Originalveröffentlichung in: Ebert-Schifferer, Sybille (Hrsg.): Deceptions and illusions. five centuries of trompe l'oeil painting ; [catalog of an exhibition held at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, Oct. 13, 2002 - March 2, 2003]. Aldershot 2002, S. 17-39

# Trompe l'Oeil: The Underestimated Trick

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THE FRENCH TERM "TROMPE L'OEIL" (eye-deceiver) is commonly used today to describe paintings that represent things in an especially deceptive way, so that the representation of a thing seems to *be* the thing itself. The phrase itself first appeared as a noun in 1800,[1] by which time the kind of painting it described already had a long history. Used for centuries throughout Europe, it had become a topos—an established theme praising paintings so unusually good at imitating the world that they "deceived the eyes" (*ingannare gli occhi, tromper les yeux, bedriegen*).[2] In fact, until the avant-garde breakthrough in the second half of the nineteenth century, *all* painting since the Renaissance had sought the most convincing imitation (*mimesis* in Greek)[3] of whatever was represented. Thus it was unnecessary to designate a genre for paintings that were particularly successful in this way.

When the degree of imitation was so successful that the technical and intellectual characteristics of the artist were impossible to discern, however, certain problems arose, especially when the representation actually seemed identical with the thing depicted. Already in his *Decameron*, Giovanni Boccaccio—certainly familiar with the classical topoi—astutely recognized the object-oriented power of virtuoso trompe l'oeil painting. As he wrote of Giotto di Bondone (c. 1266–1337): "there was nothing in the whole of creation that he could not depict with his stylus, pen, or brush. And so faithful did he remain to Nature... that whatever he depicted had the appearance, not of a reproduction, but of the thing itself."[4] It was precisely the way trompe l'oeil caused a painter to disappear behind his work that resulted in this genre's being so despised within the hierarchic schemes established by the academies. The earliest academy, founded in Florence in 1553 by Giorgio Vasari (1511–1574), was the Accademia del Disegno, with the main goal of elevating the painting profession from the lowly status of a craft to the heights of the *artes liberales*. *Disegno* was the art of correct draftsmanship, but beyond this was the ability to realize an internal, intellectual design through drawing. The higher the intellectual component of a work of art, the more its creator was elevated to the social status of a scholar. As the hierarchy of genres became established, history painting was at the pinnacle, whereas still-life painting ranked lowest. Supposedly the latter required "only" the technical ability to transfer the appearance

of a physical object into a painting. Since trompe l'oeil seemed to be pure technique, mere handicraft, and even sought to conceal the presence of the artist's hand through meticulously smooth, fine brushwork, it was scorned—although this was in total contradiction to the popularity it enjoyed with the public. Samuel van Hoogstraten (1627–1678), author of a theoretical tract and always mindful of his reputation as *pictor doctus* (learned painter), was himself ambivalent on this issue. Writing a century after Vasari, Van Hoogstraten described the hierarchy of genres using military metaphors—still life painters were just "common soldiers in art's encampment"[5]—and yet he called perfect mimesis the highest demonstration of artistic expertise. Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723–1792) later summarized the problem:

*Amongst painters and the writers on painting there is one maxim universally and continually inculcated. 'Imitate nature' is the invariable rule, but I know none who have explained in what manner this rule is to be understood; the consequence of which is that everyone takes it in the most obvious sense—that objects are represented naturally when they have such relief that they seem real.... It must be considered that if the excellency of a painter consisted only in this kind of imitation, painting must lose its rank and be no longer considered as a liberal art..., this imitation being merely mechanical, in which the slowest intellect is always sure to succeed best.*[6]

However often anecdotes were deployed in praise of a painter's skill at deceiving the viewer, this very deceptiveness was just as often damned, in the name of the Platonic tradition, as a sham and a morally reprehensible fraud. Around the time that nineteenth-century American art gave rise to the last great flowering of trompe l'oeil, the English painter and critic John Ruskin (1819–1900) felt compelled to revive the whole repertory of idealist criticism. For him, truth in painting lay in the power of the imagination, which alone could lead to recognition of the "highest truths." He observed that trompe l'oeil directed attention away from the truth of a representation to the materiality of the constructed object[7]; at the moment the viewer recognized that the painting was not the object represented, attention reverted to the materiality of the work of art. Ruskin reasoned that art thereby evolved from a state of "being for another" to "being in itself" (Levine). Here he presciently identified what would become a hallmark of the modern age, one that would finally undermine the concept of mimesis itself: trompe l'oeil was a dangerously subversive art form that—by compelling us to contemplate its object-ness, the conditions of its making, and the mechanics of human perception—profoundly shattered our faith in our ability to recognize truths.[8]

The fact that radical or extremely successful imitation would undermine the principle of imitation itself was thus a topic of earnest debate long before this "child" acquired its own name. To this extent, the term marking the title of the current exhibition (and of numerous books and articles published in the twentieth century and up to the present day) is retrospective, a latecomer. Moreover, it was one coined in France when the value of perfect mimesis was a topic of intense philosophical and theoretical discussion.[9] Thus, although the approach taken in the present exhibition might at first appear ahistorical, it was in fact a considered one, since it is precisely in the art historical reading of trompe l'oeil that our view of the power of this phenomenon has sharpened. The exhibition is conceived from the point of view of twenty-first-century visitors who will approach the genre with eyes and thoughts shaped by the experiences of modern philosophy, psychology, and art. Although our gaze may be less naive than that of a seventeenth-century viewer unaccustomed to the new media that inundate us with images, our minds are that much more amenable to the charming play of intellectual questioning in these works. Thus the pleasure we find in them should remain just as great.

## Prologue: Mimesis

As early as antiquity, painters had pursued perfect imitation and, in the eyes of their contemporaries, achieved it. Today we know little about the trompe l'oeils made in ancient Greece and Rome. Only a few relatively late Roman works from Pompeii survive, and the often badly damaged state of these mosaics and wall paintings (more precisely, encaustics) has obliterated much of their effectiveness. Classical authors have left a large number of reports about their most famous artists, often with descriptions of their best works and anecdotes about contemporary reactions. As these tales were revived and disseminated in the Renaissance, they became the common property of the public and of artists; they were repeatedly quoted or, when appropriate, used to praise the exceptional skill of a particular picture or living painter. Conversely, many artists self-consciously adopted the central motifs of these anecdotes, seeking to prove themselves worthy followers of their classical forerunners and to provoke comparable literary praise and viewer response. Thus in an interplay between art criticism and artistic production, both text passages and certain motifs became linked together as a topos. These could also be used independently, however, so that where a theoretical or critical text referred to a viewer being "deceived," it did not necessarily signal a trompe l'oeil in the modern sense but simply a particularly successful instance of mimesis.

