

The Mind of Matter: The Ink on Plastic Drawings of Jasper Johns

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I have attempted to develop my thinking in such a way that the work I've done is not me—not to confuse my feelings with what I produced...I found I couldn't do anything that would be identical with my feelings.¹

—Jasper Johns

I believe the law of habit to be purely psychological. But then I suppose matter is merely mind deadened by the development of habit.²

—Charles Sanders Peirce

Among artists working in the last half-century, Jasper Johns counts as one of the most technically gifted—a master of techniques as varied as oil and encaustic on canvas, intaglio printmaking, bronze casting, and drawing in ink on sheets of translucent, non-absorbent plastic. The latter is one of his most abundant and enigmatic media, and yet it stubbornly remains the least investigated on its own terms, either in exhibitions or scholarly literature.³ Since the mid-1980s, several respectable survey exhibitions and catalogues of Johns' drawings have been produced, yet the full implication of his ink on plastic drawings still needs to be assessed. Even the catalogue texts accompanying his 1996 Museum of Modern Art retrospective exhibition make only passing mention of the importance of ink on plastic in Johns' career, despite the reproduction of nearly thirty of these ink on plastic drawings, a testament in itself to their enduring value. In the last five years, Johns has made several new ink on plastic drawings whose desiccated puddles of pooling ink and richly variegated surfaces seem to be ever more complex (Figures 1 and 2). These dense palimpsests collapse mind and

matter into singularly resonant works; they are somewhere between spontaneity and habit, between immediate feeling and mediated representation. Less significant as indices of chance effects or the artist's hand, they more importantly represent a paradoxical medium that is unique in the way that Johns says: "it removes itself from my touch."⁴

By working in a medium that is not "identical with his feelings," and one which "removes itself" from his touch, Johns expresses a tendency to avoid self-identification with his art, choosing instead anonymous or commonplace objects and images for his subjects, which are often put through a series of transformations in various media. As Johns is often quoted, "take an object, do something to it, do something else to it."⁵ For Johns, *doing* becomes more important than *thinking*, or rather, thinking is collapsed into the process itself, whether he is engraving a copper plate or applying ink onto the recalcitrant surface of a plastic sheet. Johns has said, "the mind can work in such a way that the image and technique come as one thought, or possibly one might say there is no thought. One works without thinking how to work."⁶ Some

¹ Vivian Raynor, *ARTnews* 72, no. 3 (March 1973): 20-22. Reprinted in *Jasper Johns: Writings, Sketchbook Notes, Interviews*, ed. Kirk Varnedoe (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1996), 145.

² Charles Sanders Peirce, "To Christine Ladd-Franklin, On Cosmology," in *The Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, ed. Arthur W. Burks (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958), 8:318. Subsequent references in the following pages are consistent with established practice in Peirce literature. The numbers refer to the paragraphs of the respective editions of his collected writings, rather than to the pages. *The Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce* consists of eight volumes. Volumes I-VI are edited by Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931-1935). Volumes VII-VIII are edited by Arthur W. Burks (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958).

³ To date, there is only one exhibition singularly devoted to his ink on plastic drawings, a 2010 show at Craig F. Starr Gallery in New York. However, only a mere fourteen—however exceptional—drawings were exhibited, accompanied by an anemic three-page essay (see note 12). David Shapiro and David Whitney's 1984 book on Johns' drawings includes some interesting insights on the ink on plastic drawings and although half of the catalogue plates consist of these works, Shapiro fails to assess the medium's uniqueness among Johns' works on paper as a whole (David Shapiro, *Jasper Johns: Drawings 1954-1984*, project director David Whitney, ed. Christopher Sweet (New York, NY: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1984). The same critique could be made against Nan Rosenthal and Ruth Fine's equally lavish exhibition catalogue published to accompany Johns' drawing retrospective six years later at the National Gallery, despite giving similar prominence

to the presence of the ink on plastic drawings in both the book and the exhibition: *The Drawings of Jasper Johns*, ed. Nan Rosenthal and Ruth Fine (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 1990). More recently in 2003, Mark Rosenthal organized a small, yet very fine survey of Johns' drawings at the Menil Collection in Houston, Texas. Nearly half the drawings included in the exhibition and reproduced in the catalogue were ink on plastic works, and a detail of one was used to illustrate its front cover. However, Mr. Rosenthal's text often refers to all the drawings as merely "works on paper" and at several points seems to contradict himself on the nature of chance and randomness operating specifically in the ink on plastic works. See Mark Rosenthal, *Jasper Johns: Drawings* (Houston, TX: The Menil Collection, 2003), 8, 25, 69. Richard Shiff, too, has in several essays over the years written briefly yet perspicaciously on Johns' ink on plastic works. His research, in particular, has served as a touchstone at several points in the development of this paper.

