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Mind the gAPP-Museum of Stolen Art: Reminiscing, Collecting and Curating Missing Artworks

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It takes a village to write a Master's Thesis. This Thesis is dedicated to my close and extended family, my incredibly supportive friends, my wonderful partner and the amazingly patient and wise supervisor Noit Banai.

Table of Contents

1 Introduction

"[W]hen we agree about our hallucinations, we call it 'reality.'"

— Anil Seth, neuroscientist[1]

With the simultaneous rise of artwork digitalization and art theft, the focus of this master's thesis lies at the intersection of a polemicized cluster issues that cause cultural hallucinations. Throughout my thesis, I analyze phenomena such as virtuality, storage, and curating digital(ized) artworks in an era of hypermodernity by focusing on an art project, the *Museum of Stolen Art* (*MOSA*), a virtual reality application for iPhone and Android created by Israeli-born and New York–based multimedia artist Ziv Schneider, an interactive designer and adjunct professor at the Interactive Telecommunication Program (ITP) of the Tisch School of the Arts, NYU. Generally, her exclusively technology-oriented projects involve themes such as presence, absence, loss, death, remembrance, and knowledge. Schneider describes herself on her website as an "[a]rtist and designer playing with technology." As a multimedia artist, she synthesizes various digital design practices to explore how new technologies, especially computer-based media, can alter or augment narratives through virtual spatialization and interaction. Schneider's work is located at the intersection of documentary film, video games, and volumetric photography. An omnipresent feature of her projects has been her manipulation of databases with the aim of creating alternative narratives for chosen databases.[2] After the launch of *MOSA*, in 2014, Schneider has been further experimenting with virtual reality, including a project for *The Economist*'s first virtual reality (VR) experience, entitled *RecoVR: Mosul, a collective reconstruction*—a virtual tour of the reconstructed Mosul Museum in Iraq. Recovering and reconstructing lost cultural heritage has been her main objective in art project applications like *MOSA* and *RecoVR: Mosul, a collective reconstruction*.[3] Thus, the two projects are excellent case studies of various complex and technologically conditioned entanglements that define the contemporary art world. Situated somewhere between fact and virtual fantasy, the two art projects deal with humankind's relentless struggle to compensate for the loss of their

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[1] Anil Seth, *Your Brain Hallucinates Your Conscious Reality* <https://www.ted.com/talks/anil_seth_how_your_brain_hallucinates_your_conscious_reality> [accessed 1 September 2019].
[2] See Appendix A, Appendix B and Appendix C.
[3] See Appendix A, p. 158-159.

valuable artifacts, a phenomenon that is deeply embedded in the cultural fabric of our societies. Schneider was working as a research fellow and lecturer at ITP at the time of the interview, in 2018.[4] As a part of her artist residency at Pioneer Works, Brooklyn, in 2017, Schneider was developing an ongoing 3D-printed portrait series *Capsules*, alongside with other VR and AR experimentations. These all illustrate her interest in the hypermodern human condition of satellization and perpetual state of remoteness in the era of hypermodernity.[5] Science fiction and outer-inner-space aside, this exploration of the fictions of the art world begins using *MOSA* as case study. The three main chapters of the thesis deal first with the issue of what type of artistic expression *MOSA* is, second, for what purpose *MOSA* possibly could have been created, and, finally, how and to what extent Schneider succeeded in conveying the message *MOSA* was intended to carry through established curatorial practices.

1.1 Mind the gAPP—*Museum of Stolen Art* (*MOSA*)

"The Museum of Stolen Art *is a virtual space for art that has been stolen or looted, lost to greed or conflict. It is a virtual reality experience where one can enjoy artwork that is otherwise hidden. The museum is dedicated to engaging the public in culturally significant items that are in danger and aim to assist in the recovery of stolen art."*

— Ziv Schneider[6]

According to the artist, *MOSA* was initiated, in 2014, as a modest student project for one of her master's classes, called *Cabinets of Wonder*, held by Nancy Hechinger of the Tisch School of the Arts, NYU.[7] Hechinger's reading list may have changed between 2014, when Schneider was creating *MOSA*, and 2017, the information currently available online, but is instrumental to understanding the professor's rationale for structuring the class series *Cabinets of Wonder*. Upon completing Hechinger's seminar, Schneider's playful project was released to the public as a fully functioning smartphone application but has been modified at

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[4] Appendix A, p. 157.
[5] Ibid. p.
[6] 'The Museum of Stolen Art' <http://mosa.ziv.bz/> [accessed 11 October 2016].
[7] See Appendix A, p.; 'Course Overview and Rules of Play | Cabinets of Wonder 2017' <https://itp.nyu.edu/classes/cow-fall2017/syllabus-assignments/course-overview-and-basics/> [accessed 8 October 2019].

least once since it was initially released and is presently still downloadable online free of charge. Prior to entering the maze of *MOSA* (Figure 1), via a dimmed entry hall, where the title of this virtual installation (Figure 3) is featured on an info screen, the user has to activate the app by pointing the disproportionally large yellow circular cursor on the start info screen (Figure 2), while repetitive electronic music plays in the background. This action lights up the previously gloomy entrance hall and reveals the info screen, informing the user about the exhibitions currently on display in *MOSA*, as well as providing three submenus: *Explore*, *About,* and *Report* (Figure 4). Should the user chose the submenu *Explore* by pointing the now yellow cursor dot, the info screen with the titles of current exhibitions disappears and the user can then roam freely about the virtual space of *MOSA*. The second submenu, *About*, offers a variety of information on sources and contributions, including the source databases that were crucial for the project (Figure 5). The third submenu leads to a virtual space external to the virtual space of *MOSA* where the user can report their sightings and experiences of featured stolen artworks to the *Stolen Art Hotline* or simply return to the entry hall (Figure 6).

1.1.1 General Features

The above mentioned digitally constructed architectural structure of the virtual space of *MOSA* seems to have a double concentrically arranged circles at its center, with the space between the circles functioning as a centrally aligned corridor connecting all the (mock-)exhibition halls (Figure 1, Figure 39). The space was prefabricated and purchased by Schneider through Unity, a software program that the artist used to create the museum she envisioned.[8] This virtual space has three general built-in characteristics occurring throughout the entire application:

- the labyrinth-like structure,
- the automated prolonged picture frame zoom-in, and
- the principle of human-machine-human interaction.

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[8] See Appendix A, p. 157.

The first characteristic, the maze-like floorplan, combined with the possibility of app-users choosing their own starting points in *MOSA*, enables visitors to take various paths through or lose themselves in the virtual museum by choosing commands *Explore* in the entry hall or *Walk Around* on the navigation sheet. The second characteristic becomes apparent to the viewer when, upon viewing the reproductions, an automated zoom-in of the reproduction is activated. This action is only set in motion when a viewer gazes at a reproduction, pointing the now invisible and imagined cursor at a reproduction for a longer time frame in the virtual space of *MOSA*. At that precise moment, the frame zooms in and freezes on the viewed object. Foreshadowing futuristic interconnectivity, a possibility of crowdsourcing has been built into the app. The visitor has the option of leaving a message on the answering machine about the missing artworks represented in *MOSA* via the *Report* submenu. This feature allows a certain degree of interaction between the visitor and the art project while the visitor is transported into a separate virtual space (Figure 6). Furthermore, the *Exit* signs (Figure 8, Figure 53), which, upon using the same command as previously discussed in the navigation sheet, expel the app user from the app, are scattered throughout the virtual installation. The app user then has to re-enter the app and begin the journey anew. Additionally, the four (mock-)exhibitions, as described below, have their own underlying specificities. With these characteristics in mind, the description of each (mock-)exhibition is needed to understand the complexity of an art project like *MOSA*. The short resume provided below is a comprised description of *MOSA* based upon my transcriptions of written and spoken texts featured in the app.[9]

After a brief phase of experimentation, the user discovers what I named a navigator sheet, which is available throughout the entire virtual experience and appears automatically when the device or the VR glasses are faced toward the floor of this virtual space (Figure 7). The navigator sheet gives the *MOSA* visitor three possibilities to choose from, again by means of the yellow cursor dot: *Walk Around*, *Choose Exhibition*, and *Mute Audio*. It is possible to experience *MOSA* with or without the soundtrack playing in the background by muting or unmuting the music with the *Mute Audio* command on the navigation sheet. The *Walk Around* command of the navigation sheet is similar to the *Explore* submenu encountered in the entry hall, as both enable the app user to experience *MOSA* at their own pace. However, the visitor has the option to choose an exhibition of their liking at any time, and by moving the yellow cursor dot to *Choose Exhibition* on the navigation sheet, they can teleport to the chosen exhibition instantly.

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[9] See Appendix B.

The app, in its essence, is an exhibition of virtual exhibition practices. *MOSA* differs from the known and wide-spread digital databases of familiar art institutions, because Schneider's reproductions are not high-resolution digital photographs of artworks but instead almost border on miniatures, with little white glitches programmed into them (Figure 19, Figure 43, Figure 45). Once entering the databases from which the reproductions originate, the spectator is confronted with better quality reproductions than those presented in the actual app or with the complete absence of the reproductions of artworks.[10] As a result, a dissonance of the three realities—the reality of the app, the reality of the app viewer, and the reality of the database—becomes tangible to the viewer if they decide to leave the app and proceed to the databases mentioned in the in-app commentaries or in the credit section of the app (Figure 5).[11] To describe Schneider's online exhibitions spaces, I have chosen the term (mock-)exhibition, because the virtual galleries of *MOSA* are exclusively virtual spaces that merely mimic traditional museum architecture and "exhibit" reproductions of missing artworks: They are not exhibitions in the traditional sense of the word. *MOSA* currently features the following four online in-app (mock-)exhibitions:

- *Recently Stolen* (Figures 8–20)
- *Stolen European Painting* (Figures 21–37)
- *Stolen Photographs* (Figures 38–50)
- *The Private Collection of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos* (Figures 51–68)

When *MOSA* was first released to the public, two additional exhibitions, *The Looting of Iraq* and *The Looting of Afghanistan*, had been on display but have since been excluded from *MOSA* and incorporated in a web installation piece, *RecoVR: Mosul.*[12] *RecoVR* was commissioned by *The Economist Media Lab* in association with Project Mosul, a crowdsourcing initiative devoted to transforming photographs of cultural heritage and transforming them into their 3D counterparts.[13] The project was described by the editorial head of *The Economist Media Lab* as a "Museum of Destroyed Art" and therefore

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[10] See Appendix C.
[11] See Appendix B.
[12] See Appendix A, p. 159
[13] See Appendix A, p. 159; 'Introducing "RecoVR Mosul", The Economist's First VR Experience', *The Economist*, 20 May 2016 <https://www.economist.com/blogs/prospero/2016/05/virtual-reality> [accessed 18 January 2018]; 'About', *REKREI* <https://rekrei.org/about> [accessed 8 October 2018].

represented a certain continuation of *MOSA*.[14] In *RecoVR*, Schneider worked in co-operation with Laura Juo-Hsin Chen, an interaction designer and programmer from Taipei, Taiwan, who also attended ITP.[15] Chen's involvement in *RecoVR* remains a subject for further discussion. *RecoVR*, similarly to *MOSA*, was conceptualized as an immersive online virtual experience, but it was never released to the public. In a 2018 interview with Schneider, conducted by me, the artist remained vague about why the project was not released in its full form, but there were several factors at play, such as the format of the project or the general accessibility of the format of photogrammetry to the viewership.[16] Therefore, this thesis exclusive analyzes *MOSA*, beginning with a brief description of the (mock-)exhibitions.

1.1.2 Recently Stolen

Recently Stolen (Figures 8–20), which is located in the upmost inner center of *MOSA* (Figure 1), features twelve reproductions of missing artworks. While there is no in-app commentary, the wall captions next to the reproduction provide information about the artists, the title of the work, and the technique and/or medium.[17] As it is the case with all reproductions in *MOSA*, these depictions were borrowed from databases that archive stolen or missing artworks. The direct source of the visual and textual data is not provided by the artist for every (mock-)exhibition but was in this instance probably taken from INTERPOL's database of stolen works of art, as this database includes a category entitled "The most recent stolen works of art reported to INTERPOL."[18] The only common criterion of this collection appears to be the time of their disappearance—recently.

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[14] Ziv Schneider, 'Interview Ziv Scheider (Nieuwe Media Kunstenaar)' (Door Barbara Oosterwijk, interviewer), *Archeologie Leeft*, 2017 <http://www.archeologieleeft.nl/interview-ziv-scheider-nieuwe-media-kunstenaar/> [accessed 18 January 2018].

[15] onioneye, 'About « Laura Juo-Hsin Chen' <http://www.jhclaura.com/about/> [accessed 7 October 2019].; *RecoVR: Mosul, a Collective Reconstruction | The Economist* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0EazGA673fk> [accessed 7 October 2019], 5:12.

[16] See Appendix A, p. 159; *"The public release was in May 2016 and here we decided to not release it as an interactive experience because of where things are in the market."* for reference see footnote no. 13.

[17] See Appendix B, p. 163-177.

[18] See Appendix C.

1.1.3 Stolen Photographs

In comparison to *Recently Stolen*, spoken commentary is provided for the (mock-)exhibition *Stolen Photographs* (Figures 38–50). An in-app commentary is triggered automatically upon entering the virtual hall, and the viewer is informed that the reproductions originate from the FBI's *National Stolen Art File*.[19] Along with the inquiries about the source database for the reproductions the value of some of the high profile photographs on the art market is occasionally mentioned.[20] The second part of the commentary describes the circumstances under which some of the eleven photograph reproductions on display in this virtual room supposedly went missing through an art theft in Birmingham, Michigan, in 1998.[21] The informational wall texts then state the title of the artwork, followed by the artist.[22]

1.1.4 Stolen European Painting

Compared to the previous two (mock-)exhibitions, *Stolen European Painting* (Figures 21–37) has the most extensive in-app commentary. The commentary does not provide any specifics about the source database from which the reproductions were borrowed. However, almost all the artworks featured in this virtual (mock-)exhibition can be found on the "FBI Top Ten Art Crimes" list, which the artist probably combined with the International Foundation for Art Research (IFAR) database *Art Loss Register*.[23] In total, sixteen reproductions of paintings are featured in this virtual exhibition hall, of which ten have their own commentary that activates upon zooming in on the reproduction.[24] Along with basic information about the artworks familiar from any guided tour through a conventional museum, in the style of conceptual artist Andrea Fraser, the sometimes-questionable backstories of how the artworks are thought to have disappeared are provided, and their estimated art market value is occasionally mentioned. The commentary on the ten reproductions focuses on six high-profile art thefts that all occurred in fairly famous art museums around the world. The emphasis is on the artworks stolen in the 2012 heist at the Kunsthal Museum, in Rotterdam (four reproductions; Figure 33, Figures 35–37), and the Isabella Gardner Museum, in 1990 (three reproductions; Figure 22, Figure 25, Figure 29). The third place is occupied by the art

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[19] See Appendix B, p. 178.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Ibid. p. 178-180.
[23] See Appendix C.
[24] See Appendix B, p. 167-177.

theft at Van Gogh Museum, in 2002 (two reproductions; Figure 28, Figure 32). After listing the standard details such as artist, title, technique/medium, and year of creation, the wall texts situated next to the reproductions emphasize their institutional ownerships by listing the institutions from which the missing artworks were stolen.[25] Further details of these art thefts are discussed later in this thesis.

1.1.5 The Private Collection of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos

Finally, *The Private Collection of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos* (Figures 51–68) exhibits fifteen reproductions. The in-app commentary describes Ferdinand Marcos' dictatorship in the Philippines and later focuses on Marcos' connections to the United States, whereafter it sheds light on the looted wealth that Ferdinand and his wife Imelda acquired during his period of control.[26] The reproductions of artworks on display in this particular (mock-)exhibition predominantly depict works of art created by famous artists of European or American origin. According to the in-app commentary, Marcos's art collection was purchased through ill-gotten money and disappeared along with him and his wife as they fled Philippines after the political upheavals of 1986.[27] The Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) was founded that very same year. The reproductions in this (mock-)exhibition are from PCGG's database, *The Missing Art Movement*. The main objective of the PCGG lies in recovering the artworks so that they can later be sold on the art market and the assets gained from the sales invested back into Philippines—a very interesting case exemplifying the precarious circular economy existing in art markets.[28] Information on the acquisition cost of the artworks, where it could be found in the evidence remaining after the Marcos's disappearance, is listed along with the artist, title, technique/medium, and year of creation in the description text on the wall next to the reproductions. When comparing *The Private Collection of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos* to previously described (mock-)exhibitions of *MOSA*, the former seems thematically out of place, as the database is obviously heavily politically motivated. However, whether or not *MOSA*'s (mock-)exhibitions build a coherent unit of substance as a whole is beside the point here: No museum has ever been a coherent unit of substance.

