The Contemporary Art Gallery

The Contemporary Art Gallery:

Display, Power and Privilege

By

David Carrier with Darren Jones

Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing

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This book first published 2016

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN (10): 1-4438-9786-8
ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-9786-0

For Joachim Pissarro

David thanks Leeza Chebotarev, Birte Kleemann, Lélia Pissarro, Sandrine and Lionel Pissarro and his wife Marianne Novy.

Darren thanks Emmanuel Cooper, Joachim Pissarro, Anne Jones and James Jones, Madina Stepanchenko and his partner Kirby Congdon.

“The ideal gallery subtracts from the artwork all cues that interfere with the fact that it is ‘art’. The work is isolated from everything that would detract from its own evaluation of itself.”

—Brian O’Doherty

“The art market, like the market for anything else, has its highs and lows, but since the end of the Second World War the highs have prevailed. They have taken the prices of art to distances beyond the imagination of earlier generations.”

—Malcolm Goldstein

“Two years after Johns, Frank Stella appeared in 1959. Right after Stella, we had the Pop artists, then the Minimalists, then the Conceptualists. It was astonishing. In 15 years I found them all.”

—Leo Castelli

“I play hard. So the critical stuff doesn't surprise me or bother me.”

—Larry Gagosian

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

Chapter One

Chapter Two

Chapter Three

Courtesy the artist and Gavin Brown's enterprise, New York/ Rome. Copyright the artist.

Chapter Four

4-1 Armory Show. A panoramic shot of Pier 94 –Contemporary. Credit: Photo by BFA, Courtesy of The Armory Show 2016.
4-2 Christie's Auction House © Christie's Images Ltd. 2016

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

> "I don't have any secrets. I know only one way to sell paintings, which is to get hold of some and wait for people to come buy them. . . . It's all so simple."[1]
> —D. H. Kahnweiler

This book has been a long time in development, for it draws upon more than thirty years of experience as art critic. In the late 1970s, when I first read *Artforum* I wrote to the editor, Joseph Masheck, offering to write about the methods of his criticism. (I then was a philosopher.) He very generously encouraged me rather to write art criticism (few critics post their first publication in *Artforum*[2]), and introduced me to the first artist I wrote about, Sharon Gold, who patiently listened to my very academic modes of thinking.[3] I never have lost my fascination with the activity of art writing, though my personal style of art writing has changed dramatically as I learned by stages to become more immediate, and less bookish. This book draws on my experience publishing art criticism in *Art in America*, *Art US*, *artcritical.com*, *Artforum*, *ArtInternational*, *Arts Magazine*, *Artscribe*, *Burlington Magazine*, *Kunst Chronik*, *Modern Painters*, *Sculpture*, *Tema Celeste*, and *Titolo*. In recent years I have especially welcomed the patient, generous editorial support provided by Phong Bui and his colleagues (Taylor Defoe and Laila Pedro) at *Brooklyn Rail*, David Cohen (and Noah Dillon) of *artcritical.com* and Paul Gladstone who edits *Journal of Contemporary Chinese Art*.

Some materials presented here have been published in very different forms. My discussion of fashion was "Fashion Desire. Giorgio Armani's Art Gallery," *ArtUS* 14 (July-September 2006): 25-35. More recently, thanks to the editorial support of Phong Bui, I guest edited the *Brooklyn Rail* in April 2013, with the theme: "The Contemporary Art Gallery." I thank Bill Beckley, Ivan Gaskell, Darren Jones, Joachim Pissarro and Adele Tutter for their contributions, and Jacky Klein and Amanda Rensham for going over the entire manuscript.