⁴ Jasper Johns, "Interview with Jasper Johns," by Nan Rosenthal and Ruth Fine, in *The Drawings of Jasper Johns*, ed. Nan Rosenthal and Ruth Fine (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 1990), 73.

⁵ Jasper Johns, in Varnedoe, *Jasper Johns: Writings*, 31. The text originates from a handwritten annotation on one of Jasper Johns' sketchbook pages (*Book A*, c. 1963-64), which is reproduced in full in Varnedoe, *Jasper Johns: Writings*, 42.

⁶ Jasper Johns, Interview with Christian Geelhaar. "Interview mit Jasper Johns," by Christian Geelhaar, in *Jasper Johns: Working Proofs*, ed. Christian Geelhaar (Basel, Switzerland: Kunstmuseum Basel, 1979), 41-62 and 63-72. Reprinted in Varnedoe, *Jasper Johns: Writings*, 189.

have described Johns as if he were a medium of change, rather than a medium of self-expression.⁷ He operates as if his self were in constant flux, as if his mind were like an unprimed canvas or an empty sheet of paper upon which a series of images could be impressed.

Johns has also expressed a seeming lack of control over his own artistic choices, as if his mind were merely a vessel for thoughts and actions determined by someone (or something) else: "I don't know if it's out of choice or out of necessity—it's how my mind *must* move."⁸ Johns moves his mind as he would the end of a burin, or a brush on canvas, tracing the outline of a thought, or a sequence of thoughts, into a malleable, a *plastic* medium. Is the mind not also a plastic medium in its own right? Often an idea or a memory triggers another, and Johns has said working ideas out through his art serves as a way of ridding himself of them.⁹ For Johns, the classic dichotomy between the *idea* and the *art object* yields to a dialogue: he internalizes objects and images, and externalizes his thoughts, disrupting the conventionally understood split between subject and object.¹⁰

As cagey as Johns is in the discussion of his artistic choices or subject matter, his effects are not purely the result of chance.¹¹ Despite how Johns might characterize himself or his work, he is a living archive of technical expertise and is always sensitive to the unique effects of all media. As a testament to this expertise—and also as a way of keeping his mind in motion, as it were—he has made the repetition of images across media a staple of his artistic practice, to create a tension between a catalytic image and its various material iterations across media. All of his drawings—and this is the case with his ink on plastic works as well—are generally made *after* his paintings and do not serve as preparatory

studies.¹² Each medium for Johns thus has an independent quality unique to itself. The following discussion will look primarily to the American pragmatist philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce, whose phenomenology and theory of signs is aptly suited to elucidate the significance of these changing material effects.¹³

In 1961, Johns found in an art supply store in Charleston, South Carolina, sheets of translucent plastic on which he would begin a series of drawings the following year, based on paintings he had recently completed (Figures 3 and 4).¹⁴ Johns was attracted to the medium's lack of absorbency and the distinctive patterns made by the ink during the time it took to dry, much like lithography, a medium with which he was already familiar.¹⁵ What is striking about the transformations from some paintings to drawings is the shift from a palette of bright colors to shades of gray, one of Johns' most characteristic "colors" and the dominant shade in all the ink on plastic drawings. Johns' rendering of imagery in neutral *grisaille* effaces potential meaning and the effect that the original colors may have had, further distancing Johns from his work. Yet many of his ink on plastic drawings, and notably one of his most recent, *do*, in fact, subtly incorporate color.

