

Editorial

La parade

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I.

The *parade* is the apparition of the actor before the façade of the theater, in the street, in the narrow zone between stage and world. The actor solicits the attention of passersby with skits, with acrobatics, with music, calling out the attractions on offer inside the theater. Without scenic appurtenances, the sideshow performer engineers a compelling figural appearance with body alone. The *parade* is the manifestation of a figure outside the scene of representation. Beyond the scenic frame, the actor hovers between the vulnerability of exposure and the vitality that propels his promotional appeal. The *parade* allegorizes life itself as the repetition of this appeal.

This issue of *Res*, “La Parade,” looks to instances of the *parade* in visual art and in the arts—not necessarily to literal representations of the *parade*, but to the figure that performs the movement of the *parade* by throwing itself forth, by a self-animation apart from environmental context. What are the principles of figural *anima* that compel a viewer to perceive a figure as such, prior to perceiving a relation of figure to ground?

If the *parade* models a modality of art, its countermodel is the aesthetic text. An aesthetic text is a tight weave of signifiers, a whole greater than the sum of its parts, which in generating effects or meanings does not permit itself to draw on any resources beyond the internal relations of those parts, one to another. The aesthetic text can be recognized by the axiom that secures its borders and its stability: no part may be moved or substituted without creating a new whole.

This project identifies figures ungoverned by the laws of the aesthetic text. These figures are sometimes found thrown into a work of art, sometimes thrown from a work back into life. “Thrown” suggests the figure’s frequent surplus of energy, the gyrations that invoke contexts beyond the one in which it finds itself, including social contexts. If the figure is animated, its animation does not arise in response to other figures. Instead, the figure self-animates, borrowing too from nonvolitional movement, like fluttering clothes and hair or shimmering armor.

Yet thrown figures, cast figures, cast-out figures, figures in transit may also respond by drawing back into themselves, performances of unsociability or inability to engage in relations that would tether them within a picture-world. Whether antisocial or excessively social, the thrown figure is indifferent to the fictional relationships offered up by depiction. *La parade* is the apparition of the human figure in a state of hysterical or depressive recognition of its own unresolved relation to a prestigious scene of representation.

The project seeks to establish the preliminaries of a history and theory of the figure that resists the sociable bonds of the picture-world. This figure only passes through tectonic frames on its way to other settings.

Composition—the practical principle of aesthetic textuality—has been an object of study at the expense of other modalities of art, for example, the setting forth or *Darstellung* (literally, “putting there”) of figures. Many works of art do not depict but simply place figures before us, without implicating them in a scenario or a fiction. Many works are internally discontinuous, open, capable of hosting—not binding—the figure thrown. Art not only proposes second worlds but also populates our world with artful figures. Only a new approach can account for the figure that passes through different art forms, including theater, dance, literature, and other *arts de corps*.

We recognize figural repertoires: viewers, readers, artists, and authors collect and reassemble thrown figures in other places. They draw on works of art to cast their own figural repertoires. In turn, artists create figures knowing they will be recast by others. Such figures perform thrown-ness as an appeal to be picked up, reused, and revived. The *parade* is an audition for a continued but alternatively social life in the figural repertoires.

This was the prompt our authors were asked to respond to.

II.

The *parade* is tied to the articulation of difference between what is animate and what is not; one of its functions is to express liveliness as a movement of

desire—to be seen, to be recognized, to be called. The figure of the *parade* is outside—outside composition, outside the theater “proper.” Impropriety, usually caused by excess (excess of beauty, or chasteness, or ugliness) prompts the breaking of social ties and the figure’s exclusion. This social exclusion models a way for the human figure (as a representation) to exist and to persist between medias and epochs. The figures of the *parade* are overwhelmingly either human or animal. Vases do not go on parade, although they may present parading figures. Just as the vase might provide a stage for a figure, the *parade* constitutes visual art as one place, among others, where ordinary, unartful people glimpse extraordinary, artful people. Yet these extraordinary beings are not fixed; the *parade* tantalizes with its suggestion that these figures can come back into the lives of ordinary beings, to move among us.