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[25] See Appendix B, p. 167-177.
[26] Ibid. p. 181-182.
[27] Ibid.
[28] 'The Missing Art Movement' <http://www.missingart.ph/> [accessed 15 January 2018].

1.2 Research Questions and Thesis

"[A]rt criticism of technology is a taboo."

— Paul Virilio[29]

The focus of this thesis lies on researching how current technological advances influence contemporary art in theory and practice, using *MOSA* as a case study. To develop the methodology for the case study of *MOSA*, the contributions of Erkki Huhtamo regarding the interconnectedness of technology-enabled virtuality and virtual exhibition practices have been indispensable. Furthermore, Huhtamo, a media archaeologist, exhibition curator, and professor at the University of California, Los Angeles, has succeeded in outlining the history of artistic practices relying on virtuality and their relevance to understanding contemporary media art. In a chapter entitled "On the Origins of a Virtual Museum" in the reader *Museums in a Digital Age*, Huhtamo outlines a basic framework for analyzing works created by media artists: "[W]orks [of contemporary experimental media artists] often raise issues like storage and erasure, memory and forgetting, revealing and hiding, the physical and the virtual."[30] Upon reading the chapter, I was inspired to develop the research question(s) for my thesis along those lines. Therefore, Huhtamo's brief description of major concepts concerning most contemporary media artists has been altered to analyze Schneider's art project *MOSA*. The exact order of Huhtamo's binaries has been rearranged to better demonstrate the multi-faceted nature of *MOSA* to the reader. Nevertheless, it is important that these binaries are not understood as rigid, irreconcilable poles on a binary spectrum. Rather, they are analytical terms on each side of a spectrum of processes that are interconnected to each other without "either-or" polarizations. Furthermore, the binaries storage–erasure and memory–forgetting have been merged into a single subchapter because the processes of memorizing and forgetting have been gradually conceptualized as distinct manifestations of storage or erasure though the act of writing. Huhtamo's statement above can thus be rephrased into the following research question:

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[29] Paul Virilio, 'From Modernism to Hypermodernism and Beyond: An Interview with Paul Virilio.' (John Armitage, inteviewer) [1999], in: *Paul Virilio: From Modernism to Hypermodernism and Beyond*, ed. by John Armitage, 1 edition (London ; Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications, 2000), p. 34.
[30] Huhtamo, Erkki, 'On the Origins of the Virtual Museum', in: Ross Parry, *Museums in a Digital Age*, 1. publ. (London [u.a.]: Routledge, 2010), p. 123.

How can the artist or the exhibition design practices she used for MOSA *be placed on an axis between the following binaries:*

1) **Physical and Virtual**

   What kind of art project is MOSA *in terms of the artwork, the artist, and the exhibition space, and how does the virtuality in* MOSA *influence these terms?*

2) **Storage and Erasure**

   Why was MOSA *created, and what role does virtuality play in choosing the subjects in* MOSA*?*

3) **Revealing and Hiding**

   How have the methods of curating—selection, arrangement, and presentation—been used by Schneider in MOSA *to convey her message?*

In the chapters following this introduction, I argue along the following lines:

1) MOSA *is the artist's pocket museum of miniatures, an immersive, narrated, virtual exhibition experience in form of a VR smartphone application aimed at transforming spectators' perception and awareness of stolen artworks.*

2) *Schneider selects artwork reproductions from various archiving databases of missing artworks with the intention of compensating for the inevitable loss of chosen artworks and thus the symbolic value of cultural property caused by theft, looting, fraud, or structural phenomena.*

3) *Schneider rearranges and presents the selected immaterial matter in a highly curated manner to induce prosthetic memories in the visitors of* MOSA *in hopes of prompting them to take action against the neglected, victimless crime of art theft and against the institutional gaps in handling the missing artworks either on- or offline.*

1.3 Research Approach

"As an art critic of technology, I always try to emphasize both the invention and the accident. But the occurrence of the accident is being denied."

—Paul Virilio[31]

Methodological categories for comparison and stringent analytical parameters have been developed in line with the research question stated above in order to first place projects such as *MOSA* firmly within the grid of artistic expression. Second, these analytical parameters are used to determine what type of artist Schneider is and to consider whether Schneider's art project can be described as an artwork, an exhibition practice, or a museum, all while placing emphasis on the shift toward the virtual in the past several decades. Finally, the thesis examines the motivation behind and the execution of *MOSA*. To apprehend *MOSA*, both the invention and the accident, I have begun an archival process myself by creating screenshots of the artwork reproductions in *MOSA* and later cataloguing them. After completing the cataloging process, the in-app automated spoken commentaries, which can be heard in the background either describing the (mock-)exhibitions or the individual artwork reproductions on display, have been transcribed. Even after transcribing and cataloging *MOSA*, I remained dissatisfied with the gaps in my own knowledge, so I began to "map the lives of the objects" presented in *MOSA*.[32] To my understanding, the methodological approach of "mapping the lives of the objects" means conducting provenance research on the artworks presented in the project. However, instead of concentrating on the history of their accession and past ownership, the focus is placed on the circumstances of their disappearance and retrieval, if applicable. Moreover, instead of going to a physical archive, I investigated databases. In the process of mapping the lives of the objects, the artworks presented in *MOSA* were compared to their entries in the databases mentioned in the in-app commentary. Fortunately, most of the databases that sourced the reproductions were free of charge and were free-access (*National Stolen Art File, Presidential Commission on Good Government's The Missing Art Movement*). Furthermore, I also gained access to the INTERPOL database of stolen works of art and cross-referenced the contents of this

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31 Virilio 2000[1999], p. 41.
32 See Appendix C.

database with the collections found in *MOSA*. The IFAR's *The Art Loss Register*, however, was not free of charge, and its methods of operation appear slightly biased towards the art market, as IFAR specializes in issuing certificates for artworks that their background check deems as irreproachable.[33] All the reproductions of artworks in *MOSA* were found in the former three databases. As I researched the databases and typing the titles of artworks into the search engines of the previously mentioned databases, I simultaneously repeated the same process with "The Search Engine"—google.com—as well and was astonished at discovering (or failing to discover) the media outrage surrounding the theft and recovery of artworks featured as reproductions in *MOSA*, with disproportionally greater online media coverage given to artworks featured in *Stolen European Painting* and *The Private Collection of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos*. However extensive the research of the databases has been, *MOSA* raises more questions than it answers. An interview with the artist was later conducted with the aim of answering at least some of these questions and seeing the art project from the artist's viewpoint.[34]

The accumulated primary resources mentioned above are examined in this master's thesis in terms of the three binary categories outlined in the previous section, namely, Physical and Virtual, Storage and Erasure, and Revealing and Hiding. Each of these binaries are contextualized using prior research in their respective field and underlined by the artistic practices discernible in *MOSA*. (Unfortunately, due to its public inaccessibility, I consciously chose to omit *RecoVR* from my master's thesis.) The shortcomings of *MOSA* are discussed accordingly in terms of the analytical categories listed above.

1.4 Key Assumptions and Limitations

A selective review of the primary resources enabled the synthesis of key assumptions in addition to the previously mentioned research question. To better explicate my argumentation, I elaborate upon the analytical categories by elucidating the core concepts (keywords) for the conceptual categories that correspond to the three sub-hypotheses that define the chapters of my thesis. First, the sub-hypothesis for each of the binaries—Physical and Virtual, Storage and Erasure, Revealing and Hiding—that serve as foundational building

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[33] 'International Foundation for Art Research (IFAR)-Authentication Research'
<https://www.ifar.org/authentication.php> [accessed 12 October 2019].
[34] See Appendix A.

blocks and their theoretical counterparts for the following three chapters are specified. Second, the theoretical cornerstones from the ongoing lecture by Nancy Hechinger that provided the basic artistic framework prompting the creation of *MOSA* are integrated into the chapters following this introduction alongside with a selection of several other theoretical concepts.

1.4.1 Physical and Virtual

While observing *MOSA* and attempting to determine what exactly *MOSA* is and to what extent virtuality in *MOSA* influences ideas of artwork, the artist, and the exhibition space, it is crucial to understand that the two realms of the physical and the virtual are deeply interconnected in this particular art project. The reader *Museums in a Digital Age,* edited by Ross Parry, has been essential not only in forming the research question of this thesis, but also in establishing the theoretical framework for its chapter "Physical and Virtual." In the introduction to part two of the reader, Parry identifies André Malraux's *Le musée imaginaire* (*Museum without Walls*) as an antecedent for a half of the essays in part two.[35] Malraux's concept of the museum without walls centers around the transformational impact that media such as the museum, the printed catalogue, and photographic reproduction have on the meaning of art.[36] Tracing the media-influenced transformation of the perception of art is thus one of Malraux's central methodological instruments. Malraux's vision of photographic reproduction, and the eclectic juxtaposing thereof, augments the dissemination of knowledge about art. This is highly related to Schneider's motivation to create *MOSA*, an assemblage of stolen artworks across all epochs, media, and styles of art. The three authors mentioned by Parry in *Museums in a Digital Age* approach Malraux in three different but complementary ways, and their various approaches can help provide a better understanding of Schneider and her undertaking. Erkki Huhtamo, in "On the Origins of the Virtual Museum," positions Malraux' *Museum without Walls* as an inevitable byproduct and a culmination of the avant-garde's use of exhibition design as a new medium.[37] Antonio Battro, in "From Malraux's Imaginary Museum to the Virtual Museum," by contrast, incorporates Malraux's concept of the imaginary museum into the concept of the virtual museum by integrating Malraux's paradigm of artwork transformation through reproducibility.[38] Finally, Konstantinos Arvanitis,

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[35] Ross Parry, 'Introduction to Part Two', in: Parry 2010, p. 119.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Huhatamo 2010, p. 123.
[38] Antonio M. Battro, 'From Malraux's Imaginary Museum to the Virtual Museum'; in: Parry 2010, p. 136.

in "Museum Outside Walls: mobile phones and the museum in the everyday," extends Malraux's concept of transformation and *Museum without Walls* to the virtuality of mobile media.[39] In his paper, originally presented at a Nobel Symposium, in 2002, Huhtamo establishes the parallels between the virtual museum and the avant-garde movement, thereby stripping the virtual museum of its sensationalistic, futuristic, and vague categorical veil, which often prevents an accurate analysis of contemporary experimental artists and their projects, *MOSA* being one such project.[40] A similar technological revolution to that experienced through the introduction of the internet took place in a form of electronic mechanization and robotization, for example, with the introduction of electronic television, during the period of the avant-garde.[41] Hence, the artistic developments of the avant-garde, as well as their theorization, build a suitable base from which to develop a theoretical grid for analyzing the artistic practices in *MOSA*, which is undertaken in this thesis in the chapter "Physical and Virtual." Tablets, smartphones, and computers, which are currently nearly all connected to the internet, are increasingly merging together with what was formerly known as the television set. Hence, the current development caused by increasingly fractalized and accelerated flow of time and technology is a type of merger between the two technologies—computer and television—that initially belonged into two separate domains. Agreeing with Battro, Arvanitis wrote of this new technological progresses as a realization of Malraux's museum without walls and a potential for a new wave of transformation in the meaning of artwork.[42] The spread of the photographic reproduction, according to Battro, had driven Malraux to develop his own trademark methodology of tracing metamorphosis and transformation in the perception or meaning of artworks, artists, and art disciplines, anchored in an art historian's standard method—the comparative analysis.[43] As *MOSA* touches upon the majority of the major concepts already deeply engaged with by Malraux, such as artist, artwork, exhibition, and museum, I have chosen to discuss how the internet and VR-glasses-induced virtuality impacted these four concepts by using *MOSA* as a case study and a reference.[44] Temporally speaking, the selection of artworks on display in *MOSA* is erratic, as the artworks originate from different epochs—premodernity, modernity, or postmodernity—possibly including *MOSA* as an artistic accident born out of hypermodernity. The term hypermodernity, which is used in my thesis mainly as a temporal and societal

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[39] Arvanitis, Konstantinos, 'Museum Outside Walls: Mobile Phones and the Museum in the Everday'; in Parry 2010, p. 170.
[40] Huhtamo 2010, p. 121; Parry 2010, p. 119.
[41] Huhtamo 2010, p. 123.
[42] Arvaritis 2010, p. 170.
[43] Battro 2010, p. 136.
[44] Huhtamo called these grand concepts: "[E]xhibition spaces, exhibits and spectators/visitors…" in: Huhtamo 2010, p. 123.

index, was coined by the philosopher John Armitage in an interview with Paul Virilio to describe the present societal state of being in an digital age.[45] By comparing the (dis)similarities between analogue creation of virtuality in the avant-garde and digital creation of virtuality in *MOSA*, the chapter "Physical and Virtual" is concerned with the conversions of artistic methods and practices that resonate with reappearing technological revolutions, because there is no need to interpret art projects such as *MOSA* as sensationalistic and futuristic when there is already a theoretical and empirical framework available with which to analyze *MOSA*. This chapter centers on identifying *MOSA* as a virtual installation aiming to create exhibitions with additional meaning. This goal is understood in this thesis as a new perspective on or a means of adding additional knowledge to more- or less-known subjects. Against this background, Schneider, as yet another multimedia-artist, is placed in the long lineage of artists filling the role of curators, creating borderlands wherein knowledge resides and transforming our perception of reality by experimenting with various media to achieve the elastic expansion of a specific exhibition space, a specific vision, and specific knowledge. To conclude, I argue, that virtuality in *MOSA* taps into borderland spaces between the virtual and the real in four conceptual areas—Artist, Artwork, Exhibition, and Museum—and it aims to reevaluate the spectator's relationship to stolen artworks, but on a scale that is heavily influenced by the increasing rate of information distribution and fractalization and by the coexistence of multiple realities surrounding the same information.

1.4.2 Erasure and Storage

Whereas the second chapter deals with the classification of *MOSA* in the grid of artistic expression, the third chapter—"Erasure and Storage"—explores the objectives behind Schneider's art project. This raises the question about why all the gadgetry in *MOSA* has been employed. To answer this question, the first part of the second chapter focuses on the mechanisms of erasure of the artworks, while the second half explores the tension among memory, archive, and database, that is, the mechanisms of storage. Time constantly erases people, objects, and ideas, as argued by Jean Baudrillard in his brief and highly pessimistic essay "The Art of Disappearance."[46] The question of erasure is therefore a question about the capacity, limits, and constraints of our memories, while the question of storage involves compensating for those limits and constraints. As highly specific mechanisms of storage and

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[45] Virilio 2000[1999], p. 21.
[46] Jean Baudrilliard, 'The Art of Disappearance'; in: Nicholas Zurbrugg D.Phil B. A. and Nicholas Zurbrugg, *Jean Baudrillard, Art and Artefact* (London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: SAGE, 1997), p. 28.

erasure, memory and forgetting are two cognitive strategies deeply rooted in society. Memory and forgetting are as much compulsory phenomena as theft and reconstruction, mostly because the wound of erasure seems to reopen at one side as it heals on the other.