However, it would be a mistake to conflate Johns' desire for neutrality towards his imagery with a lack of control over his media. Some writers have commented that the predominant element of Johns' ink on plastic works comes from the *chance* effects of pooling and drying ink, reflecting his deliberate acquiescence to a difficult medium and subsequent loss of control.¹⁶ Yet others have more keenly discerned that Johns is actually always in consummate control over every medium. He enjoys the challenge of giving form to a seemingly formless material, of arresting its entropic predilections

⁷ Richard Shiff, "Metanoid Johns, Johns Metanoid," in *Jasper Johns: Gray*, ed. Douglas Druick and James Rondeau (Chicago, IL: Art Institute of Chicago, 2007), 121.

⁸ Jasper Johns, "An Interview with Jasper Johns," by Roberta Bernstein, in *Fragments: Incompletion and Discontinuity*, ed. Lawrence D. Kritzman, *New York Literary Forum* 8-9 (1981): 279-90. Reprinted in Varnedoe, *Jasper Johns: Writings*, 201.

⁹ Jasper Johns, in Richard Francis, *Jasper Johns* (New York, NY: Abbeville Press, 1984), 98.

¹⁰ As Richard Shiff has elegantly written, "if the preliminary thought generates the idea, then the hand that renders the concept as an image and a certain object, changes it. The hand, its touch, is *metanoic*: it changes the mind," in Shiff, *Metanoid Johns*, 136.

¹¹ Richard Shiff, "Preference without a Cause," in *Past Things Present: Jasper Johns Since 1983*, ed. Joan Rothfuss (Minneapolis, MN: Walker Art Center, 2003), 12.

¹² Nan Rosenthal and Kristy Bryce, *Jasper Johns: Ink on Plastic* (New York, NY: Craig F. Starr Gallery, 2010), n.p.

¹³ Charles W. Haxthausen makes excellent use of Peirce's triadic sign theory in examining the changes an image undergoes in various media in his essay "Translation and Transformation in *Target with Four*

Faces," written on the occasion of Jasper Johns' 1990 solo exhibition at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis. As such, it serves as a useful reference point for this essay. Full citation: Charles W. Haxthausen, "Translation and Transformation in *Target with Four Faces*," in *Jasper Johns: Printed Symbols*, ed. Elizabeth Armstrong (Minneapolis, MN: Walker Art Center, 1990), 63-75.

¹⁴ Kirk Varnedoe, ed., *Jasper Johns: A Retrospective* (New York, NY: The Museum of Modern Art, 1996), 191; Rosenthal and Bryce, *Jasper Johns: Ink on Plastic*, n.p.; Roberta Smith, "Jasper Johns: Ink on Plastic," *The New York Times* (14 May 2010): C25; and Christophe Cherix and Ann Temkin, *Jasper Johns: Regrets* (New York, NY: The Museum of Modern Art, 2014), 29.

¹⁵ Johns, "Interview with Jasper Johns," by Rosenthal and Fine, 73. Subsequent to the first drafts of this paper, an exhibition of Jasper Johns' monotypes opened at Matthew Marks Gallery in New York, on view from May 5 to June 25, 2016. Perhaps even more than lithography, Johns' recent monotypes, in their technical execution and subject matter, share many similarities with his ink on plastic drawings. Like ink on plastic, Johns has explored the monotype medium since the 1950s. A forthcoming *catalogue raisonné* of Johns' monotypes written by Susan Dackerman and Jennifer L. Roberts will be published in 2017 by Matthew Marks Gallery.

¹⁶ Smith, "Jasper Johns," C25; John Yau, "Jasper Johns, Ink on Plastic," *Brooklyn Rail* (3 June 2010): n.p.

and subjecting it to a rubric defined by his working habits.¹⁷ Johns has said that ink on plastic is, contrary to what we might think, *not* very difficult to control. Rather, he likes it for how it manifests its own nature and changes form as it dries, as if the material were revealing a mind or intention all its own.¹⁸

The writing of Charles Sanders Peirce resonates closely with Johns' habits of mind and is useful in parsing the varied effects of Johns' artwork.¹⁹ In 1891, Peirce wrote that the state of things in the infinite past is chaos—the complete absence of regularity—while the state of things in the infinite future is a kind of death, consisting in the complete triumph of law over spontaneity.²⁰ Peirce continues, “Between these, we have on *our* side a state of things in which there is some absolute spontaneity counter to all law, and some degree of conformity to law, which is constantly on the increase owing to the growth of habit.”²¹