Many people have generously supported this project. Barry Schwabsky alerted me to one important point; Philippe de Montebello and Larry Gagosian made suggestive comments. And I thank Jill Weinberg Adams,

Leeza Chebotarev, Paula Cooper, Brent Beamon, Michael Findley, Steven Harvey, Loren Munk, Victoria Newhouse, Sandrine and Lionel Pissarro, William O'Reilly, Mary Sabatino, Nancy Whitenack and other gallerists who talked to us. Thanks to the generous support of Graham Nickson and Lexi Campbell, Darren and I presented a version of this material at the Studio School. Over the past thirty-five years, I have learnt from discussion with a great many artists. And of course we warmly thank the many art dealers who, by providing our plates, have made this book possible.

In May, 2014 Laurie Wilson invited my participation in "Psychoanalysis and Art: Sixth International Symposium," Florence. That occasion got me thinking about the important analogies between the practices of therapy and art historical interpretation. David Miller, my moderator, who is a practicing psychoanalyst, told me something important;

> Even when the critic/analyst feels lost and powerless, to the artist/patient, he may still seem powerful. Of course, this power refers to the power to injure, but also to inspire confidence. The power to move markets is a lot more complicated, as you know.

Richard Sennett's *The Conscience of the Eye: The Design and Social Life of Cities* is an academic treatise on urban culture. At one point, however, for eight pages he writes in a personal way.

> Since I've lived in New York I've liked walking, avoiding subways or taxis whenever I can. These days I usually walk from my apartment in Greenwich Village up to midtown on the East Side to eat, an amble of around three miles.[4]

He describes the route with scenes of drug dealing; leather shops; stores selling spice; and the residents of the neighborhood near his restaurant. Sennett's analysis inspired me to narrate my gallery walks in equally concrete ways. And then walking around Rome with him many years ago gave me the idea of how to begin my "Overture."

"Galleries are dedicated spaces," Arthur Danto wrote in his account of the art of Joshua Neustein,

> governed by a complex set of conventions that define the relationship in which works of art are intended to stand to those who enter the gallery to be in their presence. . . . the gallery itself, which makes these experiences possible, is generally not itself a further object of aesthetic scrutiny or pleasure and, lest it distract from the objects it makes accessible, it aspires

> to a certain neutrality. . . . It is a pure symbolic nothingness, like a blank page or the silent space of the concert chamber[5]

Danto, my teacher, was an intimate friend. My books were often engaged in dialogue with his. In context, Danto's argument is that while normally paintings and sculptures "carry their references and meanings with them, wherever they are shown, and are altogether self-contained," Neustein's *Light over Ashes* is site-specific, Danto argues, and so "it seeks an internal relationship to the space and indeed to the site in which the museum containing the gallery is located."[6] Danto is right to call attention to the complexity of the conventions upon which gallery-life depends, but wrong, I will argue, to conclude that the gallery itself can ever be a neutral space. In truth, the gallery is not simply a container, but a place that has its own visual qualities, which deserve to be identified because they contribute to interpretation of the visual art displayed. The goal is to make explicit those conventions, showing how they inflect experience of art.[7]

I wrote this, the first of my books developed after the death of Danto, when Joachim Pissarro transformed my life and writing. When it was well underway, I invited Darren Jones, who worked with me on a previous publication, *Wild Art*, which was co-authored with Joachim Pissarro, to become involved. Darren and I are different enough people to argue productively—and close enough to be effective collaborators. We have very often enjoyed looking at exhibitions together—and the book includes substantial contributions of writing, examples and ideas from him. Unless otherwise indicated, the publications identified in notes are my publications.

For a long time, I thought of my intellectual life as essentially divided. Coming to New York, I wandered in art galleries and museums. Then in my Pittsburgh study I wrote books, essays and reviews of the art I saw in New York. I supported myself by teaching and writing philosophy—my art criticism was very much a side activity, like growing roses. I had to come a long distance before I saw the unity of my concerns. One reviewer of my book on art museums complained that I had never worked in a museum. This book, a successor to that volume, may occasion a similar complaint, for I have never worked in an art gallery. My aim in both, however, is to respond to these institutions as a visitor, describing them in terms that enrich the experience of other people who visit museums and galleries.