Forgetting, which is closely related to death, is sometimes an artificially induced, sometimes a naturally occurring process of our flawed human experience. Keeping memories alive is thus a desperate attempt to combat forgetting, a frantic cry for immortality. Thus, in the case of *MOSA*, an ever changing and reality transforming virtual medium has been chosen by Schneider to compensate for art loot and theft, which are two further mechanisms of erasure that can alter the perception of reality drastically by physically removing the object from the sensory field. The phenomena of art theft and loot itself have been described extensively by Ivan Lindsay in his 2014 book *The history of loot and stolen art: From antiquity until the present day*. Nevertheless, a unified theoretical framework for analyzing art theft and loot from an art historical viewpoint is yet to be produced. In addition to the physical and virtual erasure mechanisms threatening our beloved artifacts, more subtle or hegemonic erasure mechanisms also lead to the premature decay of the artworks, such as bias-based omission from grand narratives and plain nonchalance when handling the artworks. Hence, through *MOSA*, Schneider exposes the quite obvious and deliberate physical mechanisms of erasure, such as art theft and loot, directly and then via a pseudo-datamining process uses the data from feeble databases of missing artworks to create her own personal Malrauxian imaginary museum. Beneath the surface, however, it becomes apparent that *MOSA* exposes the flawed logic of the databases, including the algorithmic and human erasure involved in the process of data caption and retrieval, as Schneider refers to the databases through the narration accompanying the (mock-)exhibitions in *MOSA*. The realization sinks in that commas or typos in all those databases can decide between the life and death of an imaginary artwork online, and the memory implantation processes are as glitchy as the reproductions on display in *MOSA*, witnessing the flawed nature of human as well as automated memory.[47] Along the path of the information recovery, old versions or formats of events disappear and new are created instead, all while the knowledge about those events is being constantly reinvented.

With equally uncertain motives and outcomes, storage mechanisms have been put into place to counter the processes of erasure. To illustrate how Schneider conceptually

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[47] See Appendix C.

approaches memory, I reference an art installation that inspired her greatly; *Last seen . . .* by Sophie Calle, from 1991.[48] Memorizing artworks, even through a template of photographic reproduction, keeps them alive in the recollections constructed by the viewers, but it also alters them through viewer's perception and memorization. Theoretically, the concise explanation, in my opinion, that best illustrates the possible conscious and intended motives for storage of artworks in *MOSA* is Baudrillard's *The System of Objects*, from 1996, according to which all objects have a use-value and/or sign-value and are collected to be put to use or to be possessed because of their significance in a particular culture, time, and context.[49] As a reaction to the recurring processes of erasure, a variety of oral traditions, written traditions, chronicles, collections, and archives are devised. Eventually, the individual and collective memory passed around orally from generation to generation is increasingly supplemented by various archives created to more efficiently safeguard that which is deemed important in a certain culture at the certain time. As the art world increasingly morphs into a world of short-lived spectacles as *MOSA*, it is crucial to trace the evidence about the existence of an artwork and its path to a collection. Without collecting there would be no "art," nor would there be "art history." Thus, the question that *MOSA* poses concerns the severity of the internet's impact on the mechanisms of collecting. During the latest technological revolution, a new collecting mechanism has taken shape—the database. According to Lev Manovich, in his contribution "Database as Symbolic Form" to *Museums in a Digital Age*, the database is a natural enemy to the oral or written narrative. By comparing the database to the archive instead of to the narrative, I attempt to circumvent the database and narrative paradox that has preoccupied Manovich.[50] The strategy employed by Schneider, namely, creating visual prosthetic memories of artworks that can no longer be seen in real life, can be described as a "protest against forgetting." *MOSA* is therefore a desperate attempt to compensate for a deficit that essentially cannot be replaced through a medium that changes continuously with every passing second.

1.4.3 Revealing and Hiding

To conclude my analysis, the final chapter of this master's thesis, "Revealing and Hiding," revolves around issues concerning organizing and displaying artworks—the exhibition

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[48] See Appendix A, p. 161.
[49] Jean Baudrillard, 'The System of Objects'; in: Mark Poster, *Jean Baudrillard: Selected Writings* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1988), p. 22.
[50] Lev Manovich, 'Database as Symbolic Form'; in: Parry 2010, p. 68.

design in *MOSA*. For recollecting, which can be understood collecting the collection anew in our minds, display techniques are just as important as the storage mechanisms meant to preserve them. Selecting, arranging, and presenting objects are all tools for displaying a collection and constructing the narrative. However, as discussed earlier, the intricate relationship between the physical and virtual is a common thread throughout this thesis. Hence, the final chapter centers around answering the question about how the virtual is integrated into the exhibition design's tools of selection, arrangement, and presentation. The creation of *MOSA* was partly inspired by Walter Benjamin's line, quoted above, from his monograph *One-Way Street*, a pivotal work of alternative exhibition design.[51] Most probably, this reference originates from Susan Sonntag's reading of Benjamin in the introduction to the collection of Benjamin's writings published in 1979. Two main Benjaminian characteristics of his experience in half-fantasmic "urban space" are the non-linear storytelling (description of the city) and the microscopic gaze. These concepts have served as an introduction to exploring alternative exhibition practices also found in the exhibition design of *MOSA*. Hence, I mostly focus on the comparison of the four galleries of Frederic Kieslers—already a pivotal character of the first chapter—designed for Peggy Guggenheims *The Art of This Century* gallery, in 1942, and Jean-François Lyotard's *Les Immatériaux*, of 1985. Both exhibitors are renowned for alternative curating practices, especially in their approaches to selection, arrangement, and presentation, which motivated the theoretical framework of "Revealing and Hiding" based on the two compendia of interviews conducted and edited by Hans Ulrich Obrist: *Everything you always wanted to know about curating: but were afraid to ask* and *A brief history of curating*. Additionally, for curating new media, which are essential for an art project like MOSA, I have selected various interviews from another collection of interviews entitled *A brief history of curating new media art: conversations with curators.*

Subsequently, I argue that Schneider attempts to engage the spectator to comprehend the essential lessons of *MOSA* through at least four specifically atypical curating strategies:

1) the irrational, labyrinth-like structure of the space, which features spatial overlapping (Figure 1, Figure 8),

2) the automatic activation of the zoom-in when reproductions are viewed, that is, a forced focus,

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[51] 'Ziv Schneider - Virtual Glue: The Many Futures of Our Past - YouTube'
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hNvj66ih7YY> [accessed 18 January 2018], 12:13.

3) referencing external sources (i.e., databases) for the virtual artifacts, and

4) promoting interactivity by encouraging the visitor to leave a message on the in-app answering machine and even become an investigator by going beyond the app into the world wide web and searching for the missing artworks (Figures 5–6).

The majority of mentioned approaches have already been employed by artists such as Kiesler and Lyotard, but the introduction of the internet has allowed an even greater degree of total immersion in a world of dense information. Moreover, *MOSA* reveals Schneider herself as the artist-curator, who employs methods of selection, arrangement, and presentation by means of metamorphosis and resurrection of artworks in the fast-paced sphere of the Internet.

1.5 Contributions of this Thesis

Since the introduction of the internet and the personal computer in the 1990s, artists, including Schneider, have been increasingly experimenting with these technologies. It is thus not the lack of experimentation that is concerning; rather, it is the lack of theorization regarding and preservation of such practices. The problem lies in the representation and preservation of art projects like *MOSA* within an art-historical discourse due to the rapidly evolving medium of the internet, and it is compounded by the (im)possibilities of projects like *MOSA* advancing from the online to the offline realm. Issues such as the commercialization of cultural property, the loss of cultural heritage, and the challenges surrounding the appropriate use of new technologies in recovering lost cultural heritage are highly relevant to the field of art history. However, they also require a concise methodological framework for their evaluation in the era of the technologically induced acceleration of virtuality. This thesis represents an attempt to break down the essential lessons *MOSA* has to offer in terms of theoretically grasping the new developments in virtual exhibition practices and the potential of such practices for the preservation of cultural heritage and on the curatorial base.

2 Physical and Virtual

"In a place where the work of art no longer has any function other than of being a work of art, and at a time when the artistic exploration of the world is in active progress, the assemblage of so many masterpieces—from which, nevertheless, so many are missing—conjures up in the mind's eye all of the world's masterpieces."

— André Malraux[52]

Praised by Huhtamo, Battro, and Arvaritis as a visionary, Malraux did not have access to the internet, nor did he possess a crystal ball, but he was able to predict the future by observing his present time. According to Malraux, virtuality began as soon as the first work of art was created—it was a gate to seeing alternate realities, even if it was emulating reality to the last possible detail. As Malraux phrased it in his speech to *Sur l'heritage culturel*: "Humanity has always sought in art its unknown language. . . . "[53] The perception and the method for comparison of artworks to each other, however, changed drastically with the introduction of relatively easy and affordable photographic reproduction. This new format made new forms of visual data accessible, and with the access to a newfound variety of reproductions, the meaning or knowledge of the depicted objects transformed as well.[54] Taking into consideration the broad applications of the Malrauxian methodological approach and presuming that *MOSA* resembles a miniature virtual replica of the ecosystem that is the art museum, the following chapter is dedicated to a discussion about how *MOSA* mirrors the influence of the latest wave of technological achievements—the internet, micro-computers such as mobile devices, VR-headsets—on four fundamental components of the art world:

- the multi-media artist as the mediator in the field of creation,
- the originality and materiality of the virtual artwork,
- the practice that is the virtual exhibition, and
- the institution that the museum has become in hypermodernity.

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[52] André Malraux, *Museum Without Walls* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1967), p. 10-11.
[53] Cited from Edson Rosa da Silva, 'La Tête d'obsidienne: Malraux Beyond Forms'; in: Geoffrey T. Harris, *André Malraux: Across Boundaries.* (Amsterdam: Brill Rodopi, 2000), p. 265.
[54] Battro 2010, p. 136.

2.1 From Peep Boxes to VR-Headsets

To establish the point of departure for the analysis that unfolds in this chapter, each of the above-mentioned semantic clusters are examined in terms of the genealogy of the medium of the VR-headset in relation to the medium's potential for knowledge production, because *MOSA*'s aim is first and foremost the display of "prosthetic knowledge."[55] A key component of the VR-headset as a medium is digital footage, usually stored on a mobile device, which has replaced analogue photography. The genealogy of this medium spans from modernism to postmodernism and up to what John Armitage described as hypermodernism, in the Western hemisphere.[56] Surprisingly, there is a shortage of publications addressing the distinctions between these philosophical systems, let alone a written work that addresses these intense shifts within the field of art history. Hence, the few available resources and oversimplified terms are used in this chapter predominantly as temporal guidelines. Further analysis of these extremely complex issues should be conducted by future generations of philosophers. Shifting the focus to knowledge as an informational commodity and as the variable that determines the fabric of philosophical systems allows a rough chronological framework to be developed.

Jean-François Lyotard, an aspiring student of Malraux's teachings, saw knowledge and power as two sides of the same coin: "Knowledge in the form of an informational commodity indispensable to productive power is already, and will continue to be, a major — perhaps the major — stake in the worldwide competition of power."[57] However, the power over knowledge can also be influenced and altered through the introduction of new technologies, as these possess the power to alter or aid a society's perception of the world. Similarly, by observing the connections between knowledge and power, the psychologist Louis Hoffman describes modernism as a predominant philosophical trend that extended well into the avant-garde and was to a large extent based on the method of attaining knowledge through the modernist methodology and empiricism, which was heavily grounded in the individual sensory experience of the world disguising as the objective truth.[58] This notion could also

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[55] See Appendix A, p. 161.
[56] Cited from Virilio 2000[1999], p. 25.
[57] Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, Theory and History of Literature ; 10, Repr.. (Manchester: Manchester UnivPress, 1994), p. 5.
[58] Louis Hoffman, 'Premodernism, Modernism, & Postmodernism: An Overview', *Postmodern Psychology*, 2017

explain the avant-garde's intense focus on vision and on observing and experimenting with technology. Friedrich Kiesler, for example, was obsessed with the idea of the Laboratory of Design Correlation, where he worked for decades on his Vision Machine.[59] Outside the established centers of knowledge production, in 2006, Huhtamo argued in a chapter contribution to *Book of Imaginary Media* entitled "The Pleasures of the Peephole: An Achaeological Exploration of Peep Media" that the same trend emerged and was associated with "the newly stimulated curiosity towards visible reality - its observation, exploration, measurement and reproduction."[60] Especially between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, peep boxes and other optical devices became prevalent in Europe, entering the collections of museums, physics cabinets, and cabinets of curiosities.[61] Instead of immersing oneself into a subject by constructing a physical illusory space, it could be argued that peeping into a peep box eliminates the viewer's surroundings and forces the observer to turn their focus toward the matter in the peep box, thus turning the viewer's vision into a microscopic vision for precise examination. Moreover, peeping into peep boxes is fascinating because it closely relates to scientific exploration and to our present day VR-headset. Thus, there exists a close relationship, one of historical contingency, in the method of attaining virtuality and the motivation for creating virtuality between the peep box and the VR-headset. Although *MOSA* can be viewed as two-dimensional footage of a virtual museum created by Schneider, it was primarily designed for the Google Cardboard, the hypermodern version of the lenticular stereoscope already in use throughout the modern period. The function of *MOSA* as a means for introspective voyaging thus becomes apparent when the VR app is compared to the stereoscope of the modernity. The evolution of modern stereoscope has already been extensively described by Huhtamo. At the Crystal Palace Exhibition, in London, in 1851, dedicated to highlight the achievements of industrial production, the hand-held lenticular stereoscope, or lens-based stereoscope, was, according to Huhtamo, introduced to the public.[62] If we were to dissect a stereoscope, however, we would find that it still relies on the physical medium of analogue photography mounted behind the lenses of a stereoscope. A stereoscope is an optical illusion apparatus that contains a place holder for two offset two-dimensional analogue images or stereograms (analogue or digital), taken with a special two-lensed camera from two different positions in

<http://postmodernpsychology.com/premodernism-modernism-postmodernism-an-overview/> [accessed 7 June 2018].

[59] Stephen J. Phillips, *Elastic Architecture: Frederick Kiesler and Design Research in the First Age of Robotic Culture* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2017), p. 191.

[60] Erkki Huhtamo, 'The Pleasures of the Peephole: An Achaeological Exploration of Peep Media', in: Eric Kluitenberg, *Book of Imaginary Media: Excavating the Dream of the Ultimate Communication Medium* (NAI, 2006), p. 84.

[61] Huhtamo 2006, p. 87.

[62] Ibid. p. 112.

space, which can be viewed through two magnifying lenses separated from one another by a physical divider.[63] The three-dimensional perception of depth is eventually perceived in the observer's mind, because the brain combines the two-dimensional images after the initial act of sensory perception.[64] After the introduction of the stereoscope in the mid-nineteenth century, the use of such media in domestic environments steadily increased, and the stereoscope became a commodity, with Huhtamo pointing out that it was a popular device for educational and leisure activates.[65] Thus, already in the nineteenth century, the stereoscope was becoming a device with the potential to bridge gaps in knowledge caused by the unaffordability of or restricted access to travel.

Both in his essay from 2002 and from his 2006 chapter in the *Book of Imaginary Media*, Huhtamo abruptly ended the genealogy of the peep media, to which the stereoscope belongs, at around the time that Malraux's *Museum without Walls* was first published, in 1947. Similar and sudden cuts in the evolution of such media appear in Battro's and Arvanitis's essays as well. According to Louis Hoffman, postmodernism began to emerge in the mid-twentieth century; in my opinion, the shift thereto had already begun in the first half of the twentieth century, with previous methods of attaining knowledge increasingly coming under question and with epistemological pluralism emerging as a response.[66] Epistemological pluralism means that knowledge can be obtained either synchronously or asynchronously through any of the following methods: revelation, as in premodernity; by science and reason, as in modernity; and by subjective methods such as intuition, interaction, metaphysics, or mysticism, as in postmodernity.[67] Additionally, the postmodern approach is characterized by diffusion of centralized power structures and flattened models of hierarchies.[68] This shift would—in terms of the art world and traditional institutions dealing with art, such as the museum and established styles of art schools—cause the formation of additional knowledge and power structures such as art fairs, art festivals, biennials, art symposia, peer-reviewed journals, and opposing scientific communities, on a globalized

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[63] Cf. In terms of VR theory: "Most life forms have evolved with a pair of eyes – as two views give an increases FOV and also assist in the perception of depth. You may have experienced the excellent 3D effect that is created when looking at a pair of photographs through a stereoscope. As the two images are taken from two different positions in space, the brain uses these differences to create a single image that contains depth information. This is called *stereoscopic vision*." John Vince, *Introduction to Virtual Reality* (Springer Science & Business Media, 2011), p. 39.

