

The Sublime Event With Kant, Deleuze, and Lyotard

Mention the word

“sublime”

and thoughts turn to wild seas

and wind-torn

landscapes. Images of 19th-century paintings by William Turner and Caspar David Friedrich come to mind...Romantics with a twist. Friedrich's *The Polar Sea (Das Eismeer)* (1823-24) (p. 14), for example, offers a close-up view of piled slabs of ice that form a rugged mass isolated in a vast steely cold landscape. Barely noticeable, the remnants of a wrecked ship appear lodged on the right flank of the ice formation. With no other evidence of human life, the wreck matter-of-factly exemplifies hope destroyed. Significantly, while the ruin is discernable, the event that caused its demise is nowhere depicted. In fact, the sublime sensibility is provoked in the aftermath of an event, in a space that exceeds the details of a depicted narrative and instead unfolds within the viewer through the experience of reception. Therefore, rather than depicting the drama of the shipwreck, Friedrich invites his viewers to consider the departed force of nature, the fragility of humanity demonstrated in its wake, and the anxiety that accompanies such considerations. In contrast to Friedrich's close-up perspective, Turner's paintings almost always engage a distant view; nevertheless, the insight remains the same. His focus is too far from the drowning slaves tossed overboard to generate a sense of concern or empathy; instead the dramatic colors and brush strokes of *Slave Ship* (1840) (p. 15) direct viewers' attention away from the implied narrative and ask us to consider the absolute violence of life's expression, both that of nature and humanity.

As these two paintings suggest, a central component of the sublime expression in visual art is located in its address to the viewer. In this regard Friedrich's *Wanderer Above a Sea of Fog* (1817) (p. 14) is often seen as iconic. The lonely “Wanderer” stands atop a craggy peak. With his back turned toward viewers he gazes out on a misty landscape broken up by other jagged outcroppings and distant peaks. Without his face or eyes to confront us, we are invited to imagine stepping into his shoes and experiencing his lofty gaze. Yet compositionally, his body functions as the pinnacle of the craggy peak, forming a dark triangle that marks



1
 The sublime dates back to the writing of Longinus in the first century. See Simon Morley, ed., *The Sublime* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2010).

2
 Edmund Burke "A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful" (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 36.



3
 See Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgment*, trans., James Creed Meredith (Oxford University Press, 1978), 90-207.

the foreground of the picture plane. However inviting his stance may be, this dark triangle also becomes a visual barricade, refusing us access to the landscape beyond. Here, Friedrich masterfully collapses the distant and close-up perspective on a reflective moment that raises the fundamental question of the sublime: what happens when the stability of human consciousness, of a centered subjectivity, encounters the absolute power of the universe?

While Edmund Burke and Immanuel Kant certainly did not invent the notion of the "sublime," their 18th century texts—*A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757) and *Critique of Judgment* (1790), respectively—set the stage for the Romantic investigation of the sublime experience.¹ Significantly, both authors specifically located the sublime in a threatening address.

As Burke explains:

"Whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain and danger, that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the sublime; that is, it is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling."²

With its references to "serpents and other poisonous animals" Burke's treatise further describes how the emotional response to terror—namely fear of bodily pain—disables the subject's ability to reason. Moreover, Burke's specific focus on terrifying empirical encounters helps explain historical connections between the sublime and other horrific or even Gothic references. Kant, on the other hand, focuses his inquiry on the internal dynamic that such terrifying encounters generate. Nevertheless, both Burke and Kant agree that the sublime experience produces a pleasure that proceeds from pain.

As both Friedrich's and Turner's paintings demonstrate, physical space or temporal distance is key for the pleasure of the sublime to emerge from the painful crisis of the "terrified" subject. In fact, the experience of the sublime will only manifest itself after one has escaped any threat of actual physical danger associated with an unfolding event. When the threat of bodily pain is actually looming, the subject is too distracted by it to assume a reflective perspective on the experience, which the sublime sensibility requires. Turner's persistent use of the long view provides enough distance for viewers to occupy a safe—or what Kant described as a "disinterested"—perspective from which to contemplate the violent scenes his paintings depict.³ Likewise, Friedrich's close-up viewpoint presents the shipwreck after the fact; it appears in the past tense in order to provide a temporal distance. Ultimately, the pleasure of the sublime emerges in the reflective moment that distance provides: it allows the subject to translate the fear of pain into the relief of

survival (Burke), and it generates a sense of mastery over the situation that comes from a more complete understanding of human limits and capabilities (Kant).

