

Lesley Johnstone and Monika Kin Gagnon, *In Search of Expo 67, Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2020, 248 pp. 138 photos, \$ 49.95 (paper) ISBN 9780228001140*

Didier Morelli

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and now housed in proximity to the artist's altarpiece in the Cathedral of San Martino, Lucca. Relic and altarpiece worked in dynamic interplay for contemporary believers thanks to the creativity of the artist. Suzanna Simor examines the lively interconnections between saints' relics and visual expressions of the Apostles' Creed in the Catholic church. Two locations in particular, Bamberg Cathedral and Jean de Bourbon's "Creed" Chapel at Cluny, display doctrinal cycles that play directly with notions of relics, reliquaries and visualized statements of the Catholic faith. Indeed, as this volume suggests, such performative expressions of the theological truths and artistic expression lie at the very heart of early modern religiosity. Livia Stoenescu's own chapter considers how replicas of important miraculous images (such as the Veronica or True Face of Christ) and a collection of relics re-animated the sacred landscape at the Sacro Monte di Varallo, Italy, from the 1490s onwards. Art, architecture, and the sacred power of simulacra were fused in newly created installations designed to aid in the affective piety and mediative practices then being encouraged in Catholic worship. Such spaces, images, and locations became visual aids to help pilgrims imagine themselves in Jerusalem, walking in the footsteps of Christ. The replica of the Veronica image at Varallo is a kind of "contact relic" in its own right, transmitting the sacred during the meditations of the faithful, as part of the long-standing tradition of endless creating, re-making and re-formulating sacred materiality. Citing Mircea Eliade, Stoenescu reminds us that for the faithful, spaces and images were continuously manifesting the sacred, whether as originals, duplicates, or substitutes.

In Part Three, Jérémie Koering tackles the sixteenth-century notion of procuring "relics" from distinguished artists such as Michelangelo, with admirers hoping to obtain even

the smallest fragment of a drawing from the artist's hand. The word *reliquiae* (remains) was used in relation to both the drawings and the artistic inventions of Michelangelo, helping us understand, as Alexander Nagel reminds us elsewhere, that notions of awe, wonder and the sense of artistic value were often tinged with ideas of the sacred.² In Koering's essay, the "relics" serving as inspiration to other artists and made by Michelangelo include his *Battle of Cascina*, the *Last Judgement* and the Sistine Chapel ceiling in the Vatican. The final essay by Sarah Dillon focuses on the materiality of different kinds of glass (i.e., transparent glass or rock crystal) in relation to fourteenth-century Italian relics and reliquaries, showing how artists and artisans were engaged in creating startling, evocative revelations of the holy.

The exciting question at the heart of this book is how "things" were being continually aestheticized in the premodern era in service to the sacred through a believer's sense of religious devotion. Each essay is precisely situated within its unique historical situation, and each explains the dominant aesthetic processes relied on by patrons, artists, and artisans. This book demonstrates ably that sacred things, whether labelled as art, relic, or reliquary, accumulated power and presence through human invention and desire in premodern Europe (and India). As we contemplate the future study of relics, reliquaries and aestheticization processes beyond the premodern and across different geospatial realities, this volume will hold its own within the fields of art history, visual studies, visual anthropology as well as religious studies. ¶

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1. See for instance, the contributions in David Germano and Kevin Trainor, eds., *Embodying the Dharma: Buddhist Relic Veneration in Asia*

(SUNY Press, 2004); John S. Strong, *Relics of the Buddha* (Princeton University Press, 2004); see the multi-authored special issue "Relics and Remains," which places the topic in a global perspective encompassing diverse religious and political cultures, *Past & Present* 206, Supplemental issue 5, 2010.

2. Alexander Nagel, "The Afterlife of the Reliquary," in *Treasures of Heaven: Saints, Relics and Devotion in Medieval Europe*, ed. Martina Bagnoli et al. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011), 211–221.

Lesley Johnstone and Monika Kin Gagnon

In Search of Expo 67

Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2020

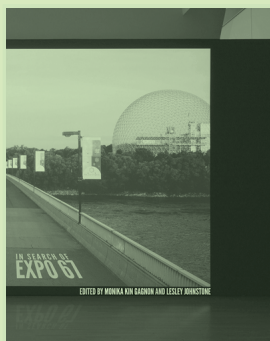
248 pp. 138 photos

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Didier Morelli

Fifty years after Expo 67, the echoes of the world's fair still resonate in the city of Montreal. A historic moment of emergent technologies, identities, and aesthetics, its material archive lives on in the sediments of Canada and Quebec's culture, media, architecture, and socio-political climate. Expo 67 was also an important display of interwoven local, provincial, national, as well as Indigenous narratives and storylines. These notions are taken up in the opening pages of *In Search of Expo 67*, where co-editors Monika Kin Gagnon and Lesley Johnstone write about critical approaches to the archive as a foundational principle of their joint curatorial endeavor. A compliment to their 2017 group exhibition of the same title at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal (MAC), *In Search of Expo 67* is a timely, compelling, and visually stimulating book that conveys the works of artists, scholars, and curators attending to the intricacies, tensions, and legacies of the iconic event.