The expected reaction of viewers seems to be at least doubly conditioned: first by the literary topoi mentioned above, which reflect a cultural stamp; and second by what seems an anthropologically constant interaction between the senses of sight and touch,[10] with consequences for perception theory. Among the classical anecdotes most relevant to our theme is that of the Roman Pliny the Elder (Gaius Plinius Secundus, 23/24–79 C.E.) on the work of the Greek painter Zeuxis (active 435–390 B.C.E.): "Zeuxis... painted a child carrying grapes, and when birds flew to the fruit... he strode up to the picture in anger with it and said, 'I have painted the grapes better than the child; if I had made a success of that as well, the birds would inevitably have been afraid of it.'"[11] Whereas the artist tricked birds in this case, in another instance he himself was fooled by a curtain painted by his artistic rival Parrhasios (active 440–390 B.C.E.): "[Parrhasios] entered into a competition with Zeuxis, who produced a picture of grapes so successfully represented that birds flew up to the stage-buildings; whereupon Parrhasios himself painted such a realistic picture of a curtain that Zeuxis, proud of the verdict of the birds, requested that the curtain should now be drawn and the picture displayed; and when he realized his mistake, with a modesty that did him honor he yielded up the prize, saying that whereas he had deceived the birds, Parrhasios had deceived him, an artist."[12] These two anecdotes are extremely significant for the history of trompe l'oeil, even though they refer not to a specific genre but rather to the degree of mimesis or imitation of nature that painting could ultimately achieve. Presumably the curtain of Parrhasios was a painted theater curtain and was part of classical theatrical decor. It is instructive that victory depended on the intellectual caliber of the deceived public: whereas Zeuxis misled "only" irrational animals, Parrhasios succeeded in befuddling not only a rational creature, a man, but one who was especially competent in this area. That an artist's status grew in proportion to the rank of the person deceived became a topos as well, one that Boccaccio soon applied to the founder of modern painting, Giotto, whose art Boccaccio ranked as a superior intellectual achievement because it delighted not the *ignoranti* (the ignorant) but the *savi* (learned).[13] Even in the seventeenth century, when the earliest baroque trompe l'oeils were especially valued at the courts of European kings and emperors,[14] the intellectual or social status of the deceived viewer was taken as the measure of an artist's rank.

1. Jacopo de' Barbari, *Still Life with Partridge, Iron Gloves and Bolt*, 1504, oil on panel, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Munich

Two further anecdotes, about painted animals, are indirectly relevant to our topic. One concerns the partridge of Protogenes (active in the second half of the fourth century B.C.E.), a tale handed down by Strabo (64/65 B.C.E.–23 C.E.). Protogenes painted a

*Satyr... standing by a pillar, on top of which stood a male partridge. And at this partridge... the people were so agape... that they would behold him with wonder but overlook the Satyr, although the latter was a very great success. But the partridge-breeders were still more amazed, bringing their tame partridges and placing them opposite the painted partridge; for their partridges would make their call to the painting and attract a mob of people....*[15]

Numerous anecdotes describe animals duped by painted representations of their own species, but Protogenes' live partridge is unusual. Later artists only rarely depicted living birds illusionistically (see cat. 48), more often portraying dead game birds with convincing illusionism, harking back to a classical tradition known from pictorial sources (cat. 17), although the feathers would require the same skill in either case. One of the very first modern trompe l'oeils (and still lifes), Jacopo de' Barbari's painting of 1504 (fig. 1) presumably makes reference to Protogenes' partridge, although the bird it depicts is dead.[16] The phenomenon of a small object so illusionistically represented that it seems to lie on the surface of a painting and to provoke uncertainty about the degree of its reality was also known in classical art. Philostratus reports a picture representing Narcissus: "The painting has such regard for realism that it even shows drops of dew dripping from the flowers and a bee set-

tling on the flowers—whether a real bee has been deceived by the painted flowers or whether we are to be deceived into thinking that a painted bee is real, I do not know."[17] This famous bee has spawned two motifs in the modern era, that of the painted fly and of the so-called *cartellino* (little card), a piece of paper that seems to be attached or left lying on the picture surface, often bearing the artist's signature or some other message.[18] The *cartellino* became a recurrent, even constitutive element of certain types of trompe l'oeil, appearing in ever newer variations to a level of hypertrophic virtuosity. The fly motif, however, was a kind of fashionable accretion between the mid-fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, when it appeared primarily as an isolated element of deception on paintings that were otherwise not trompe l'oeils (cats. 24–27).[19]

Philostratus' bee was revived and transformed in order to celebrate Giotto as the founder of modern painting.[20] Although Giorgio Vasari is usually cited regarding this anecdote, an earlier report comes from Antonio Averlino, called Filarete (c. 1400–1470), in his *Treatise on Architecture:* "We also read that Giotto, while young, painted flies that fooled his master Cimabue. He thought they were alive and tried to shoo them off with a cloth."[21] It was by this time possible for Filarete to look back upon essential innovations in Western painting, a considerable portion of them ascribed to Giotto. But the philosophical prerequisites for these innovations had to be established first, and these in turn had created a need to revive the mimetic strategies of antiquity. In contrast with Aristotle, Plato rejected the mimetic capacity of painting as nothing but a shadow play obscuring the truth.[22] And in the wake of medieval Christian thought, when everything the human eye could see was deemed a hollow semblance, illusionism was likewise denigrated as mere "deceit." In the thirteenth century a theological and philosophical change allowed even the smallest detail of earthly creation to be acknowledged as a manifestation of God, triggering a wave of precise observation, even of inanimate things. The new, empirical approach called for a pictorial record, and mimetic techniques had to be developed anew. The essential requirements were an increased ability to mimic plasticity through gradations of color and the rendering of light and shadow—both skills ascribed to Giotto by Vasari—as well as the discovery of a mathematically exact construction of one-point perspective—first fully formulated by the theoretician Leon Battista Alberti (1401–1472). Techniques for correctly distributing shadows were empirically developed to a level of mastery, as in renderings of closely observed subjects in the natural world—plants and insects or small animals—an interest that evolved in conjunction with the positivist requirements for illustration in the natural sciences. The borders of illuminated manuscripts remained an arena for such likenesses well into the sixteenth century. It is not surprising that a fly motif was involved when the ancient topos was reactivated with reference to Giotto.

### Excursus: The Window into Space

The discovery of one-point perspective made it possible to represent the optical consequences of distance on a two-dimensional surface. It was Alberti who formulated an idea that would remain valid for centuries: a picture is a window through which we observe the scene represented beyond the frame.[23] For that scene to appear real, the perspective must be based on the viewer's position; the imaginary window intersects a visual pyramid between the eye and the central vanishing point. In this metaphor the picture surface becomes a membrane, which, although transparent, separates the viewer's space from that of the image in an ideally palpable way (Alberti speaks of glass).[24] The classical concept posits a pictorial *space* that *opens* behind this membrane. When this pictorial space is plausibly related in scale and motif to the actual space of the viewer, a