Although Burke dismissed “The Beautiful” as being far less significant than the intensity of the sublime, Kant comes to the sublime through “The Beautiful.” For Kant, “A Judgment of Beauty” is determined through a sensual perception that is unencumbered by moral imperatives, ideological tenets, or even idiosyncratic likes or dislikes. Instead of being directed by any of these more personal concerns, Kant argued that beauty is recognized through an intuition that appears with reference to nature. In short, something is perceived as being beautiful because it embodies an expression of the transcendent found in nature. For Kant, transcendental ideals cannot appear directly but must be presented indirectly as an expression of another object or situation. Ultimately, Kant locates “The Beautiful” in an intuition that appears because an exemplary object affects us in a particular manner that we recognize sensually. When the body perceives such an expression, the imagination locates an equivalent example within nature and “A Judgment of Beauty” is realized.

Inherent to Kant’s argument is the idea that beauty cannot be defined conceptually. Rather, “The Beautiful” can only be expressed through examples. Felix Gonzalez-Torres’s “Untitled” (Perfect Lovers) (1991) provides an insightful contemporary example. The work is comprised of two battery-powered analogue clocks hung on a wall side by side. The clocks reference human bodies, but they perform this reference recursively rather than symbolically. Instead of presenting a conceptual or iconic representation of bodies, the clocks perform the passage of time and through this performance they demonstrate the body’s expenditure of energy and its mortal condition. By doubling the clocks, Gonzalez-Torres further indicates how this mortal condition operates in relationship to another body. Ultimately, the doubling

of the clocks suggests a symbolic reference to couples, which the subtitle “Perfect Lovers” confirms. By framing the operational structure of the piece in terms of the metaphor of a perfect couple, Gonzalez-Torres specifically directs us to consider the clocks’ expenditure of time and energy in terms of a new context, the context of love.

As has been well documented, this piece is informed by Gonzalez-Torres’s own loss of his lover Ross

to AIDS.⁴ In light of this information, the artist’s choice of bland institutional clocks expands the metaphor that resonates through his subtitle “Perfect Lovers,” and underscores the failure of medical and state institutions to recognize the rights of same-sex lovers and the

William Turner
Slave Ship (Slavers Throwing Overboard the Dead and Dying, Typhoon Coming On)



PHOTOGRAPH © 2013 MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON

4
Julie Alt, ed., *Felix Gonzalez-Torres* (Göttingen, Germany: Steidl Publishers, 2006), 155.

unspoken demands of these institutions that this type of love remain out of sight and in check. In fact, in the early nineties it was argued that such institutions were not even capable of conceiving of the possibility of a same-sex couple in love. Thus, Gonzalez-Torres's *"Untitled" (Perfect Lovers)* appears under the cover of two physically identical clocks. Disguised, they present the failure of these institutions—or to put it in Kantian terms, the failure of the conceptual—to understand the reality that confronts it. Gonzalez-Torres's use of institutional clocks not only suppresses any allusions to amorous descriptions of love, but the work also exemplifies the loss of a loved one. For even though the clocks are set at the same time, we know that one of the batteries will inevitably run out of energy first, leaving the other to trudge on alone. Ultimately, this work asks its audience to bear witness to that part of love that cannot be told, its trauma, before which the rational falters. Moreover, in this regard, Gonzalez-Torres's *"Untitled" (Perfect Lovers)* demonstrates Kant's notion of "The Beautiful" because it embodies an expression of the transcendent that the rational faculty cannot comprehend and only the imagination is capable of grasping.