As for *our side* of things, it seems *any* kind of consciousness would require not only a measure of habit—a logic or structure that could give both form and stability to our thoughts—but also a degree of spontaneity, the ability to be diverted by chance, to allow us to change and evolve our conceptions. Otherwise our brains would just be inert matter, as Peirce writes, “deadened by the development of habit.”²² This is how Johns' mind—or ours for that matter—*can move*, can change, and like his ink on plastic drawings, can exist somewhere between pure chance and the absolute dominion of habit. Yet *conformity to law*, as Peirce notes, is always on the rise.²³ In Johns' latest ink on plastic drawings one can sense a kind of mastery, complexity and systematization, perhaps the unintended consequence of his having worked in this medium for over fifty years. Johns' particular gestures, the final states these drying puddles of ink may form, might not be entirely premeditated, but Johns surely anticipates a range of desirable effects.

It is telling that Johns has said he works to distance his art from his feelings. If we consider the self as existing primarily within the conscious mind, feelings seem somehow at odds with its formal logic, a part of us yet just that—only

a part. One could draw an analogy to the discrete puddles and gestures from one of these new drawings, complete in themselves yet conveying just a fragment of the whole image: they are simply meaningless, formless blobs when considered on their own. For Peirce, corresponding to this state of pure spontaneity and chance is *feeling*, a state isolated from everything that came before or will come after, complete and sufficient unto itself in each moment as long as it lasts.²⁴ However, a feeling *cannot be a thought*, for there is no consciousness in an instantaneous moment. Peirce writes that feeling is simply a quality, a mere possibility.²⁵

If not of feelings, what does consciousness consist of? For Peirce, consciousness is not a *state*, like a feeling, but rather a *mediation*, a representation of something to somebody.²⁶ If we understand Johns as a medium of change, he would embody Peirce's notion of mediation and representation. The inputs are particular images, which Johns subjects to his habits of hand and mind, and the outputs are works of art, veritable indices not just of his agency, but paradoxically, of a process capable of *removing itself from his touch*.

One of the most significant aspects of Johns' two most recent bodies of work is their origin in the found image: a *photographic* image. The first series, *Regrets*, was completed in 2012 and 2013 and is based on an image Johns found in an auction catalogue. The black and white photograph, taken by John Deakin, shows the 42-year-old painter Lucian Freud, head in hand and seated on a narrow bed.²⁷ It appealed to Johns in a large part because of its *material* condition; it is crinkled and torn, splattered in paint, some parts folded back and held together with a paper clip.²⁸ The materiality of this *photo as object*—the creases and folds in the emulsion—were elements Johns translated into compositional lines and units of color and tonality in several paintings. In these works, the original image has been mirrored and doubled to produce a slightly off-center composition.²⁹ Several ink on plastic drawings, varied in their wide range of experimental effects, were made subsequent to the paintings and explore the same motif.

¹⁷ Robert Ayers, “Reviews; New York: Jasper Johns: Craig F. Starr,” *ARTnews* (Summer 2010): n.p.; Cherix and Temkin, *Regrets*, 29.

¹⁸ Johns, “Interview with Jasper Johns,” by Rosenthal and Fine, 73.

¹⁹ Johns has on various occasions acknowledged the influence of the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein, whom he started reading in 1961 (the same year he began working with ink on plastic), but there is no indication he had been exposed to Peirce's writings. Wittgenstein is mentioned variously by Johns in Varnedoe, *Writings*, 22, 165, 168, 184, 254 and 283.

²⁰ Peirce 8:317.

²¹ *Ibid.* Author's emphasis.

²² *Ibid.*, 8:318.

²³ *Ibid.*, 8:317. Author's emphasis.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 1:306.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 1:310. In Peirce 6:18, he continues, “A feeling is necessarily perfectly simple, in *itself*, for if it had parts these would also be in the mind, whenever the whole was present, and thus the whole could not monopolize the mind.”

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 7:630. In Peirce 6:19, he continues, “when we think, we are conscious that a connection between feelings is determined by a general rule, we are aware of being governed by habit...the one primary and fundamental law of mental action consists in a tendency to generalizations.”

²⁷ Cherix and Temkin, *Regrets*, 11–12.

