The Jeffrey Rubinoff Sculpture Park

Activities Director's Report
on the
2011 Yale University Forum on
Art, War and Science in the 20th Century

Co-chaired by sculptor Jeffrey Rubinoff and Dr. Jay Winter

Hosted by The Jeffrey Rubinoff Sculpture Park

May 19-23rd 2011 on Hornby Island, British Columbia

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To download the 2011 Forum Essays please see www.rubinoffsculpturepark.org/2011forum.php

Introduction to the Forum Directors Report

Introduction

The *2011 Yale University Forum on Art, War and Science in the 20th Century*, was a unique effort in intellectual collaboration between an artist and scholars on a topic of overlapping interest. The Forum was held at the Jeffrey Rubinoff Sculpture Park (JRSP), rather than the customary academic setting, enabling participants to juxtapose world-class scholarship, with complex artistic statements and work of sculptor Jeffrey Rubinoff.

The 2011 Forum continued in the spirit of the annual *JRSP Company of Ideas* forums that invite scholars to contribute sculpture park visitors' understanding of the context of Rubinoff's work. However, the 2011 Forum moved this activity forward in an important new direction.

One of its purposes was to reconnect art to the global scholarship on human history, a necessary element for art that endeavours to address profound human challenges. Conversely the Forum sought to demonstrate the value of such art as originator of novel historical insight.

As demonstrated by the dialogues appended to this report, certain fault lines were clear throughout the Forum, due at times to differences in the scope and mode of discourse between artists and scholars. However, the evidence of effort to bridge these cleavages is a statement about the ongoing necessity of this type of interdisciplinary discourse.

Forum Speakers and Presentations

The 2011 Forum presentations were:

- Through the Lens of the Endgame
  by Jeffrey Rubinoff, Sculptor

- Scientists and artists between war and peace: the Blaue Reiter moment

- Reconfiguring the sacred: Artists, scientists and spiritualism before 1914
  by Dr. Jay Winter, Charles J. Stille Professor of History at Yale University

- Chromophilia: Der Blaue Reiter, Walter Benjamin and the Emancipation of Color
  by Dr. Martin Jay, Sidney Hellman Ehrman Professor of History at the University of California, Berkeley

- 'A language for humanity?' The Blaue Reiter, and the failed search for universality
  by Dr. Annette Becker , Professor of history at the University Paris Ouest Nanterre La defense

2011 Forum Description

Constructive dialogue across disciplines is a challenging undertaking. The study and practice of art, cultural history, and science have different methods, fields of focus, and conventions of knowledge. The seriousness of intent in meeting this challenge is illustrated by the collaboration between Yale University and The Jeffrey Rubinoff Sculpture Park to conduct this Forum. Representatives of both institutions have agreed to undertake this dialogue by co-chairing an examination of scholarly and artistic perceptions within a context of mutual interest: art, war and science in the 20th century and beyond.

The initial focus is the time of 1900-14, a period of great creativity and discovery in art and science. It is the eve of a global war that both chairs agree mark a significant historical turning point. The Forum will debate the views of some of the foremost scholars of cultural history on this subject in the context of the sculpture and insights of artist Jeffrey Rubinoff.

For those who believe the quality of ideas matters to the quality of human affairs, the stakes involved are high. Rubinoff perceives the two world wars to be the final act of what he terms the End of the Age of Agriculture, which ended the domination of Europe and its imperial territories by its agricultural warrior class.

Jay Winter sees a transformation in warfare as having started with the massacre of the Great War and the suicide of the landed military caste which led it. The ramifications and cultural impact of these events are still evident a century later in the art, ideas and identities of the combatant countries. After a second world war of even greater destructive power, these changes were amplified in other ways. One development which concerns Winter has been the emergence of '...post-modern ways of thinking [which] raised issues related to the supposed end of the Enlightenment project, contaminated, as some would say, by imperialism and the Holocaust.'

Rubinoff and Winter both perceive a great danger that post-modernism can delegitimize the knowledge and capacity for insight central to the future of human affairs. Both chairs see the urgency that a troubling historical trajectory of anti-humanist ideology coupled with highly destructive and widely-distributed weapons will continue to gravely threaten civilization itself. As such the Forum is a statement of the need for artists, historians and scientists to identify and address the challenge of their individual moral obligation as witnesses to our shared history.

Respecting the essential integrity of both scholarly and artistic disciplines, the Forum strives to realize the additional value of a dialogue among recognized scholars and artists. It is hoped that the challenge of this unique encounter will encourage Forum participants, especially the invited group of students, to think more broadly about their individual moral obligation to address these questions and consider their consequences.

Description of Proceedings

The 2011 Yale University Forum invited internationally recognized scholars in the field of cultural history to the Jeffrey Rubinoff Sculpture Park to present papers on the topic of Art, War and Science in the 20th century, with a special focus on the period leading up to the first world war.

Four guest scholars and non-scholars who were not giving a presentation, were asked to read one paper each and prepare oral questions, comments and additional information that would be useful to the ensuing dialogue.

Jeffrey Rubinoff was also asked to make oral comments on each paper, as well as to do a presentation in response all of the scholars' essays.

In addition to the speakers and readers, the 2011 Forum invited 10 undergraduate and graduate students, 5 from Yale University and 5 from Canadian Universities.

Non-presenting participants

Essay Readers

- **Dr. James Fox**, *Research Fellow in the History of Art at Cambridge University*
- **Dr. Maria Tippett**, *Professor of Cultural History (retired)*
- **Leba Haber Rubinoff**, *filmmaker and interactive media producer*
- **Frank Frketich**, *high school history teacher*

Yale University students

- **Jennifer Wellington**
- **Jeremy Kessler**
- **Lingyuxiu Zhong**
- **Rose Malloy**
- **Chelsea Janes**

Canadian university Students

- **Azmina Kassam**
- **Sara Checkley**
- **Jenni Pace Presnell**
- **Robert Dening**
- **Jesse Kennedy**

Observers

- **Vaughn Neville**, *Artist*
- **Susan Cain**, *Artist*
- **Carole Chambers**, *Canada Post Branch Manager*
- **Richard Goldman**, *US Agency for International Development (retired)*
- **Heather Goldman**, *US Agency for International Development (retired)*
- **Janet LeBlanq**, *Registered Nurse*
- **Nora Kelly**, *Author*
- **Bill Jeffries**, *Curator of the Simon Fraser University gallery*
- **Debbie Frketich**, *High school teacher*
- **Arnie Olsen**, *Hornby Island Resident*
- **Dr. Peter Clarke**, *Professor of 20th Century history (retired)*
- **Charo Neville**, Art curator
- **James Wellington**, *Solider in Australian Armed Forces*

JRSP Board, Staff and Event Staff

- **Karun Koernig**, *JRSP Activities Director and Forum moderator*
- **Betty Kennedy**, *JRSP Board of Directors*
- **John Kirk**, *JRSP Landscape Curator*
- **Ivy Gordon**, *on-site catering supervisor*
- **Shuman Vostrcil**, *on-site catering assistant*

2011 Forum Speakers and Readers Biographies

CO-CHAIRS AND PRESENTERS

Jeffrey Rubinoff
Rubinoff received his B.A. and M.F.A. in the nineteen sixties in the United States, returning to Canada in 1969. In the years that followed his one man shows included The Helen Mazelow Gallery, The Ontario Science Center, The Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park, Queen's Park Toronto, York University, and Two Sculptors New York.

In the past two decades he concentrated on group historical exhibitions including works by sculptors David Smith, Alexander Calder, Anthony Caro, Mark di Suvero, Nancy Graves, George Rickey, Beverly Pepper, Tony Smith, and Robert Murray.

"For my generation of artists, culture was defined by marketing. The art market defined originality as novelty. I realized that to make original art with artistic depth I would have to return to the lineage of the ancestors—the history of art by artists. So began a dialogue with the ancestors, artist to artist via the work itself."

In 1973, Rubinoff purchased an 80 hectare farm on Hornby Island, off the west coast of British Columbia, Canada, for the eventual establishment of a sculpture park. Living and working on site he has created over a hundred sculptures, constructing each piece alone in his studio from CORTEN or stainless steel. Located in the former barn, his studio is equipped with a one-man steel foundry, making it possible to cast the complex shapes seen in his later series.