The *parade* makes it possible to imagine fluidity between the world of art and our own. Yet pure mobility is not enough. The *parade* figure desires to shine in a moment of opacity, when words are lost, a pure state of the unbound. Historically, this shine belongs to the royal entry, the presentation of the figure of the royal person as a show in itself.¹ This person was (supposed to be) radiant, shimmering with the energy of his or her majesty. It is this type of figure, this kind of libidinal excess, that the aesthetic text tries to discipline, perhaps because the shimmer of majesty could be too easily turned upside down, into the frenzy of the grotesque. A body racked by laughter is like a body glowing with majesty; both are possessed by an inner force that presses outward, breaking things.

To understand the aspirations of the *parade*, we sometimes have to fall quite low, to examine the principle as it unfolds among unartful manifestations. For example, the *parade* has become quite a powerful model in the age of social media, with individuals showing themselves on and among a variety of media “platforms,” digital doubles of the *tréteaux*. Continual shuffling and reconfiguring of relationships between celebrities establishes the mobility of the repertoire as a set of pieces that can be constantly rearranged. The overwhelming tendency toward the serial format (streaming television favors series over films) suggests the desire for an ongoing repertoire, a parallel world from or into which figures can constantly be thrown. The most

successful contemporary films are epic repertoires, produced serially, which offer a recurrent cast of characters. Activities like LARP (live-action role-playing) allow consumers to harvest characters from the repertoire for reuse, appropriation, and imaginative play. The *commedia dell’arte* also offered a serial repertoire with recurring characters. The serial, like the epic, is an open form, versus the closure of tragedy.

The *parade* needs openness because it needs to move its figures between worlds and medias. This mobility is one source of the *parade*’s erotic appeal. The figure on parade claims its ability to be anywhere, with anyone, which is a promise both to the viewer (“I will be with you”) and for the viewer (“you can be anywhere, like me”). In the Romantic era, this promise was felt to be both exhilarating and perilous. Canova’s dancing figures in the Pompeian style offered the groundless figure as a fetish that mourned the sense of ground lost during the Revolutionary era while celebrating the fleet-footed lightness to be gained in its stead. The way that *parade* allegorized the uprooting wrought by revolution brought the concept forward as a subject of fretful attention in literature and art.

Our *parade*, our thrown figures: where and when do we meet them? A few particular figures inspired this project. In the first place, we look to the human figures thrown by German and French Romantic authors as they envisioned the unstitching of the image as aesthetic text. In their disenchantment, authors like J. W. Goethe and Gérard de Nerval reenchant the figure as that which communicates life as the appeal to live in the eyes of others, ultimately challenging text itself as a compositional format. Nerval’s fluid textual arrangements throw forth recurrent female figures, objects of longing around which the narrator circles, incanting rather than fixing their appearances in dance, theater, and visual art. Utterly inattentive to generic or medial boundaries, Nerval saw visual art as one medium among others for the throwing forth of figures.²

In the second place, as a counterpart to Nerval’s “time-chaste” young women, the German and Swiss mercenary soldiers of the early sixteenth century, depicted as single figures in prints and drawings, convey the excessive energy of certain kinds of *parade*, in which the figure thrusts itself forward and aggressively declares its independence of social ties (fig. 1). Outsiders by the nature of their profession—outlandishly clothed, hips

1. J. Vogel, *Aus dem Grund: Auftrittprotokolle zwischen Racine und Nietzsche* (Paderborn, 2018), 11–15. Vogel uses the term *Glanz* to describe the effect of the entrance of the royal body during courtly ceremony (14–15).

2. See C. S. Wood, “Figure and Ground in Goethe’s *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*,” *ELH* 84 (2017): 399–422, and Marika Knowles’s essay on Nerval in the current volume.