²⁸ *Ibid.* This photograph was a source image for Francis Bacon's 1964 painting, *Study for Self Portrait*, and it became, over the years, yet another piece of detritus in the compost-like mass that was the artist's studio, resulting in its damaged physical state.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 14. The mirroring and doubling apparent in this body of work resulted from a photocopying of a hand-drawn tracing that was paired with the original catalogue reproduction itself.

Much like *Regrets*, Johns' most recent body of work—informally titled *Farley Breaks Down, After Larry Burrows*—similarly takes its inspiration from a photographic image, one that Johns first saw in a 2014 edition of *National Geographic*.³⁰ This black and white photograph of Lance Corporal James C. Farley was taken by Vietnam War photojournalist Larry Burrows and originally appeared as part of a larger photo-essay in *Life Magazine's* April 1965 issue. The obvious similarities between these two source photos are striking. There must have been a clear imagistic association, an association that dictated the particular direction that Johns' *mind must move*. An inscription on one of the *Regrets* drawings suggests that this photograph caught Johns' eye because, as he is often quoted as saying of his targets or flags, it was a thing "the mind already knows."³¹ In this instance, it was not a banal or commonplace image or object, but rather an *art historical* thing, suggested by the artist's annotation: "Goya, Bats, Dreams? Just notes of mine, association."³² This chain of association from Francisco Goya to Deakin's photo of Freud, to Burrows' photo of Farley is surely noteworthy, yet one should not let the particular imagery over-determine the significance of these works. Just like Johns' flags, the images may be less significant in themselves and more important as prompts, as vehicles for experimentation across and within media. Deriving two full bodies of work from photographs is decidedly unusual for Johns, who unlike Robert Rauschenberg, for instance, rarely used photographic imagery. Johns admitted a general indifference in photographs and disliked looking through the camera lens, resulting in only a handful of finished works that include photographs or photographic imagery.³³ As rare as photographs are in Johns' work, it is often the specific material condition that attracts him, not only the depicted imagery.

Peirce once suggested that the universe is "perfused with signs" and is likely composed entirely of signs.³⁴ Signs also permeate Johns' ink on plastic drawings, yet each drawing reveals different combinations of marks, varied effects of pooled and splattered ink that are combined with crisscrossed marks and sharp outlines deliberately tracing contours created by the drying ink. Peirce himself proposed three categories of sign: the *icon*, the *index*, and the *symbol*, defined by how each one relates to its respective object and corresponding with his three phenomenological categories. Peirce maintains these categories are not mutually exclusive and can coexist in a single image. We see this same multivalence in Johns, where each drawing on plastic at some level incorporates different kinds of signs. The original pho-

tographs Johns used as prompts would surely be what Peirce would describe as *iconic*, that is, a sign determined by some resemblance, signifying its object by imitating some quality or aspect of it.³⁵ As Peirce readily admitted, a photograph is just as equally (if not predominantly) an *index*, relating to its object by means of a factual or causal relationship, by having been directly affected by that object.³⁶

In translating the *Regrets* imagery from the original photograph, collages and paintings into ink on plastic, Johns plays with a range of signifying effects. In one particularly vivid collage, Johns filled in the right side of the composition with bright color, limiting the left to more muted shades. In the painting, gray floods across the surface, leaving just a small sliver of original color. Once finally translated into ink on plastic, the colors have yielded entirely to gray. Whatever rule or rationale was used to color-code the previous iterations has been eliminated along with any potential *symbolic* significance they may have had. Peirce maintained that symbols signify by virtue of convention, rule, or code, referring to types rather than a single thing.³⁷ Now the dominant neutral grays seem to work like the random pools and splatters, those marks which seem, at first glance, to refuse artistic intentionality, marks that have removed themselves from Johns' hand and appear to spill out beyond the crisp linear boundaries present in the earlier drawings and paintings. In one drawing from the series, the formless effects of the medium predominate (Figure 5). Indices of successive pooling and drying render the original imagery so abstract as to be almost invisible. The iconic has been reduced almost to pure indexicality—not just signs produced by Johns' hand gestures, but also signs of an independent material process all its own.