Professor Jay Winter
Jay M. Winter, the Charles J. Stille Professor of History at Yale University, is a specialist on World War I and its impact on the 20th century.

His interests include remembrance of war in the 20th century (such as memorial and mourning sites), European population decline, the causes and institutions of war, British popular culture in the era of the Great War and the Armenian genocide of 1915.

He has edited or co-edited 13 books and contributed more than 40 book chapters to edited volumes, among which include:

- The Great War and the British People
- Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History
- 1914-1918: The Great War and the Shaping of the 20th Century
- Remembering War: The Great War between History and Memory in the 20th Century
- Dreams of Peace and Freedom: Utopian Moments in the 20th Century

He is co-director of the project on Capital Cities at War: Paris, London, Berlin 1914-1919, which has produced two volumes, the first on social and economic history, published by Cambridge University in 1997, and the second published by Cambridge in 2007.

Work in preparation includes: The Degeneration of War, The Social Construction of Silence, and Anxious futures: population politics in the 21st century.

GUEST PRESENTERS

Professor Annette Becker
Annette Becker is professor of history at the University of Paris Ouest Nanterre La Defense, and senior member of the Institut Universitaire de France. She specializes in the study of the First World War and its cultural representations.

She is co-author, with Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, of Understanding the Great the War. Her recent book, Apollinaire: A War Biography, emphasizes particularly the impact of the First World War on the arts and highlights the place and meaning of the trauma experienced during and after the war. For this book, Annette Becker received the 2010 l'Académie Française award for biography.

Professor Martin Jay
Martin Jay is the Sidney Hellman Ehrman Professor of History at the University of California, Berkeley. He is a renowned intellectual historian and his research interests have been ground breaking in connecting history with other academic and intellectual activities, such as the Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School, other figures and methods in continental Social Theory, Cultural Criticism, and Historiography among many others. His book on the Frankfurt School of Social Research is a classic in the field of intellectual history.

His work since then continued to explore the many nuances of Marxism/Socialism, and new territory in historiography and cultural criticism, visual culture, and the place of Post-Structuralism/Post-Modernism in European intellectual history. He is a recipient of the 2010/2011 Berlin Prize Fellowship from the American Academy in Berlin.

ESSAY READERS

Leba Haber Rubinoff
Leba Haber Rubinoff is an award-winning filmmaker and online interaction designer. After Leba received her Master's degree from NYU's Interactive Telecommunications Program, she became the Digital Artist in Residence in the Black Filmmaker Foundation Lab.

In 2005, Leba won a Webby for "Best Political Website" for her interactive narrative, weaponsofmisdirection.com. Leba's company, Interactive Filmmaking, has partnered with Microsoft Research India to create an interactive documentary about the global digital divide.

She began her career as a filmmaker, directing films for the United Nations and the Canadian government in locations as diverse as Tanzania, Lebanon and Cameroon.

She is currently working on a project funded by the MacArthur Foundation and USAID called *Mobile Movement* which connects young social entrepreneurs in Kenya with online philanthropists in the US through internet enabled mobile phones.

Frank Frketich
Frank has taught high school history and social studies for most of his teaching career. His specialty was History 12, an elective course that covers the history of the 20th century. At the end of the course, students had to write a government exam to test their competency in the subject.

Frank was involved in marking, reviewing and then preparing those exams for many years. Frank also served as Professional Development Chairperson for the Courtenay Teachers Association for many years. Within the committee he was responsible for organizing Professional Development activities teachers of the school district.

During his career, Frank and his wife Debbie had two international experiences, one teaching in Japan very early in their careers and another in Thailand at the end of their careers.

Dr. James Fox
Dr James Fox is a Research Fellow in the History of Art at Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge University.

Before this, he held research positions at both Yale and Harvard. He works primarily on the impact of the First World War on visual culture, and is currently developing a monograph on the subject.

James also curates exhibitions and works with the British media, and he has just finished writing and presenting a major BBC series on 20th Century art that will be broadcast in 2011.

Dr. Maria Tippett
Dr Tippett received her BA (Hons) in Education at Simon Fraser University and her Ph.D. in Russian cultural history from the University of London.

She has held academic posts as Lecturer at Simon Fraser University, the University of British Columbia, and Emily Carr School of Art.

She was also the Robarts Professor of Canadian Studies, at York University.

Her publications include:
- From Desolation to Splendour: changing perceptions of the British Columbia Landscape
- Emily Carr: a biography
- Art at the Service of War: Canada, Art and the Great War

2011 Forum Agenda

Day 0 Thursday May 19	Begins	Ends
Travel to Vancouver BC Canada		
Tour of Early Work: Students	15:30	18:00
Chartered float plane from YVR to Hornby	17:00	17:45
Welcome dinner at Sea Breeze Lodge	19:00	22:00

Day 1 Friday May 20	Begins	Ends
Breakfast at JRSP	9:00	10:00
Tour of Early Work: Presenters & Readers	10:00	12:30
Lunch at JRSP: All participants are invited	12:30	14:00
Karun's Welcome. Co-chairs intro: Rubinoff and Winter.	14:00	14:45
Rubinoff's presentation	14:45	15:30
Comments by presenters & readers then discussion	15:30	17:30
Dinner at Sea Breeze Lodge	19:00	22:00

Day 2 Saturday May 21	Begins	Ends
Breakfast at JRSP	8:00	9:00
Jay Winter | Scientists and Artists between War and Peace	9:00	9:45
Rubinoff's and Frank Frketich's comments on presentation	9:45	10:30
Dialogue open to all	10:30	11:15
Tea/coffee break	11:15	11:45
Martin Jay | Chromophilia: Der Blaue Reiter, Walter Benjamin and the Emancipation of Color	11:45	12:30
Rubinoff's and James Fox's comments on presentation	12:30	13:15
Dialogue open to all	13:15	14:00
Late lunch at JRSP	14:00	15:00
Artist led tour of late work: Presenters & Readers	15:00	16:45
Browsing of JRSP Library: Students	15:00	15:30
Self directed browsing of late work: Students	15:30	16:45
Q & A on late work: Students	16:45	17:30
Dinner at Sea Breeze Lodge	19:00	22:00

2011 Forum Agenda continued

Day 3 Sunday May 22	Begins	Ends
Breakfast at JRSP	8:00	9:00
Jay Winter | Reconfiguring the sacred: Artists, scientists and spiritualism before 1914	9:00	9:45
Rubinoff's and Leba Haber's comments on presentation	9:45	10:15
Dialogue open to all	10:15	11:00
Tea/coffee break	11:00	11:15
Annette Becker | 'A language for humanity?' The Blaue Reiter, and the failed search for universality	11:15	12:15
Late lunch at JRSP	12:15	13:15
Rubinoff's and Maria Tippett's comments on presentation	13:15	14:00
Dialogue open to all	14:00	15:00
Tea/coffee break	15:00	15:30
Students' & observers' comments.	15:30	16:30
FORMAL END OF FORUM. Koernig, Winter, Rubinoff	16:15	18:00
Tour of Late Work: Presenters & Readers (weather dependent)	16:15	18:00
Dinner at Sea Breeze Lodge	19:00	22:00

Day 4 Monday May 23	Begins	Ends
Breakfast at JRSP	9:00	10:00
Tour of Late work (weather dependent) then reflection on themes	10:00	13:00
Lunch at JRSP	13:00	14:00
Transfer to float plane landing area	14:00	14:30
Chartered float plane to Vancouver	14:30	15:15

Co-chair Jeffrey Rubinoff
Introduction to the 2011 Forum

Sadly, on August 23, 2010 Larry Badash passed away. I received a short email from his partner Nancy Hofbauer whom many of you recall, accompanied Larry to last year's Sculpture Park forum as a reader.

Larry's paper, "Nuclear Winter at the End of the Age of Agriculture" was a culmination point.

What had begun on my return to the working value of art history 30 years before now resulted in the highest level of discourse regarding the survival of civilization itself. It was an honour that Larry brought his knowledge to our forum.