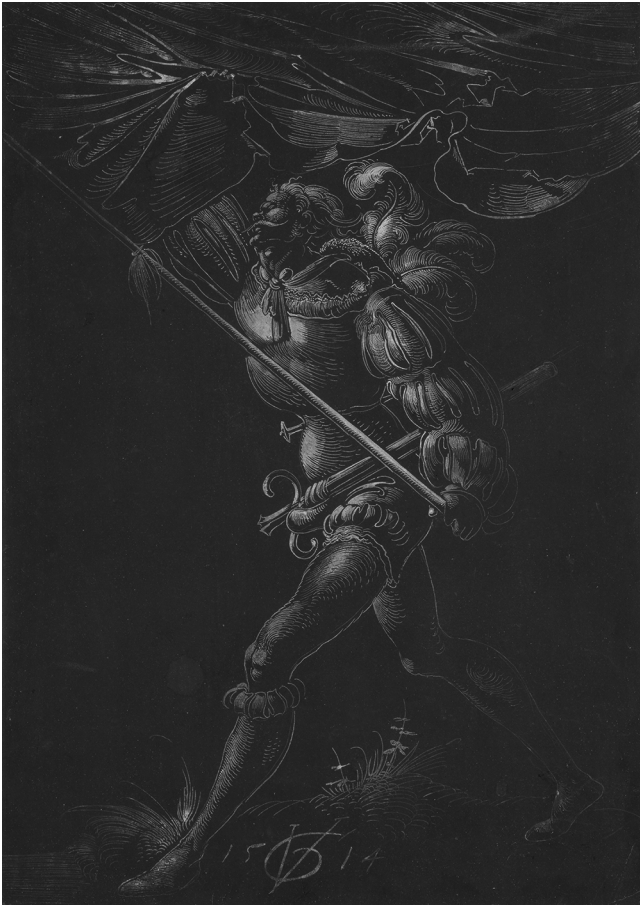


Figure 1. Urs Graf, *Standard-Bearer*, 1514. Pen and brush in white on brown-violet paper, 30.8 x 21.8 cm. Kunstmuseum Basel, Kupferstichkabinett, Amerbach-Kabinett, Inv. U.XVI.51.

thrust, bearing rippling flags—their gyrations imply untold narratives, novels without plots except the figure’s creation of itself as cut out against the landscape through which it strides. The figure’s paroxysm is the protest of the uncooperative and underprofessionalized against the invisibility of contextualization. The solo mercenary figure exposes a flaw in a compositional system, a body that fails to be recruited to a company (to be composed). Comic, antic, the mercenary soldier staves off death and yet courts loneliness. In the early seventeenth century, Jacques Callot catches the swagger that the German mercenaries had thrown and recasts it as the affect of the Captain, a military mask from the *commedia dell’arte* (fig. 2).³ A genre of the *parade*, the

3. This relationship is explored in M. T. Knowles, “Swaggering Off: Actors, Mercenaries, and Duelers,” chap. 2 in *Realism and Role-Play: The Human Figure in French Art From Callot to the Brothers Le Nain* (Newark, DE, 2020).



Figure 2. Jacques Callot, *The Captain* from *Les Trois Pantalons*, ca. 1618–20. Etching on paper, 21.4 x 14.6 cm (image). Art Institute of Chicago, the Wallace L. DeWolf and Joseph Brooks Fair Collections, 1920.2051. Photo: Art Institute of Chicago (CC0).

commedia deploys flimsy, repetitive plots as a pretense for the stock characters’ performance of themselves.

The woman taken in adultery has cast herself forth by refusing the tethers of marriage. Most artists show her folded into herself in shame, but Tintoretto casts her as radiant in her thrown-ness, appearing before Christ unbound, unattached to her captors, ready to go forth as Christ instructs her: “go forth and sin no more” (fig. 3). Tintoretto’s delicate figure lifts her arms and bends one knee; she looks down, in concentration, as if she is about to begin the steps of a dance. In this instance, a figure’s backstory allegorizes the movement of *parade* as a shaking free of social ties. Tintoretto responds by



Figure 3. Jacopo Tintoretto, *Christ and the Woman Taken in Adultery*, ca. 1550. Oil on canvas, 119 x 168 cm. Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica, Rome. Photo: Scala / Ministero per i Beni e le Attività culturali / Art Resource, NY. Color version available as an online enhancement.

making her figure more compelling than those around it; it is her show we want to see.