[64] Cf. "The stereoscope had a 'physiological' basis, only providing ingredients for the spectacle, which was actuated, and therefore existed, in the peeper's mind." Huhtamo 2006, p. 114.

[65] Ibid. p. 113.

[66] Hoffman 2017.

[67] Ibid.

[68] Ibid.

stage.[69] Although the period proved fruitful to the inclusion of media such as VR-headsets in the artistic scene, the head-mounted display was not of primary interest to the artists creating during the end of the postmodern period.[70] All three authors writing on the subject of Malraux and the virtual museum—Huhtamo, Battro, and Arvaritis—leap from Malraux's concept of the *Imaginary Museum* to the artist's experimentations in the 1990s, when media-based pluralism was on the rise. Awareness of computer-based media and net.art began to surge, but the stereoscope did not reappear until the head-mounted display was invented.

MOSA was primarily designed for the VR-headset, which is a direct descendant of the stereoscope. Thus, the question arises of what kind of shift in the medium of stereoscope occurred with the introduction of the internet and constant progress in computerization. To answer the question, a precise definition of hypermodernism is necessary. The term was first coined by John Armitage, a professor of media arts, in a 2000 interview with architect Paul Virilio. According to Virilio, the hypermodern condition is characterized by the acceleration and fractalization of history.[71] While fractalization could most likely be explained in terms of multiple and sometimes conflicting interpretations of the same chain of events across different cultures simultaneously existing in the same global discourse—for example, histories rather than history—the explanation for the acceleration of histories is slightly more complex. However, it has to do with the accelerated progression of events in history due to technological innovation, globalization, and the diffusion of power in the international hierarchical order.[72] In general, Virilio's concept of the acceleration of history is related to the transfer of information: "Ours are cinematic societies. They are not only societies of movement, but of the acceleration of that very moment."[73] The two processes—fractalization and acceleration—are two core distinctions of the age that separate hypermodernity from the previous modernities. The same principle, acceleration and fractalization, can be appropriated to describe the impact of the latest technological revolution on the stereoscope. Acceleration and fractalization enabled the stereoscope of the twenty-first century, that is, the VR-headset, to present stories in non-interrupted but diverse segments. For example, the introduction of VR-headsets was only possible though the technical boom of the last 30

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[69] Cf. Lyotard 1994, p. 6.
[70] Cf. "The head-mounted display is, after all, a new kind of interactive stereoscope. The connection between peepshows and virtual reality was made clear by Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun's VR work Inherent Rights, Vision Rights (1992), displayed in a custom-designed interactive peepshow viewer." Huhtamo 2006, p. 138.
[71] Virilio 2000[1999], p. 25.
[72] Cf. Virilio 2000[1999], p. 26; Zenonas Tziarras, 'Power Decentralization in the International System and the Acceleration of History', in: Alexios Alecou, *Acceleration of History: War, Conflict, and Politics*, 2016, p. 20.
[73] Virilio 2000[1999], p. 27.

years. Creating virtual-reality videos has become automated and can be calculated with an algorithm, thus eliminating the double-lensed camera previously needed to take stereographs and fixed images. Using a mobile device as an image carrier for the VR-headset also led to recorded and automated vocal narrativization for such footage, for example, *MOSA*'s narration and music, and created a surplus of information compared to the stereoscope.[74] According to Virilio, virtual reality, cyberspace, video chat, and supersonic air travel have led to a deterritorialized society in an accelerated reality.[75] Processes or journeys that even half a century ago would take days have been reduced to hours, including creating the stereoscopic footages. The revival of the stereoscope as a VR-headset once again accentuated the medium's possibilities as an educational device, a trend already observed by Arvanitis.[76] As seen in *MOSA*, the databases harboring traces of stolen artworks are readily available to the artist and to everyone with the access to the internet.[77] The sheer amount of reproductions and their variety in quality are fixed byproducts of the fractalization that Virilio described. While the reproduction of Jan van Kessel the Elder's *The Paradise* (Figure 12) is barely recognizable, the reproduction of Rembrandt's van Rijn's *The Storm on the Sea of Galilee* (Figure 22) is incredibly realistic. Apprehending the quantitative increase in information and the reduction in processing time is vital to understanding both the hypermodern condition of the VR-headset as a medium and *MOSA*. The missing artworks in *MOSA* are reduced to pixels and only assemble a collection in relation to each other, which is exclusively possible in the imaginary space of the app. The connections between *MOSA*'s (mock-)exhibitions have all been enabled by the abundance of the internet and mostly open-source data.[78] Moreover, the visualized collection of highly dispersed and dislocated information from four databases and online articles (Figure 5) in *MOSA* has all been compressed into a mobile device and transmitted through a VR-headset.[79] The VR-headset adds a new layer of simulation—a kind of Malrauxian *superworld* or a state of mind. The backstories come from the internet and could well be inaccurate, as is the case with the narration of Vincent van Gogh's letter about his injured mother[80]—no such information can be found in the Van Gogh Museum's online letter repository. The technique behind the magic trick was hidden in plain sight all along. There are downsides to every technology, but it is not the technology itself that is corruptive; instead, it is its intended functionality. When such devices are considered to be harbors of alternative worlds, their

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[74] See Appendix B.
[75] Virilio 2000[1999], p. 27.
[76] Arvanitis 2010, p. 172.
[77] See Appendix C.
[78] See Appendix A, p. 157.
[79] See Appendix B and C.
[80] See Appendix B, p. 170-171.

analysis becomes increasingly exciting. Indeed, they have great potential and a huge influence on guiding the nature of society's vision, beyond mere entertainment.

2.2 Digital Stereoscopic Vision and Malrauxian Metamorphosis—Resurrection

Digital photographic reproduction not only transformed the medium of the stereoscope into the VR-headset, but also had a major impact on the perception or meaning of the displayed matter. Malraux, an eccentric individual who influenced many great authors who succeeded him in the field of museology, was preoccupied by the idea that highly accessible analogue photography drastically changed the perception of viewed matter, or, in Malraux's analysis, artworks.[81] At the brink of the postmodern era, Malraux released his book *Museum without Walls*, in which he introduces two phenomena that accompany every significant change in the art world: the resurrection of forgotten art and metamorphosis in the specific perception of art.[82] First, what Malraux meant when describing both processes is difficult to convey. Second, I argue that the processes of transformation and metamorphosis have been inevitably altered by acceleration and fractalization in hypermodernity. Malraux described these processes thus:

Metamorphosis:

"Our recognition that the mere creation of every great art modifies those that precede it has made us all the more sensitive to the fluidity of the past."[83]

Resurrection:

"Every resurrection projects on the past its sudden beam of light and vast patches of shadow. . . . "[84]

For Malraux, these two processes are key notions about shifting paradigms around which he

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[81] "Today, an art student can examine color reproductions of most of the world's great paintings and discover for himself a host of secondary works, as well as the archaic arts, the great epochs of Indian, Chinese, Japanese, and pre-Columbian sculpture, some Byzantine art, Romanesque frescoes, and primitive "folk" art." Malraux 1967, p. 12.
[82] Malraux 1967, p. 223.
[83] Ibid. p. 223-224.
[84] Ibid. p. 224.

builds his idea of *The Imaginary Museum*. What Malraux referred to when describing metamorphosis was the sudden onset of a reflective and comparatist depth in the meaning of depicted matter which was enabled by the growing quantity of visual data produced through the photographic reproduction.[85] "Every major confrontation," Malraux argues, "also calls for a metamorphosis in our manner of seeing, especially when pictures are no longer competing with imaginary spectacles. . . . "[86] What Malraux is most probably referring to here when mentioning imaginary spectacles is (hyper)realistic painting. Malraux was able to explain the linkages and canonization of art history by applying the achievements of the technological revolution of analogue photography into his comparatist methodology, but at the same time, he was attempting to unlink and relink the existing paradigms of art history.[87] Contrary to his contemporary Walter Benjamin, with whom Huhtamo paralleled Malraux, the latter saw in the reproduction not a loss of originality of an artwork, but a possible surplus in meaning and knowledge about objects, artists, and exhibitions, which were, up to the point of the mass availability of photography, scarcely available to limited or affluent social groups and scattered throughout different museums.[88] What Malraux describes as resurrection is equally affected by the process of the photographic reproduction as is metamorphosis. Resurrection is a term that Malraux frequently used throughout his book *Museum without Walls* to refer to revival on two levels:

1) Certain known themes, styles, and mediums have been revived in art in general, for example, the Renaissance rendition of the antique.[89] The first type of resurrection is thus irrelevant to the interrogation of *MOSA,* because MOSA is not about uncovering the missing links in the styles of art history.

2) The revival and accessibility of artworks through mechanical reproduction enabled new and changing contexts for the comparison of artworks and a different degree of comparison, namely, that of a state of mind expanded or augmented by photography.[90] Hence, the photographic reproduction was, for Malraux, the key for

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[85] "We, however, have far more great works available to refresh our memories than even the greatest of museums could bring together. [. . .] A museum without walls has been opened to us, and it will carry infinitely farther that limited revelation of the world of art which the real museums offer us within their walls: in answer to their appeal, the plastic arts have produced their printing press." Malraux 1967, p. 12.
[86] Malraux 1967, p. 223.
[87] "Moreover, their distribution is sustained by a commercial approach of constantly increasing subtlety and extent. It often substitutes the significant work for the obvious masterpiece, and the pleasure of learning for that of simply admiring." Maraux 1967, p. 77.
[88] Huhtamo 2010, p. 123.
[89] "Italian painting and antique sculpture were the highest achievements of a civilization that still reigned supreme in the imagination." Malraux 1967, p. 78.
[90] "[R]eproduction was on the threshold of distributing to the world, for the first time, the forms that artists of every nation have resurrected, admired, foreseen, or ignored." Malraux 1967, p. 76.

suggesting and imposing new hierarchies, for example, between African masks and the heads of classic statuary in an album.[91]

Finally, resurrection entails the gathering of abundant and previously unavailable information in the "mind's eye." When understood on this cognitive level, metamorphosis and resurrection are the methodological resources to extend the limits of human knowledge. As one of the scholars researching the legacy of Malraux, Edson Rosa da Silva, phrased it:

> "By going beyond the limits that reality inflicts on art, Malraux's work proposes if not the transformation of the world then at least the invention of another world—"un surmonde"—in which art is able to escape the control of time and find its own meaning in its own autonomy."[92]

The word *surmonde* reflects the reoccurring topos in Malraux's *Museum without Walls* and translates, in my opinion, very well into *superworld*, which is so much more than an album; it is a state of mind or a cognitive shift in the mind's vision.

MOSA is precisely a kind of a Malrauxian confrontation device, albeit not in all possible aspects, because its collections have become finite: *MOSA* has been left unchanged for at least the two years for which I have been observing it. Moreover, in *MOSA*, the (mock-)exhibition *Stolen European Painting* is situated directly adjacent to *Stolen Photographs*, which is a virtual step away from *The Private Collection of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos*, because it depicts exactly the virtual repository of our age sourced from many databases and websites. Hence, *MOSA* is an updated version of a collector's album: It is an album within the virtual walls. The notions of metamorphosis and resurrection help to clarify the concept of *MOSA*, in which Schneider heavily relies on using digital photographic reproduction as the carrier of the message and digital animation for stereographic footage. However, the conditions for its distribution had accelerated and fractalized in the twenty-first century as digital photography has replaced analogue. Battro perceives the virtual museum as a continuation of Malraux's *Museum without Walls* in which the networked digital photography, now a photography emancipated from its paper support, offers wide variety of visual data at any time or place and emancipates the viewership from the exhibition halls.[93] These changes have brought about transformations in the perception of artwork and the

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[91] Ibid. p. 79-80.
[92] Rosa da Silva 2000, p. 248.
[93] Battro 2010, p. 136.

institution of museum.[94] Moreover, a very small occurrence in cyberspace can now change everything on a large scale, as Virilio has argued.[95] The latest dramatic change that shook the (art) world was unquestionably caused by the introduction of the mostly wireless internet and ever-contracting personal computers discussed in the introduction. The mobile media, according to Arvanitis, provide access to the museum information at any time, in any space, thus transforming the museum information and thus transforming knowledge into "a portable commodity," an imaginary museum of a flux medium for the audience emancipated of the physical dimension.[96] With this updated methodological approach already established by Malraux in the middle of the last century and with the chronological frames theorized by Hoffmann and Virilio—modernity, postmodernity, hypermodernity—the four semantic clusters mentioned at the beginning of this chapter are examined as they appear in *MOSA*, starting with the discussion about the historic progression that ultimately leads to the manifestation of the cyborg-artist as a curating performer in *MOSA* and rounding the discussion with the comparison between *MOSA* and *Museum without Walls* itself. The following sections are therefore an attempt to examine *MOSA* in the terms of the artist, the artwork, and the exhibition in the context of a museum through the temporal framework selected above.

2.3 Multimedia Artist as a Mediator in the Field of Creation

The shift in the perception of the persona of the artist in *MOSA* is a twofold one. On the one hand, the transformation of the persona of the artist can be read through the reproductions in *MOSA*, hence, observing the shift in in the perception of how the artists, their creations, or their lives can be understood and reconstructed through their reproduced artworks. On the other hand, there is the transformation in the persona of the creating artist behind *MOSA*. Whereas the first conundrum is concerned with displaying the artists and conveying their art, the second concerns understanding the shifting role of the artist in hypermodernity by understanding Schneider's modes of operation. What does Schneider's resurrection of so many absent artworks mean for the artists whom she is resurrecting, and how does her approach characterize her as an artist?

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[94] Battro 2010, p. 136.
[95] Cf. Virilio 2000[1999], p. 41.
[96] Arvanitis 2010, p. 170.

2.3.1 Artist as a Creation

According to Battro's interpretation of Malraux, the museum as a modern institution changed the function of the artworks, focusing attention on the attribution of the artworks and the cult of authorship, even if the artworks could not always be clearly assigned to any specific artist.[97] From a distance, all artworks in *MOSA* are elevated to the same level: From a distance, there is no (readable) wall text (Figure 21, Figure 51), and their authors are only revealed upon a closer look triggered by the automated zoom-in (Figure 22). The nuances become tangible through the tension between zoom-in and zoom-out, a standard characteristic of digital photography. The time-leap of prolonged focus provides further information, including the artist. The artworks belonging to a particular artist have become miniature icons on the screen, and, along with their materiality, their authenticity vanishes into the intangible as well. Malraux observed in modernity, especially from the nineteenth century onwards, that the personage of the artist began to overpower the physical medium of the artwork, a process that extended to the subject of the art as well, at least in the field of painting or sculpture, while all the other arts were still considered minor.[98] When Schneider, who always cautiously refers to the reproductions as paintings, photographs, and so on in real life, is describing the theft of the two Monet paintings from the Kunsthal Museum, in 2010, as it was mediatized online, a slip of the tongue shows the entanglement of the artist and the artwork perfectly:

> *"One of the men convicted of the crime claimed that the Monet along with the other stolen works was burnt in his mother's stove to hide evidence of the theft from government officials. . . ."*[99]

Of course, the burglars have not exhumed and burnt Claude Monet himself. They were referring to the painting, which served as a surrogate for the persona of the artist. When describing paintings, such a usage of language adheres to what Malraux called the "primacy of the artist over what he depicts"[100] or the primacy over the discipline. Hence, in the app, all the artists, known or unknown, are on an equal level, whether they produced photos, paintings, or sculptures (when *Looting of Iraq and Afghanistan* was still on display). Parallel to the enmeshment of the artist and the medium, the enmeshment of the artist and the

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[97] Antonio M. Battro, 'From Malraux's Imaginary Museum to the Virtual Museum', in: Huhtamo, Erkki, 'On the Origins of the Virtual Museum', in: Ross Parry, *Museums in a Digital Age*, 1. publ. (London [u.a.]: Routledge, 2010), p. 137.
[98] Malraux 1967, p. 9.
[99] Appendix B, p. 176.
[100] Malraux 1967, p. 61.

subject intensified in modernity as well. The pinnacle of this progression Malraux describes by discussing Paul Cézanne's *Apples*:

> "The annexation of the model [the portrait became a work of art] by the painter, of the world by painting then took on a character without precedent, because, for the first time, the great artists no longer expressed, no longer recognized, the supreme value of the civilization in which they lived."[101]

When viewing the wall texts next to the reproductions, Schneider always provides the name of the artist, the title of the artwork, the medium, and finally the date of creation (Figure 22). Information about the reproductions in *MOSA* could be false or misleading, as is the case in *Half Shell Nautilus* (Figure 42), as it could be attributed to Edward Weston.[102] Nonetheless, the mind does not differentiate between true or false in the absence of a point of reference, and the learning process continues as usual, which is also the kernel of Malrauxian methodology. The same attributes hold for the internet.