Notes

[1] Quoted in Olav Velthuis, *Talking Prices. Symbolic Meanings of Prices on the Market for Contemporary Art* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005), 41.
[2] "Willem de Kooning at the Pittsburgh International," *Artforum*, XVIII, 5 (l980): 44-6.
[3] "Sharon Gold," *Artscribe*, 30 (l98l): 35-7.
[4] Richard Sennett, *The Conscience of the Eye: The Design and Social Life of Cities* (New York and London: W. W. Norton, 1990), 123.
[5] Arthur C. Danto, *Unnatural Wonders: Essays from the Gap Between Art and Life* (New York: Farrar. Straus. Giroux, 2005), 303.
[6] Danto, *Unnatural Wonders*, 304, 305.
[7] "Typically," Mary Anne Staniszewski notes, art historians treat "the discrete work of art" as "the unit of analysis," failing to consider that it

> is always an element within a permanent or temporary exhibition created in accordance with historically determined and self-consciously staged installation conventions.

Mary Anne Staniszewski's *The Power of Display: A History of Exhibition Installations at the Museum of Modern Art* (1998), xxi. Our account has been influenced by hers. But where she argues that the history of installation has, to speak in psychoanalytic terms, been repressed, in ways that reveal ideology, "ellipses in our official histories and collective memories," we prefer to speak of making shared implicit knowledge explicit.

PROLOGUE

Taking their cue from Brian O'Doherty, Carrier & Jones go about their task of unraveling the labyrinthine meanders of the Art Gallery—one of the most obvious, yet unchecked, dark squares on the checkerboard that composes the contemporary art world. With the same dogged and inquisitive determination as Holmes and Dr. Watson would apply to solving a crime, Carrier & Jones do not leave any stone unturned in their pursuit. The result, this book, is admirable: filled with facts, unexpected comparisons with the pre-gallery era (one senses a certain obsession from one of the authors with the Rome of Caravaggio), this meticulous analysis produces unexpectedly rich and compelling results. Long preoccupied by the (often tense) juxtaposition of the "brief beautiful high and the everlasting low" (*High Art*), both authors clearly enjoyed experiencing this descent to the inferno of contemporary art: the art gallery—which, as they establish, constitutes, like it or not, a crux wherein all players come to meet: artists, curators, collectors, amateurs, viewers, by-passers and where the beginning of an (ever so fragile) aesthetic consensus is being formed.

—Joachim Pissarro
Bershad Professor of Art History,
and Director of the Hunter College Art Galleries

INTRODUCTION

> "Gallery going . . . a definitive feature of present urban culture . . . is poorly understood. . . . The upshot is one of those universal miseries with which each individual feels uniquely afflicted.
>
> The misery is basic to capitalist culture: a ragged fissure between Mammon and Eros, or money and meaning . . . ."
>
> —Peter Schjeldahl[1]

Nowadays contemporary art travels. It is made in the studio; displayed for critical evaluation and sale in the gallery, and moved, when sold by the dealer, to a collector's home; and then, finally, it enters its permanent home, a museum. This, at any rate, is the ideal scenario.

An artist creates an object in the studio.

That object is taken by a dealer to the gallery.

The work is purchased by a collector

The same object then is seen by the public in a museum.

All contemporary art *is* site specific, which is to say that we always encounter it in some visual context, a setting that influences how we describe and valuate it. That this is a truism isn't to say that it's a trivial claim.

The contemporary art world system thus includes artists' studios, art galleries, homes of collectors and public art museums. To speak of a system is to indicate that these institutions are linked together. To comprehend art, you need to understand these settings and how it travels through them. There are many published accounts of artists' studios, collectors' homes and the public art museum.[2] But much less has been said about the contemporary art gallery, which is our concern. The one great commentary, Brian O'Doherty's *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space*, published in 1976, is dated; now many galleries are not white cubes.[3]

Most accounts of contemporary art focus on the art itself—on its meaning; on its relationship to older art; and, often, on its social role or political significance. This book adopts a different approach—it looks at art today through the lens of the contemporary art gallery. In order to understand our art world, you need to understand the contemporary art gallery. Just as the art historian has to wander through Umbria to see the dispersed frescoes of Piero della Francesca, and walk in Naples in order to understand that site of Caravaggio's subjects; so the art critic must traverse the streets, visiting the contemporary art galleries. This book is as concerned with the *appearance* of art galleries as art historians are with the visual qualities of the art which they describe.