In three other drawings from this series, Johns adopts a progressively complex working process—the pools of ink are overlaid by deliberate hatch marks and sharp delineations emphasizing the contours created by the puddles of ink. Among these three, the more or less continuous, all-over tonality of the first drawing (see Figure 1) is disrupted as Johns plays with varied effects of contrast, with gradients of greater and lesser saturation extending across the surface of each subsequent drawing (Figures 6 and 7). With these hatch marks and outlines it is almost as if Johns were iconizing the indexical, utilizing these new marks for the purposes of illusion, to simulate other kinds of indices. One could also describe it as symbolizing the indexical, using a conventional system of marks for specific effect. The simultaneous inclusion of intentional crosshatching together with seemingly

³⁰ Matthew Marks, in a conversation with the author, January 2015.

³¹ Jasper Johns, "His Heart Belongs to Dada," *Time* 73 (4 May 1959): 58. Reprinted in Varnedoe, *Jasper Johns: Writings*, 82.

³² Cherix and Temkin, *Regrets*, 15.

³³ Jasper Johns, "Jasper Johns," by Paul Taylor, *Interview* 20, no. 7 (July 1990): 96-100 and 122-23. Reprinted in Varnedoe, *Jasper Johns: Writings*, 248-49.

³⁴ Peirce 5:448.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 2:229.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 2:248.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

random pools of ink could be read, oddly enough, as a coexistence of two different kinds of indices: one with a direct relationship to Johns' hand, and the other as the sign of an independent process, one, as Johns writes, that makes it "difficult to tell from the finished drawing what gestures were used to produce it."³⁸

By playing with the effects of these various signs and then combining them all within a single image, Johns affords us a paradoxical experience that collapses into one artwork not only feelings, but also sensations of reaction, and symbolic representations. His most recent series of ink on plastic drawings exhibits a wonderful surface complexity unmatched by most other examples of his work in this medium. The looser, more continuous gestures and broad planes of contrasting tonality characteristic of some earlier ink on plastic drawings (as in Figures 8 and 9) have transformed into dense labyrinths of variegated textures, superimposed upon and enclosing one another within finer constellations of marks. Much like Johns' earlier works, however, they continue to play with successive effects of reversals, mirroring, and flipping of form with ground. In one 2014 drawing, highly contrasting areas of light and dark play out across the surface with dramatic effect (Figure 9). There is a tension between wholeness and fragmentation that Johns often utilizes in his work, but here it manifests itself with unusual intensity. The original photographic image that inspired these works threatens to disappear entirely within the varied surface effects and textures as if it were a pixelated image, a photograph translated into low resolution.³⁹

Upon close inspection, one can discern a fragmentary grid in the upper left quadrant of another exceptional 2014 drawing, made by the impression of a screen or cheese-cloth

onto the still wet surface (Figure 8). It is as if it were the image's skeleton, its underlying matrix, revealing itself. Order and structure in Johns' work always seem to assert themselves just as they are on the verge of collapsing entirely, of dissolving into formlessness, giving in to the universe's tendency to chaos. This ever-present tension is what makes Johns' work so appealing; order and habit constantly yield to sensations of feeling and effects of chance, before seeming to flip back. At the moment that systems seem operative, they collapse. On the one hand, his ink on plastic drawings exude anonymity, a feeling that they were created by someone else or by the chance effects of dynamic forces beyond his control. On the other hand, they are decidedly deliberate and carefully modulated. As Johns has said about this medium,

the idea of chance seems to me to suggest something more haphazard in the way that things interact. I'd love not to be in control, but that's not what I'm interested in. I think there's a play between the subjective and the objective that is in operation constantly when I'm working that tackles the idea of chance from both directions.⁴⁰

Just as Peirce is quoted earlier in this paper, on our side is a state of things that allows for just this kind of paradoxical comingling of presence and absence, feeling and non-feeling, mind and matter. Johns, perhaps more than any artist of his era, mediates this understanding in his art, rarely failing to create deeply complex, resonant, and paradoxical experiences for his viewers.

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³⁸ Johns, "Interview with Jasper Johns," by Rosenthal and Fine, 73.

³⁹ Richard Shiff, "Blur and Fuzz: On Translating Representations of Low Resolution" (unpublished manuscript, 2015), Microsoft Word file. This unpublished manuscript explores the idea of representations of low resolution. Shiff distinguishes between the effects of "blur" and "fuzz," both of which seem operative in these works in ink on paper by Johns.

⁴⁰ Jasper Johns, "Jasper Johns," by Bryan Robertson and Tim Marlow, *Tate: The Art Magazine* no. 1 (Winter 1993): 40-47. Reprinted in Varndoe, *Jasper Johns: Writings*, 287.