Expanding on the exhibition premise that the nineteen selected contemporary artists engaging with Expo 67 could “open up new avenues of exploration with this context” of historical “celebration” (3), Gagnon and Johnstone’s publication anchors these research-based-projects in different forms of performative history-telling. This



includes forensic and conceptual approaches to recasting elements of the world’s fair and more poetic and personal creations that employ primary sources as catalysts for new interpretations (5). Works from the original exhibition are clustered into five thematically, conceptually, and/or methodologically driven areas: “Materialities and Temporalities,” “National Identities: The Canada Pavilion,” “National Identities: The Indians of Canada Pavilion,” “Digital Reimaginings,” and “Archival Remixes.” Each of these sections includes striking colour photographs documenting the project at the MAC, original source-materials from Expo 67, and accompanying descriptive texts written by the artists themselves. In addition, each cluster is grounded in essays by contributing scholars specializing in art history, media studies, decolonial theory, and/or Canadian visual culture more broadly.

Towards the end of their introduction, Gagnon and Johnstone describe how the act of animating “the archive through artistic

practices” offers unique lenses for revisiting and “re-knowing of Expo 67” (25). This posture inscribes *In Search of Expo 67* within a rich tradition of exhibitions, artistic practices, and academic discourses invested in providing views into the “messy” backstage of mythical events while simultaneously pointing to “other marginalized histories begging to be explored” (24). This includes previous academic research like the volume *Expo 67: Not Just a Souvenir* (2010) edited by Rhona Richman Kenneally and Johanne Sloan, or the exhibition *Fashioning Expo 67* (2017), curated by Cynthia Cooper at the McCord Museum, which focused on the carefully designed outfits, avant-garde costumes, and overall fashion of the world’s fair. The first section of *In Search of Expo 67*, “Materialities and Temporalities,” immediately illustrates works that address the world’s fair as a spatially tangible built environment (8). David K. Ross’s *As Sovereign as Love*, which provides the image of Buckminster Fuller’s geodesic dome that adorns the book’s cover, is a narrative film in which a gliding drone explores the former site of Expo 67 at Parc Jean-Drapeau (35). Following the approximate elevated path of the no longer existing Minirail, the film stills, schematic drawing for the original construction, and artist text contextualize the work in a combination of in-depth research, calculated visual imagery, and cinematic aesthetics.

Un jour, One Day, which takes its name from the official bilingual (French/English) theme song for Expo 67 written by Stéphane Venne, is a work by Cheryl Sim that similarly grounds itself in material culture (44). Inspired by her parent’s honeymoon scrapbook documenting their visit to the world’s fair, the artist focuses on gender and fashion in the figure of the Expo 67 hostess. Sim’s three-channel video installation combines historical documentation of the hostess jumpsuit with Sim’s own reimagining of it as a feminist garment that embodies both the

idealism and contradictions of the 1960s. Tying this section together is Johanne Sloan’s essay on Greg Curnoe’s censored *Homage to the R-34*, also known as the “Dorval mural” because of its location at the Montreal airport. Focused on Curnoe’s homage to the Ti-Pop phenomenon in Quebec, “with its distinctive fusion of art and politics” (61), Sloan discusses how the artist refused to camouflage the ongoing trauma of war and militarism and incorporated imagery from the counter-cultural, left-nationalist, and anti-war protests of 1967–68 in his public mural. This contribution to the “unofficial history of Expo 67” (69) contributes to *In Search of Expo 67*’s overall aspiration to make historical fragments speak, while proposing alternative forms of citizenship to the dominant ideological internationalism espoused by Expo’s official motto, “Terre des Hommes: Man and His World.”