Where Kant mapped beauty as a negotiation between perception and the imagination that resulted in an intuitive sense of understanding, the sublime encounter threatens the subject with a sensual perception that goes beyond what the senses can measure. Using a unit of measure, such as a body part, the imagination will attempt to apprehend this formless encounter in terms of a succession of parts. However, even the imagination cannot synthesize this succession of parts into an equivalent experience, for quite literally the sublime experience is an expression without reference. Here we might recall Turner's magnificent sky, which clearly dwarfs the slave ship and diminishes the significance of those human hands reaching above the water's surface, grasping at the vast emptiness for help that will not come. The immensity of the sky, the vastness of the universe, and the unreasonableness of this situation all threaten the integrity of the subject by confronting it with a situation that pushes understanding to its limits and creates an internal crisis. Given this scenario, reason will intercede and conceptualize what is unimaginable and thereby rescue the subject from the threat of absolute uncertainty or excess. Accordingly, the endless sky does not continue to expand but becomes manageable under the conceptual possibility of being infinitely large, an idea that provides "understanding" but that does not actually re-present the encounter as found in the examples that express "The Beautiful." Thus, where "The Beautiful" eludes conceptual definition, the sublime moves in the opposite direction, creating an experience that exceeds the perceptual abilities of the body and instead can only be understood in terms of a conceptual formation. Ultimately, the Kantian sublime refers to the incommensurability between the actual and what the faculty of the imagination can accommodate; whereas,

"The Beautiful" has no adequate concept and can only be recognized through an intuitive understanding of an example.

Central to Kant's analysis of the sublime is a recognition of what he calls a "negative presentation" or the "unpresentable," namely, that which cannot be demonstrated with reference to an example and can only be explained conceptually. In other words, Kant's sublime defines the limits of representation as a mimetic enterprise. As Jean-François Lyotard suggested in 1993, herein lies the radicality of Kant's "Analytic of the Sublime," for it ultimately proposes a theory of the "non-representable."⁵

As Lyotard observed: "Even before Romantic art had freed itself from classical and baroque figuration, the door had thus been opened to enquiries pointing towards abstract and Minimal art. Avant-gardism is thus present in germ in the Kantian aesthetic of the sublime."⁶ Indeed, the impossibility of situating the sublime in a specific representation underscores the accomplishment of the Romantics and speaks to the more recent resurgence of interest in the sublime that was largely inspired by Lyotard's influential essays, "Presenting the Unpresentable: The Sublime" and "The Sublime and the Avant-Garde," both published in *Artforum* in 1982 and 1984, respectively.⁷

In tracking the legacy of the Romantics' accomplishment, Lyotard holds up Kazimir Malevich's *Black Square* (1915) painting as exemplary, for it avoids figuration and presents representation negatively. According to Lyotard, modern artists, such as Malevich, reference the "non-representable" of the Kantian sublime by constructing a material presentation of its absence. Thus, Lyotard describes the effect of Malevich's black canvas on viewers as making "one see only by prohibiting one from seeing."⁸ Nevertheless, Lyotard maintains that this approach fails to capture the true radicality of the sublime experience because it conveys this absence in terms of a nostalgic relationship with painting. In other words it presents absence in a manner that invites viewers to contemplate the loss of representation rather than the sublime experience. Moreover, it does this through the material remnant of that loss, a condition that ultimately invests Malevich's canvas, the emptied signifier, with a new meaning and an enhanced value. Thus, Lyotard concludes:

"So this is the différend: the modern aesthetic is an aesthetic of the sublime. But it is nostalgic; it allows the unpresentable to be invoked only as an absent content, which form, thanks to its recognizable consistency, continues to offer the reader or spectator material for consolation and pleasure."⁹

In contrast to Malevich's presentation of the unpresentable, consider Friedrich's "Wanderer," where the compositional darkness that occupies the foreground of the painting provides a barricade as well as an invitation. It is as if Malevich's *Black Square* has excised this darkness from the context of Friedrich's painting and represented it as a kind of placeholder for the viewer's sensual experience of the sublime.

5

Jean-François Lyotard, "Answering the Question: What is Postmodernism?" *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, tran., Régis Durand (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 78-9.

6

Lyotard, "The Sublime and the Avant-Garde/1988," *The Sublime*, ed., Simon Morley (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2010), 34.

7

For a detailed chronology of contemporary texts and exhibitions dealing with the sublime that appeared from 1982-2009 see Simon Morley, "Introduction/The Contemporary Sublime," *The Sublime* (London: The MIT Press, 2010), 12-21.

8

Lyotard, *The Postmodern Explained: Correspondence, 1982-1985*, trans., Julian Pefanis et al. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 11.

9

Ibid., 14.