What do art galleries do?

Why should we care about them?

What can be learnt by going to galleries that cannot be learnt anywhere else?

This book will answer these questions. We describe gallery going in ways designed to inform your experience. As we wrote, we found that thinking about these issues greatly enriched our experience of gallery going. Our book makes explicit your implicit awareness that the art gallery is not just a neutral setting, a mere container for the art on display, but has its own distinctive visual qualities, which influence and contribute to your experience of the art it contains. To fully understand a gallery exhibition, you need to interpret its setting; and to adequately comprehend the development of contemporary art, you have to study where it is displayed.

In the first chapter we briefly describe the beginnings of the present contemporary art gallery. In the second, we describe the experience of gallery going, presenting summary accounts of visits to some contemporary galleries. In the third, then, we expand and extend that analysis, with detailed close up descriptions and comparative evaluations of many diverse contemporary galleries. Our aim is to identify the challenges provided by these marvelous places. In the fourth chapter we indicate why in the near future, such galleries might disappear. And, finally, there is a short bibliography. The crucial organizing strategy, running through the entire book, the governing analogy, is our comparison of an art tourist's visit to pre-modern art in its original urban sites, and the gallery goer's visit to contemporary art galleries. Because art tourism is familiar, comparative reference to it provides a good way to analyze

gallery going, which has been much less discussed. Art's context matters: To understand the contents of galleries, you need to recollect the experience of walking into them.

Many dealers are devoted partially or entirely to exhibitions of old master art, or to provincial artists. We focus on the ambitious presentations of contemporary art because such displays raise the crucial conceptual issues. And we concentrate on New York galleries, because that is the most important place for contemporary art displays – and is the city that we know best. Scholars have studied the history of the gallery, tracing the development of the present art market, and so we do not replicate their work. Our concern is with the gallery here-and-now. Thanks to a robust art world economy, the scale and obvious ambitiousness of the grand present day contemporary galleries is unprecedented. Drawing on extensive experience as reviewers, our basic concern is to describe and analyze them. This book thus is based almost entirely upon our own direct responses to galleries we have visited. We have seen together many of the exhibitions we describe and Darren or I have looked at almost all of the others.

Our analysis often aims to be contentious-- like the art it describes. Art galleries matter, for you cannot understand contemporary art without visiting them. Your first experience of an art gallery, like your first taste of oyster or drink of grappa is likely to be surprising, even disconcerting. Even now many years later, to us nowadays galleries still seem marvelously strange. Our goal is to preserve some sense of their strangeness. Spelling out the conventions of gallery life defamiliarizes these sites, making analysis possible.

The studio is a private place. The gallery is the public site where art is first seen—anyone can come and look for free. This store, a commercial site, is where aesthetic judgments are made. Art's value is determined in this marketplace by the consensus formed by public opinion. Often the prices are open to negotiation.

Today modes of seeing art have diversified beyond the physical act of visiting artists' studios, galleries or museums. Much art is seen, at least initially, online: Press releases for new shows pile up in our inboxes with links to the artist's last project, his website and images of the work in the upcoming show; in determining which exhibitions to visit, one can scroll through any number of online gallery guides, Google the gallery and the artist and decide instantly if it is something that warrants an in-person

visit. In a few hours of online research one can zip through every one of hundreds of exhibitions in New York and form a list of those that are really worth seeing: art is sold online without ever having been seen in person, replacing to a degree the auction phone bid of old. Curators may forgo lengthy, time consuming and unnecessary studio visits by replacing them with Skype calls, sending jpegs back and forth and checking the artist's blog, website or recent press; and then there is social media - artists today get residencies, sales, gallery representation, and press, on an international scale from merely nourishing their online presence by posting on Instagram, Facebook or Youtube.