“National Identities: The Canada Pavilion” and “National Identities: the Indians of Canada Pavilions,” the two following sections, further highlight “histories of resistance,” while providing a deeper understanding of both unofficial and official “imaginary expressions of social and political ideals” (11) put forth by the host nation, province, and First Nation and Inuit communities. Althea Thauberger’s contribution about her two-channel video installation *L’arbre est dans ses feuilles*, extracts portions of her piece rather than offering a didactic statement describing her process or the final product (81). This poetic intervention, which includes written excerpts from spoken texts by her collaborators from the original video, gives new life to her reinterpretation of the Still Image Division of the National Film Board of Canada. Similarly, *Planning for Gold / Walking You Through It* by the collective Leisure (Meredith Carruthers and Susannah Wesley) rethinks the “near-infinite possibilities” (89) of iconic Canadian landscape

architect Cornelia Hahn Oberlander's Environment for Creative Play and Learning in the Children's Creative Centre pavilion. Leisure build from their own conversations with the architect to think about new forms of agency and an appreciation for providing "challenging play" for children. The intergenerational juxtaposition of Oberlander's original drawings for the pavilion (92–93), a black and white photograph of children playfully inhabiting the space during Expo 67 (94), and documentation of contemporary youth manipulating sculptural logs in Leisure's 2017 installation (12) creates a nexus of visual, participatory, and performative experiences. This question of intergenerational discourse within the overall project of *In Search of Expo 67* could have undoubtedly been expanded upon. While many of the contributors were born in the 1970s, having not experienced Expo 67 themselves, the few who had firsthand knowledge of it were either teenagers or young adults. The artistic or self-reflexive presence from elders, those from the so-called silent generation (1928–1945), might have been interesting here to enlarge the voices and scope of the oeuvre by including other perspectives that have evolved over time.

The affectively rich, cross-temporal linking of past and present is again present in Duane Linklater's *Earth Mother Hair, Indian Hair, and Earth Mother Eyes, Indian Eyes, Animal Eyes* entry, which opens the section on the "National Identities: Indians of Canada Pavilion." In his statement, Linklater delves into the story behind Norval Morrisseau's mural *Earth Mother with Her Children* at the 1967 Indians of Canada Pavilion. The original design was considered too explicit by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development for its depiction of a human and animal suckling on the breasts of Mother Earth. Morrisseau was not present to paint the mural and Linklater frames the artist's absence

as a potentially deliberate act of agency (107). In an act of mirroring this historical event, Linklater commissioned Juliet Ouellet to paint a mural of his own design at the MAC (108–109). A full-page spread captures the piece's watchful eyes, attesting to how we are "still experiencing, witnessing, and making our way through" legacies of "violence and deliberate attempts by the state to disconnect and remove Indigenous children from their rightful place in their families and communities" (110). On the subject of residential schools, Krista Belle Stewart's *Indian Memento* utilizes a photograph from a CBC docudrama that charts her mother's life as she became the first Indigenous public health nurse in British Columbia (113). Her blood red gridded windowpanes simulate stained-glass windows in direct reference to Catholicism and the residential school system. This work returns to notions of representation, iteration, and re-articulating of source material through various technologies to translate obfuscated personal and political narratives from the 1960s to today (116).

Two essays, one by Guy Sioui Durand, who visited Expo 67 at age fifteen (122), and the second by David Garneau, who was five years old during the event but lived far away (135), close this section. Sioui Durand contextualizes the Indians of Canada Pavilion with historical and material rigor, including an account of its importance as a marker of a de-colonial, "autonomous presence of Indigenous peoples" (123), housing works with political overtones and the precarious realities of reservation life for all to see (126). Garneau discusses the use of First Peoples as foils of progress in world exhibitions and how the pavilion disrupted this narrative in ways that Indigenous artists and curators continue to develop (135). With cautious concluding notes about the contemporary art world's propensity for novelty and deference to capital in

its current embrace of Indigenous practices, both authors demonstrate how the pavilion was a "wake-up call to settler complicity and responsibility" (141) that still carries truth today.

The "Digital Reimagining" and "Archival Remixes" sections focus on Expo 67 as a display of emergent technologies, media forms, and a surviving material archive with which to mix and match. Stéphane Gilot's *Montréal délire* is poignant in its re-exploration of the topography of the world's fair via the Minecraft video game platform (161). Gilot's contemporary modelizations bridge the geometric vectors and spatial imagination of the past with a virtual digitized future (164). As Janine Marchessault states in her essay on missing archives, the anarchic, and the counter-archive, processes of remediation by artists are methodologically important in opening dialogue to "create a grammar and aesthetic experience from the material detritus of history" (201). Disappearances of media, film, and other tangible and intangible *things* play a key role in the formation of memory surrounding Expo 67 (194). Liberating the archive through counter-narratives becomes a launching point to "historicize differently, disrupting conventional storylines, and writing difference into public accounts" (201). Such is the case in Jacqueline Hoang Nguyen's *1967: A People Kind of Place*, which critically reevaluates the emergence of multiculturalism as state policy through the inauguration of the world's first UFO landing pad in St. Paul, Alberta on June 3, 1967 (187).