spatial illusion is created. Such illusions are most often articulated architectonically, and are frequently categorized as trompe l'oeil. In his Scrovegni Chapel in Padua (c. 1305), Giotto explored this concept when he painted what seem to be openings in the upper portion of the triumphal arch, allowing the viewer to look through into two arched rooms containing windows, chandeliers, and frescoes. With this architectural illusion he once again revived an antique tradition; indeed, Pompeian wall painting, following earlier Greek theatrical decoration, had already played out an extravagant game of deception in pillars, doors, vistas, and garden panoramas (fig. 2). In fact, the idea for a constructed perspective is recorded by the Roman architectural theorist Vitruvius in a description of an illusionistic stage set designed by Agatharchos (active late fifth century B.C.E.) for a tragedy by Aeschylus.[25] The mathematical basis of perspective construction, which developed in the seventeenth century into a genre of its own, so-called *quadratura* painting,[26] allowed artists to transform whole rooms illusionistically (fig. 3). Eventually, in the baroque era, painters would conjure up visions of boundless space on two-dimensional ceilings (see page 44), and use painted architectural illusions in stage decorations and on building façades. Even in today's modern cities the idea of architectural illusion persists as a way to disguise ugly firewalls. They represent the extreme of Alberti's window perspective, removing the requisite of the frame.[27] These large-scale architectural deceptions are not included in the present exhibition, not least because room decorations are by nature not transportable. Architectural trompe l'oeil is determined by the notion that a viewer leaves his own space and steps bodily into the endless space behind the picture plane. The illusion engendered can be compared with virtual reality,[28] which can only succeed when viewed from a fixed, calculated point in real space.

2. Wall decoration, Pompeii, Second Style, Villa of P. Fannius Synistor, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Naples

### Trompe l'Oeil Painting

At its point of origin, trompe l'oeil painting in a narrow sense is exactly the opposite of the idea of a "picture window," and as a consequence one emerged simultaneously with the other: the cross-section of the visual pyramid is conceived as a fixed, impenetrable surface. Rules of shading and perspective can be applied only to things that, from the observer's point of view, lie on this side of this wall. In this respect trompe l'oeil painting, as we shall see, plays in a more limited way both "with" and "upon" that "aesthetic boundary,"[29] until this boundary is overcome not only from in front (from the viewer's space *outward*) but also, as it were, from behind (*into* the viewer's space). The tendency to project motifs toward the viewer, into real three-dimensional space, leads to a permanent involvement of the sense of touch. All of the aforementioned classical

3. Baldassare Peruzzi, Sala delle Prospettive, fresco, c. 1515, Villa Farnesina, Rome

anecdotes entail a physical reaction directed to actual contact: the birds attempt to land and peck, the man seeks to grasp the curtain and pull it aside. When the object is no longer optically distinguishable from its representation, the sense of touch becomes a corrective to the sense of sight. This response is recorded throughout the history of the modern reception of trompe l'oeil. Because the present exhibition hopes to demonstrate this process clearly, it is limited — with a few noteworthy exceptions — to the classical idea of trompe l'oeil.

Yet a definition of classical trompe l'oeil, attempted in different ways before this, is not as easy as it may seem.[30] It is agreed that a trompe l'oeil motif must be represented in a natural or, at least, plausible size, as completely as possible (not cut off by the picture frame, for instance), and with no visible traces of the painting process. Otherwise the viewer's expectations in regard to a real object might be challenged. Life-size representations of living things could then also be considered, for example, animals that appear to be truly alive. Classical reports abound of viewers' having

fallen in love with deceptively authentic sculptures and paintings of people—especially of women.[31] The best known of these is certainly that of the legendary sculptor Pygmalion, related by Ovid in his *Metamorphoses*.[32] Pygmalion was so smitten with a female statuette of his own creation (not a life-size imitation but an idealized image), that Venus brought her to life as his companion. The impulse behind these stories,[33] however, is the wish for vivification, a desire to have an ideal image made real; it is not about taking pleasure in an illusion achieved through the imitation of reality. In this respect a *narrow* definition of trompe l'oeil likewise rules out living beings from whom movement must be expected; no depiction can aspire to this degree of illusion.

Inanimate objects that are rendered in actual scale and "fool the eye" do have something in common, however, with representations of living beings that "seem to breathe." Namely, they are all created solely in order to elicit a specific reaction from the viewer, one established by classically shaped topoi. Both contain "directions for the viewer"[34] that are intended to elicit a feeling of *astonishment* in the case of trompe l'oeil painting and of longing *admiration* in the case of the desire for vivification.[35] This implies that the goal of trompe l'oeil is not the continuous deception of the viewer (raising a peripheral question about whether or not previous observers were actually duped), but rather the feeling of astonishment at one's own perception. It is taken for granted that the viewer is complicit although by no means naive; the history of reception recorded in the topoi testifies to this complicity,[36] as does the pleasure one derives from seeing through the trick.[37] Trompe l'oeils belong among the most extroverted of all artistic genres to the extent that without the reaction of a viewer they lose their *raison d'être*. Unlike illusionistic architectural painting, the works considered here employ techniques of spatial-plastic illusion not so much to suggest three-dimensionality as to question the materiality of the picture and the thing represented. And they seek to penetrate the viewer's space so that he has to stretch out his hand in order to confirm the nature of what he sees.[38] Predicated on this physical relationship to the viewer, trompe l'oeil plays with Alberti's membrane in two directions, outwardly and inwardly (primarily the former, but occasionally exploiting both in one and the same picture), until the idea of the image as window is shattered and with it a long-established idea of representation and mimesis.[39]

The exhibition investigates this game and its serious consequences for the concept of an image, and it does so in sections that pursue the successive degrees of manipulation of the Albertian window membrane all the way to its complete negation. The sequence of sections following the prologue as well as the groupings of motifs and the main focal points of each epoch seem to emerge inevitably, and they make readily apparent what many authors have already established: trompe l'oeil paintings represent a highly self-reflexive genre, a sustained debate between the art and itself, the artist and himself. Thus trompe l'oeil paintings are much more than mere technical artifice or decoration, as has so long been asserted within the academic hierarchy of genres.[40]

### Temptation for the Hand

We have already referred to the comparable roles or effects of the fly and the *cartellino*: ostensibly resting on the surface of a painting that is otherwise assumed to be an Albertian window, they seem out of place and thus invite removal. The two motifs have various origins and characteristics but share the same intellectual foundation: the treatment of Alberti's window as a transparent membrane and simultaneously as a material, impenetrable surface[41] able to support another flat object made of the thinnest possible material—paper. This alone calls Alberti's window into question, and even partially negates it. Here techniques of shading and perspective are ap-

4. Vittore Carpaccio, *Letter Rack* (verso of *Hunting in the Lagoon*), c. 1490–1495, oil on panel, The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles

plied in their narrowest scope, namely in order to represent an insubstantial object on a flat surface, a configuration that even in reality is barely three-dimensional. The two-dimensional picture projected onto the retina differs only slightly from the real object, so a viewer can register the absence of shifting contours only from close by, thereby recognizing the deception.[42] This principle cannot be taken to much further extremes than the illusion of glued-on banknotes (cat. 44) or postage stamps (cat. 46). Chalfant's *Which is Which?* has neither cast shadows nor displaced contours. Its degree of illusionism is so advanced that its surface has suffered considerable abrasion from attempts to rub it and thereby test its authenticity. Yet even this degree of deception is surpassed in the representation of broken glass lying on sheets of paper resting tightly pressed and without shadow (cat. 41) where any attempt to verify with touch is countered by the frustratingly ironic threat posed by the jagged edges.