In early eighteenth-century Paris, fairground theaters presenting the characters of the *commedia dell'arte* would often give the responsibility of the *parade* to Pierrot, a naïve, rustic clown who wears a straw hat and a loose, plain white suit.⁴ At the end of the performance proper, to which Pierrot's *parade* had enticed an audience, Pierrot again played a central role in the curtain call, the postperformance *parade* in which the actors showed themselves (fig. 4). Despite his apparent importance, Pierrot never seemed ready to appear, remaining stiff and inexpressive. Yet for Antoine Watteau, Pierrot's awkwardness performed all the complexities and the anxieties of the *parade* as a moment of social appeal and vulnerability. The setting of oneself forward, the stepping outside—this was Pierrot's

4. On Watteau's borrowing from the visual and performative aesthetics of the fairground *parade*, without specific reference to Pierrot's figure, see T. E. Crow, *Painters and Public Life in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (New Haven, CT, 1985), 45–74.

story, which Watteau saw as sufficient subject for some of his greatest paintings.⁵ The looseness of Watteau's compositional arrangements enabled early nineteenth-century critics to treat his oeuvre as a repertoire of figures rather than discrete tableaux. In their critical accounts, authors walked among the figures (like Diderot strolling through Claude-Joseph Vernet's seaports), mingling with Columbine, Pierrot, and rouged courtiers, extolling Watteau's poetic world creation rather than single works of art.⁶

Certain kinds of movements are associated with the *parade*. Figures dance; figures step forward or outside; figures float or sway; figures excrete; figures laugh; figures shiver. Garments ripple and flutter in the wind.

5. M. T. Knowles, "Pierrot's Periodicity: Watteau, Nadar and the Circulation of the Rococo," in *Rococo Echo: Art, History and Historiography from Cochin to Coppola*, ed. M. L. Hyde and K. Scott (Oxford, 2014), 109–27.

6. L. Gozlan, "Antoine Watteau," *L'Artiste*, 2nd ser., 1 (1839): 156–62; A. Houssaye, "De la peinture galante en France: Watteau et Lancret," *Revue de Paris* 34 (October 1841): 293–317.



Figure 4. Jean-Antoine Watteau, *The Italian Comedians*, ca. 1720. Oil on canvas, 63.8 x 76.2 cm. Washington, DC, National Gallery of Art, Samuel H. Kress Collection, 1946.7.9. Photo: Courtesy National Gallery of Art, Washington. Color version available as an online enhancement.

These are repetitive micro movements that resist the fixity of the artwork as well as the determination of narrative and plot. They are movements that tend not to tell a story but to express the figure's liveliness and to advertise its potential for mobility. In addition to particular kinds of movement, the *parade* seeks alternative substances in which this movement is performed. Liquid (water, milk), air, fire; mediums in which figures float or are suspended, rather than moving laterally from one point to another. John Quidor's figures spring out of fiery pits and are always aflame as a result. Vermeer's milkmaid floats, as on a milk-white porcelain tile, as on the ocean that had become the watery ground of the Dutch empire. Goethe's *Homunculus* shoots like a meteor through the Classical *Walpurgis Night*, following his desire to "come to be." Birds and sea monsters shake on a Northwest

Coast rattle, a movement illustrative of the way that Haida and Tlingit mythology show creatures and humans slipping through earth, water, air, screens of trees, and the skins of other beings. Pierrot's strategy, of course, is somewhat different, at least in Watteau's paintings of the figure. Pierrot does not move at all. He performs lumpishness. Yet the result is the same—he is put outside. The figure of *parade* creates its world through its movements (or its failure to move), declaring that it makes its own ground. As Matthew Spellberg puts it in this volume, "the shivering intensity of sentience creates the very space in which [the figure] exists."

Figures who create their own existential space require new ways of thinking about figure-ground relationships. Yet far from proposing a radical separation of figure and ground, the *parade* suggests a close interdependence, if ground is reconceived as that which emerges in the

figure's wake. Gottfried Boehm, for example, describes Ariadne's dance as drawing the movement of thread through the Minotaur's labyrinth.⁷ The labyrinth is the stage upon which she dances, but it is also what she draws as she dances. Her figure is her ground. *Bildgrund*, pictorial ground, is inadequate to describe this scene. The composition of Callot's print, *The Captain*, represents the figure's triumph (his shine) as the movement from a scenic ground that encompassed it (in the background) to a ground determined by the figure's height and the spread of its sword, feathers, and limbs. Through his charisma, which unfolds through his rippling accessories, the Captain springs from background to figure-ground.

III.