It is on this elevated plane that we begin the 2011 forum.

(For those who have not read his paper, or wish to reread it, there are copies available on the table along with a number of his books for reference.)

As I explained on the tour of the sculptures, after finishing graduate school in 1969 I assumed my right as heir to the avant-garde in the then surging art market. To my generation of artists—and of course the market—this assumption was that novelty itself was originality and our natural place was to supersede the previous avant-garde.

The unlimited fatuousness of the art world—my world—smothered in the hubris of total commodification brought on my existential crisis of 1979. It was time to return to, and challenge art history itself. So the new journey began in 1980.

Once I crossed the threshold of original art via art history rather than its rejection, a flood of insights began. This was a feedback loop of knowledge through the work itself and it came as a complete surprise. The insights became ideas in the work which in turn generated new insights.

Art was indeed capable of evolving knowledge.

This knowledge would have remained encoded in the work and only occasionally spoken—mainly to other artists—were it not for a conversation with my daughter Leba.

In December of 2005 the Sculpture Park became registered with Canada Revenue Agency; the planning could begin.

I had had two successful openings under the auspices of the Hornby Island Festival Society earlier in the decade. My thoughts were to continue with them on a management arrangement.

Leba convinced me that we should be planning symposia and a facility to accommodate them. Her friends and colleagues were becoming interested in the ideas that I had evolved over the past many years.

This both surprised and excited me. Firstly I didn't realize she had discussed the ideas or that her generation might be interested. As to who might manage the forums, she suggested her friend Karun Koernig whom I had met when he was a high school student many years before.

Karun visited the Island in November of 2006. We toured the work which clearly resonated with him and he communicated acute sensitivity and deep intelligence. He convinced me that indeed his generation would benefit from knowledge of the work. He encouraged me to talk of the insights that had evolved with and from the sculpture. This took place over a concentrated three day period. These were transcribed in a highly condensed form into "Insights" and the "Themes" of the Sculpture Park.

Karun is a man of many talents and experience. We began planning the future forums to describe the context of the sculptures. Thus the Sculpture Park would not only house the work but would become the communicator of the context.

Michael McNamera, a presenter at the first forum, and a consistent observer at each one following was commissioned to design and build this excellent facility.

Three years ago, the Sculpture Park hosted its first forum seamlessly organized by Karun. The participants were colleagues of Leba and Karun, Michael McNamera, and our rapporteurs chosen for their education in art.

We began as a symposium. I had chosen to name the activity, "The Company of Ideas" as an identity for the process. The success of the first symposium which included an excellent presentation on modern architecture by Michael McNamera was based on the curiosity of the participants and their willingness to suggest programmes for the future.

However, Karun and I realized that the "Themes" for discussion were both original and difficult. We discussed this at length immediately after the forum and as a result I asked him to create a specific paper which we could offer as a model for critique followed by a call for papers. He would write it on the topic of "The Value of Art at the End of the Age of Agriculture" applying the principles of Richard Dawkins.

The result was an excellent paper incorporating my definition of art as "an act of will in accord with a mature conscience" as a driving force for the evolution of culture.

The concept of consciousness and a mature conscience will appear consistently in our discussions. The insight of the "End of the Age of Agriculture" is now over 25 years old as is my definition of art. Rather than eroding over time, the concept of the "End of the Age of Agriculture has been continuously reinforced by historical events and my growth as an artist.

Since 1989 I have been extending the history of art deep into evolutionary history. As I discussed at previous forums this extension has strengthened my definition of art.

The forum of 2009 had 5 presentations by five authors: Karun Koernig, Jenni Pace Presnell, Sam Yeaman, Jeff Foss, and Jerry Swatez.

Ultimately Karun and I realized that the Sculpture Park is about passing this lifetime of work to future

generations. Karun was continually critical of what he called post-modernism in the education system.

The ideas that evolved in my work were about the assertion of existence in the face of absurdity (more about this later).

The term post-modern first entered my reading as a reference to architecture, namely Philip Johnston's AT & T building in New York completed in 1984. It soon referred to contemporary architecture. By 1985 it was being used ad nauseam in the art market in New York. I only understood it vaguely as educational terminology through my daughters Leba and Charo in the 1990's.

In spending time with Karun who himself has spent his adult life educating young people, I realized that the absurdities of my generation, immediately ominous then, immediately ominous now, were not even on the knowledge horizon of his generation. Imminent issues of the survival of civilization itself were simply falling into the general failure of what I had called "cultivated ignorance". That this was occurring among the best educated is exigent.

For the 2010 forum we took the bull by the horns.

Karun addressed the issues of post-modernism.

Both Jeff Foss and Jenni Pace Presnell addressed possibilities for a new humanism.

Jay Winter addressed the suicide of the warrior class in World War One.

Lawrence Badash addressed the immanent potential of nuclear winter.

I addressed the possibilities of the genetic disposition of art and conscience.

After the forum Jay and I discussed the possibilities of continuing the discourse in the framework of his discipline of Cultural History. This was a new field to me. As I understood Jay it essentially came into being in the 1970's long after I had finished graduate school. I was intrigued to see if there might be some ongoing relationship of the Sculpture Park and Cultural History.

From early in university I had become highly proprietary of art history as artists have always been. For myself, it essentially meant only accepting the interpretation of that history from historians who themselves had wanted to be artists.

The way I see it now, sharing what I have called the history of art by artists is necessary to increase the experience of the sculptures themselves.

Since the foundation of the Sculpture Park, I have continuously attempted to expand the base of discourse. This is in line with the context of the evolution of my work.

This year in addition to our panel of scholars we are also welcoming ten students: five from Yale and one from the University of Victoria who have not visited the Sculpture Park before.

Co-chair Dr. Jay Winter
Introduction to the 2011 Forum

Thank you very much, Jeffrey. I do want to emphasize the element of gratitude for your opening your park and your imagination to us. Walking around this park with you and engaging with the work is one of the privileges of the experiment. And that's where I'd like to start first.

One of the things that may be not sufficiently well known is how difficult it is for academics to reach outside of the Academy to do public history, to do work that involves many of those, like you, who care passionately about history but are not within the university environment. It's a risky thing to do for young scholars. For someone my age the risks are long gone. But for young scholars it is not easy, and I think the reasons are multiple.

I would like to say that [Rubinoff's] feelings about the art market are matched by my feelings about the tyranny of the individual authorial voice within the Academy. That is to say, collective work is undervalued in the Humanities and Social Sciences. Natural scientists have broken this problem long ago. But those who look for promotion, preferment, jobs in the Humanities or in the Social Sciences who write together or produce things together, suffer from that. And the notion that there are problems that are simply too big for any one individual to address, that it's natural and necessary for people to come together and to talk together as a collective, runs against a kind of what I would call bareback individualism, which is the way in which the Academy operates, and still does, in our field. And I think that is to be deplored.

And hence any step to move towards collective work in many respects requires moving outside of the Academy. I've done it with my colleague Annette Becker in creating a Museum of History of the First World War and God knows how many hundreds of hands and voices were involved in that. I've done it in works in television as well and [Dr. James Fox] is working in the same area. This is a kind of collective work which is a challenge to the ordering of intellectual activity within the Academy.

So the first point about moving outside of the Academy is also related to the issue of how individuals work in groups. And I see this conversation very much as a collective conversation in which there are many different voices that I look forward to hear from the listeners and from the students who've come here, most of whom I know to be irrepressible anyway. But I think the important point to bear in mind is we are doing here something very unusual, exceptional.

And I'd like to add a third point to that of how unusual this activity is. To have the privilege of working here in the place where the art was done and is being done, to work at, as it were, the pit face of a creative source of energy, artistic energy, is something I do not believe, in my experience, forty years in the profession I've ever done before. And I was speaking to my old friend, [Dr. Jay], who has more experience of academic events. I don't think either of us has spoken at a site of artistic creativity with the artists among us. So it's not just that we're talking about issues of art, but we are talking about issues of the living imagination and in the place where that imagination exists.