The representation of paper has inspired painters through the centuries to ever new, highly imaginative solutions. The intellectual step of envisioning the picture surface not as an aperture but as a dense substance like a wall was already achieved by c. 1440 in northern Italy, where artists began the practice of painting a signature on a small illusionistic card (*cartellino*) (see cat. 25).[43] The practice of mounting correspondence and other papers on a wall is masterfully illustrated in Jan Gossaert's *Portrait of a Merchant* (cat. 32). As early as c. 1490 the Venetian painter Vittore Carpaccio (c. 1465–1525/1526) had been inspired to decorate the exterior of a window casement with letters held in place by a strap before a painted stone background, so that the casement, when opened, completely blended into the room's interior wall (fig. 4). When the casement was closed, and covered the window, the viewer saw a vista onto the lagoon that Carpaccio painted on the other side, in other words, exactly the Albertian window that

negates the trompe l'oeil side of the painting. A painted deception was more likely to succeed in fooling viewers when it corresponded to normal expectation. The psychological trick of an "empirically legitimate" placement, that is, placing a tromp l'oeil image of an object in a location where one would expect to see such an object in reality, was thus already part of the earliest trompe l'oeils in the modern age, even before psychoanalysis and neurobiology recognized that such "furtive" entry into the experience of perception serves to annul temporarily our mechanisms of control. Trompe l'oeils of liturgical books (cat. 33), whose actual counterparts were usually left open on lecterns, also toy with the betrayal of everyday expectations. In such cases the momentary success of the artifice depends on the viewer's expectation that the object will be found in a specific context—which is lost in a museum setting, of course.

Trompe l'oeils of paper—in the form of notes and letters, or as the support medium for works of art such as for drawings and prints—frequently conveyed information about authorship as well as the artist's status. Representations of works of art on paper also proclaimed the ability of painting to imitate other artistic techniques, thereby proving its superiority. In American trompe l'oeils of the nineteenth century this strategy extended to photography. Sebastien Stosskopff's painting of 1651 (possibly earlier) of a print of Galatea (cat. 34) has long been considered the earliest known trompe l'oeil imitating an engraving. This may also be the earliest autonomous trompe l'oeil, one that was not originally part of a larger wall decoration. Through the centuries, the marked ability of painting to imitate works of art on paper supplemented the so-called *paragone* debate between painting and sculpture (see page 27), for it demonstrated that painting was capable of reproducing all other artistic media and could therefore claim precedence over them. An artist could communicate other sorts of information about himself by writing on the painted sheet of paper or letter. Wallerand Vaillant (1623–1677) used a "letter rack" (cat. 36) to display his name, date, address, and patron. This kind of holder, known as a *Quodlibet* (Latin for "what you please"), suggests an arbitrary assemblage of objects that were, in fact, personal articles related to the artist or to the real or imagined owner. It remained a popular feature in trompe l'oeil paintings until the turn of the twentieth century. Samuel van Hoogstraten's letter rack of 1664 (see cat. 37) used the device to boast of his own intellectual status, to announce his relationship to the Holy Roman Emperor, and to rank himself as the equal of Zeuxis.[44] Seemingly innocuous rack pictures could in fact belie the charge that still life, unlike history painting, did not relate a narrative. Like most trompe l'oeil painters up until the time of Boilly,[45] they did this by making reference to the status of art and artist. Here again we see the extent to which trompe l'oeil is a self-reflexive genre.

### Things on the Wall

Sometime between 1508 and 1510 Leonardo da Vinci praised the special capacity of painting to portray things as if they projected from a wall or other flat surface in such a way that, even though they lay on the same plane, they seemed separated from it.[46] "Things on the wall" are closely related to the *cartellino* or the letter that invites us to pick it up, but they seem to protrude farther, and their corporeality reaches out into the space before the picture plane; they take the first step, so to speak, away from Alberti's "window" and back in the direction of the viewer. The background of this type of trompe l'oeil is often painted in a manner that causes the "thing" to merge optically with the wall on which the picture hangs. For instance, the painting might disappear into wood paneling. These conditions cannot be reproduced in a museum exhibition where several such trompe l'oeils with entirely different backgrounds must appear together in the same room. When frames were added later—some-

times when the trompe l'oeil entered a museum—the effect was destroyed. Unlike the artists who attached pieces of paper or *cartellini*, both of which are flat, painters of "things on the wall" favored objects that were obviously three-dimensional, orienting their choices to viewers' everyday expectations. Thus they considered only those articles that would normally be found hanging on a nail or hook.[47] In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries trophies of the hunt and hunting equipment predominated, especially since the rendering of fur and feathers put exceptional demands on the mimetic capacity of the painter if the illusion was to be momentarily credible. Here the bridge between antiquity and modernity is Jacopo de' Barbari's trompe l'oeil with partridge and hunting equipment (fig. 1). Nineteenth-century American variations on the theme show particular skill at adapting to the viewer's milieu—essential if businessmen and bankers were to take pleasure in the trompe l'oeils by Harnett, Haberle, and their contemporaries.[48]

### Niches, Cupboards, Cabinets

On the other hand, the aspiration of painting to render three-dimensionality led to an emulation of the plastic sister art: sculpture. Painters created deceptive reproductions of reliefs and sculptures, thereby asserting their superiority over sculptors who were incapable of accomplishing the reverse (cats. 64, 88, 89). The contest that occupied art theorists for centuries, *paragone* (Italian, "comparison"), resulted in a survey taken in 1547 by the Florentine scholar Benedetto Varchi (1503–1565), who asked painters and sculptors which of the two genres was superior in achieving mimesis.[49] The proof of painting's superiority had already been demonstrated by Giotto, who represented the virtues and vices in the socle zone of the Arena Chapel in a grisaille technique that uses a palette of different shades of gray to simulate sculpture (fig. 5). Not satisfied with demonstrating the potential of black-and-white shading for generating plastic illusions, he rendered the figures in movement, stepping forward out of niches and accompanied by colorful natural elements such as flames. Giotto's wit consists of allowing the art of painting, even when it imitates sculpture, to become once again visible as such and thus to triumph.[50]

5. Giotto di Bondone, *Envy* (*Invidia*), before 1304, fresco, Arena Chapel, Padua

The grisaille imitation of sculptures and reliefs became part of the standard repertory of illusionistic architectural decoration, but