Figure 1. Jasper Johns, *Untitled*, 2013, ink on plastic, 27 1/2 x 36 inches. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Promised gift from a Private Collection. Art © Jasper Johns / Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY / Courtesy Matthew Marks Gallery.





Figure 2. [above, left] Jasper Johns, *After Larry Burrows*, 2014, India ink and water-soluble encaustic on plastic, 32 x 24 inches. Art © Jasper Johns / Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY / Courtesy Matthew Marks Gallery.

Figure 3. [above, right] Jasper Johns, *Device*, 1962, ink on plastic, 24 x 18 inches. Art © Jasper Johns / Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY / Courtesy Castelli Gallery, New York.



Figure 4. Jasper Johns, *Device*, 1961-62, oil on canvas with wood, 72 1/16 x 48 3/4 x 4 1/2 inches. Dallas Museum of Art, gift of The Art Museum League, Margaret J. and George V. Charlton, Mr. and Mrs. James B. Francis, Dr. and Mrs. Ralph Greenlee, Jr., Mr. and Mrs. James H.W. Jacks, Mr. and Mrs. Irvin L. Levy, Mrs. John W. O'Boyle, and Dr. Joanne Stroud in honor of Mrs. Eugene McDermott. Art © Jasper Johns / Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY / Courtesy Matthew Marks Gallery.

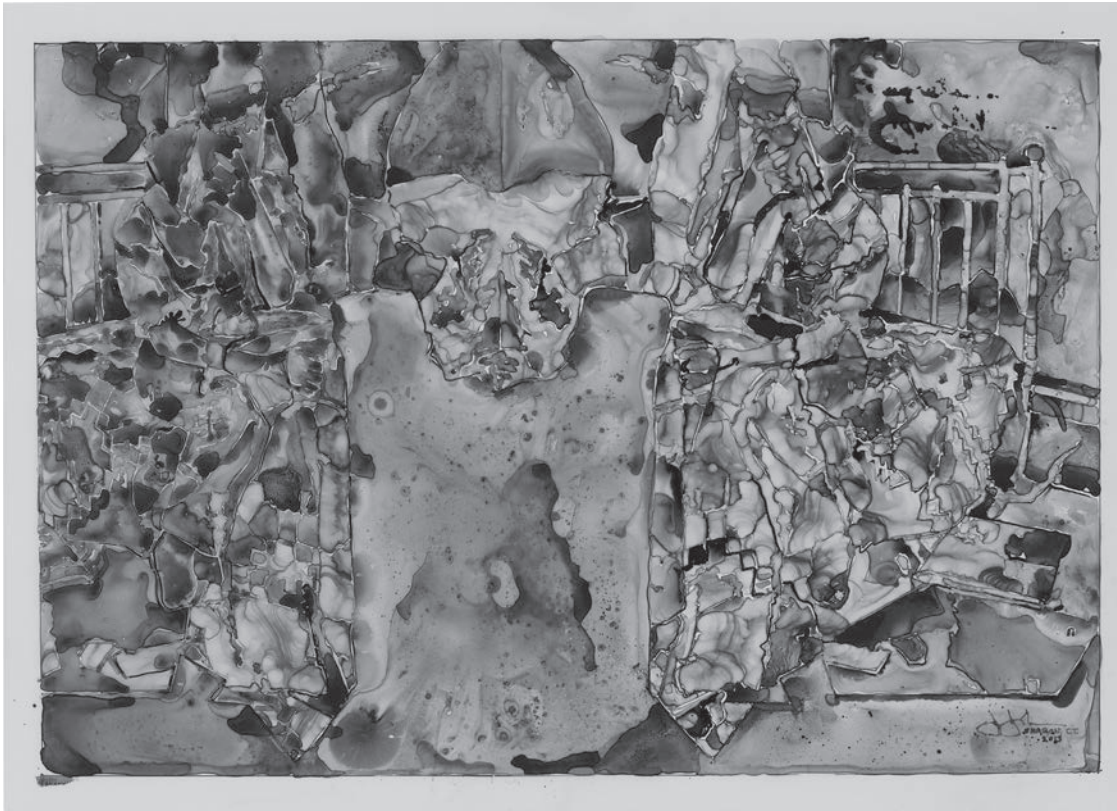


Figure 5. Jasper Johns, *Untitled*, 2013, ink on plastic, 27 1/2 x 36 inches. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Promised gift from a Private Collection. Art © Jasper Johns / Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY / Courtesy Matthew Marks Gallery.