Collective work, public history, these are deviant activities within the Academy and we should I think, all be grateful for [Rubinoff] for having, in this building the perfect entity to open the doors for people to come in, who do not have dwellings of this kind to work in. It's exceptional.

The other point that I want to make that I think is of some importance is that since I came into the study of history in the sixties, by and large, people working in the fields of intellectual history, social history, labour history was where I started, are all "living with the neighbours". That is to say historians, since we began were engaged in finding an allied discipline that could help us, Philosophy or History or Economics or Demography or Sociology or name it. "Living with the neighbours" has been a very important part of the development of the study of history over the last forty years.

And in my area, the field of intellectual history, which had a good deal of social history in it, slowly but surely developed into what we now call cultural history. And that evolution over the last forty years has many different national and maybe even regional variants. But by and large, there has been a fruitful, maybe even essential multidisciplinarity about the development of cultural history. Multidisciplinarity, that there hasn't been only one set of neighbours that we've dealt with, but a whole series of them.

By and large, in the sixties when I got started, cultural history had a very, very strong French component in it. And that meant studying something which I still can't or don't translate: "mentalité." I have no idea what it means: Mental furniture, the past, the things that you know without saying them, the way you look at the world just by virtue of breathing the air. I mean there are lots of ways of mistranslating that phrase, but it's a mysterious one. But by and large, you needn't worry about it anymore because it's dead. And in its place there has been a very large, again primarily French, but not only, construction of the history of representations. Now, cultural history is the study of how people make sense of the past through a set of representations, 're'-presentations of the past.

We were walking earlier today with Jeffrey and I was asking him, you know, with all that steel, all that metal out there, is the presumption that one should have in walking around this park that this steel not only created extraordinary edifices in the twentieth century, but as Anselm Kiefer described it, has ruined a great deal of the twentieth century too, namely, that steel is the language of war.

And that brings me to the last point I want to raise. It is an astonishing moment. It's a moment that fits more or less what I have tried to describe to you as the essential tasks of the intellectual activity that I've been engaged in. First of all, it's a moment of multidisciplinary work, it's a moment of collective work, and it's certainly a moment outside of the Academy, and that is the Blaue Reiter moment. It's a moment from 1910/11 to 1913 in which some kind of transnational engagement in dealings with issues of the arts, science and society, with all of the conflicts entailed therein, became a natural forum for the avant garde to express their beliefs and their hopes.

And in this project the Blaue Reiter set up an almanac, or the two main leaders of it, Franz Marc and Kandinsky set it up. It was to be an annual, it's every year, have one about all the best news, good stuff that's coming out there. And it was blown to smithereens, to pieces. It was demolished completely, atomized by the First World War.

So I thought when [Rubinoff] and I got together that the really exciting way to begin a conversation about the interaction between art, science, war and peace in the twentieth century is to start with the Blaue Reiter group, because they did something which has never happened again. I believe that to be so. I'd be interested to be contradicted, whether there are parallels that we can say have picked up the pieces. My guess is it happened and that is it, in the twentieth century. So in a

degree we're talking about a vanished dream, a lost horizon. And why it has never happened again is a question that we have to pose that leads us into the dark areas of twentieth century history.

The question I think that we should ask is: to what extent is art multinational, or transnational might be the best way to speak it, and to what extent do those who are interested in art and in science imbricate it, locate it within the social and national conflicts of their own time? My guess is that in order to answer those questions in original ways we have to speak in different tongues, in different languages. I think [Rubinoff's] language is all around us. His statements are there to be seen and to be listened to.

Historians work in many different other languages and one of the jobs that we have here is a serious problem of translation. It's a real one and I think it happens in many different academic disciplines anyway. But it certainly happens between creative artists and scholars. There is a disconnect in the technical language and maybe even in the formal language that people use.

So what we have ahead of us is I think an interesting question of establishing translation, that was exactly the problem that the Blaue Reiter group had in front of them, because they dealt, they tried to deal with everybody who was doing something interesting no matter what their language, their background or their disciplines. I'm not sure we're much further on that they were in 1912 or 1913. I think the language problem is still fundamental. The problem dividing the Academy from creative artists is still fundamental. The problem dividing a collective like the Blaue Reiter from individual artists or individual scholars is still fundamental.

We're still engaged in the same set of interrogations as they were at that time. They were unlucky. They had the misfortune of flourishing right at the moment when the First World War destroyed what they had started, and "destroyed" I think is an understatement. What I wonder is whether we can see this conversation today as the beginning of a series of enquiries that can enable us to bring together creative art and scholarship in ways that have not happened before. I think all of us know that it's difficult. I think it can be done, but it requires a degree of suspension of disbelief on all sides. That is to say, tolerance is not always the high point of academic excellence. Some of my colleagues are wonderful scholars but tolerance is not one of their strongest elements. If we are able I think, to listen between the lines to the words not spoken, maybe to the silences too, we might be able to establish the beginning of a long conversation over many years.

EXCERPT OF FORUM DIALOGUE ON RUBINOFF'S 'Through the Lens of the Endgame'

JAY WINTER: Can I ask you, Jeffrey, do you share my view that conscience is social by definition? It is not an individual category or property that we have as separate individuals, but we have it by virtue of a shared language that we learn when we're young.

JEFFREY RUBINOFF: No.

JAY WINTER: Well, this is—I think this is a fundamental point. The word "conscience," I think, is critical to your approach, and once more I'm engaged in the art of translation, if I can. And it strikes me that there are two different pathways here.

JEFFREY RUBINOFF: Yes.

JAY WINTER: One of them involves the notion of inspiration and possibly of obligation, which are also important words for you. And I take the word "obligation" to be, by definition, social. Inspiration may not be. I'm not sure, but when we use the term "mature conscience," I think we have two choices: one of them going towards the social, and one of them going away.

I've been spending a reasonable amount of time trying to work out why the King James version of Elijah "conscience" is substituted for "silence". The Hebrew is Qol Demamah Daqqah, and the Hebrew means, "the thin voice of silence." That's exactly what it means. Qol Demamah Daqqah. The thin voice of silence. The King James version translated that to: "the still small voice of conscience." That's the English version. So we go from silence to conscience. And they were learned men. This was not trivial at all. And one of them may be a personal quantity, silence, although I do think there are social dimensions to that, too. But I still think that the evidence of the work of many artists that you cited, for example, the work of Simone de Beauvoir. We had talked about <u>the individual acts of conscience</u>. I still believe they are social acts.

JEFFREY RUBINOFF: <u>Acts of individual conscience</u>.

JAY WINTER: I think acts of individual conscience are social. They don't exist outside of the framework. And I would say that we have, therefore, two pathways.

JEFFREY RUBINOFF: Can I explain how I see this? The acts are social, yes, but conscience is something else. I think that, very soon, we're going to find a continuum of genes, and I'll use the word "switched on," but really, scientifically it is termed "expressed". There will be a cluster of genes that will be identified as conscience. And so you're going to have a continuum of people with various combinations of that cluster of genes turned on. We may choose our leaders or the leaders themselves come forward based on that continuum, avoiding the pure psychopaths with none turned on.

My argument is that artists, by nature, have the most amount switched on, if not all of them. They're born with this level of conscience. Now, when you're born with certain genes turned on or turned off, it's a predilection towards these things.

This is an important part of what I think is missing from most of the humanities that I've read in the last 30 or 40 years. None of them deal with Darwin and Darwin's humanism. Part of that, I think was, as mentioned in other papers, the nationalization of science. Darwin was British. You don't hear the Germans talking about Darwin. He's not even mentioned. The French don't mention Darwin. The British kept that science going. Crick and Watson were British, so they kept Darwin's science going there. Now, the way that it's crept into our language is in social Darwinism and, naturally, there's a complete negation of that. I mean, no one really wanted that. I really sense that most of the Marxists really wanted to be Lamarckians. They really wanted to have a sense that you could actually alter people's genetic being through social interaction. That doesn't work.

Why I differentiate the two [social and individual conscience] so strongly is the elastic nature of morality. That is morality has a sliding scale. It moves wherever you want to go. If you declare war on Jews, then they're fair game. And so, if they're fair game, it seems to me that morality says you should kill them. So what happens with the sliding scale of morality is the way that it remains social. The acts of individual conscience, not the individual acts, but the acts of an individual's conscience strikes me much more of answering to something "higher and inside" — and that higher and inside is the way that I look at Darwin.