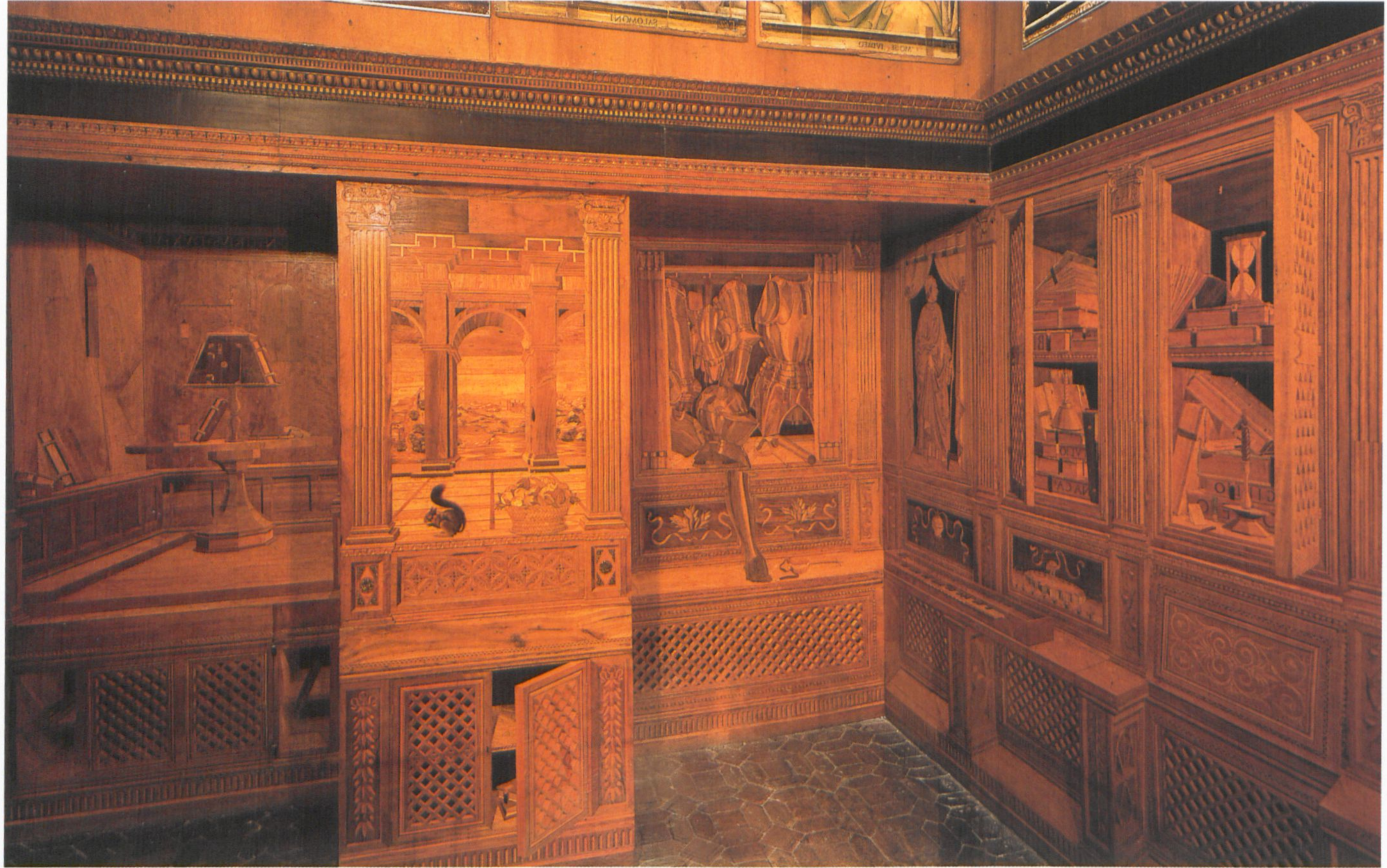
earned consideration as autonomous trompe l'oeil only once the object-ness of a painting had been sufficiently discussed and framed in theory, and once the *chantourné* technique had been disseminated, namely in the eighteenth century, and most prominently in France and Holland.[51] By imitating works of sculpture, painting demonstrated its ability to transform itself into any other material, be it marble, wood, or bronze. One requirement of a perfect trompe l'oeil was nowhere more clearly evident than here: in order to deceive perfectly, painting must be invisible as technique. Trompe l'oeils must expunge the individual features of artistic style such as brushstrokes and other marks left by paint application; in order to be convincing, painting must truly transform itself by mimicry into the material it represents. In perfect mimesis, art moves invisibly behind its product and is thus self-denying; a point that Ovid had made early on in regard to Pygmalion's creation: "Such art his art concealed."[52] In this respect the metamorphosis of painting into sculpture that inevitably invites touching shows especially clearly how trompe l'oeil is "hyper-mimesis."[53] In 1732 the salon critic of the *Mercure de France* wrote of a painted bronze relief by Chardin: "with the aid of the eyes, however close one might be, one is again seduced to the point where it is absolutely necessary to put one's hand on the canvas and to touch the picture in order to be undeceived."[54] The self-abnegation hereby required of the artist as author is directly connected to the extreme self-referentiality of the genre that we have already mentioned. In this way the artist's most deeply personal discourse—that concerning the essence of art and, in the case of sculpture imitations, the *paragone*—serves to bring him back into the viewer's consciousness.

Storage places such as niches, cupboards, and cabinets (like attached pieces of paper, objects hanging from nails, or sculptures in their niches) relate back to the tactile experience of moving things: taking them away, for instance, or tidying up.[55] Such daily actions are mere habits; functions to which we pay little attention, partially switching off the brain's normal mechanisms for inspection. This circumstance makes up for the fact that these trompe l'oeils, owing to their representation of greater depth and their more intense shading, would in principle be recognizable from a greater distance as two-dimensional artifacts. Provided that the demand for optical merging with the surroundings is fulfilled—

6. Taddeo Gaddi, *Niche with Paten, Pyx, and Ampullae*, 1328–1330, fresco, Santa Croce, Baroncelli Chapel, Florence

also valid for things hanging in front of a wall—they "function" for a moment as we enter the room, until our own movement or heightened visual attention uncovers the deception. This type of trompe l'oeil has early forerunners in the fourteenth-century school of Giotto, the best-known example being a painted stone niche with liturgical paraphernalia in the Baroncelli Chapel in Santa Croce in Florence (fig. 6). Fifteenth-century Netherlandish painters used the motif of the niche on the outside of devotional diptychs, which opened to reveal the donor or donors venerating a Madonna or a saint. The tradition presumably originated with Rogier van der Weyden's (1399–1464) Braque diptych of c. 1452 (Musée du Louvre, Paris). As paradoxical as it may initially appear, these motifs immediately foil the illusionism of the niches: the things in the cupboards are not part of a household's everyday furnishings and therefore provoke, even startle, the viewer into paying closer attention. Objects such as skulls and liturgical vessels are preferred (cat. 57), as are, though less often, everyday articles with a then-recognized religious content. Take, for example, the objects that appear on the reverse of an image of the Virgin from the circle of Rogier van der Weyden—all are allusions to the Madonna's purity, complemented by the motif of Parrhasios' curtain (fig. 7). When such a diptych was not in use as a devotional object but hung on a wall, closed, it fit into the context of an ordinary household. Yet it transferred things into the house that may reflect habits of daily life, but that in point of fact do not belong there. The moment of surprise provoked by the apparent corporeality of the symbolic and liturgical objects and the reflex to touch them probably served to clarify various degrees of reality: On this earth, death and decay were real, as was their spiritual antidote, namely the practice of the faith through the liturgy and its symbols. The daily threat of sudden death was offset by regularly performed rituals of salvation, such as prayer and the celebration of the Mass. The images painted on the inside of the diptych, on the other hand, were part of the ideal, visionary realm: neither the everlasting beauty of those portrayed nor the sight of heavenly figures is of this world. These belong in the realm of "visions" in a double sense, as things that can be seen either with the mundane sense of sight (*visus*) only in the form of a work of art, or that can be viewed with the inner eye but cannot be touched and held. Yet the "other side"