However, in doing so, Malevich's painting removes the more threatening component of the sublime, an experience that the rational faculty must manage. Effectively, in Malevich's painting the rational faculty has already come to the rescue and resolved the perceptual crisis that the sublime prompts. In Friedrich's painting, however, the sublime appears as a perspective generated between the Wanderer and the landscape; moreover, it is a perspective that is not actually present in the picture. In fact, this is the power of Friedrich's foreground, with its contradictory gesture of inviting viewers into the picture to imagine the Wanderer's gaze and simultaneously denying them access to the picture plane. Ultimately, Friedrich's painting calls upon viewers to consider the sublime sensibility as an expression that eludes representation and must be experienced through the sensibilities of the body. In fact, Lyotard concludes as much when he says that the Romantics' investigation of the sublime throws the very condition of representation, and by extension, the entire status of artworks into question:

"By meditating on the theme of sublimity and of indeterminacy, meditation about works of art imposes a major change on techne and the institutions linked to it — Academies, Schools, masters and disciplines, taste, the enlightened public made up of princes and courtiers. It is the very destination or destiny of works which is being questioned...No longer 'How does one make a work of art?', but 'What is it to experience an affect proper to art?'"¹⁰

¹⁰
Lyotard, 2010, 33–4.

While Lyotard celebrates Kant's contribution to theorizing the "unpresentable" at risk within the sublime, he nevertheless maintains that Kant ignores the outcome of this risk.¹¹ Ultimately, for Lyotard the Kantian sublime points to the role of time in our reception of artworks. Lyotard argues that the sublime aesthetic moves the artwork away from "the classical rule of imitation" and closer to the conditions of an event.¹² Nevertheless, Kant does not pursue this direction of the sublime, which leads Lyotard to insist that Kant "strip[s] Burke's aesthetic of what I consider to be its major stake — to show that the sublime is kindled by the threat of nothing further happening".¹³ Within Burke's notion "of nothing further happening" Lyotard locates the significance of the "unrepresentable," which is its focus on the "now." Finally, in the "now" of the unpresentable Lyotard locates the challenge for the postmodern:

"The postmodern would be that which, in the modern, puts forward the unpresentable in presentation itself; that which denies itself the solace of good forms, the consensus of a taste which would make it possible to share collectively the nostalgia of the unattainable; that which searches for new presentations, not in order to enjoy them but in order to impart a stronger sense of the unpresentable."¹⁴

¹⁴
Lyotard, 1997, 81.

For Lyotard, the postmodern needs to focus attention on the feeling that there is something unpresentable in the world and that there is no reconciliation to be found between the sensible and the concept. In

focusing on the impossibility of such a reconciliation, Lyotard maintains that the postmodern forces audiences to confront the unknown and embrace the experience of the unfamiliar.

Nevertheless, to locate the power of the sublime solely in terms of the non-representable, or what Lyotard will later call the “immaterial,” suggests a very problematic anachronism. As Andreas Huyssen has pointed out, Kant’s sublime remains historically linked to the 18th century fascination with the cosmos and its reference to notions of totality and absolute truth.¹⁵ Certainly, this totality is the object of the Wanderer’s gaze in Friedrich’s painting and the condition that informs Turner’s persistently distant perspective and fantastically glorious skies. Yet, totality is the antithesis of what Lyotard is claiming for the postmodern. In fact, the challenge facing Kant was not simply the temporal address of the world but his own effort to preserve the centered subject in the face of this threatening address.

Ultimately, Kant’s project is built around a unified subjectivity, which he strives to protect at all costs. Likewise, Burke’s threat of “nothing further happening” may be understood as a potential assault on the stability of that subjectivity. As Paul de Man has pointed out, Kant’s description of the dynamic exchanges between the mental faculties of the imagination and reason that operate during a sublime or even beautiful encounter suggests a narrative. Accordingly, de Man asks: “how can faculties be said to act, or even to act freely, as if they were conscious and complete human beings? We are clearly not dealing with mental categories but with tropes, and the story Kant tells us is an allegorical tale.”¹⁶ For de Man the allegory of the Kantian sublime is ultimately a celebration of the rational subject and an assertion of the power of the conceptual to contain and manage the material world. When seen from this perspective, Kant’s text becomes less an argument and more a theatrical drama about representation, one that is played out against the backdrop of an already pre-formed and rationally centered subjectivity. Taken together, de Man’s and Lyotard’s analyses beg the question: what would happen if the backdrop of a prefigured subject were dropped? What would happen if instead of struggling to preserve a unified and centered subjectivity, Kant let the subject fully participate in and transform through the body’s perceptual encounters with the world? In fact, these are the questions that framed Gilles Deleuze’s intervention with Kant’s project.