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MARTIN JAY: Jay's put a little pressure on the second part of your definition of art, the one dealing with conscience. I want to ask you a bit about the first part, the idea of the imposition of will or the issue of the artist being basically intentionally creating and imposing his or her will on the material.

JEFFREY RUBINOFF: Okay, but the will is in accord with the mature conscience, and the mature conscience doesn't have that definition (imposition of will) here. A mature conscience is a fully conscious conscience.

MARTIN JAY: Ok, so let's say it's a will filtered through inertia and responsibility, reflexivity about it's implications. Now, I can understand why you're hostile to Duchamp, who obviously tries to, in some sense, decenter the work away from the will of the creator and found objects or ready-mades, or something that is aleatory, something that is not an expression. So it's an anti-expressive view of art, a view that takes us away from the all-powerful quality of the creative genius and the one who imposes his or her will.

And I think it's an interesting dialogue that one could have between those two positions. And, of course, 20th-century art, 21st-century art has engaged in that dialogue. But I was immediately—I immediately came to my third alternative, in a way, which is not one that I often draw on, but clearly is relevant, and that's Heidegger's notion of the work of art. I mean, Heidegger has a very powerful critique of the importance of will. And his alternative is one that emphasizes the object as disclosing something, not being an expression, not being somehow the subject imposing his or her will, but a disclosure. Now, it could be a disclosure of being, something that, you know, may be itself problematic.

But I must say, to be honest, looking at this extraordinary complex here, I had a very powerful sense of disclosure rather than imposition. I mean, there's a lot of you here. There's a lot of that. You know this

is signature art in a context that you've created. But the sense of the works being in the context of this extraordinary nature, the rhythms that they expose, the sense of form that they both juxtapose and somehow echo in the environment, the sense of the works themselves not being an imposition. I mean, they're small in comparison to this incredible space. So there seems to me to be more disclosure than will.

Now, what is disclosed, we can then try to unravel. Maybe it's not a single formula. But, I wonder if you've thought of that as an alternative way to conceptualize the power of the work rather than the stress on a will that is even filtered through a conscience that has matured.

JEFFREY RUBINOFF: Yes, this is the way that I think about it. The first is that to make a statement of existence itself is the first struggle against the absurdity of the full awareness of your own consciousness. That is, probably the most difficult thing is: why the hell care? And so the statement of existence takes an enormous amount of will to move against that absurdity. And that, I find, is very, very important, because with full consciousness, you're also fully conscious of the absurdity of your act.

So it requires the will to exist, and that's what I'm talking about. You have the will of the artist to exist with the necessity of the artist to exist, which you feel very strongly inside yourself. It took me a long time to fuse those two things together.

So the concept of disclosure is in the statement of existence itself and the celebration of existence itself. And if you can celebrate your own existence, that's part of the part of giving. That's part of the map of the human soul. So now you're disclosing the map of the human soul. That is disclosure. So the act of will, then, at that particular time, is not a will of imposition, it's the ability to overcome the inertia — the essential inertia that comes with the recognition of absurdity.

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ANNETTE BECKER: Jeffrey, since you've quoted Simone de Beauvoir, I would like to show the contradiction in her thoughts, and perhaps solve the problem between you. She speaks about acts of conscience, but when she could have demonstrated acts of conscience herself during the Second World War, she didn't. These ideas came in an article she wrote 15 years after the Second World War, when she had the capacity to think about what she could do during this terrible time. And what she wrote after the war was "you are not born a woman, you become a woman." So I was wondering if we could push that, that you are not born as human beings, you become. You are not born as an artist, you become. And, again, by this conscience or by the act of conscience, or by both together.

JEFFREY RUBINOFF: Mature conscience, by my thinking, is full consciousness. And so that only comes with knowledge. So there's no way that, by this definition, a child can create a work of art. It's not possible to do. There's not enough information there to be able to have a mature conscience. So I am agreeing with you completely. Her maturity and her recognition in this time after the war is probably by her own maturity from what she knew and what she learned. So yes, you do grow into it.

The only way that I can see this, is that the attempt to become fully conscious means accounting for whatever knowledge you might have. Now obviously no one is going to know everything, but the sum

of all human knowledge is what I see artists mapping. So as they map it and original art comes about, they become part of that knowledge itself, and so that's part of the act of making art.

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JAMES FOX: This park seems to be, in many ways, an attempt to opt out of that art world, and that's very admirable. And I think, in the last 30 or 40 years, much of the best art that has been produced has been a response, an attempt to get out of the art world, whether it's the land art movement or it's David Smith.

But at the same time, the very works you showed in your first slide show, the great modernist masterpieces of the early 20th century and the late 19th, they would not have been produced without an art world and without a network of dealers and collectors and critics and magazines, and art galleries and exhibitions. There would be no sphere for that work to have been produced.

And if we take it all the way back to Chauvet and the caves where there was no art world. I mean, it was 36,000 years, B.C. before we even had a word for art. I mean, I'm very much involved in the art world today, and when I go around these art fairs, I'm struck with this revelation, that the art world doesn't need art. Whereas, you know, in Chauvet, there was no need for an art world. Now it's the opposite way. But at the same time, I wonder what other options are left to us. I mean, is it the worst? Is it the best of many bad systems?

JEFFREY RUBINOFF: Well, one of the things is, that it wasn't so bad in the 1950s. When the dealers themselves had to work in their dedication to art, they became dedicated to the artists. And when I was looking for that in New York, it was only a pretence by then. You weren't an artist anymore. You were a petty manufacturer, and you were on the list. And, like I said, "cause any trouble, and we've got 10,000 people who will take your place."

So, I don't agree with you. I don't know how important that art world was at that particular point because the Blaue Reiter artists showed in their own environment at that particular time. The Blaue Reiter chose the works themselves, they found their places to show, they had enough patronage to mount those shows, but there was no such thing as art dealers at that point. They must have come afterwards, not from modernism.

So, I can imagine the support system must have grown up from supporters of that art finally becoming dealers and collectors trading among each other, but not at the beginning. I think that the artists themselves had control over that first market, and I think that they carried on from 1874, probably right into 1914.

JAMES FOX: Some people have even argued that, you know, the artist is himself or herself the product of the art world. You know, that without an art world packaging certain things in certain ways, then you're not going to have the figure of the artist, the person whose work you can buy. The named work being very much an invention of the Renaissance as well, this idea of wanting a Michelangelo rather than wanting an enunciation. So, in that sense we could say that the institution

precedes the individual. But for me, it's just this worry about what alternatives are there? It's fantastic that some artists like yourself can produce work without this fear of being commodified, and I think that's magnificent and is only a good thing. But that's only available to a select few, and I wonder where other people would go, what advice you would give to them who cannot do that.

MARIA TIPPETT What is a young artist supposed to do? Okay, they can drive a cab, they can teach, they can do all sorts of things. I know as a writer it's wonderful writing books and the act and the creativity and the intuition, all of that. But I have to interface with an audience. There has to be a connection somehow. And we're really lucky because we've gone around the park with you and you've talked about your work. But what is a young artist supposed to do, are they supposed to drive a cab? And how are they going to get their work out there?

JEFFREY RUBINOFF: I look at the statement of existence itself as a statement of defiance. That is the statement of defiance, to survive being an artist and to get through it and get through a lifetime. To be doing it even after 30, 40, 50, 60 years. That's a statement of defiance, and that's a statement of your own existence. And I don't know now that you really expect anything beyond that. One of the most difficult decisions that I experience, and I couldn't overcome in myself, was teaching, because what could I teach people…'Go out and drive a cab', 'Do whatever it takes to keep going because that's the only thing that there is really out there for you'? That's a terrible point of view, so I wouldn't teach. I just felt that it was almost criminal to teach. So, if people have [art] within them, it will emerge and does.