7. Unknown Brussels artist, *Still Life with Books, Pitcher, and Basin*, c. 1470–1480, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam



8. Baccio Pontelli?, *Federico da Montefeltro's Studio*, c. 1476, intarsia, Palazzo Ducale, Urbino

of the coin was "nearly graspable," and it was not accidental that artists rendered it using a strategy of visual deception that appealed to the sense of touch.[56]

At the same time in Renaissance Italy, enthusiasm for the potential of mathematically exact one-point perspective led to another kind of paradoxical interior decoration, namely the use of intarsia for the embellishment of exclusive, small studies or rooms for displaying collections of art, so-called *studioli*, as well as the decoration of church pews and sacristies. Typical scenes were landscape views and open or half-open cabinets and cupboards containing musical instruments, books, and scientific instruments. Although their monochrome character makes them unlikely to deceive, such decorations are paradoxical because they demonstrate with extraordinary virtuosity the potential for illusion introduced by the correct application of the rules of perspective (fig. 8). These make use of the Albertian principle of the window by both viewing the picture plane as a closed wall while also pushing it further back, suggesting an enclosed space. Mastery of these rules provides the foundation for all later pictures of cabinets.[57] The still lifes of Juan Sánchez Cotán, one of which is exhibited here, are truly experimental in this context, as Victor I. Stoichita has aptly demonstrated.[58] On three sides of the San Diego picture (cat. 59), the edges of a stone niche open toward the top and to an infinite space at the back, perceptible only as a dark surface. The edge of the niche functions like the indispensable frame of Alberti's window to take us *into* the picture, but subtly shifts the frame asymmetrically, betraying the fact that the painting's subject is neither the collection of vegetables portrayed there (nor the creation of an authentic trompe l'oeil) but the question of pictorial space itself. The ob-

jects represented are pressed together in a single, narrow plane between the dark background of the niche and the invisible surface of the picture, which they partly break through as they struggle to free themselves from the confinement of a "window" leading to a wall. Cotán's pictures demonstrate pointedly how much the motifs of the cabinet and niche parody the window, a strategy that continued until Cornelis and Franciscus Gijsbrechts allowed us to look behind the window (see cat. 63). What we see there is this very same window, only now we apparently are able to look back through it to the spot where we ourselves were previously standing.

### In and Out of the Picture

Once the "window membrane" has become "moveable," it can naturally be broken through at the back. At first glance the perspective boxes by Van Hoogstraten (cat. 72) seem to belong to this category. Unlike an illusionistic extension of a room, a "peepbox" forces the viewer's eye—and only that—to position itself exactly on the transparent membrane (the peephole). The illusion then seen eliminates the viewer's body and his reactions (gestures, touching); it is available to the sense of sight alone. What is seen is therefore not really an illusion but the reflection of its own production, a picture of the very process of seeing.[59] The exhibition also includes a few examples (cats. 71, 74) that are distinguished from architectural illusions painted on walls only in that they are painted on moveable supports. They are included to illustrate the mental scope that makes it possible to perforate this membrane from the other side as well, that is to say from behind the picture plane toward the viewer. In both cases it is a question of abolishing what Ernst Michalski has called the "ästhetische Grenze" (aesthetic boundary), the maintenance of which guarantees the "autonomy" of art; once this boundary is breached and the image has "reached out" toward the viewer, the art becomes "heteronomous."[60] What Michalski could not have foreseen is that heteronomy in the sense of an intermingling of art and the viewer's world would become a leading principle in twentieth-century art, one that would reverse the concept of mimesis and allow a real object to be elevated to a work of art through "transubstantiation." The final section of our exhibition is concerned with this central phenomenon.[61]

At first the window suddenly functions in reverse: the viewer does not look through it but rather is himself seen through it by a figure located behind the picture plane. Such works are clear departures from classical trompe l'oeil in that they include the representation of living things, usually human figures. The movement back to the viewer, however, can be achieved only through looking and touching, that is, the same two sense perceptions with which the viewer has always operated. The solutions that painters have offered are witty and often complex. Whereas in Renaissance portraits the (window) frame had been transformed into a balustrade or similar barrier, after the seventeenth century the sitter frequently actively intrudes beyond it, into the viewer's space. Such "metafictional pictures" blur the boundary between fiction and reality by placing the viewer himself in a dialectical interplay with the work of art, so that he becomes the object of contemplation.[62] Samuel van Hoogstraten brought this into focus early in his *Bearded Man at a Window* of 1653 (see page 85): with*in* the picture both the frame as well as Alberti's window are contained, but the window remains shut; at the only point where it is open, a figure intently gazes at us, and thus any possibility of trying to localize the "aesthetic boundary" (on the picture surface? on the inside of the frame? on the windowpane?) is thrown back at the viewer as an unresolved dilemma.[63]

A self-portrait by Murillo, painted about 1670 (National Gallery, London), is also paradigmatic for its self-reflexive involvement with pictorial space. According to the inscrip-

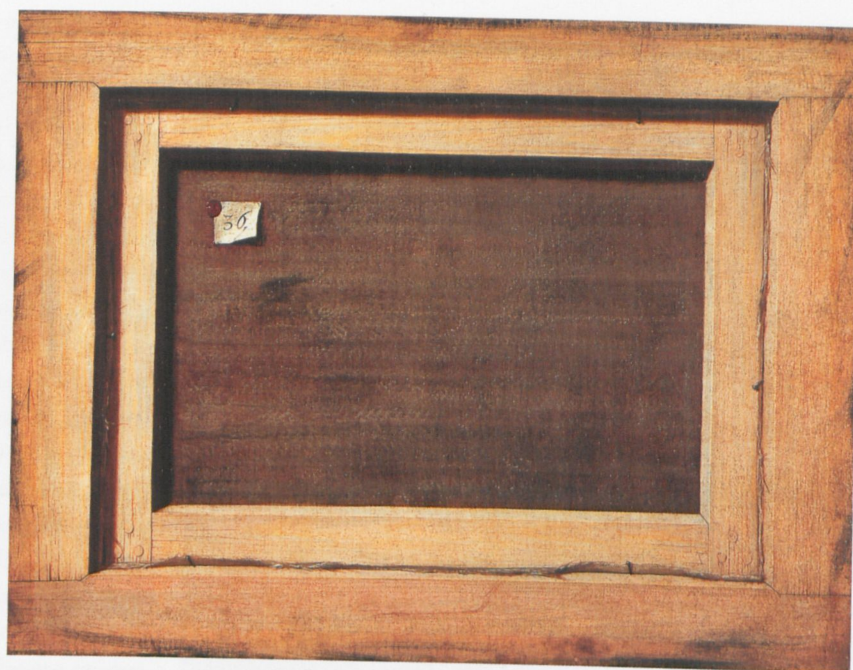
tion on the cartouche, the artist painted it at his sons' request. Thus it came into being as a devotional picture meant for posterity. The oval frame that directly encloses the portrait creates a picture within a picture that itself stands independently on a pedestal, an altar to art identified by the artist's palette and a drawing. So far this would not be unusual, if the painter were not reaching out beyond his portrait frame to identify himself simultaneously as among the living, as "Murillo himself," who can communicate with the viewer in the viewer's own space. Correspondingly, the inscription is unusual in referring to the painting process in the present tense: portrayed and portrayer are one and the same.[64] The self-portrait by Antonie van Steenwinkel (cat. 69) is complex in another way, presenting us with the artist's own reflection in a mirror, as if the painter were taking the place of the viewer. The portrait shows, therefore, something that is actually *in front of* the picture; at the same time the reflection is a picture in a picture held out by a youth who stands at the back as if he were pushing the picture wall toward the front.[65] But the objects depicted in front of the mirror image thrust themselves between the viewer and the opaque membrane that is trying to move forward; these objects create an intermediate space, an expanded "aesthetic boundary" that is hard to define in relation to the pictorial space or the space of the viewer.[66] The drawer pushing its way out of the picture in a trompe l'oeil fashion seems to invite the viewer to reduce this boundary with a decisive gesture; we are bidden to close the drawer and end our visual uncertainty through the sense of touch.