The order of the information changes from (mock-)exhibition to (mock-)exhibition, and the information unavailable to Schneider on the internet is omitted form the wall text. When there is no information about the artist available to Schneider, the title is elevated to the position in the wall text where the artist is supposed to be (Figure 41). Additionally, with the reproduction of Meyer de Hanh's self-portrait, the title *Self-Portrait* replaces the artist's name on the top of the wall text (Figure 35). In this instance, the *Self-Portrait is* the artist and the author. However, the ultimate exception of naming the artist first in *MOSA* is the entire (mock-)exhibition of *Stolen Photographs* (Figures 40–50) where the title, which, in the majority of the reproductions, is identical to the presumably photographed subject, is accentuated, and the artist takes the second place in the wall text. Hence, in photography, including in digital photography, the subject appears to overhaul the artist or the medium. The artist in *MOSA* is thus equated with the miniature digital icon, which is now sustained only by the aura of the artist. Partially, the artists are subjugated to the value of their works, which are often translated into their market value; for example, the reproductions in *MOSA*'s *The Private Collection of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos* (Figure 54–68) are paired with their acquisition value during the Marcos's era. Moreover, Rembrandt certainly never intended for his *Storm at the Sea of Galilee* (Figure 22) to be his only and prime example of Dutch maritime scenery, thereby driving up its current market value, nor did he intend for it to be a marketable investment, but this is the metamorphosis of the personage of the artist, which is

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[101] Ibid. p. 66.
[102] See Appendix C.

unfolding in front of the viewers' eyes.[103] Therefore, the artistic capability is also subjugated by the value and exclusivity of their work on the market.

2.3.2 Artist as a Creator

If hypermodernism is intensifying the displacement of traditional paradigms, chronically creating idiosyncrasies between the viewed and apprehended matter in the process, where does this place the creating artist? Photography or photographic reproduction, as a medium for transmitting visual information, has the potential of transforming how artists can be perceived in relation to their artworks in *MOSA*, while it has also has the potential of reshaping the role of the artist who created *MOSA*. Thus, what is the role of the artist such as Schneider in hypermodernity? Schneider allows herself to be known as the author, or in her words, creator of the app, through *Credits (About) Info Screen* (Figure 5) in the entry hall of *MOSA*. In this way, the act of naming herself as the creator elevates her to the status of the artist behind the concept or idea of *MOSA*. The artist was already transformed into a creator of meaning or value in postmodernity and became increasingly engaged in the immediate social reality.[104] Rosa da Silva, looking through the Malrauxian lens, describes such artists in this manner: "The artist always takes risks: by questioning forms, he questions the world. [. . .] The artist's role is to ask [. . .] [questions] rather than answer them."[105] The approaches to achieving social engagement are diversifying, hence the strong presence of concepts, ideas and the notion of the artist as creator of materialization of these thoughts. Additional artistic fields such as performing and applied arts formed, and these arts are now being challenged by the latest emerging media arts.[106] Technological advancements have had an influence on these developments. For example, this is how Huhtamo describes the impact of the technology on the performative arts: "the human performer was often displaced from the center of the 'stage', becoming a commentator, operator and impresario. Media and technology began to take over."[107] In this sense, when Schneider as a multimedia-artist uses technology for creating *MOSA,* she is displacing herself from the center of the stage and becoming the commentator and operator, who is commenting on the status of looted and stolen artworks online.

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[103] See Appendix B, p. 176-177.
[104] For further reading see: Irving Sandler, *Art of the Postmodern Era: From the Late 1960s to the Early 1990s*, Icon Editions (New York, NY, 1996).
[105] Rosa da Silva 2000, p. 254.
[106] For further reading see chapter ten "Media Art" in Sandler 1996.
[107] Huhtamo 2006, p. 92.

Huhtamo highlights that, as early as in the avant-garde, the newly discovered interdisciplinarity between the art disciplines provided fruitful grounds on which the persona of the artist then began to attain the status of the persona of the curator, a trend already starting to appear in modernity with artists such as László Moholy-Nagy, El Lissitzky and Friedrich Kiesler, as these artists are usually curators of their own exhibitions.[108] When investigating the persona of the artist, *MOSA* reveals this exact artist-curator complex, where the exhibition design is supposed to complement, augment or even replace the actual artwork, that is so prevalent in contemporary art but has also been present since the avant-garde. Huhtamo even identified the exhibition design as the new medium of the avant-garde.[109] Additional examples of such interdisciplinarity include stage designers designing exhibitions (Friedrich Kiesler), visual artists sculpting sculpture (Sol Lewitt), designers turned writers or curators publishing artists books (Joseph Kosuth in collaboration with Seth Siegelaub), or even artists collecting specimens and conducting experiments (Mark Dion). These combinations occasionally contain a strong neoliberal component when artists run modern day workshops as CEOs would run companies; hence, the advent of the manager-artist, who is not necessarily incompetent or malevolent, as managers are people and their work ethics are highly subjective, began. One such example of the manager-artist would be Olafur Eliasson with a crew of 90 employees listed on his official web page.[110] The list of such diverse and multi-faceted artist roles continues, and it is increasingly difficult to determine who is the artist is, what is the created value and what is the knowledge that the artist creates. In general, three predominant types of artists who often appear in postmodernity have been observed: artist-curator, curator-artist and collector-artist. To better understand this phenomenon of the enmeshment of artist-curator and curator-artist, I dedicate the entire last chapter of my thesis, "Revealing and Hiding", to curating and such relationships.

In the case of *MOSA*, the three types mentioned above coincide in a single person, partly because *MOSA* is an art project of hypermodernity. Thus, how can Schneider be understood as an artist of hypermodernity? In the interview with John Armitage, Paul Virilio was asked a question about the potential of cyberfeminism for social change and whether his present condition was that of being a cyborg, using Donna Haraway's *Cyborg Manifesto* of the 1990s as a point of reference.[111] Armitage was hinting to the fact that in hypermodernity, the human

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[108] Huhtamo 2010, p. 124.
[109] Huhtamo 2010, p. 123-124.
[110] "Studio Olafur Eliasson" <https://www.olafureliasson.net/> [accessed 27 October 2019].
[111] Cf. Virilio 2000[1999], p. 51.

mind/body is increasingly merging with the technology, thus changing how we perceive or influence our immediate social reality.[112] In contrast, Verilio's response was quite negative, as he concluded that the man was still the center of the universe and that the new technology had very limited potential for transforming or liberating society's marginalized groups.[113] However, when observing *MOSA*, it is difficult to impose Verilio's denial of the cyborg onto Schneider. The artists of the present are competing with sources of meaning outside the world of art and are evolving more and more into influencers of meaning. In Schneider's case, this meant she was turning to the internet/tech companies/digital reproductions and was gaining traction from the internet when the PCGG approached her with a proposal for a collaboration.[114] In a way, this activity is a type of art-based research— slightly mystical, partially artistic, with the artist lingering in between.[115] The state of lingering in between resonates more with Haraway's concept of the cyborg than Verilio's "man is still the center of the universe" conviction. To summarize, what *MOSA* produces is the shifting role of the artist in hypermodernity, a multi-media female artist collaborating with, for example, a Philippine governmental agency half a globe away with the *Samsung Multimedia Lab*.[116] Though *MOSA* was created with the support of a tech company and to promote VR-headsets, it was also created with a critique of the technologies (e.g., databases) in mind.[117]

Approaching Malraux from the perspective of knowledge and power construction, Jean-Francois Lyotard postulated that knowledge is transformed into a commodity, but not all knowledge is intended to be sold.[118] Contemporaneity has thus given rise to two other types of artists: the creator of market value and the creator of knowledge.[119] What *MOSA* is selling are the products that were used to sustain and make the app. The knowledge ironically comes free of charge for all who can afford the device. Nonetheless, the question arises about (im)possible separation of the artist from her device, as with case of *MOSA*, in hypermodernity. For a cyborg artist-curator and curator-artist, if the primary aim is creating meaning via an exhibition, the value of the artwork is in the creation of knowledge through resurrection and metamorphosis. Haraway states that "[a] cyborg is a cybernetic organism, a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction.

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[112] Virilio 2000[1999], p. 51.
[113] Ibid.
[114] See Appendix A, p. 160.
[115] idfa, *IDFA 2015 | DocLab Interactive Conference | Ziv Schneider*, 2016 <https://vimeo.com/162347012> [accessed 6 November 2019].
[116] See Appendix A, p. 158.
[117] Ibid.
[118] Lyotard 1994, p. 4.
[119] This could be knowledge of aesthetics, social condition, polemics, et cetera.

Social reality is lived social relations, our most important political construction, a world-changing fiction."[120] Malraux's metamorphosis resonates with Haraway's historical transformation, behind which the cyborg is a driving force: "The cyborg is a condensed image of both imagination and material reality, the two joined centers structuring any possibility of historical transformation."[121] The artist-curator and curator-artist are the primary agents who have the highest potential for historical transformation. The stories they attempt to tell structure the perception of the world and as the perceived world is structured by technology. These stories are necessarily structured by technology, which has penetrated every inch of our private homes in addition to public spheres. Using technology, Schneider, via a VR headset, brings this strange non-museum into the realm of domestic privacy in the same way the institution of a museum is increasingly transmitting the museum to private devices in a form of endless databases interconnected with each other with collections stowed away in vast warehouses. Haraway continues to describe the cyborg: "[n]o longer structured by the polarity of public and private, the cyborg defines a technological polis based partly on a revolution of social relations in the *oikos*, the household."[122] Under such conditions, the artist and the museum can seemingly enter any private home via technology, assembled and reassembled to the consumers' taste. The artist of hypermodernity would find himself/herself in constant cycle of resurrection and metamorphosis of previously created and infinitely reproduced matter in every exhibition, continuously adding new information and perspectives. The artist transforms, as *MOSA* clearly illustrates, into a distributor, multiplicator and diffuser of the information and knowledge available to her, along with the inherent multiplication of the confusion surrounding the conflicting resources that necessarily cause semantic mishaps (Figure 28, Figure 45).

In conclusion, the role of the artist in hypermodernity is constantly in flux, perhaps even resembling an extremely disillusioned Renaissance idea of a creative genius dabbing in all possible scientific disciplines, as is evident when examining performative online art projects such as *MOSA*, which aim at creating a knowledge surplus in the liminal space called the World Wide Web. Perhaps projects such as *MOSA* do not generate market value for the lost artwork, but for the artist, they do. The cyborg-artist who created *MOSA* is trying to close the rift between socially engaging and relevant issues—displaying and representing lost and therefore immaterial artworks—which has been neglected for far too long and has not found

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[120] Donna Jeanne Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge Chapman & Hall, 1991), p. 149.
[121] Ibid. p. 150.
[122] Ibid. p. 151.

a solution through technological advances of hypermodernity. The artist-curators, along with performing artists, are often dissatisfied with the constraints of the existing theoretical frameworks and thus search for alternative knowledge spaces beyond the given frameworks that enable them to experiment freely, even if sometimes they create utter nonsense.

2.4 Originality and Materiality of the Artwork in the Integrated Circuit

The dichotomy of presented artworks in *MOSA* versus *MOSA* as an art installation also structures this sub-chapter. An intricate entanglement exists between the artist and the artwork, as demonstrated by the analysis in the previous sub-chapter. For a better understanding of how the notion of the artwork has been transformed in hypermodernity on the level of the reproductions and on the level of the art project *MOSA*, Malraux must be resurrected once again. Malraux summarized the transforming image of the artist through the introduction of photographic reproduction, but he also applied the same reasoning to the artwork and its perception. Prior to the introduction of photography, it was much more difficult to establish comparisons, and the geographic distance was also a mental distance.[123] Additional to the new expanded mode for comparison it offered, photography was the medium upon which history in the last 100 years was built.[124] Moreover, Battro extended Malraux's methodology to the digital photographic reconstruction. Digitalization, as Battro explains, pushes our confrontation with the reality of the artwork to the extreme through the manipulation in the scale of the reproduction.[125]

2.4.1 Metamorphosis-Resurrection through Digital Photographic Reproduction

Malraux argues that until modern times (i.e. the nineteenth century) artwork was a representation of something seen or felt, and if the representation was of something felt, there was always necessarily a component of virtuality present.[126] Artworks were not viewed

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[123] Malraux 1967, p. 14.
[124] Ibid. p. 28.
[125] Battro 2010, p. 142.
[126] Malraux 1967, p. 10.

as paintings or sculptures, but as conceptional representations of reality. Malraux states that, "[a] Romanesque crucifix was not regarded by its contemporaries as a work of sculpture; nor Cimabue's *Madonna* as a picture. Even Phidias' *Pallas Athene* was not, primarily, a statue."[127] The Madonna, Pallas Athene and all other motifs known in art history were all imaginary concepts, but if these representations were depictions of something taken out of the immediate perceived reality, they were indeed only stylizations of the world. This sort of transformation can be seen in *MOSA*, when one compares various self-portraits and portraits. Raphael's *Portrait of a Young Man* (Figure 30), Frans de Mieris' *A Cavalier* (Figure 34), and Paul Strand's *Archina McRury* (Figure 43) are artistic snapshots of a certain time. The trend of realistic painting seemed to intensify until it culminated in the Renaissance. However, for the forefathers who played a crucial role in the rebirth known as the Renaissance, the idea of art probably did not exist, and both periods were not producing painting but images.[128] Moreover, there is the case of Caravaggio's *Nativity with St. Francis and St. Lawrence* (Figure 27), which was stolen from the Oratory of Saint Lawrence in Palermo. Initially, an empty frame was left hanging in the altar in memory of this painting, but it was later replaced by a high-resolution reproduction digital print on a canvas prepped with gesso.[129] Malraux argues that photographic reproduction changes the perception of all cultural artefacts, intensifying their transformation into artworks – in the same way the modern institution of the museum has begun to do.

> "The great religious works are inseparable from a powerful poetry, and become poetry to the extent that they become art when they are no longer documents of truth, but their poetry is always subordinated to faith and, almost always, is a means of expression of faith. But in the art of the unreal (as in certain of the arts of the Far East), painting becomes a means of expression of poetry—and often is preferred means of expression."[130]

The lesson *MOSA* reveals is the metamorphosis of the religious painting into an artwork. This is especially clear when one compares Francis Bacon's *Study for a Self-Portrait* (Figure 58), which is a transformation of the self-portrait into an artwork by the artist. In contrast to premodernity, in modern times – and coinciding with the establishment of the modern museum – the artwork increasingly loses its role as a depiction of real or imagined worlds and becomes a work of art.[131] Thus, artworks that entered the museum achieved a status of

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[127] Malraux 1967, p. 9.
[128] Cf. Ibid. p. 210.
[129] Stephanie Kirchgaessner, '"Restitution of a Lost Beauty": Caravaggio Nativity Replica Brought to Palermo', *The Guardian*, 10 December 2015, Art and Design section <http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2015/dec/10/restitution-lost-beauty-stolen-caravaggio-nativity-replica-brought-palermo> [accessed 9 May 2018].
[130] Malraux 1967, p. 180-181.
[131] "In a place where the work of art no longer has any function other than of being a work of art, and at a time when the artistic exploration of the world is in active progress. . . ." Ibid. p. 10-11.

an appearance of immortality and lost their context, as the unifying principle became simply "art". In this regard, *MOSA* is a critical reflection of this development, as it collects simply "stolen art" – the critical component is art, having been "stolen" and the art being revealed as "art". In addition, Malraux concludes that in modern times, the notion that only finished and framed artworks count as complete artworks was often imposed on works *post festum*; yet time and again it became obvious that complete work was not finished and finished work was incomplete.[132] The narration in *MOSA* tells the virtual visitor a story, whether true or not, about Vincent van Gogh's *Congregation leaving the Reformed Church at Nuenen*. Schneider's narrator claims that the X-ray – another kind of imaging – indicated that the scene had been altered, hinting at the fact that artworks and photographs alike can be unfinished.[133]

Malraux points out that the development of putting art objects on a pedestal made to be admired in a temple-like architecture started in modernity and continued into postmodernity.[134] "[T]his art and this esthetic derived legitimacy from a *general feeling*: from the will of all those who expected no more from painting than a *privileged* spectacle."[135] Within the museum context, the painting became a spectacle – for example Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*, Eduard Monet's *Water Lilies* or Vincent van Gogh's *Starry Night* – and towards the end of modernity, the novelty of the white cube resulted in artwork becoming even more entrenched in spectacle culture. The art critic Brian O'Doherty, who has written a several publications about the development of the white cube and its impact on artwork reveals this postmodern gallery space as the space where neutrality is an illusion, and where artwork is stripped down to bare art.[136] Thus, artworks transform into pure and competing theories of meaning. In terms of this approach, *MOSA* is Schneider's hypothesis about missing works – a research work in progress.