Although *la parade* resembles an iconography, and although we know it by its silhouettes and its gestures, it is neither a content nor a form but is instead best understood as a concept. Like any other untranslatable concept—*virtù*, the *unheimlich*, pastoral, and so on—*la parade* escapes history and reason and puts pressure on other concepts.

An exemplary manifestation of this concept is the seizing of the means of expression (*prendre la parole*—taking the microphone, as it were) by an individual, aspirant to artistic expression, who thereby escapes the restraints of his otherwise collective art and yet at the same time knows his escape to be temporary. In *Les Enfants du Paradis* (1945), directed by Marcel Carné and written by Jacques Prévert, the actor Frédérick Lemaître complains to the director of the Funambules (the popular theater where the film is set) that he feels stifled by the mutism of the pantomime: he wants to speak, to project his voice and self outward to the audience. The director offers to put him outside: "Listen, if you like, from time to time, I could put you outside, in the *parade*. You would do the sales pitch."⁸

La parade encompers historical adjustments of the arts, plastic and performative alike, to new populations of addressees and new locales, new sight lines. The classic *parade* of the European *saecula*, generated by dynamic interplay between high and low forms of life, the historical *parade* that gives this scholarly project its

name, comprises depictions of representational predicaments: performances reperformed, with a concurrent leaking of the crisis from the inner performance to the outer or framing performance. Pablo Picasso in 1900, nineteen years old and in Paris for the first time, painted a street scene with sideshow, in layers (fig. 5). There is the sideshow itself, involving a man in evening clothes and a harem girl on a painted porch; the onlookers, a mixed crowd in top hats and caps, shifting, distracted; and in the lower right corner a pert woman who has migrated from a painting by Toulouse-Lautrec and looks straight out of the picture at us, creating us as the painting's fourth layer of complicity. The performance, kin to the nonprofessional quasi performances of urban life, ripples outward from the stage toward us.

The *parade* can be found on any level of abstraction. It is a subject matter but also an approach to subject matter, and it is not tied to its historical occasions such as soldier or actor. We do suggest that sensitivity to the *parade* was particularly acute during the era of Romanticism. The early modern *parades* in this volume err toward the marginal and the venal. In the spirit of carnival, *parade* is untroubled, coarse, and generative. In the Romantic period, the *parade* remains antic, yet begins to be pathologized; the affect moves toward the hysterical. The mobile figure becomes a time traveler, and it is understood that while some figures travel and survive, others do not. In modernity the *parade* takes on urgency. Marginality and precarity escape the topoi and types that had contained them; they seem more real now. Figures begin to speak out of turn, to bristle against the conditions assigned to them. In *Les Enfants du Paradis*, the ragpicker Jérico confronts, backstage, his fictional double, who wears a costume made from the rags that Jérico himself has provided. Jérico protests that each night, Pierrot kills the fictional ragpicker—"quel exemple!"

An apparition outside the scene, between scenes, but anyway *elsewhere*, the *parade* is the symptom of an art-theoretical crisis in the European tradition, between about 1500 and 1900. Our modern involvements with art are so often framed by philosophies of art history. In scholarly accounts, artworks plot the shape of art history. Our project, we believe, reveals that the most influential narratives of post-Renaissance art, from Vasari straight through to Modernism, neglect libidinal figurality in favor of pictorial composition, static and self-supporting, so much better suited to an aesthetics of disinterest than art built around the human figure. *La parade* is an antic gesture of dissent from these narratives, a desperate reassertion of the natural primacy of the claim of the

7. G. Boehm, "Der Grund: Über das ikonische Kontinuum," in *Der Grund: Das Feld des Sichtbaren*, ed. G. Boehm and M. Burioni (Paderborn, 2012), 62–63.

8. J. Prévert and M. Carné, *Les Enfants du paradis* (Paris, 1974), 161: "Tenez, si vous voulez, de temps à autre, je pourrais vous mettre dehors, à la parade. Vous feriez le boniment."