### The Painting as Object

Whether a painting depicts a view into an autonomous aesthetic sphere or is a flat object belonging to the viewer's own world definitely depends, as we have seen, on the interpretation or, rather, on the acceptance of Alberti's idea of a picture as a window. It is hardly surprising that once the idea was established, its potential negation became intellectually conceivable. A picture is a two-dimensional object on canvas; as such it can be packed, damaged, or reproduced, just like any other object. It is no wonder that most of the early debates we know of concerning the materiality of a picture come from the circle associated with one of the most educated and refined courts of Northern Italy, namely Ferrara. In Girolamo da Cremona's "torn" *Opera* of Aristotle, we find examples of a torn picture support, a sheet of parchment superimposed over (cat. 79) still further images. The subtle thought process behind this intellectual game is made clear in a special way in a Madonna by an unknown Ferrarese master (cat. 80). Illusionistically painted fragments of a parchment-like wrapping material are still attached with painted nails; at the lower left a fly sits on the tatters. We are presumably looking at the remains of the picture's packing material (at least this is how John Haberle interpreted the "trick" centuries later; see cat. 95).[67] In addition, however, the shredded surface can also be interpreted as a destroyed picture mounting that was supposed to form the "membrane" at that point on the visual pyramid where we assume the window to be. (Recall that parchment, on which small-scale pictures were sometimes painted in the fifteenth century, is also a membrane). But the Virgin and Child in the Ferrarese painting are not on but behind this, in an autonomous space, *in front of which* the stretcher seems to float. This Madonna, therefore, would not represent a picture constructed by an artist but a heavenly apparition that came into being without the help of perspectival projection. In a similar way later trompe l'oeils that show canvases rolled up to reveal other pictures behind (cats. 81, 83) play on the duality of the vision and object-ness (susceptible to destruction), thereby also reinterpreting the curtain of Parrhasios that opens the view to the true painting.

A radical abandonment of any visionary element beyond the physical nature of the pic-

ture is what characterizes the so-called *chantournés* (from the French, *chantourner*, "to cut with a fretsaw"), namely, trompe l'oeils fully congruent with the shape of the object represented. Sources report that this technique was invented by the painter Cornelis Bisschop (1635–1674) and that Van Hoogstraten's house was filled with works of this type. Yet early extant examples, by Cornelis Norbertus Gijsbrechts, court painter in Copenhagen, are the result of painting's radical questioning of itself and its growing self-confidence.[68] His *Studio Wall and Vanitas Still Life* (cat. 82) is a first step, a "trompe l'oeil representation of a trompe l'oeil painting" that invites meditation not only on the vanity of material things (*Vanitas*) but also on paintings' being "only a canvas."[69] His *Back of a Picture* of c. 1670 (fig. 9), an isolated detail excerpted from *Easel with Fruit Piece*[70] (see page 45), was intended not to hang but to lean against a wall. It thus proffers an open invitation to take hold of it and turn it around. One who responds to this enticement, however, will find nothing there. No one could formulate the implication more aptly than Stoichita: "The object of this painting is the painting as an object."[71] The *Back of a Picture* is the most radical representation of this paradox because here the painting's outline and format collapse into each other; it is *chantourné* in a natural way.[72] This is unlike the trompe l'oeils whose contours are cut in the irregular shape of the thing they represent (cats. 84, 85) and thereby elude the brain's intended tracking[73] of the outline: They simulate a reality that lacks "only" the three-dimensionality that would make them indistinguishable from real objects, a plasticity fabricated by interior shading. It is not accidental that *chantourné* trompe l'oeils so often include allusions to the painter's profession and the process of making pictures, for their actual content is the skeptical question about the ontological status of painting: vision or object? At the moment that it frees itself in both form and principle from Alberti's window and strives to merge with the object, the classical concept of a picture starts to dissolve, and the modern age begins. Gijsbrechts' *Back of a Picture* differs from a ready-made solely—although certainly decisively—in being a *painted* reverse.[74]




9. Cornelis Norbertus Gijsbrechts, *The Back of a Picture*, c. 1670, oil on canvas, Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen

### The Object as Art

The crisis of representation long since initiated by trompe l'oeil loomed more and more perceptibly during the nineteenth century, finally leading to a rejection of pictorial representation and the Albertian window principle. Cubism finally transformed the concept of a picture as a window into a new concept of it as a physical surface *on* which the artist could depict shifting axes and perspectives, word fragments and mimetic quotations, eventually leading to the introduction of actual materials.[75] The conscious questioning of the self-evident status of representation and reality emerges in the playful reversion to traditional trompe l'oeil motifs such as the *cartellino* among the *papiers collés* mounted on a picture surface (cat. 96), the illusionistically painted nails in Georges Braque's still life *Violin and*

10. Georges Braque, *Violin and Pitcher*, 1909–1910, oil on canvas, Öffentliche Kunstsammlung Basel, Kunstmuseum, Gift of Raoul la Roche, 1952

*Pitcher* of 1909–1910 (fig. 10), and, last, the insertion of "real" imitation veneers in place of illusionistic renderings of wooden backgrounds,[76] an idea already latent in Hoefnagel's real insect wings (cat. 30) or Chalfant's real postage stamp (cat. 46). Painting now takes leave of the possibility of pictorial representation,[77] and the real object (even if at first it appears to be something flat attached to the surface of a *tableau-objet*)[78] represents itself. If, from the mimetic standpoint, the *chantourné* trompe l'oeil achieved the greatest possible identity with the thing represented, now the object itself, imported from the world of the viewer, subsumes representation and thereby extinguishes the act of mimesis.[79] Yet the viewer's irritation remains. Familiar with the pictorial conventions of trompe l'oeil, he now expects *painted* veneer, a *painted* guitar string (cat. 98), or a *painted* nail. Instead he confronts the object itself, from which the artist's signature has been completely erased.