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[132] Malraux 1967, p. 48.
[133] See Appendix B, p. 171.
[134] Simultaneously, art objects were for the first time being perceived as "art" itself.
[135] Malraux 1967, p. 13.
[136] Cf. Brian O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space, Expanded Edition*, Enlarged ed (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), p. 79-80.

2.4.2 *MOSA* as a Digital Artwork

MOSA, unlike the artworks it contains, is completely intangible and presents itself in comparison to tangible artworks as a non-artwork that was created by highly profitable technologies at the shift from postmodernity to hypermodernity. By analyzing the shifts between premodernity and modernity, Malraux's *Museum without Walls* has a postmodern nuance to it. Certain characteristics of postmodernism were emerging before Malraux ever wrote *Museum without Walls*, which was translated into English in 1967, but it had already started to enter the theoretical discourse in the 1960s, as observed by the curator David Campany, who works primarily with photography.[137] However, the notion of reproduction was not critically questioned – and especially what Malraux describes as a certain comparative depth, apparent when the original is compared to the reproduction, was largely absent.[138] In postmodernity, the spectacle was no longer centered on the artwork, but on seizing a particular moment. It was an era obsessed with movement and ephemerality. The performing arts claimed their own place in the realm of art, as they were hard to reproduce, and reproduction became the standard.[139] Digital reproduction, on its own, can be quite performative, as a stroll through *MOSA* reveals. Nonetheless, what undoubtedly resonates with the *MOSA* art project is the utilization of reproduction techniques in order to achieve virtuality through stereoscopic vision and visualization of the collected visual data through the virtual space that merges in part with the space of the World Wide Web by choosing the option *Exit* (Figure 8, Figure 53) – resulting in the visitor being thrown out of the app instead of returning to the entry hall. This is the artwork of double simulation: the app on one side and the internet on the other. Postmodernity is as much an epoch of non-reflection as it is a

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[137] "The notion that photography has made art history possible is far from new. Indeed it is only slightly younger than art history itself, which grasped the structure of its reproductive condition almost from the outset. But it has never been a firm grasp. To ask of art history that it remain aware of its historical and contemporary dependence is really too tall an order, too intrinsic a proposition. Photography remains something of a founding disavowal that lets art history function. [. . .] Recognition of the dependence on photography will surface intermittently. We could see the writings of Walter Benjamin, André Malraux and even Jean Baudrillard as such varied eruptions." David Campany, 'Conceptual Art History, A Home for Homes for America'; in Michael Newman and Jon Bird, *Rewriting Conceptual Art* (Reaktion Books, 1999), p. 123.

[138] "Like reading of a play, as distinct from seeing it performed, or listening to a phonograph record, as distinct from hearing the same piece in a concert hall (but also like the reading of plays we will never see performed, listening to records of concerts we will never hear), there is now appearing, outside the walls of the museum and distinct from its contents, the broadest artistic domain man has known, the first heritage of all history - including history as yet unknown." Malraux 1967, p. 157.

[139] For example, see following artworks: Marcel Duchamp – *Hand Stereoscopy* (1918-1919); Lynn Hershman – *A Room of One's Own* (1993); Mike Naimark – *See Banff!* (1994); Perry Hoberman – *Excess Baggage* (1992); Catherine Richards – *The Virtual Body* (1993).

time when secondary genres such as artists' books, such as Seth Siegelaub's "Xerox Book" mentioned earlier – chosen here because of their high potential to achieve virtuality in an analogue medium – gained momentum. Such publications definitely belong to the virtual realm, as they focus the viewer's attention on a very limited space and transport him/her to another dimension by utilizing pictorial material and compressing an exhibition of several format-foreign and field-diverse artists into a photocopied book.[140] According to Malraux, the sheer mass of material forces the spectator to reevaluate all the remembered matter in a completely decontextualized manner:

> "The vastly expanded public [. . .] is unaware of a feeling which, for four centuries, played a large role in the relationship between the collector and the work of art: the feeling of ownership. We do not own the works we admire in reproduction (almost all of them are in museums), and we know we will never own them [. . .] This indifference to possession that, for us, frees the work of art from its quality of objet d'art, also makes us more sensitive than collectors of objet d'art to the creative accent of the work, an accent that photography reveals in minor or smaller works as well as in masterpieces. The world of photographs is, unquestionably, only the servant of the world of originals; and yet, appealing less directly to the emotions and far more to the intellect, it seems to reveal or to "develop"—in the sense which this word is used in photography—the creative act; to make the history of art primarily a continuing succession of creations."[141]

Artists' books are closely related to Malraux's *Museum without Walls* as they both rely on the technology of photocopying, which was spreading rapidly at the time; and in a way, both of them are related to *MOSA.* Are the megapixels of today's digital images not the photocopies of yesterday? Creating artists' books was merely a strategy by which the artist – or in this case the curator – bypassed the collector and museum and could reach the spectatorship on a direct distribution base. What *MOSA* reveals through the narration is, in fact, the artwork as a symbol of a time segment and of a particular culture, while continuing to depend on the context and remaining a collectible with a commercial worth.[142] The acceleration caused by raging globalization has changed the dynamics of viewer experience: for the spectator, recognizing the work of art has become a difficult process. Where does the artwork end and the exhibition begin? Is it one single artwork, a succession of artworks, an exhibition, a performative spectacle, an exhibiting institution, or all of the above? Notwithstanding the fact that he was writing in the late 1940s, I believe Malraux's claims still ring true: museums are made up of largely of exhibitions, each presenting a totalizing artwork, which swallows all the objects into one entity. For example, Malraux mentions the Louvre in Paris and the Prado in

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[140] Seth Siegelaub, 'Interview' (Hans Ulrich Obrist, interviewer); in: Hans Ulrich Obrist, *A Brief History of Curating* (Zürich: JRP Ringier, 2008), p. 122; For further detail on Seth Siegelaub, Chapter 7 in: Alexander Alberro, *Conceptual Art and the Politics of Publicity* (MIT Press, 2003), p. 152-171.
[141] Malraux 1967, p. 148.
[142] See Appendix B, p. 172.

Madrid.[143] The curators of museums will not much longer be content with "the best possible presentation of objects': even now they are seeking a means of expressing the mysterious unity of works of art, of which they are constantly reminded by the images in books published by the museums themselves."[144] This is a quotation from the beginning of the *Museum without Walls*, and even writing about art is a metamorphosis itself: "It is what is said *to us* by these sculptures and these paintings, and not what they have said."[145] The visitor to MOSA is confronted by precisely this type of narration about the originals behind the reproduction. However, the narration the narration is made to fit the context of the artwork value on multiple occasions, thus transforming curating into the real artwork of *MOSA*.[146] This notion is reinforced by the accelerated development of virtuality due to the introduction of the internet. However, at the same time, I am arguing that art projects such as *MOSA* are not a novelty amongst hybridized art endeavors. Friedrich Kiesler – active primarily in the first half of the twentieth century – developed the Vision Machine, which closely resembles the virtual reality devices that are known today. Kiesler's Abstract Gallery room of Peggy Guggenheim's Art of This Century Gallery art salon in 1942 is one such example. Huhtamo established that in Kiesler's case, using peep boxes, and forcing the spectator to manipulate the box in order to see the reproduction was an act of ultimate curating – an act of ultimate vision fixation.

> "By introducing the idea of peeping into the gallery, Kiesler managed to question some widely shared assumptions. Not only were artworks subordinated to the creative intervention of the exhibition designer [. . .] the playful way of interacting with them engaged both the visitor's eyes and his/her hand, transgressing the 'untouchability' traditionally associated with the aesthetic object."[147]

Kiesler is worth revisiting – not just as an eccentric on the margins of modernism, but as an early predecessor to media artists presently experimenting with the newest technology. In hypermodernity, of which *MOSA* is a part, reproduction becomes hyper, which has several consequences for the artwork. First, the reproduction and the issues of authenticity are not relevant, because it has hopefully been broadly realized by now that nothing is original and everything is an imitation. Second, it is not the dread of reproduction that haunts *MOSA*, but the crisis of the representational capacity of these reproductions. Schneider is becoming increasingly dissatisfied with its representation through the database, because the database is a sterile and automated environment with little or no effective context.[148] While a database

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[143] "When confronted with the taut and massive styles [. . .] all the European schools represented in the Louvre [. . .] become one single style." Malraux 1967, p. 72.
[144] Ibid. 220.
[145] Ibid.
[146] See Appendix B, p. 173-177.
[147] Huhtamo 2006, p. 76.
[148] See Appendix A, p. 158; also compare the wall texts in Appendix B to the database entries in Appendix C.

is certainly not poetic, algorithms, by contrast, can be highly poetic, as many video games and virtual reality platforms have demonstrated.[149] Indeed they can be almost addictive, as is true in the case of *MOSA*. However, algorithms belong to hard sciences – to math and programming – how could they possibly be art? With these complex relationships in mind, it is easy to see how it would be hard to equate internet projects with artworks. *MOSA* is a fairly simple algorithm scripted in Unity – from the world of games – where the visitor enters the album, the virtual exhibition designed and curated by the artist, trying to comprehend how and why so many artworks simply disappeared, without most of society even knowing about it.[150] However, *MOSA* is also itself an art installation that is threatened by permanent erasure. If preserving analogue artworks proves to be a futile task, one might well ask how digital artworks could possibly be preserved in these ever-changing formats, as software and hardware seem to be upgraded by the minute. Two versions of *MOSA*, iOS and Android, have already been created, and *The Looting of Afghanistan* and *The Looting of Iraq* are only partially available on YouTube, all within the span of two years. Virtual artworks defy the logic of collecting, as the formats and technological requirements are rapidly changing, leading to the question whether performativity is actually their essence. Virtuality, as an imaginary space, is not new to hypermodernism, but the majority of the processes are accelerating faster than ever before in our known history. It is the variable of time that is being distorted and shortened; for example, in *MOSA* anything is possible, no temporal boundaries are left uncrossed.

2.5 Virtual Exhibition Space as Critical Space

Art histories are being made every day, every moment, with every vernissage or exhibition. When searching for answers, focusing on discrete objects is insufficient. Moreover, as discussed in previous chapters, relationships between objects and discrepancies between the original and reproduction are extremely important – also when discussing exhibition design, which is itself a complex artistic ecosystem. When Huhtamo analyzes the exhibition design of the avant-garde, he is referring primarily to Mary Anne Staniszewski. Writing about the power of display, Staniszewski argues that,

> "[A] work of art, when publicly displayed, almost never stands alone: it is always an
> element within a permanent or temporary exhibition created in accordance with
> historically determined and self-consciously staged installation conventions. Seeing

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[149] For example, see following artworks: Scott Fisher – *Menagerie* (1993); Jeffrey Shaw – *Legible City* (1989).
[150] See Appendix A, p. 158.

the importance of exhibition design provides an approach to art history that acknowledges the vitality, historicity, and the time-and-site-bound character of all aspects of culture."[151]

This development was regarded as radically novel in modernity, because prior to the introduction of the modern museum in the mid-nineteenth century, exhibition design consisted only of one major component, namely the display – "a gathering of paintings".[152] The exhibition design of premodernity consisted mainly of straightforward displays scattered about a space and mixed with all kinds of rarities. The exhibition space of cabinets of wonders was very site-specific, and almost identical to its physical accommodation. Moreover, it was this notion that partially inspired Schneider to create *MOSA*; however, more in the sense of displaying rarities than in the sense of the display itself.[153]

2.5.1 Virtual Exhibition Practices of the Avant-Garde and *MOSA*

In modern times the locus of display moved from palace/church to the museum, whereas the collections were still displayed in a predominately random manner until the establishment of late-modern galleries.[154] Alexander Dorner's curatorial practices, which included the use of atmosphere rooms relying on the concept of gallery/exhibition, for the Landesmuseum in Hannover in 1920s would mark a slow departure from modernity. Dorner actively implemented exhibition design into the museum spaces and unintentionally succeeded in creating an independent discipline out of exhibition design. The gathering of paintings ceased to be an arbitrary matter or dependent on the individual whims of collectors and became a conscious and conceptual process. By means of sensory stimulation such as background colors, theatricality or staging was created, and immersion was supposed to evoke an emotional response in the spectator. A string of paintings on the peach-colored walls, the columned entry hall (Figure 4), and the domed "inner-sanctum" of *MOSA* (Figure 8, Figure 53) resemble one of Dorner's spaces in the Landesmuseum. However, virtuality is also very much connected to deliberate sensory stimulation. I especially agree with Huhtamo's conviction that in the avant-garde,

> "[t]he key idea is integration [of the spectator into the exhibition]. Here the exhibits are no longer seen as separate entities put on display in any space. Instead, they are considered integral elements of total environments that envelop the visitors and

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[151] Mary Anne Staniszewski, *The Power of Display: A History of Exhibition Installations at the Museum of Modern Art* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1998), p. xxi.

[152] Malraux 1967, p. 16; For example, see: Frans II. Francken – *Kunst- und Raritätenkamm*er (ca. 1620-1625)

[153] For Schneider's position on cabinets of wonder see Appendix A, p. 157.

[154] Cf. Malraux 1967, p. 22.

encourages them into dynamic relationship with the space and all its dimensions and elements. The environment comprises different media and channels of communication. Instead of a passive spectator in front of static exhibits, the visitor is meant to turn into an active participant."[155]

In his chapter in the compendium *Book of Imaginary Media* (2006) – yet another of his contributions towards theorizing virtual exhibition practices – Huhtamo further discusses how virtuality was often used to enhance displays of objects. He traces the history of peep media and closely aligns it to the desire to create virtuality as a tool of voyaging through imagination. Artists inspired by modern gadgets, such as the stereoscope referred to earlier on, were often harshly criticized for using them in their exhibition design practices.[156] The avant-gardists preferred the format of a gallery and they embraced progress, technology, and science. Stephen J. Phillips, who studied the influence that emerging technology trends in the first half of the twentieth century had on Friedrich Kiesler's exhibition designs, best describes the intricate relationship between arts and sciences at that time: "Symbolizing the ultimate incorporation of the human body in its surroundings, both exciting and discomforting, androids or living machines came to reflect society's obsession with modern industry and the impact technology was having on everyday human life."[157] Moreover, Phillips lamented the fact that the Czech writer Karel Čapek coined the term "robot" in 1920, which inspired Kiesler and others to start experimenting with new technologies.[158] Moreover, Phillips adds that by "[p]roviding visions of the future, authors and designers created fictional spaces of experimental fantasy that have opened up towards new worlds."[159] Understandably, avant-garde artists initially experimented with virtual exhibition practices within established institutions, and faced challenges similar to those faced by contemporary artists.