Figure 5. Pablo Picasso, *Fairground Stall*, 1900. Oil on canvas, 38.1 x 46.3 cm. Museu Picasso, Barcelona, 113.113. Photo: Album / Art Resource, NY. © 2019 Estate of Pablo Picasso / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Color version available as an online enhancement.

body on our attention. The protest of *la parade* in its parodic negativity, its swings from overperformance to underperformance, can never achieve its aims. That same complaint, however, a dissatisfaction with the painted composition's leveling of body and nonbody, lay behind the polemical scholarship of J. J. Winckelmann and behind the new art of ballet, the Apollonian ballet of Jean-Georges Noverre and Carlo Blasis—the only successful realization, perhaps, of Winckelmann's prescriptions.

Our *parades* communicate with Jacques Rancière's *scène*, which is both a historical object and a method. The scene for Rancière is "a form of intelligibility"; to follow the "method of the scene" is to "connect that which appears unconnected, or to reveal an apparently non-existent capacity."⁹ The *scène* is a fictional configuration that reveals a real configuration, or a possible but not yet realized future. The *scène* is Rancière's own writing method: he puts appearances

together on the page, allowing historical actors to address one another and thus reoccupy their historical moments. "The idea is to read in the thickness of a singular event the whole set of connections and issues which define a political, artistic, or theoretical singularity."¹⁰ This method is preferable to conventional philosophical history, he argues, because it refuses all evolutionary logic and all hierarchies of surface and substance: "The scene is a way of interrupting the explanatory machine in its two modes: the referring of the conditioned to the never-completed series of its conditions, and the referring of the surface to what is hiding below it."¹¹

The metaphor of the actor is crucial for Rancière, yet he lays the stress not on the actor's insincerity, the deception perpetrated, but on the actor as one who seizes control of history by using someone else's words. Theatrical appearance for Rancière is not the opposite of reality: it is a manifestation. In its ideal state, as in the

9. J. Rancière, with A. Jdey, *La méthode de la scène* (Paris, 2018), 15, 14. All translations are our own, unless otherwise noted.

10. Rancière, *La méthode de la scène*, 11–12.

11. Rancière, *La méthode de la scène*, 17.

pantomime at the Funambules, theatrical appearance disregards “toute finalité morale,” answering to neither plot nor the morals and customs implied therein.¹² Admittedly, Rancière’s premise that dramatic apparitions need not stoke anxieties about mendacity and deception is called into question by the confrontation between the real and fictional ragpickers in *Les Enfants du Paradis*. “I may be a drunk,” Jericho cries, “but that doesn’t mean I don’t have morals, does it!”¹³ This confrontation occurs precisely because the film has narrativized the *parade*, embedding the realism of the body on the stage in an intricate and sentimental narrative of love, longing, and the actor’s relationship to his role. From within this plot, Jéricho demands that he be treated morally. He wants nothing to do with the *parade*. The solo flight of the figure who appears on the boards becomes the condition of Jéricho’s lonely bachelorhood, “always all alone.”¹⁴

Rancière, however, is not concerned with literal stagings any more than we are concerned with literal sideshows. *La scène* remains a concept and a method even if it is easy to find it “doubled” in the theater. He considers the institution of theater, especially the popular theater of early nineteenth-century Paris, a privileged venue for such doublings because “there are moments when one could say that the question of theater is linked to the activity of the people, in the sense that there is a relation between the material institution of the theater and the question of a space where the people are manifest, present as such.”¹⁵ Rancière reproduces on the level of his own writing a certain improvised, unpretentious, nonbinding quality that he finds in the commedia dell’arte, the pantomime, and the follies of the Funambules as enshrined in *Les Enfants du Paradis*.

Rancière abjures teleology and would not concede that his early nineteenth-century historical configuration was destined to realign itself as the 1917 ballet of Erik Satie and Jean Cocteau, entitled *Parade* (costumes and sets by Picasso, program notes by Apollinaire). And yet there is no denying that the script of his method is shaped by a Romantic or pre-Marxist populism. Rancière’s scenes are all the more powerful, he would say, because the very concept of the scene was once

staged for us, in a real time and place just barely perceptible on the horizon of European memory.