With the intrusion of the object into the image, after four centuries of speculation about the materiality of paintings, this experiment ends very much as it began: with flat images on a flat surface slipping past the brain's initial attempts at classification.[80] Thus, a further advance into three-dimensionality was pre-programmed. It was Picasso who completed this step by integrating actual objects into sculptures (cat. 97), carrying the intermingling of reproduction and object into the plastic dimension.[81] In both cases the mimetic role is played by the object itself. The most consequential advance, however, occurred simultaneously in the oeuvre of Marcel Duchamp. In 1914, after a short cubist phase, he broke with painting, acknowledged that the materiality of the image was no longer reversible, and for the first time declared a utilitarian industrial product to be a work of art. The first "readymade" was born: an ordinary bottle rack. His last painting, *Tu m'*[82] (fig. 11), shows how closely and logically this step was tied to the trompe l'oeil issues of depiction and perception, representation and object, in short

11. Marcel Duchamp, *Tu m'*, 1918, oil on canvas with bottle brush, three safety pins, and one bolt, Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Gift from the Estate of Katherine S. Dreier

with the ontological status of the painted image. It joins the (painted) shadows of Duchamp's readymades *Roue de bicyclette* and *Porte-chapeaux* with an exact perspectival construction of a stack of rhombuses leading into the deep space of an Albertian window; an actual bolt holds the uppermost rhombus to the picture surface. This motif alone demands the impossible from the viewer: the eye must see the picture surface, at the same time, as both window *and* material surface. Every element of this long painting—so long that it cannot be perceived in a single glance—similarly confuses our perception. The picture's painted shadows of absent readymades compete with the shadow of a (present) corkscrew and the real shadow of a real bottle brush that shifts with our viewpoint. The nature of a shadow—in Plato's well-known allegory of the cave, the archetype of all mimetic deception—becomes at the same time both a representation and a thing (in its most immaterial form). Finally, a *painted* tear through the right center of the picture is held together by *real* safety pins—a classical trompe l'oeil motif that recalls torn or partially unrolled canvases. In the ideal case, classical trompe l'oeil presented the retina with a perfect two-dimensional image that slipped past the brain's control mechanisms for just a moment, only to activate them all the more with the ideational help of the sense of touch. However, in *Tu m'*, the materiality of the work is at every moment visually evident, since in the overlay of object, reproduction, and shadow the mimesis contradicts itself permanently and directly.[83] Duchamp has mustered a disparate synthesis of topoi from the past history of trompe l'oeil.

From this point on the image is purely self-referential, and hence representation is conceivable only as a simulation of the past, as a play with an endless, established repertoire of motifs.[84] Magritte in particular was aware of this when he examined the epistemological aporia—which trompe l'oeil played upon from the beginning—from all possible sides of the semantic triangle: "thing-representation-verbal description" (cats. 101, 102). Magritte canceled the referentiality of the picture through linguistic counter-checks, that is, through using words to counteract the descriptive, visually referential nature of a mimetic image. This then annuls the trompe l'oeil effect engaged in the play of measuring the distance between reality and image.[85] Picasso's object-sculptures had blazed the trail for the material collages of the Russian cubo-futurists[86] as well as for the dada assemblages and *Merzbilder* of Kurt Schwitters.[87] These in turn became important catalysts for Robert Rauschenberg's "combine paintings." And it was Duchamp's existential questioning of the possibility of representation that Jasper Johns picked up again with his *Flag* (fig. 12) and *Painted Bronze*[88] (cat. 105). Reduced to the lowest common denominator, the query posed by *Flag* asks whether a flat, mimetic rendering of a flat object bearing an iconic meaning is a *picture of* or *identical to* a national emblem. As with Harnett's and Haberle's painted imitations of dollar bills, this question can only be answered with the help of semantic conventions.

12. Jasper Johns, *Flag*, 1954–1955, encaustic, oil and collage on fabric mounted on plywood, The Museum of Modern Art, New York

In relation to the problem of three-dimensionality, the same holds true for the "material-mimetic"[89] imitation of everyday objects, those that skirt the principle of the readymade through a new form of mimesis and, like Andy Warhol's *White Brillo Boxes* (cat. 104), can only be recognized by touch, exactly as in classical trompe l'oeils.

Artists of the twentieth century were very aware of the latent power of trompe l'oeil and its potential for self-referentiality. This is clear, for instance, in Roy Lichtenstein's retrospective turn to subjects like the backs of paintings or *Things on the Wall* (cat. 108) or in Jasper Johns' debate with the art of a John Peto, recognizable in numerous works that include real objects or deceptive replicas[90] (cat. 106). Through post-mimetic signals, combine paintings and objects reinvigorate the urge to touch and, coincidentally, that entry into the viewer's physical space that has accompanied visual deception since antiquity. At the opposite end, as it were, of Lichtenstein's *Things on the Wall*, is Daniel Spoerri's ironical, subversive *tableau piège* (a picture that is also a trap). He attaches the actual remains of meals to the tabletop, turns it ninety degrees, and hangs it on the wall (consistent with the trompe l'oeil concept of things on a wall). In their normal position these tables might pose the question of fiction versus reality; but once they are mounted on the wall, they fool no one. With these "détrompe l'oeils" as he explicitly called them, Spoerri proposed to end the history of trompe l'oeil: "I believe that I.... am the end-point of trompe l'oeil... because there is no more trompe l'oeil, it has caught up with reality."[91] This sentence is at once both true and false. Naturally there are and have always been "classic" trompe l'oeil painters who make perfect, "autograph-less" works, both architectural illusions as well as small paintings of deceptively real objects. But the existential questions this genre initially posed for the definition of painting opened new paths for confronting the early twentieth-century crisis about the relationship between sign and signified; the goal of this exhibition is to trace these paths.[92] Spoerri was right once again in this respect: classical trompe l'oeil ceased to

participate in this discourse; its aporiae are debated elsewhere.

Even the irritation of perception was transferred to another genre. When a visitor is surprised at the end of the exhibition to find one of Duane Hanson's sculptures included, it is because it "seems to breathe," in accordance with the ancient topos; for a moment we are misled into confusing representation with what is represented. John de Andrea, an artist who operated in a very similar way, also addressed this topos: "I would like my figures to be so 'real' that they appear to breathe."[93] Here we must return to the Pygmalion myth mentioned at the beginning, even though it did not at first seem related to trompe l'oeil. The desire for animation and the need to verify a visual deception share a common denominator: the sense of touch. With successful painted trompe l'oeils as with their sculptural counterparts (produced by naturalistically dressing and painting casts made from living models), art retreats behind its product and denies itself. Again it is the sense of touch alone that allows us to differentiate between the modes of nature and art.[94] We retain the constant of sensory interaction along with the pleasure we feel in successfully unmasking a deception. The curiosity to fathom these connections, that power which has driven trompe l'oeil in the artistic realm as a visual reflection of scientific and philosophical uncertainties, has in the meantime fundamentally altered the classical concept of art in the West—we see this now, *after* it has already occurred.