Friedrich Kiesler's *Leger und Träger* system of flexible freestanding presentation displays from the 1920s, for example, created a spatial situation in which, in the words of Huhtamo, "[t]he experience of the situation was dependent on the routes and points of views chosen by each visitor. . . . "[160] Accordingly, the whole internet is a giant maze, a non-linear data space with dubious linkages, much like *MOSA* (Figure 1). The non-linear data space, which is so characteristic of the internet, is symbolically present in *MOSA*, as the shape of the

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[155] Huhtamo 2010, p. 125.
[156] Cf. ibid. p. 127.
[157] Stephen J. Phillips, *Elastic Architecture: Frederick Kiesler and Design Research in the First Age of Robotic Culture* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2017), p. ix.
[158] Phillips 2017, p. X.
[159] Ibid. p. x.
[160] Huhtamo 2010, p. 125.

virtual museum is a double concentric circle framed within a square. All the spaces are connected to one another and can be reached from the innermost circle through five passages. In the case of *MOSA*, too, the visitor can choose his or her own path and, depending on which virtual exhibition hall is viewed first, the general narrative of the whole museum changes, as does the visitor's perception of *MOSA*. For example, by choosing to view *Stolen European Painting* first, it is easy to reconstruct the concept conveyed by *MOSA*. However, upon entering the center of the museum at *Recently Stolen*, the in-app commentary is absent and the context has yet to be discovered by the visitor. This is evident from the transcriptions of the in-app commentaries which are absent from this (mock-) exhibition.[161] Furthermore, when focusing on separate (mock-)exhibitions, *MOSA* strongly resembles another great avant-gardist work, namely László Moholy-Nagy's *Raum der Gegenwart* (*Space of the Present*) from the 1930s, produced for Dorner's Landesmuseum. The multimedia exhibition contained only artwork reproductions, with the exception of the Light Prop, which was a technological light manipulation installation that Moholy-Nagy had already unveiled at the international design exhibition in Paris in 1930 for a show representing the *Deutscher Werkbund*.[162] Akin to the circumstances surrounding the Light Prop, which was funded by the German electronics company Allgemeine Elektriztäts-Gesellschaft (AEG),[163] *MOSA* was created with the assistance of the Samsung VR Lab at ITP.[164] While Moholy-Nagy viewed the Light Prop in his 1930 essay as a machine prototype, the focus of his own work shifted to kinetic sculpture in his book *Vision in Motion* in 1944.[165] Encountering works such as Alexander Calder's *Mobile* and Walt Disney's *Fantasia*, both of which he was familiar with, led to Moholy-Nagy's re-evaluation of Light Prop and a transformation of his own role as an artist.[166] While he was not alone in his quest for virtuality, he was initially very isolated in his attempts to breach the gap between the artwork and the spectator. In the words of Joyce Tsai, who wrote an extensive analysis of Light Prop, what Moholy-Nagy was essentially trying to achieve was "the transformation of the world […] [through] the fundamental reconfiguration of sensuous perception."[167] Influencing or

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[161] See Appendix B, p. 163-166.
[162] Cf. Huhtamo 2010, p. 126; Joyce Tsai, '"Sorcerer's Apprentice: László Moholy-Nagy and the Light Prop for an Electrical Stage." In Reconsidering the Total Work of Art, Edited by Anke Finger and Danielle Follett, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010.'
<https://www.academia.edu/1201296/_Sorcerer_s_Apprentice_L%C3%A1szl%C3%B3_Moholy-Nagy_and_the_Light_Prop_for_an_Electrical_Stage._In_Reconsidering_the_Total_Work_of_Art_edited_by_Anke_Finger_and_Danielle_Follett_277-304_426-33._Baltimore_Johns_Hopkins_University_Press_2010>
[accessed 15 May 2018], p. 277.
[163] Cf. Tsai 2010, p. 288.
[164] See Appendix A, p. 158.
[165] Tsai 2010, p. 303-304.
[166] Cf. ibid. p. 300-301.
[167] Ibid. p. 281.

redefining the sensory perception would, so Moholy-Nagy believed, enable re-evaluation of historical, economic and political conditions.[168] However, Moholy-Nagy failed spectacularly in his attempts to create either a light show machine that could achieve such profound outcomes or induce such a powerful social transformation, because his ambitions could not match his creation – the technology he needed was simply not available yet – and his Light Prop was viewed by the critics as a useless toy.[169] *MOSA* can also be regarded as a project inspired by technology, but sadly unfinished, as it did not contribute to any paintings whatsoever being recovered.[170]

Another avant-garde artist who experimented with useless toys and encapsulated reproductions of artworks in virtual space was Friedrich Kiesler. It was Peggy Guggenheim herself, with the approval of the Surrealist circle, who commissioned Kiesler to design four new gallery exhibits for The Art of This Century gallery in New York in 1942.[171] Kiesler, who was well informed about Marcel Duchamp's exhibition design, built the displays to highlight artworks smuggled to the US from France during the German occupation in the Second World War by spreading them amongst four areas: the Abstract Gallery (cubist exhibit), the Daylight Gallery (temporary exhibit), the Surrealist Gallery (Surrealist exhibit) and the Kinetic Gallery (interactive show featuring works of Paul Kleé and Marcel Duchamp).[172] Based on his studies of what he called the Vision Machine for his design correlation research in the 1930s, Kiesler – constantly intrigued by the visual perception of images – constructed shadow boxes that could be peeped into through openings in a wall or screen.[173] The Vision Machine, as described in Kiesler's unpublished manuscript, was supposed to play masterworks of art on a continuous film-loop which was subsequently projected onto a glass apple on one side of the dividing wall.[174] From the other side of the wall, the viewer would look through a peep hole and, while he or she was involved in the act of peeping, the glass tubes on the one side of the wall would somehow project the viewer's brainwaves in a color code of some sort that could be somehow deciphered.[175] It is unclear exactly how the Vision Machine was intended to work, but it was supposed to map the perception of the viewer, and thereby map the process of human imagination. By forcing the viewer into the act of

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[168] Tsai 2010, p. 280.
[169] Ibid. p. 294.
[170] Appendix A, p. 162.
[171] Phillips 2017, p. 175.
[172] Ibid.
[173] Ibid.
[174] Frederick Kiesler, 'Brief Description of Vision Machine', unpublished manuscript, 1937.
[175] Ibid.

peeping, Kiesler also succeeded in fixing the former's gaze on the highlighted image. The reconstruction of such a space by means of a textual description is highly problematic, and equally as challenging is a description of Kiesler's exhibits for The Art of This Century gallery. Phillips, who extensively researched Kiesler's artistic corpus, describes the galleries as one continuous exhibition space that was constantly interrupted by a series of shadow boxes – devices that resembled magic lanterns and mirrors.

> "Kiesler's shadow boxes focused conscious perception on a series of successive images - set to motion - to create a sense of illusionary space. One optical machine in the Kinetic Gallery at The Art of This Century used a rotary device like a magic lantern to animate a series of images of Duchamp's partially opened Boîte-en-valise (1935-1941). Another shadow box device set up between the Abstract and Daylight galleries used an ocular diaphragm surrounded by a series of fisheye mirrors. Opening the lens, one saw Kleé's Magic Garden, superimposed against the mirror image of the spectator and the Abstract Gallery behind. Closing the diaphragm, one looked up to see Kurt Schwitters's Relief suspended within a glass picture frame that revealed part of the Daylight Gallery beyond. When one moved through the door into this distant room, the image space expanded to complete the picture of the Daylight Gallery held in the mind's eye. Then looking back toward the shadow box, the viewer visualized the Abstract Gallery contracted within this same glass picture frame (from this side Arp's Untitled (1940) is suspended in the window frame). This last framed image then became superimposed against the series of afterimages in memory reflected within the shadow box device. Perception fluctuated between these successive images unfolding through time, creating the sense of an elastic spatial continuum between the rooms."[176]

Kiesler's Kinetic Gallery, in particular, bears an almost chilling resemblance to MOSA. According to Staniszewski, this period seems to be pivotal for the acceleration of virtuality in the art sphere: "It is in the installation design of the first half of the twentieth century that the sources of such practices as viewer interactivity and site specificity, as well as multimedia, electronic, and installation-based work, are to be found."[177] The virtual exhibition practices of the avant-garde present valid and helpful points of reference against which art projects such as MOSA can be compared, since MOSA comprises four (mock-)exhibitions and draws heavily on the utilization of virtual exhibition practices, interactivity, and immersion. First, visitors have the option of leaving a message on an automated answering machine, should they possess any information about the missing artworks featured in MOSA (Figure 6). Nonetheless, it is unclear to whom the message is actually addressed. Second, when visitors uses the VR headsets they become totally immersed in the alternate reality of an imaginary museum that exists only in the app, and are forced to move their bodies in the physical space to maneuver their way through MOSA. It is precisely this approach of imaginative interactivity that appears to be latently present in and crucial for art projects such

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[176] Phillips 2017, p. 175.
[177] Staniszewski 1998, p. xxii-xxiii.

as *MOSA*. Another similarity that *MOSA* has with avant-garde exhibition practices is the maze-like structure of the space that allows for the space to be redefined and deconstructed.

For Kiesler, who went as far as to create his own Design Correlation Laboratory, interdisciplinary research was an integral part of his artistic practice.[178] For years, one of the central projects of his laboratory at the University of Columbia was the never-to-be-realized Vision Machine. Kiesler also reached out for consultation with other educational experts, including scientists who dealt with ocular mechanics, to build a device that could track informational networks that existed between space, body and mind.[179] In his unpublished manuscript, Kiesler describes the Vision Machine as a kind of peeping device that was designed to demonstrate how highly subjective cognitive perception actually is. Unfortunately, however, a machine that could take snapshots of unconscious perception and encapsulate the full scope of human imaginative capacity was obviously too elaborate and pretentious ever to be assembled.[180] Nonetheless, the ideas of the Vision Machine and the shadow boxes integrated into Kiesler's exhibits for The Art of This Century gallery were intended to convey that there are multiple realities and that vision and fact do not necessarily belong to the same reality.[181] Kiesler was attempting to create a space somewhere between the objective (sensory) and pictorial (subjective) perception that would enable eidetic visions, for example, a vivid memory retention of an image upon a series of short exposures to the said image.[182] Phillips called this state of mind a zone of indeterminacy and stated that "[w]ithin this zone of indeterminacy, neither subjective nor objective, eidetic images constitute a virtual depository of endless images in the process of becoming."[183] In the next subchapter, I discuss this zone of indeterminacy and ask whether the way *MOSA* relates to this zone could be the museum without walls that Malraux was describing.

In contrast to Moholy-Nagy, Kiesler kept the spectator at a distance from the artwork, but forced the spectator to focus on and integrate the reproductions through mental immersion. However, Kiesler's Kinetic Gallery is no longer an anomaly, as it has been slowly incorporated into mainstream exhibition practices. The gadgetry had a sort of vulgar and unsophisticated undertone, a trend that seems to be extending into the twenty-first century,

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[178] Phillips 2017, p. 159-161.
[179] Ibid. p. 153.
[180] Ibid. p. 154.
[181] Ibid. p. 180.
[182] Ibid.
[183] Ibid.

since many of the modern gadgets are viewed as entertainment devices with cheap or primitive aesthetics when presented to a lecture room packed with art history students.[184] In defense of these emerging trends, although they have been around for several decades, it should be emphasized that they are in their early stages of development.[185] Nonetheless, they are primarily incomplete technologies and innovations, as can be experienced when visitors to *MOSA* are desperately trying to select the exit sign to leave the app, which is hard to zoom in on, or trying to re-enter the app to start the whole experience from the beginning again. Smartphones – those portable mini-computers that have almost become parts of our bodies and our extended consciousness – are the peep-holes or stereoscopes of hypermodernity. This argument is further developed by Huhtamo's reading of Mary Anne Staniszewski who postulates that "technology was used against collective consumption typical of mass media and for individualized and customized experiences."[186] To demonstrate the difference between the two technologies mentioned in the previous sentence and apply it to contemporary media, this would be precisely the difference between the internet as a platform for display and the interactive segments of the internet, such as multiplayer online gaming, interactive applications, video streaming platforms with a commentary section, and social media. Both Huhtamo and Staniszewski have chosen examples of installation design from avant-garde artists of the first half of the twentieth century as precedents to the more recent virtual exhibition practices. What distinguishes these two eras from one another is that today the internet is the "it" medium, whereas in the avant-garde period, film, radio, and accessible cameras were the predominant tools for creating virtuality. What appears strikingly familiar in the avant-garde experimentation with virtuality is the significant shift in the media towards mass accessibility and distribution, which is comparable to our experience today; for example, the acceleration and fractalization mentioned by Virilio. In fact, the attempts of the avant-garde artists were aimed at inducing a shift in the spectator's perception to uncover the otherwise latent content. The profound transformation of the way information was experienced and communicated served as an inspiration for today's artists and the avant-garde artists, who were in search of innovative displays that would encapsulate alternative perceptions of art objects. In order to discuss this topic further, it is crucial to recognize that exhibition design in the age of mediated representation has changed its function. Staniszewski argues that "[a]ll that we experience in the world is mediated by culture and is, in this sense, representation. As everything we see as culture, exhibitions are history, ideology, politics—and aesthetics."[187]

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[184] Huhtamo 2006, p. 139.
[185] See Appendix A, p. 161.
[186] Huhtamo 2010, p. 127.
[187] Staniszewski 1998, p. xxiii.

The notion that an exhibition is far more than a simple collection of paintings establishes the basis for Chapter 4: "Revealing and Hiding." When discussing exhibition spaces, the distinction between museum and gallery is crucial, as the gallery can be an autonomous space as well as a part of the museum. Furthermore, it was the gallery that the avant-garde artists chose as their preferred exhibition space, and it is the format of a gallery that Schneider chose for *MOSA*.[188] The comparison with a church might seem extreme, but it does remind us of the fact that when we are dealing with art spaces we are dealing with powerful institutions with very set traditions. The firm grip of institutionalized traditions is apparent while viewing spaces that are constructed in the virtual dimension.

2.5.2 MOSA as Critical Virtual Exhibition Gallery

The virtual begins where the tangible ends and imagination leads the way. As argued previously in this chapter, virtuality has existed in some form or another for at least as long as there has been art, but the total immersive experience associated with virtuality in the twenty-first century intensified with the introduction of the internet and personal computers.[189] Helena Barranha, a modern theorist on the topic of virtualization in museums claims that "[i]n response to this apparent paradox, a twofold approach to museum design has been developed since the 1990s: on the one hand, virtual exhibition spaces have emerged and multiplied on the Internet as a democratic and exciting alternative to traditional institutions; on the other hand, physical galleries have also been redesigned in order to accommodate new media artworks."[190] Exhibition practice is evolving beyond the constraints of the exhibition space by being repeatedly displaced to the streets by artists, condensed into books, and transferred to the World Wide Web in hypermodernity. Virtual gallery spaces frequently mimic the creator's immediate surroundings in such an apparent way. Staniszewski explains why people in general are fixated on familiar concepts in the following way: "Their unconscious, or less obviously visible, aspects can be understood as manifestations of historical limitations and social codes."[191] The spaces created in the virtual realm exemplify the persistence and social rootedness of such constructs. To paraphrase

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[188] "The modernist gallery is a space for meditation and interiority; in that sense it resembles a church." Huhtamo 2010, p. 128.

[189] Helena Barranha, 'Between the Virtual and a Hard Place: The Dilemma of Digital Art Museums', *BOWEN, Jonathan P.; DIPROSE, Graham; LAMBERT, Nick (Eds.) - EVA London 2016 - Electronic Visualisation and the Arts* <https://www.academia.edu/28617191/Between_the_Virtual_and_a_Hard_Place_The_Dilemma_of_Digital_Art_Museums> [accessed 31 January 2019], p. 330.

[190] Barranha 2016, p. 330

[191] Staniszewski 1998, p. xxii.

Lyotard's understanding of the institutional grip on discursive potentials, in an exhibition space there are specific chosen objects to be shown, and there are ways of showing them.[192] Clearly, in the case of *MOSA*, the familiar exhibition patterns also reappear – a string of paintings hanging on a dull monochrome wall resembling Dorner's atmosphere rooms. The same principle applies to nearly all virtual reconstructions of museums, as these projects are extensions of established institutions in the virtual world. For example, MUVA, a virtual museum in Uruguay, is only one of the numerous examples that demonstrate this stark trend.[193] What the app user encounters in the app or on the web is how a museum functions as an ideology and how exhibition design is perceived as an idea.