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JEREMY KESSLER: This is continuing in the vein of the question of trying to categorize the individual or social nature of the conscience, and it actually began with Martin Jay's suggestion of Heidegger's notion of art as disclosure as being an alternative to art as an act of will. I was very struck by that, because if the later Heidegger notion of art as disclosure gets away from a romantic idea of the individual artist creating art by fiat, his earlier notion of conscience is actually quite parallel to what Jeffrey is suggesting in terms of this idea of the mature conscience. And maybe it's a disturbing parallel.

And what I mean by that is Heidegger basically says that the desire to act in accord with our individual conscience is the first glimmer of authenticity, the first glimmer of true being within one's self. This model of conscience seems very paradigmatic of a notion of individual conscience. It's so individual that it definitionally has to make no reference to the given social environment. It has to stay within itself in a very radical way. Because of that, this notion of conscience has been very criticized as absolutely foreswearing, given moral content, given normative values that are received from the social environment. And these criticisms have political implications, talking about Heidegger pre-World War II.

You yourself have opposed very clearly, the idea of individual conscience to morality in a way that really resonates with Heidegger's notion of conscience. But at the same time, you clearly have lots of moral concerns. You're very concerned with nuclear violence. You flagged the kind of large-scale worries about genetic manipulation, and I think there's a moral charge there to your critique of that movement. So I'm curious how you relate these moral concerns that clearly do drive your work and

your thinking to a notion of conscience that seems to necessarily foreswear social concern or kind of input about morality from the social environment.

JEFFREY RUBINOFF: Again, it's not just conscience, it's mature conscience. And by mature conscience, I mean full consciousness, the full ability of the weight of your consciousness. Now, that full ability of the weight of your conscience, that's the social.the social side of that particular thing. That's the mature conscience part, but not conscience itself. It doesn't separate conscience itself.

So we're talking about art, now, as an act of will in accord with a mature conscience. It's that mature part that is the kicker in there, which is this question of can you act within the realm of what you know, conscionably? So that's quite different because it does keep your conscience quite independent in terms of the way that your mind may be structured. But on the other hand, you have to incorporate the knowledge that you have in order to have that act. And so it's acting at the outer limits of your own knowledge. So that means that knowledge becomes very important. So as I have matured, I also think that the maturity of my conscience has matured.

So those decisions are about awareness, for example, of manipulation of the genome. To me, I don't consider it just immoral, I consider it irrational. And so many of these things, such as nuclear winter, are actually the result of irrational acts. It's somehow the Enlightenment having turned back on itself from rationality to irrationality. And in face of that irrationality, you might in calling for rationality, in turn, call that morality.

There are so many irrational acts in the 20th century that were rationalized. And that is one of the aspects of the age of agriculture that I really criticize, and have criticized for the last 25 years. It is the ability to rationalize in ways that you come to a contradiction that is actually something highly irrational.

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JENNIFER WELLINGTON: We've quite often heard you use the term "original art," and you speak about creating original art. I was wondering how you define what is original art as opposed to, unoriginal art and who determines that. You also speak a lot about the individual conscience, and for an individual artist if it's an internal judgment, then a certain feeling or thought might be original because it's never occurred to them before. But if it's an externally judged thing, then other people might say, "Well, that's not original." And I was wondering, how do you think about what is original and who decides what is original art?

JEFFREY RUBINOFF: That's a really good question because when I originally thought of that, I had a very strong purpose in its formulation, and that was that it would be self-measuring within the artist, that they themselves would know, and that they would be self-judgmental on that particular issue. And that's what I wanted — a self-judgmental definition of art. It was not a prescription, but rather something that the individual artist could use to measure themselves and their own honesty about who they were and what they had accomplished, because I really believe that only the artist, internally, knows whether or not they've crossed that line into original art. This isn't about the viewer, this is about the internal workings of the artist, and I wanted a description or a way of communicating what

the artist might do as a set of criteria to measure himself, herself. And yes, that really was the purpose for that definition.

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KARUN KOERNIG Martin Jay, I just want to go back to your concept of disclosure. I wonder how closely you personally think the notion of disclosure parallels the concept of witnessing of the emergence of the identity of the object.

I would propose that it would be useful to pair the idea of disclosure, which parallels my concept of emergence of the identity of the object of art, to the act of will of the conscious subject, which then has to respond to that emergence of identity. For the object to disclose something there must be a subject, and for that disclosure to be of any interest, that disclosure must relate in an uncertain way to subjective will. By will, I mean the manifest degrees of freedom of action in human behaviour. That is why Heidegger's concept of disclosure requires the will of the subject for it to be useful or interesting.

MARTIN JAY Well, you've asked an enormously complex question. What is disclosed? First of all, I brought Heidegger into the conversation not because I'm, in any serious sense, a convinced Heideggarian, but because it moves us away from the subject of the artist as the dominant and creative will-expressive subject to something that is outside of the intention of the artist. Now, what that something is, what is disclosed—first of all, there's no one formula, so Heidegger may have emphasized something as grandiose as Being. I'm not, myself, willing to operate very much on that level, but there are many other things that are potentially disclosed.

Among the things, the viewer, or not the subject who makes, but the subject who appreciates and judges and so forth. Here, too, there may be an overcoming of the subject-object distinction, that we may find ourselves immersed in something that's more primordial, more basic than the subject looking from afar at an object. And it may situate in this larger, natural context. I mean, it's powerful. I say this without false flattery to be able to see these objects [Rubinoff's sculpture] both dwarfed by the larger environment, and also, in some ways, courageously asserting themselves against it, without being intrusive, without being, in some way, a violation of it. So one gets an interesting dialectic of natural beauty and artificial beauty. You know, the context and the human which, as you know, it's hard to do. I mean, I think that sometimes these two are not so easily juxtaposed. So these, I would say, are among the many disclosures that, just in my brief experience here, I've felt are, in fact, shown.

EXCERPT OF FORUM DIALOGUE ON DR. WINTER'S 'Scientists and artists between war and peace: the Blaue Reiter moment'

JEFFREY RUBINOFF: I thought what I would do is begin with the influence of the University of Berlin. So this fits very, very much with what we're talking about. Now I don't know if people are aware of the Humboldt University of Berlin and the list of notables who are associated with it.

We've got von Bismarck, Bonhoeffer, who you mentioned, Max Born, the physicist, W.E. DuBois, African-American activist and scholar. Paul Erlich, physician, Nobel Prize Medicine 1908, his work was done on syphilis. Albert Einstein. Friedrich Engels. Johann Gottlieb Fichte, a very important philosopher. He was the first philosopher at the university when it was founded.

Herman Emil Fischer, founder of modern biochemistry, Nobel Prize 1902. Fritz Haber, the inventor of both modern chemical warfare and synthetic ammonia. Otto Hahn was a student of Fritz Haber's and won the Nobel Prize for chemistry in 1944. He is the person most responsible for finding fission, and that was done in I think, 1938.

Hegel, that's Hegel the philosopher. Heinrich Heine the poet, who also was actually a secretary to Rodin, interestingly enough. Werner Heisenberg, physicist, Nobel Prize for Physics in 1932. Wilhelm von Humboldt, politician, linguist, and he was the founder of the university. Karl Liebknecht, social politician and revolutionary. Herbert Marcuse, Karl Marx, Lisa Meitner. Lisa Meitner was a physicist who actually confirmed the fission experiment by Otto Hahn.

Felix Mendelssohn, that's the composer. Max Planck, the physicist, von Schilling, the philosopher. Schopenhauer, the philosopher, that's just a few. This is a very, very long list. These are the people who might otherwise be familiar to most of us.

And then there are 33 Nobel Prize winners, among them Max Planck, Heisenberg, Otto Hahn, as I said, Einstein, Haber. So that gives you an idea on the power of this place. This place, in science, was a genuine powerhouse. Now in trying to keep all of this material together and keep this narrative going, I tied to connect Newton to ballistics. So we're talking about the utilization of science for its destructive power and the conversion of science into that to destructive power. …

That's the problem. I think Humboldt's [founder of the University of Berlin] purpose was to assure that there would be at least conversations with the scientists over the use and how, and the direction of where, their technology might go.