As noted earlier, according to the Kantian sublime, the mind encounters something formless that goes beyond what the senses can measure. Using a unit of measure, such as a body part, the imagination attempts to apprehend the formless as a succession of parts. However, the imagination cannot synthesize this infinite succession of parts into an equivalent experience; it is quite literally an expression without

15

Andreas Huyssen,
“Mapping the Postmodern”
*The Art of Art History:
A Critical Anthology*, ed.,
Donald Preziosi (Oxford:
Oxford University Press,
1998), 331.

16

Paul de Man
“Phenomenality and
Materiality in Kant,”
Aesthetic Ideology
(Minneapolis: University
of Minnesota Press,
1996), 87.

17

Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans., Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 493.

18

Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, trans., Mark Lester (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 102. For a more complete exploration of Deleuze's engagement with Kant see Deleuze, *Kant's Critical Philosophy*, trans., Hugh Tomlinson, Barbara Habberjam (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

19

Bernard Blistène, "Les Immatériaux: A Conversation with Jean-François Lyotard" *Flash Art*, #121 (March 1985), 7.

20

Ibid, 4.

reference. Deleuze intercepts Kant's narrative here. Rather than cognition stepping in to save the subject, Deleuze lets the Kantian subject disintegrate because for Deleuze, Kant's belief in a stable subject was always mythological. Instead of a rational conception interceding, Deleuze allows the catastrophe of the sublime encounter to unfold, which allows for a passage into what he will later call "spaces of pure connection," where all "orientations, landmarks and linkages are in continual variation."¹⁷ Within this space of haptic awareness there are no clear references to be made, no conceptual identities emerge to stabilize the flow of energy and the network of connections. Instead of a stabilized backdrop of subjectivity, Deleuze argues that subjectivity continues to emerge against and in response to a virtual field of "impersonal and pre-individual" energies.¹⁸

Central to Deleuze's expansion of Kant is the almost practical question: how can the subject fall apart, disintegrate, and yet not cease to exist? In fact, herein lies the most powerful implication of the sublime, which is an understanding of our own subjectivity as a relational or more topological form that is in a continuous state of transition, continually modulating in relationship to the world. To paraphrase this in terms of Kant's narrative: when the imagination accepts the invitation or imposition of the world and the threatened subject steps forward, embracing the potential for a transformative experience, the subjectivity that emerges through this experience cannot be the same as that which initially entered into it.

As noted at the outset of this essay, the fundamental question of the sublime is about what happens when the stability of human consciousness is threatened. Writing at the end of the 18th century, Kant proposed a narrative about the power of the rational mind to manage this threat. In the twentieth century, theorists primarily turned to the work of Sigmund Freud and Karl Marx to find other answers based upon an understanding of the subject in terms of social constructs. Near the close of the 20th century Lyotard returned to Kant to rescue that which cannot be represented but which is nevertheless perceived. Lyotard claimed this sublime immateriality as the content of postmodernism. In 1985 Lyotard expanded his investigation of these ideas by curating "Les Immatériaux," an exhibition at the Centre Pompidou in Paris. Foregoing pedestals and an organized progression of installed galleries, the exhibition was designed to present a web of sensual connections. Lyotard told an interviewer, "We wanted to exhibit things that inspire a feeling of incertitude...incertitude about the identity of the human individual in his condition of such improbable immateriality."¹⁹ As Lyotard's comments suggest, the postmodern sublime must come at the disintegration of the Kantian subject, which in turn entails the decomposition of objects into what Lyotard describes as "complex agglomerates of tiny packets of energy."²⁰

21

David Deitcher,
"Contradictions
and Containment,"
Felix Gonzalez-Torres,
ed., Julie Ault
(Göttingen, Germany:
Steidl Publishers, 2006),
322-23.