A review in any publication will normally also appear in its online version and can be sent out into the world by the artist, his work and the critical response to it in a magazine is then disseminated in seconds. Hashtags further his reach and expand the online territories in which the review will be seen. The internet has quickened the pace of art viewing, making, selling, showing, and has reoriented the entire business of experiencing art. While it has not yet found a way to replace entirely, the tactile, nature of seeing art in person, and while people may always want to be in the presence of art - it *has* initiated a revolution in how art is seen, and as with everything else, how can the art world resist the pace of technological advances?

What is the value of a work of art?

How should we compare this work to art in the museum?

These questions are answered by this public discussion, which originates on blogs, and on Facebook and online magazines. The published reviews of art critics provide a permanent public record of aesthetic judgments, but the process of making these judgments is an activity in which many people who mostly are not writers participate. Often the word of mouth response to an exhibition may matter more than the published record.

Many stores sell things for which the need is self-evident. At the grocery you buy a steak, some asparagus, and a bottle of red wine. If you need a bed, then you go to a furniture store; if winter is coming, you buy a sweater and boots. Like these banal stores, contemporary art galleries offer commodities for sale. But whereas foodstuffs, furniture or clothing are things we need, works of art are not necessities. Art galleries are shops in which most visitors never purchase anything. We window-shop, taking an aesthetic distance on the merchandise.

Imagine that there were no art galleries. How then would we learn about contemporary art? We would have to visit studios. Our galleries allow seeing a great variety of art relatively quickly. In one busy morning in Manhattan, you can cover galleries in the Upper East Side; in a long afternoon, you can walk through Chelsea. If a show isn't promising, it's easy to move on. Studio visits require an appointment, and even if you're disappointed, it's rude to stay only briefly. Of course, you can wait until art arrives at the museums, but then usually its appeal has been tested. What often is most challenging for the critic is seeing art whose value has not yet been established—and that happens frequently in the galleries. By being an intermediary between artist and collectors, the dealer plays an essential practical role.

Here at the start we need to face a minor awkward verbal issue. The word 'gallery' has several meanings. Some people call museums 'art galleries' or 'picture galleries'; and within a museum, speak of individual galleries, rooms where art is displayed. Because there is no convenient, generally accepted substitute, we will use the phrase, 'art gallery' to describe the commercial shops where art is sold. When we refer to galleries *within* museums, that different meaning of 'gallery' will be clear.

Human beings have almost always made art. But this art world system, a distinctive creation of modern bourgeois culture, is a relatively recent invention. Under the old regime, where aesthetic judgments were made in an authoritarian top-down fashion there was no need for our gallery and museum system. Many commentators are critical of the role of the gallery in this commercial art world system. They ask:

> Can aesthetic value really be determined by public debate?
>
> Is free debate about art actually possible in our culture?
>
> Why do the very rich dominate the gallery system?

Our analysis will face these questions. To describe this commercial art market is not to approve of it. Nor is it necessarily to endorse the larger capitalist system of which it is an integral part. But in order to develop a critical analysis, it is necessary, first, to understand how our contemporary art world system functions.

Not all contemporary visual artists are part of the art world system. We can learn about that system by considering briefly two such figures.

Norman Rockwell (1894-1978) was very famous during his lifetime — he did 323 covers for *The Saturday Evening Post*, one of the widest circulating American journals. But not until late in life, in 1968, was he contacted by a dealer who gave him his first gallery show. As Deborah Solomon, his biographer explains:

> The art world . . . is . . . the sum of all the rooms in the world where art is publicly shown . . . It offers any object a meaningful context, the possibility of being judged as art, of being defined in relation to other objects whose aesthetic worth is believed to be knowable.[4]

When Jackson Pollock and his successors became very famous, Rockwell remained marginal in their art gallery world.