Now, I want to raise the University of Berlin and my reading of Lyotard and his attack on metanarratives. One question that I must ask is, what extant influence does Lyotard have on contemporary university culture, and as a result, on the culture as a whole? Now I'm raising this because of the metanarrative that Lyotard, a French philosopher, raises about the Humboldt University of Berlin.

As late as 2005, in his book Songs of Experience, Martin Jay gives Lyotard recognized credibility.

So to repeat, I must ask is what extant influence does Lyotard have on contemporary university culture and as a result, on the culture as a whole?

Certainly he has had little effect on the empirical sciences and mathematics, in my perception. What concerns me is the default position of resignation regarding the determination of the direction of the resultant technology. This appears to be the self-fulfilling result of the dismissal of metanarrative. It is not clear whether the dismissal of metanarrative follows Lyotard's dismissal of what he calls *the* metanarrative resulting from Humboldt's vision.[1]

"So in talking about the founding of the University of Berlin, it has been necessary to elucidate the philosophy that legitimated the foundation of the University of Berlin." This is Lyotard talking, and that philosophy was meant to be the development of contemporary knowledge.

As Lyotard states, many countries in the 19th and 20th century, adopted this university organization—this is the critical part—as a model for foundation or reform of their own system of higher education, beginning with the United States. I was lucky to have attended an undergraduate school that had been purposely created in 1958, with the spirit of knowledge as its center piece. By the spirit of knowledge, I mean spirit free of commodification.

It is not clear to me whether Lyotard is negatively critical or wistful about its loss. Perhaps he's both. My exposure to art was a fusion of art and knowledge free of commodification. The commodification of knowledge has since become dangerously close to complete as the underlying force of the information economy. So the question is what is the state of resistance to this completion?

MARTIN JAY: On the issue of metanarratives, since this now seems to be central, we have to make clear why Lyotard was so hostile. He came out of a socialist tradition. His hostility to metanarrative was hostility to the socialist notion that somehow there was a narrative from feudal to bourgeois to socialist, then communist society. This crashed, he felt abandoned by that and moved beyond it. So that was the metanarrative that he particularly had abandoned, which then led to a general critique of notions of metanarrative, whatever they might have substantively.

And I think there was a lot of positive energy that was unleashed by that, because we recognize, first of all, it was a question of who was telling the narrative. The narratives simply weren't there, they were narrated. And second, who was the protagonist? Was there a subject the way there might be a hero of a novel? And we discovered that this was always a particular subject claiming to be universal.

So whether it's an aesthetic subject claiming to represent the avant-garde of Art de Coeur or a political subject pretending to represent the emancipation of human kind, or a subject of knowledge representing somehow the closer approximation of the truth. It was always some sense of a privileged subject. And feminism and the subaltern studies, versions of a kind of different subject, made it very difficult to have any confidence that we could ever locate that single figure who was the protagonist or the group who was the protagonist.

And we then recognized that the idea of a unified history was itself a fairly recent invention. Something

[1] See the following link for a good overview of Wilhelm von Humboldt and his ideas: http://www.ibe.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/archive/publications/ThinkersPdf/humbolde.PDF

that came basically into European consciousness, and only European, in the 18th century and was itself historically created, and was dependent on a certain privileged version basically of white male notions of being ahead of everybody else.

And the German University of Berlin represented that to a certain extent. Now there might have been a swing of the pendulum too far in the other direction. But in the history of art, just to stick with the Blaue Reiter and some of the more specific issues, that version of aesthetic modernism, moving towards abstraction, moving towards purity, moving towards disentanglement from didacticism, the kind of Clement Greenberg story, was one that was challenged by, let's say, several alternatives with the Duchampian alternative being one of them. Which went in a very different direction from the Greenberg story, purification of media and so forth.

So what we have now are very interesting, I would say, contests of different narratives. I mean, it's not a question of meta or none, but rather different competing narratives. And Lyotard himself argued that there ought to be lots of little narratives.

So with all of that reflexivity about metanarrative, when we tell a story of someone like Kandinsky or the Blaue Reiter in general, seeing themselves as the cutting edge of a singular linear history, we now have an ironic distance from that. Even though we may recognize that it's not chaos, or relativism or going nowhere or having absolutely total contingency.

So it's <u>an interesting post-metanarrative moment</u>, <u>which has learned from Lyotard</u>, even though I have many quarrels with aspects of his work.

JEFFREY RUBINOFF: So then we have isolated ourselves into smaller and smaller narratives and I think the argument of a much larger narrative has to come back. I have read that the abandonment of the metanarrative has led to abandonment of the concept of significant historical narratives themselves. As the rest of intellectual history begins to abandon metanarrative, then it abandons the ability to address these issues by people with a non-technical point of view.

My proposal of the concept of the end of the age of agriculture presupposes an even larger narrative than the 35,000 years of the history of art by artists. Ultimately, it's The Origin of Species: Darwin's three and a half billion year history of life on the planet. That's our history, and that is a huge metanarrative..

I think that it is important to discuss the serious disengagement from Darwin that I have perceived by the humanities. In 1953, Darwinian thinking went from theory to a full-fledged science from the proposal of DNA by Crick and Watson. I'm raising the question openly now as to why the humanities have not dealt with the humanistic side of Darwin. While science moves ahead, and moves towards possible alterations, within the next 50 or 100 years, of the human genome itself, this disengagement seems to me to confront us with an enormous problem.

This science and the ensuing genetic engineering have evolved into one of the most important arguments of human values facing the future. The disengagement of non-scientists and the stated abdication by abandonment of the metanarrative may prove even more destructive than thermo nuclear war.

EXCERPT OF FORUM DIALOGUE ON DR. JAY'S 'Chromophilia: Der Blaue Reiter, Walter Benjamin and the Emancipation of Color

JEFFREY RUBINOFF: I'll have to admit that I have difficulty responding to this because this sits within an area where almost automatically people assume art and painting are interchangeable terms. In fact, in the Blaue Reiter Almanac we sculptors don't exist. There's a mention of Archipenko but in passing, by a writer I don't know.

But mainly I want to get to the question of theory and what Kandinsky himself thinks about artistic theory or esthetic theory. So here's what he says.

"No such theory of principle can be immaterial. That which has no material existence cannot be subjected to a material classification. That which belongs to the spirit of the future can only be realized in feeling and to this feeling the talent of the artist is the only route." That's nice. Except then he says, *"Theory is the lamp which sheds light on the petrified ideas of yesterday and of the more distant past."* So this is a warning against aesthetic theory. And then he goes on pages later to deal with his theory of colour. So I find that to be either a mistranslation — or something very, very odd — but he just negates his own argument.

He goes on for pages and pages and pages on theory of colour, but he's already negated the idea that theory should be rejected in the first place.

But I have to admit that there's little that I can actually say about this as a sculptor because it does follow this prejudice that's inherent in the entire Blaue Reiter movement itself, against sculpture. And so your paper also follows along the same line of that particular thing. So when form is attacked, sculpture is attacked.

MARTIN JAY: Well, I'm very glad you brought up the issue of sculpture and the relation to these controversies. I mean it's of course problematic always to hierarchize the arts. Sculpture has always been, not always but usually been understood as somehow in the middle. You know, it's not as problematic as architecture which is so useful, but it's also not as somehow pure as those which are dematerialized entirely like music. So you get different hierarchies and sculpture sometimes is denigrated.

So sculpture has generally, but not always, tended towards form, line, shape, away from colour. When I say "generally", there are counter examples.

For example your sculpture, which maintains a strong sense not only of form but also of the matter out of which the form has been shaped, a kind of balance which includes in the matter something that has to do with either intended or unintended colour. And it's quite clear in your own work, the distinctions between works that are allowed to rust and works that are not, works that have the lichen. So there is colour and these are not just forms. And they're colours which merge out of choices that we make. Let's put it that way. And also, ways in which nature has had an impact on the objects.

EXCERPT OF FORUM DIALOGUE ON DR. WINTER'S 'Reconfiguring the sacred: Artists, scientists and spiritualism before 1914'

JAY WINTER: I think the point that I want to raise, and this to me is broader, and that is, my worry Jeffrey, is about low tech war. It's about child soldiers in Guinea and the Ivory Coast, who don't need any technology to hack off the arms and limbs of literally thousands of people engaged in warfare that is endemic around the world. And it strikes me that what we need to do is to multiply the dangers of wars, that have very different faces, that are terrifying, but are different from the one that you have described.