Without subject, object, or mimetic image, the question must be asked: what constitutes a contemporary sublime artwork? Here again, the work of Gonzalez-Torres offers insight on how this postmodern sublime address might appear through a contemporary artwork. His oeuvre includes several works that are based on stacks of paper (p. 11) or piles of candy. Gonzalez-Torres described these works as "non-static sculptures" because they are made up of elements (candy or sheets of paper) that the public is invited to consume and that the gallery or museum displaying the work must replenish. In other words, the piles and stacks literally represent an endless supply, a quantity like the vastness of Turner's skies that cannot be represented and can only be determined conceptually. These quantities are determined "rationally" through legal certificates of authenticity that give museums and individuals rights to display the work, but this right also entails a choice: to replenish the stacks and piles or allow them and the artwork to "pass silently out of existence."²¹ Likewise, when viewers encounter these works they are confronted with a challenge, which is also an invitation. They must choose to violate their social training, which has taught them: do not touch the art, an edict enforced by the ever-watchful museum guard. To complete the work, viewers must perform a transgression against this social training and physically interact with the artwork, literally diminishing the body of the work, as the stacks of paper or piles of candy decrease in size.

Many of the candy piles also operate as portraits in which the quantity of the candy is proportionally determined in terms of the weight of the individual being presented. For example *"Untitled" (Portrait of Dad)* from 1991 is comprised of individually wrapped white candies with variable dimensions but an ideal weight of 175 pounds, the weight of Gonzalez-Torres's father. Inherent to Gonzalez-Torres's portraits is a refusal of death; while the body of the individual referenced in the pile may pass away, their conceptual representation in the form of an endless supply of candy, free for the taking, transforms them into a presence that continues to interact with the world, providing individuals with a sweet gift that ultimately becomes part of their body when they consume it. Significantly, the presence is created not through the depiction of a likeness but through the "live" performance of an actual exchange. Describing Gonzalez-Torres as "a classicist in form, but a Romantic in temperament," Russell Ferguson further observed:

"The 'piece' disappears, absorbed into your body. But the work remains. The authority that Gonzalez-Torres won for it, and for himself, comes in part from his refusal to accept any authority other than that drawn from authentic exchange between the artist and the audience."²²

22

Russell Ferguson,
"Authority Figure," *Felix
Gonzalez-Torres*, ed.,
Julie Ault (Göttingen,
Germany: Steidl
Publishers, 2006),
94 & 101.

Through this performative exchange Gonzalez-Torres's work effectively allows the immateriality of a sublime presentation to become palpable for his audiences.

This publication accompanies the exhibition *Facing the Sublime in Water, CA*, organized by Director of Gallery Programs and Chief Curator Irene Tsatsos and presented at Armory Center for the Arts, Pasadena, California, October 7, 2012 through January 20, 2013.

© 2013 Armory Press / Armory Center for the Arts
145 North Raymond Avenue
Pasadena, California 91103
armoryarts.org

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form by any electronic or mechanical means without permission in writing from the publisher.

All images are copyright the artist and used with permission. Copyright for all texts is jointly held by the authors and Armory Center for the Arts.

GRAPHIC DESIGN: Gail Swanlund

PRINTING AND BINDING: Typecraft Wood & Jones; poster and inserts, Hauge Printing

TYPEFACES: Axia, Sybille Hagmann; Galaxie Polaris, Chester Jenkins; Miller, Matthew Carter

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY BY Joshua White EXCEPT:

p. 14 [top]

Caspar David Friedrich (1774–1840)

Wanderer Above a Sea of Fog, c. 1817

Oil on canvas

37 ½ × 29 ½ inches

Inv.: 5161. On permanent loan from the Foundation for the Promotion of the Hamburg Art Collections.

Photo courtesy bpk, Berlin / Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg, Germany / Elke Walford / Art Resource, NY

p. 14 [bottom]

Caspar David Friedrich (1774–1840)

The Polar Sea (Das Eismeer), 1823–1824

Oil on canvas

38 × 50 inches

Inv.: 5161. On permanent loan from the Foundation for the Promotion of the Hamburg Art Collections.

Photo courtesy bpk, Berlin / Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg, Germany / Elke Walford / Art Resource, NY

p. 15

Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775–1851)

Slave Ship (Slavers Throwing Overboard the Dead and Dying, Typhoon Coming On), 1840

Oil on canvas

35 ¾ × 48 ¼ inches

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Henry Lillie Pierce Fund, 99.22

Photograph © 2013 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

pp. 22–23

Ger van Elk Studio

ISBN: 978-1-893900-08-0

The exhibition and publication *Facing the Sublime in Water, CA* have been funded by the National Endowment for the Arts, The Steven B. and Kelly Sutherlin McLeod Family Foundation, Pasadena Water & Power, and Helen N. Lewis and the Estate of Marvin B. Meyer.