> One reason there was no real discussion of the aesthetic worth of Rockwell's paintings was that he had seldom exhibited them, seldom subjected them to the scrutiny of critics.

Recently, however, he has had museum exhibitions-- and his painting *Saying Grace* (1951) sold for $46 million. And art historians have argued that he deserves attention. It is possible, now, that Rockwell will posthumously join the art world system.

LeRoy Neiman (1921 – 2012), too, was very famous, financially successful enough to endow a center for print studies in the school of arts at Columbia University. He exhibited widely but in the 'wrong' kind of galleries, galleries outside of the art world system. And so he, too, was not taken seriously by art critics. To the extent that they took any notice, they thought that he was an illustrator, who did not deserve attention. Neiman's subjects, sports heroes, Playboy 'girls' and popular musicians were all wrong for the art world. When Playboy Enterprises sponsored a show of sports images by Andy Warhol and Neiman, rather than bringing him into the art world, the effect was to question Warhol's place there.[5] Neiman was rejected because his art has nothing to do with the dominant American art world trends of his lifetime—Abstract Expressionism, minimalism, Pop Art. But now, when we have a broader vision of what was possible during this period, he too, like Rockwell, might find a place within the art world.[6]

Notes

[1] Peter Schjeldahl, *The 7 Days. Art Columns 1988-1990* (Great Barrington, Massachusetts: The Figures, 1990), 39.

[2] On the studio see my "In the Studio: Photographs In the Studio: Paintings," http://www.brooklynrail.org/2015/04/artseen/in-the-studio-photographs-in-the-studio-paintings Saturday, April 4, 15; on the public art museum, my *Museum Skepticism: A History of the Display of Art in Public Galleries* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2006).

[3] More recently he published a short book about artists' studios: Brian O'Doherty, *Studio and Cube: On the relationship between where art is made and where art is displayed* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2007).

[4] Deborah Solomon, *American Mirror: The Life and Art of Norman Rockwell* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2013), 404.

[5] See http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/1982/feb/18/the-rise-of-andy-warhol/.

[6] Rockwell and Neiman are what a recent book I co-authored with Joachim Pissarro we called 'wild art', visual art that is outside of the art world system; see our *Wild Art* (London: Phaidon, 2013). See also my "The Blind Spots of Art History: How Wild Art Came to Be -and Be Ignored," http://www.predella.it/images/35/Predella_35_Miscellanea_02_25-37_III-VI_Carrier.pdf.

CHAPTER ONE

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE CONTEMPORARY ART GALLERY

> "There are no qualifying exams for being an art dealer, so anyone who has a notion to open up a clear white space with a couple of plants and a chair is an art dealer. If you feel you have perceptions and taste you can open a gallery."
>
> —Ivan Karp[1]

Since the start of modernism it has become hard to fully describe an artist's career without considering the role played by art galleries. We explain the initial response and the growth of a reputation by citing exhibition reviews. We note that sales to collectors who patronize galleries make it possible to focus on art making. And we indicate how the addition of art to museum collections solidifies a reputation. This is how we describe the development of the French Impressionists and the other pioneering European modernists. And it is how we explain the success of the American Abstract-Expressionists. At Jackson Pollock's show at Betty Parsons, November, 1949, the other artists were surprised to find well dressed collectors at the opening: a new development. "These are the big shots," Willem de Kooning famously noted: "Jackson has broken the ice."[2] A supportive dealer can be immensely helpful, especially when you are young, by providing publicity, sales and emotional support.