In Search of Expo 67 contributes to scholarship, curatorial practices, and artistic work on the archive as a complex living organism, a space of creative rethinking constituted of various structures, mediums, technologies, and affective personal experiences. In doing so, it is both a beautiful original document and also a catalog that expands upon an inspiring group exhibition. This invitation

to reconstitute Expo 67 through a contemporary lens provides a critical framework to reimagine transnational, national, local and other visual, conceptual, socio-political, identitarian, and economic ideals and surviving myths of the world's fair. By re-knowing and re-formulating Expo 67, Gagnon, Johnstone and their collaborators offer an important revision of past fact, an account of the current moment, and crucial questions about future trajectories. ¶

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Heather Diack
**Documents of Doubt:
The Photographic Conditions
of Conceptual Art**

Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2020

296 pp. 87 b/w illustr., 25 color plates
\$ 120 US (cloth) ISBN 9781517907563
\$ 30 US (paper) ISBN 9781517907570

Georgia Phillips-Amos

In the summer of 1970, John Baldessari (1931–2020) famously set fire to every painting he had made between 1953 and 1966. This body of work was cremated at a San Diego funeral home in one baby-sized and nine standard-sized caskets. Some of the ashes were then shaped into cookies and displayed as part of *Information*, MoMA's 1970 survey on conceptual art. Before pushing his paintings into the furnace, Baldessari did take the time to photograph and make slides of some, but preservation becomes slippery if what is carefully inventoried in photographs is then intentionally destroyed, and what is jarred and conserved no longer resembles the original or its documentation. In "Burning with

Contingency," the introduction to *Documents of Doubt*, Heather Diack, an art historian at the University of Miami, explores how conceptual artists in the 1960s and 70s used photography not as simple evidentiary record but as performative participant, infusing more doubt than certainty into their projects. In the process, Diack offers a comprehensive framework on the nature of conceptual photography, analyzing a series of practitioners who utilized the medium to enact what Diack refers to as a "deliberate suspension of belief" (121).

Across four monographic chapters, *Documents of Doubt* traces the shifting role of photography in the works of Mel Bochner (b. 1940),



Bruce Nauman (b. 1941), Douglas Huebler (1924–97), and John Baldessari. Though much of their work seems obsessed with taking measure, and though many of their photographs serve as documents, each of these artists challenges the idea of photography as self-evident or "transparent." Diack's focus is on how and why these four, none of whom formally trained as photographers, turned to and adapted their use of photography in the late 1960s and early 70s. Their work, and Diack's analysis, is revealing of the specific social and formal concerns that shaped artmaking at this historical juncture, addressing foundational questions about materiality and dematerialization, and

contributing to a shift away from high modernist ideals of originality toward a new framing of truth and documentation in society at large.

Baldessari's double-exposed black and white photo-composite *Artist as Renaissance Man* (1966) shows the artist himself as Leonardo da Vinci's *Vitruvian Man* (1490). As Baldessari's too-long right arm pushes past the edge of Leonardo's circle, he mocks divine dimensions and collapses the imagined dualism between conceptual and material realities, placing photography at the centre of this argument. Diack points out that rather than disembodied, this work is corporeal—Baldessari "gives form to thought and thought to form" (177). In Leonardo's layer of the image, both arms fit the circle, and in the other the right arm is abnormally long. Which is "right," so to speak? The answer is, neither. For *Police Drawing* (1970), a forensic artist created a portrait of Baldessari based on descriptions from students who had seen him for fifteen minutes. The final piece includes a full-body photo of Baldessari, a photo of the sketch artist with the students, and the composite portrait he produced based on their recollections, as well as a thirty-minute videotape of the whole exercise. As Diack points out, Baldessari's layering of evidentiary mediums draws attention to the imperfect process of evidence collection and to the indeterminacy inherent in any testimonial. The inability of art, and of photography in particular, to pin down a singular truth is at the centre of Diack's inquiry.

As the author notes, Bochner, Nauman, Huebler, and Baldessari shared obsessions with quotidian record keeping, order, and measurement at a time when the power of documents was central in the public psyche, with photographic and photocopied documentation playing an incendiary role—from the Vietnam war to the 1969 moon landing, to the Kent State Massacre in 1970, The Pentagon Papers