And if we imagine the field of cruelty that exists in the Middle East — the Lebanese or the Palestinian stories. There are dreadful futures that we need to imagine as ones we need to worry about and think about, that have multiple sources, that are separate from the ones that Jeffrey refers to, that I don't doubt have equal nightmare qualities to it.

But I just think we shouldn't underestimate the mutant quality of war to create different forms of destructive power that can be used by all kinds of groups, in all kinds of ways, that are happening now. I'm not talking about next year or ten years from now or potential nuclear winter or whatever, I'm talking about the low tech winter that comes across African or Latin American or Asian societies, that are present to this day.

It's those that make me really fear for the future of rationality. It's not consisted, in my view, with any historical approach, to assume that war will be one thing. It'll be multiple things, and they'll go in different directions. My hope is that the way of dealing with the question about the end of the age of agriculture, is to see that war has outlasted it. And it's gone in directions that are probably very difficult for scientists to have predicted, or for strategic scientists, like Herman Kahn or anybody else.

I would say the unlikely outcomes of the late 20th century, are ones that are inconsistent with the nuclear winter debates that took place so strongly and were perfectly valid and important to have.

JEFFREY RUBINOFF: Okay, one of the aspects, and I think I said it earlier in my presentation, is the primal scream against residual, tribal warfare. When I really became aware of this—and it really shocked me— was in 1979 when the Ayatollah came back into Iran. I thought tribalism was on the wane. That it was finally on its way out.

There was a sense in the 1960s and the '70s, that we were moving beyond tribalism..

So one of the aspects of ourselves regarding beyond the age of agriculture is to re-examine ourselves and our institutions as to what is residual tribalism, And among those things, I look at religion as metaphorical tribalism. The aspect of agriculture that was so significant was not that there wasn't tribalism before agriculture, but how strongly the age of agriculture reinforced it. And how that grew in magnitude from a tribe that might be 50 people, 75 or 100 people, to whole civilizations that saw themselves tribally...That is the dangerous residue.

EXCERPT OF FORUM DIALOGUE ON DR. BECKER'S 'A language for humanity?' The Blaue Reiter, and the failed search for universality

JAMES FOX: I also wanted to respond to your final lines of your paper when you said that of course the war blew to pieces the dreams of transnational creativity and transformation and the world has been poorer ever since. I want to say something that's maybe a bit cheeky and something that will probably infuriate everyone in the room, but I think the First World War in many ways improved art, improved modern art. Now, it didn't improve it if you judge the modernistic experiment as the only measure of the quality of art, and certainly it did kill a many great artists. But if we take other parameters, other ways of judging what this did to modern art it was in some ways a great deliverance.

We see the autonomization of art, the creation of a separate sphere of art. Art moving way from society, and this is something we were talking about here, about how many people went to see these shows. In the grand scheme of things, what these people were doing was pretty much irrelevant, and it was the First World War that forced artists and forced modern art to become accountable, to have to come to terms with a society to which it had to justify its existence.

And I think many modern artists came of age during the First World War. For many the First World War was the first opportunity for them to actually make art that actually had a social function. Whether this was to memorialize the dead, whether it was to help people cope with the difficulties they'd faced, whether it was to help people understand what actually happened in the war and see the war. And I think without the First World War we wouldn't have had these so great developments that happened during and afterwards, the Bauhaus, a modernism and have that kind of social agenda, a political agenda. Dada, which of course had a very strong political agenda.

So, I think if we shift the criterion, and I think it's about time that art historians particularly shift the criteria from formal experiment, the First World War is not quite the artistic tragedy that people think it is.

JEFFREY RUBINOFF: Those are fighting words and I'll say how those are fighting words. Interesting things happened afterward. It happened to Picasso, and this may happen to these young painters easier than it happens to sculptors. But I really see it in the work. As to the Bauhaus, I always had a lot of faith in the Bauhaus, but lately I don't because I think Gropius really regarded art as a craft, and it went back to being a craft once it went into the Bauhaus, which in turn turned the artist back into a petty functionary again. This is very serious. You can say no. But I see it in Kandinsky. Kandinsky starts to stylize his work. That late Kandinsky is very stylized. It just fits. It's like he's coasting on Kandinsky, and I find it very stylized and not nearly as raw or as good as it was before.

MARIA TIPPETT: Something like Lissitzky?

JEFFREY RUBINOFF: Well, Lissitzky had a position to take once he came out of Russia, and I think the Bauhaus was a home. I think that that was great. I think it was true of Gabo as well. After 1923

when Lenin died, the shift started to happen and those guys got out, and so they actually found a home, and I think that that's really a plus.

MARIA TIPPETT: Well, some of them stayed. Tatlin and Malevich,stayed until 1933.

JEFFREY RUBINOFF: I know they did, but look at late Malevich. It starts becoming early Impressionism. That's a step backwards. Malevich disappears at that particular point. Okay. So, we already destroyed Kandinsky. Let's keep this going here. Picasso becomes a victim of the success of those Picassos, those late and middle Picassos in 1923 and 1924. They're just Picasso doing Picasso. It's like de Niro doing de Niro, and Jack Nicholson doing Jack Nicholson. You know, he becomes a victim of his own success and from that point on he's Picasso doing Picasso. Sorry. Just destroyed him as well. So, these are some of the people from that particular time. It doesn't happen to Brancusi. Brancusi does some of his greatest work after that time. Gabo does as well.

MARIA TIPPETT: What about Gabo? That's wonderful work.

Jeffrey Rubinoff: So, we're talking about sculptors maturing later because they don't sell . That's the reason why. They can't become a victim of their own success because that just is not in the cards. On the other hand, painters can, and Picasso had become so famous by that time — it's Picasso doing Picasso. I see so much of that work afterwards and it's like—snore. And I see that Matisse becomes Matisse—snore—and there's a lot of sleepers after that. And so when James says art improved, you're going to have to come up with a lot newer artists. Klee comes into his own. I agree. Klee easily comes into his own after the war.

MARIA TIPPETT: He's at the Bauhaus.

JAMES FOX: I'll give you a number of examples, but certainly I know British art best, but let's put aside British art. Say someone like Fernand Léger, a great French painter. I mean, he saw the First World War. He was in Verdun where all these terrible things were happening, and what he saw was a chair on a tree, stuck on a tree, and said, "This is the great vindication of modernism." And for Léger, before the First World War he was moving into these areas of abstract terrain and very beautiful pictures in their own right. But for him, the First World War was the moment when he got in touch again with the French people. He was there serving. He saw real people, and he realized that he felt that the direction his work should take is not away from the people and towards some hermetic experimentation but back towards some constructive relationship to society, where the figure came back, the subject came back, the city came back. And I think that makes his art all the more interesting and rich. That's my view anyway.

JEFFREY RUBINOFF: One thing that I have a perception of, and I think others do as well, is that it's a 31-years war. It begins in 1914. It runs to exhaustion. You've got so many millions dead on either side. It needs rest. The war doesn't end. It just simply requires new cannon fodder. It takes another 20 years to build it. So, if you said we need 20 years to keep this thing going, guess when you go to war again? Exactly. So, that's the way that I see it. What goes on is a respite in that time, and I agree with you, these things happen among artists, writers, and others. That transformation happens in the respite, but it is only a respite. It's a respite because that war never ended. It just didn't. You can't just explain Weimar or do any of those things and, unless you see it as a continuation of one into the other, this is just an excuse to stop for a while.

Whereas there's a vacuum that's left and then a lot of new work comes into that vacuum, and a lot of cynicism comes with it. We have to look at Dix and Gross and the Dada, and Hemmingway and the group of American artists. The cynicism that grows in that particular period grows out of that war. So, I think it should never be thought of as not being continuous. I think that it's a continuous war that just takes a respite. So, James when you look at what goes on in that period, 1918 to 1939, you're really looking at art in an interwar respite, post-World War I period.

1918 was not a new beginning.