Because art galleries are so important a part of our contemporary art world, we may take them for granted. But the ambitious art gallery devoted to contemporary art is a relatively recent creation. We need only look to Caravaggio's Rome to find a very different art world. Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio (1571-1610) arrived around 1592, and swiftly moved from doing genre paintings to painting commissioned sacred scenes. Like a modern avant-garde figure, his revolutionary style inspired initial critical rejection, heated critical discussion and, soon enough, widespread emulation. Just as nowadays artists from everywhere in America, and also from Europe and Asia come to New York, the center

of the contemporary art world, so when he moved to Rome, Caravaggio was but one of many ambitious young men who were attracted by the very rich artistic traditions of that city. In present day New York, ambitious young artists seek a gallery—in Rome, Caravaggio needed a patron, who would facilitate commissions in churches.[3]

In this pre-modern art world there were only modest art galleries and almost no public art museums. There was no need for these institutions—not when art typically moved directly from the artist's studio to the church or palace where it was permanently displayed. But towards the end of the old regime, the social historian of art Francis Haskell notes, exhibitions in the nascent public sphere "provid(ed) a forum where values other than those established by the State and the aristocracy could be discussed."[4] Recent scholarship has traced in detail the gradual development of the modern market economy in art. For our purposes, four briefly described scenes will suffice for this pre-history of the contemporary art gallery: the presentation of a 1721 Watteau painting advertising a Parisian art dealer; art displays in Venice and China, in the early eighteenth century; and the Salons in the Louvre in the mid and late eighteenth century.

1-1 Watteau, Jean Antoine (1684-1721). *The Shop sign for the art dealer Gersaint.* 1720.

Amongst the visual records of art dealing is one masterpiece, Jean-Antoine Watteau's *Gersaint's Shopsign.* This, "the greatest work of art ever devoted to shopping," which was painted as a signpost, and exhibited

for only fifteen days, before being removed by a collector is an imaginary portrait of a Parisian gallery.[5] A cultural historian explains the significance of such scenes:

> The discourse of conviviality . . . represented human sociability as an achievement of civilization, the product of history.
>
> The new political order was based on the reciprocal exchange of conversation among equals, rather than the hierarchy of the society of orders and the absolutist state.[6]

The painting is a very idealized image of art dealing, quite unlike the actual scene in this cramped boutique, which was hardly more than a permanent booth with a little back shop, set on the medieval Pont Notre-Dame.

> In the gallery, art is the particular object of the social rituals of the promenade and the outing, the particular excuse for more conversation. It is the institution that draws people together and determines a field of common interest and action . . . . In the shop, connoisseurs, in conversation with each other, will select what then, as a result of this selection, is designated as Art.[7]

The original site of Gersaint's shop is visible in Hubert Robert's *The Demolition of the House on the Notre Dame in 1786*.[8] Nowadays we dress differently from our eighteenth century counterparts, and art is unlike the paintings shown by Watteau. But Eric Fischl's recent paintings of art fairs reveal another such gathering of fashionable people discussing art, which is for sale.

The Venetian feast day of Saint Roch, August 16, commemorates the end of the plague of 1576. Canaletto's *Doge visiting Church and Scuola di S. Roco* (1735) shows the outdoor picture exhibition accompanying the festivities.[9]

1-2 Canaletto, Giovanni Antonio (1697-1768). *Venice: The Feast Day of Saint Roch*, about 1735. National Gallery, London.

An art exhibit at the *scuola* overflowed into the *campo*. One painting may be a cityscape by Canaletto himself—most of the works on display, however, show sacred scenes. We normally associate art collecting with expansive capitalist culture. But here we see a nascent art market in a declining state, where aristocratic patronage was drying up. Such shops were found also in eighteenth-century China. *Spring Festival on the River* (1735) shows a humble art gallery. The historian James Cahill explains:

> From the early periods there are some records of markets where old paintings and other antiques were sold, fairs held in Buddhist temples, and shops in certain quarters of cities.[10]

Just as the ancestors of our public museums, the *Kunst* and *Wunderkammers* pre-date the art gallery, so the sophisticated art writing of Giovanni Bellori (1571-1644), who discussed Caravaggio, and various Chinese commentators existed long before art criticism. But art criticism as we know it, systematic, detailed evaluation of art in exhibitions appears only when aesthetic standards are no longer secure. Then there is a need for