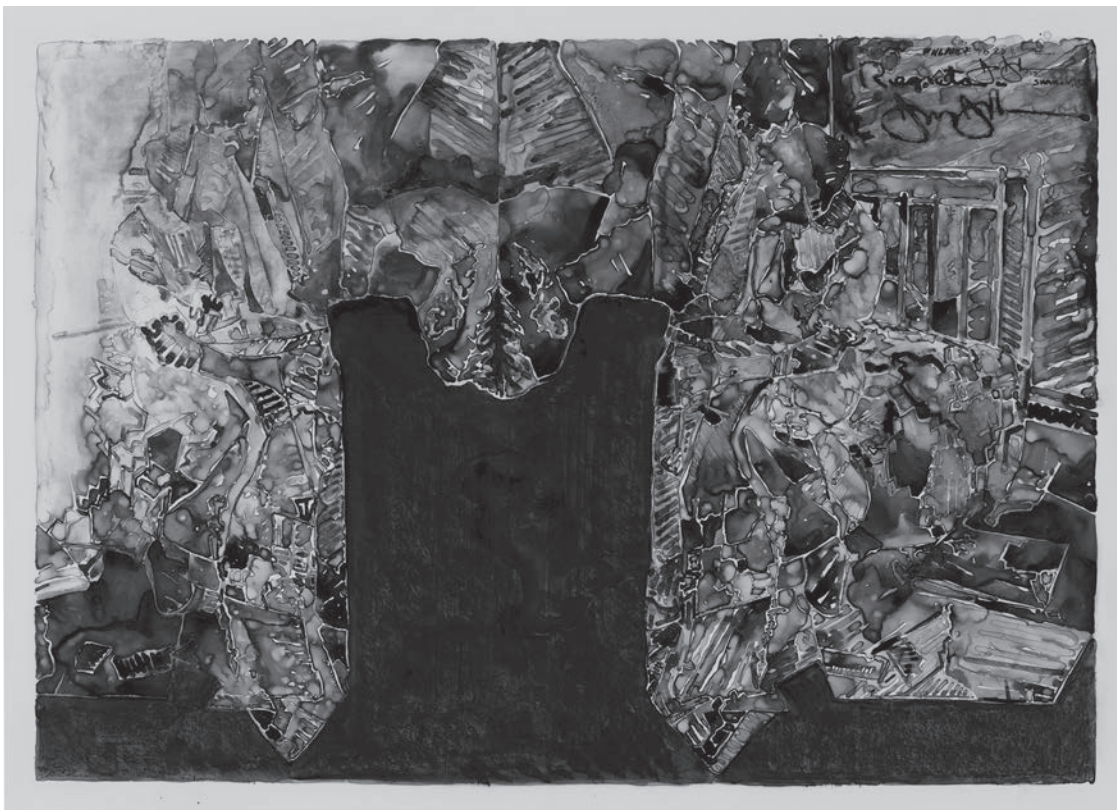


Figure 6. Jasper Johns, *Untitled*, 2013, ink on plastic, 27 1/2 x 36 inches. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Promised gift from a Private Collection. Art © Jasper Johns / Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY / Courtesy Matthew Marks Gallery.



▲ Figure 7. [above] Jasper Johns, *Untitled*, 2013, ink on plastic, 27 1/2 x 36 inches. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Promised gift from a Private Collection. Art © Jasper Johns / Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY / Courtesy Matthew Marks Gallery.



◀ Figure 8. [left] Jasper Johns, *Farley Breaks Down—after Larry Burrows*, 2014, ink and water-soluble encaustic on plastic, 32 x 24 inches. Art © Jasper Johns / Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY / Courtesy Matthew Marks Gallery.

▶ Figure 9. [facing page] Jasper Johns, *Farley Breaks Down—after Larry Burrows*, 2014, ink on plastic, 31 7/8 x 24 inches. Art © Jasper Johns / Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY / Courtesy Matthew Marks Gallery.