The meanings of *scène* and *parade* are drawn from a historical configuration, more or less the same one. A component of that configuration was a newly domineering drive to explain history, to discern patterns, to replace things in their contexts, to derive and domesticate the impulses and the anarchic imaginings of persons and artworks. Our *parade* is unthinkable outside the totalizing historiography of art that emerged in the nineteenth century, which threatened then, and threatens still, to crush its own object with explanation. The practice of art history has in many cases resembled history painting, which tells stories hinged upon the peripety—the transition from one state, before, to another, after. Indeed, the French narrative of history painting versus the “lesser” genres looms large in this particular configuration. The early nineteenth-century moment that we identify, the era of the Funambules, where Nerval dallied, jotting words in a dog-eared notebook while Pierrot flitted in and out of the visible *scène*, corresponds to the decadence and the fraying of history and its representations. Rancière’s *scène* resembles the *canevas*, the commedia dell’arte’s alternative to the script. Literally, the *canevas* is a loosely sketched series of events, into which players inserted a repertoire of speeches and physical gags. Figuratively, the *canevas* is theater as a space in which actors appear and do things, a place of appearance. It is theater as bound to its visible space, the scene, rather than theater as bound to a text, the pages of which turn as the actors speak their lines. On a *canevas*, things, figures, are placed, moved around; sequence is unimportant. It does not matter what comes before or after. This is the logic of *parade* as we identify the concept in works of art. Yet it is also a possible logic of art history.

Imagine art history as a *canevas*, on which the art historian places things, figures, events. The author configures, juxtaposes, creating a scene in which a figure or a work shines. Many of the essays we have collected for this issue are poetical in that they attempt to imagine the lives of figures freed from the ground of particular works and specific media; this is the life of the “offstage,” which takes place when an author stops narrating or a painter stops painting (off-frame). One of the resulting projects is the description of a figural repertoire, a cabinet of figures who have been formed by different physical practices and through appearances in different media. These figures record bodily praxis as well as a range of affective dispositions. In this respect,

12. J. Rancière, *Aisthesis: Scènes du régime esthétique de l’art* (Paris, 2011), 107–8.

13. Prévert and Carné, *Les Enfants du paradis*, 262: “Je suis saoul peut-être, mais ça m’empêche pas d’avoir de la moralité, moi!”

14. Prévert and Carné, *Les Enfants du paradis*, 262: “toujours tout seul.”

15. Rancière, *La méthode de la scène*, 15.

La parade is the basis not for a new art history but for possible alternatives to art history, unrealized histories of figures in motion, histories of the migration of figures from one art form to another. The new object of study is the figure-work: the work performed by figures, the repertoires constituted by figures, the figure as oeuvre, without a fixed medium or physical instantiation, shuttling in and out of artworks, in and out of roles, on and off stage. *Figure-work* is a way of escaping the logic of composition, which has enforced the metaphor of the artwork as integrated body, which in turn summons metaphors of the integration of society and the socialized bodies populating it, finally also the metaphor of the integrated subject. If this is not art history, it is still possible to reexamine the history of art with this counterfunction in mind. Works that may have previously fallen by the wayside as irrelevant to a compositional tradition may reemerge as crucial contributions to the figural repertoire. Historically, some writers (Winckelmann, Goethe, Nerval, Théophile Gautier) seem to have understood this.

For many, the suggestion of a poetical art history will come across as undisciplined or irresponsible. But a historiographical poesis need not sacrifice historical context; on the contrary, context is revalorized, made

more vivid by the fact that it does not have to be overdetermined, pressed into necessary causes and effects. We would suggest, in fact, that the attempt to describe a relationship between art and historical context is by its nature poetic. A story is told, like a scenic design that creeps into view on the boards of the *parade*, gradually surrounding, but not necessarily touching or binding, the figure who appears. It is better, perhaps, to acknowledge that the relationship is one of juxtaposition and construction, a poetic scaffolding, a *chantier*, a building site. Aby Warburg vivified the discursive, tactile, and sonic texture of historical environments, yet he declined to insist that this texture bound the figures that appeared in its midst. He placed his figures; he did not fix them. For our part, we think it impossible to deny that the recent outpouring of Warburg-mania is related to the fact that his art history was poetical. Winckelmann, too, was sensitive both to historical periodization and to the beauty of figures that spoke to him, as if from the boards outside the theater. "I can put you outside" is both what the artist or director says to the actor and what the figure of *parade* says to its viewer. What is promised is another dimension of experience—the erotic, the interpersonal as a deliverance from time and history. *Parade* is outside, but it is never past.