Comparable to the avant-garde, today's innovative exhibition designs are usually practiced outside the established art institutions, and rather take place in spaces at the intersection of science, alternative world views, and virtual hubs. However inspirational Huhtamo's findings were, they are ambiguous, too, because of his conviction about how "the gallery became […] a navigable non-linear database".[194] In the case of *MOSA*, I rather argue against Huhtamo's conviction that the gallery has become a navigable non-linear database in Chapter 2: "Erasure and Storage". The gallery is a very specific space, with actual physical locus, institutionalized traditions, and its own archival structures. Therefore, the gallery as a physical space might become an extended alternative exhibition space, while its collection's registry would still be organized in a form of an archive. If the gallery truly took on the form of a database, it would no longer be site-bound in a specific physical space. In contemporary art, this would resonate with *L'Atélier des Lumières* art installation in Paris, where the visitor is literally immersed in a work of art.[195] It is reasonable to claim that avant-garde attempts at creating a virtual exhibition, equivalent to present 3D installations, were still very much site-specific and largely bound to the physical space and context of a gallery that had itself become an institution.

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[192] "[A]n institution […] always requires supplementary constraints for statements to be declared admissible within its bounds. The constraints function to filter discursive potentials, interrupting possible connections in the communication networks: there are things that should not be said. They also privilege certain classes of statements (sometimes only one) whose predominance characterizes the discourse of the particular institution: there are things that should be said, and there are ways of saying them." Lyotard 1994, p. 17.
[193] Alicia Haber, 'MUVA: A Virtual Museum in Uruguay', *Museum International*, 52.1 (2000), p. 26.
[194] Huhtamo 2010, p. 128.
[195] 'L'Atelier Des Lumières - Site Officiel - Créé Par Culturespaces' <https://www.atelier-lumieres.com/> [accessed 3 November 2019].

The innovative exhibition design that flourished in Western Europe and the United States between the 1920s and 1960s, is reoccurring at present, due to the existence of conditions similar to those before, during, and after the avant-garde period. Moreover, experimentation with various exhibition designs is gaining momentum again.[196] However, with the introduction of the internet, the light-speed interpersonal interconnectivity on such a large scale permutated into global dimensions, seemingly compressing time and space gaps in the information exchange. When comparing avant-garde installation and exhibition design to *MOSA*, it is important to take into consideration that the existing social condition is extremely globalized and fast-paced—such is the domain of hypervirtuality. Fifty-seven works of art were extracted from at least four databases, retouched, provided with stories constructed around them, and gathered in a virutality-induced animation within several months.[197] The exhibition has definitely left the museum, the gallery, the artists' studios, and the international art fairs, and it has definitely entered the internet. The exhibition design in *MOSA* became the artwork itself. Furthermore, the approaches towards displaying artworks has diversified – with the exception of the hegemony of the white cube, of course. The design of the white cube displays certain characteristics that captivating the viewer, such as the immersion of the viewer in an austere and sterile blank space, fixation of the viewer's gaze on individual artworks, and elevation of artworks to a higher ground of understanding, all while disconnecting them from their individual contexts. Total immersion is a prerequisite for stimulating virtuality, but total immersion is also needed to isolate the spectator from his or her surroundings. In the exhibition concept of the white cube, little space is left for interaction, which is allowed only as far as the artists or curators desire it, placing the artist or curator in complete and total control.[198] Art concepts are subsequently imposed on the visitor, as against opening new perceptions to the visitor. Thus, the white cube perpetuates the old strategy of creating a rift between the spectator and the artwork. Over the past few centuries, the majority of artworks were hung on the wall and it was forbidden to touch them, with the exception of orthodox icons or certain avant-garde interventions such as Moholy-Nagy's *Raum der Gegenwart* for Dorner's Landesmuseum in Hannover in the 1930s. Hence, the implementation of the virtual can be seen as an attempt to compensate for the loss that has been caused by what Huhtamo terms "forbidden touch"[199] which rules the art world, and museums in particular.

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[196] Cf. Staniszewski 1998, p. 3.
[197] See Appendix A, p. 157.
[198] O'Doherty 1999, p. 80.
[199] Huhtamo 2010, p. 127.

The question arises about the meaning behind a virtual installation where every exhibited artwork has been violated and the taboo of the forbidden touch broken, since the artworks represented in it have been stolen and therefore violated. *MOSA* draws on the logic of the forbidden touch, amplifying the tactics of contemporary museums, by trying to conceptually touch that which is most definitely physically untouchable. At the same time, however, *MOSA* aims to create at least some sort of human-machine-human interaction to compensate for the immaterial matter that only lives in memory. Whether it is Schneider urging the visitor to report the stolen artworks and to explore (Figure 4), or VR headset commands forcing the body to move along the controls of *MOSA* in physical space, the visitor is confronted with such interaction. Moreover, the memory itself is corruptible, fallible, and easily manipulated by the emotions of anger and mourning it triggers, as is examined in Chapter 3: "Erasure and Storage." The objects presented in the critical space of *MOSA* can only continue living in the memories of the viewers through their reproductions. This is the everlasting presence of nothingness, which is at the back of our minds after we leave *MOSA*. This the precise moment the viewers find themselves in the critical space referred to by Virilio as follows: "Now, about the critical aspect of space: this means that space finds itself in a critical situation, just like one would speak of critical terms, or of a critical situation. Space is under threat. Not only matter is threatened, space too is being destroyed. But it is being rebuilt in the same time."[200] Battro argues that photography robs the objects of their initial color, material, volume, and even their dimensions, so that they become, in effect, an object autonomous of the original artwork.[201] The work loses its physical relationship to the physical space because it can be manipulated into fitting almost any dimension, and thus generates a display of miniatures that cannot escape the screen. Virtuality threatens the space by giving an impression of spatiality, but one that consists only of information – it is a resurrection of a space through information. Simultaneously, virtuality also rebuilds the deconstructed space anew in our imagination – a metamorphosis of a space through comparison between the offline and online dimension. Huhtamo was probably thinking in terms of Virilio's critical spatiality when describing the use of the stereoscope in the nineteenth century: "There is no doubt that the stereoscope provided *potential* for private, individual virtual voyaging […]. However, this potential needed to be actuated by the user, always operating in a cultural and social space."[202] Using such devices in a space where one reality is being substituted by another reality enables the individual to voyage from one reality to another. In *MOSA* the

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[200] Virilio 2000[1999], p. 33.
[201] Antonio M. Battro, 'From Malraux's Imaginary Museum to the Virtual Museum', in: Ross Parry, *Museums in a Digital Age*, 1. publ. (London [u.a.]: Routledge, 2010), p. 141.
[202] Huhtamo 2006, p. 128.

voyage is from the virtual into physical. One method to grasp spatial shifts in hypermodernism is provided by Virilio, namely a critical analysis through a perception of technology in a critical space.[203] Does this not constitute the guiding principle of *MOSA*? The concept has been taken from Virilio's disagreement with Baudrillard about the construction of reality. Virilio says the following:

> "I do not believe in simulation. […] To me, what takes place is substitution. […] I believe that different categories of reality have unfolded since the beginning of time, from the Neolithic Age to the present day. This means that reality is never given, but is the outcome of a culture. […] [A]nd then there is a simulation of that reality, through a new technology, such as photography, or some other thing or VR, for instance, and then you have a free substitution, a second reality. Hence simulation is a mere intermediary phase, without import. What is important is substitution; how a class I reality is substituted by a 'class II reality', and so on, up to the 'nth' reality."[204]

In agreement with Virilio, multiple realities exist in the virtual realm that substitute one another, but I would not like to discard Baudrillard completely. As to the substitution of one reality with another, I argue along the lines of Virilio's substitution, that history has perpetually been repeating itself. One example relates very closely to *MOSA* in our contemporary condition, namely the avant-garde of the first half of the twentieth century – especially the Surrealists and Dadaists – the proto-postmodernists who both subjected themselves to design and the logic of the machine.[205] On the one hand, the principle of substitution is one cornerstone of *MOSA*, and on the other hand the eclecticism in *MOSA* echoes an important issue regarding methodology. As a cyborgian creation, *MOSA* is situated in the borderlands between science and technology referred to by the scholar Donna Haraway in her 1991 *Cyborg Manifesto*. Haraway would use the term "borderlands" for critical spaces that are deconstructing amalgamated dualisms and borders through applied technology.[206] Haraway's borderlands or Virilio's critical spaces are productive places where negotiations about knowledge construction happen, and as such they are bound to lead to concerns about what one cares about and what that tells one about oneself.[207] Haraway claims that "the border war […] [reshapes] the territories of production, reproduction, and imagination."[208] With this notion of critical space in mind, the following two chapters attempt to outline the possible motivations behind an art project such as *MOSA* and the exhibition design strategies used by the artist in *MOSA*.

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[203] Virilio 2000[1999], p. 26.
[204] Ibid. p. 43.
[205] Cf. Huhtamo 2006, p. 76.
[206] Cf. Haraway 1991, 9. 181.
[207] Cf. Haraway 1991, p. 150; Virilio 2000[1999], p. 26.
[208] Haraway 1991, p. 151.

2.6 Is *MOSA* a (Virtual) Museum?

To analyze the *Museum of Stolen Art* necessarily means to grapple with the institution of the museum and its origins as well as its stern institutional inscription, both physical and virtual. Unfortunately, my examination of the virtualization of the museum's institution is limited by my own sociological and geographical constraints as well. The museum, which is closely aligned with the notions discussed in the previous section about the artist, the artwork, and the exhibition in this thesis, gathers all the mentioned concepts and binds them together. The artist, the artwork, and the art space, all the core concepts that have been discussed thus far, are crucial components of the unifying monolith that is the art museum. In genealogical terms, the collection, exhibition, and gallery were all in existence before the public museums we know today. Unlike a museum, an exhibition or a gallery is a temporally constrained spectacle always highlighting certain aspects of much broader artwork collections.

2.6.1 *MOSA* and *Museum without Walls*

The most intriguing question is whether *MOSA* would be the museum Malraux would have built for himself if he had lived in the present time. In my opinion, the answer is no, but it is his methodology that is demonstrated in *MOSA* in such a striking manner. *L'Univers des Formes*, a 42-volume collection including 23,000 figures published regularly until 2006 in France, would be the closest attempt to resurrect Malraux's imaginary museum. With the exception of his *Museé Imaginaire,* the materialization of a global museum was not seriously entertained until Google launched the Art and Culture Institute, with a strong emphasis on artwork digitalization.[209] *MOSA* is clearly not a total global museum, but a space for artists to reflect on the frustration with museums' representation of the gaps in their own collections on- and offline.[210] Art historian Douglas Crimp best expressed frustration with representational deficits within the museum as follows:

> "The set of objects the Museum displays is sustained only by the fiction that they somehow constitute a coherent representational universe. The fiction is that a

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[209] 'Google Arts & Culture' <https://artsandculture.google.com/> [accessed 5 November 2019].
[210] See Appendix A, p. 158.

repeated metonymic displacement of fragment for totality, object to label, series of objects to series of labels, can still produce a representation which is somehow adequate to a nonlinguistic universe. Such a fiction is the result of an uncritical belief in the notion that ordering and classifying, that is to say, the spatial juxtaposition of fragments, can produce a representational understanding of the world."[211]

Thus, the museum is a kind of mega-installation, comprised of several segmental and more or less ephemeral exhibitions, aiming to freeze in time and space that which can never be frozen or captured adequately in time and space — the physical manifestation of human creativity. Gorge E. Hein stresses that the institution of the museum is a fairly young concept: in premodernity, predecessors of museums were private collections; they began to open up to the larger public as late as the beginning of the nineteenth century.[212] According to Battro, Malraux used his *Imaginary Museum* to expose the problematic interconnectedness of the institution of the museum and the development of European modernism, which is extremely centered on the artist as a creative genius.[213] Hence, the term "museum" itself elicits certain connotations. In some instances in premodernity, private collections were made publicly accessible, for example by the British Museum in 1759, but the institution of the museum as presently seen and understood was shaped at the brink of modernity. For the art world, the ramifications of the museum as an institution are immense. As the premodern institutions resembling museums exhibited beyond exclusive collectors' circle, they were simultaneously evolving from museums of pictures (or depictions) to museums of paintings.[214] These cultural galleys or exhibiting spaceships separated artworks from the original architectural or geographical contexts to which they initially belonged, and photographic reproduction was in fact uniting them.[215] The museum's architecture was also becoming distinctly monumental, with architectural aesthetics mostly resembling neo-Greco-Roman shrines and later neo-neo spaceship-like designs.[216] Unsurprisingly, then, *MOSA* uses the architectural language that amalgamated together in the last hundred years, but it is so much more than just another virtual museum.

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[211] Douglas Crimp, 'On the Museum's Ruins', in: Hal Foster, *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, 7. print.. (Seattle, Wash: Bay Pr, 1991), p. 49.

[212] George E. Hein, *Learning in the Museum* (Routledge, 2002), p. 157.

[213] Battro 2010, p. 137; "So vital is the part played by the art museum in our approach to works of art today that we find it difficult to realize that no museums exist, none has ever existed, in lands where the civilization of modern Europe is, or was, unknown; and that, even in the Western world, they have existed barely two hundred years. They were so important to the artistic life of the nineteenth century and are so much a part of our lives today that we forget they have imposed on the spectator a wholly new attitude toward the work of art. They have tended to estrange the works they bring together from their original functions and to transform even portraits into 'pictures'." Malraux 1967, p. 9.

[214] Battro 2010, p. 138.

[215] Cf. Malraux 1967, p. 71-72.

[216] Hein 2002, p. 159.

Battro makes a convincing argument that the notion of *Virtual Museum* finds its reflection in the idea of *The Imaginary Museum*. The *Virtual Museum,* which is based on Malraux' *Imaginary Museum,* consists of three key aspects related to displaying artworks: reproducibility, remote access, and interconnectivity.[217] When used as a deliberate measure, reproduction robs the artwork of its initial context and flattens every work of art into a two-dimensional format, but it also allows for wider distribution of that artwork and for more flexible comparison between various artworks. As Malraux phrased it, "museum was an affirmation, the museum without walls is an interrogation."[218] For Malraux, photographic reproducibility enabled the creation of the *Virtual Museum,* and the same principle applies to the internet and *MOSA*, as "[a] resurrection of this kind [photography and reproduction] inevitably gathers together works that have undergone a profound metamorphosis. And primarily, in the real museum [. . .], works in which time has wrought many changes."[219] *MOSA* could then be described in the same terms Malraux uses to describe an album: it creates an imaginary place that has no existence outside its pages.[220] The dialogue between the originals differs from the dialogue between the reproductions, and these are the two realities that substitute each other in the Malrauxian reasoning. However, the Malrauxian crux lies in the fact that he did not foresee that photography would eventually also find its way into museums' exhibition rooms and collections. Crimp critiqued Malraux for the limited potential that photography had as the catalyst of style: "[O]nce photography itself enters, an object among others, heterogeneity is reestablished at the heart of the museum; its pretensions of knowledge are doomed. Even photography cannot hypostatize style from a photograph."[221] Perhaps photography is no longer a helpful tool for determining style across media, but it might still be a catalyst for other types of knowledge. In *MOSA,* reproductions of photographs hang on the same virtual walls as the reproductions of the European masters. As long as there are no individual pixels on display in the museum, digital photography still has the power to transform our vision of the world. The virtualization of the museums' collections online, which is not always as productive as anticipated, is a kind of resurrection of their artworks through the internet. In comparison to *The Imaginary Museum* or *Virtual Museum*, *MOSA* is not an archival device, but a device for introspection of artworks. Through the processes of reproduction, Malraux argues, the artwork undergoes a "magic

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[217] Cf. Malraux 1967, p. 76.

[218] Ibid. p. 162.

[219] Ibid. p. 163.

[220] Ibid. p. 232.

[221] Hein 2002, p. 51.

transmutation [because] it finds synchrony with other works that seemed unrelated to it"[222] context-wise. For example, the transformation of the artwork into the object of possession is apparent in *MOSA's* narration of the (mock-)exhibition *Stolen European Painting*.[223] If all the known artworks in the world could be compared to each other, the connections that might be discovered would sometimes be nonsense and sometimes brilliant. Furthermore, some of the reproductions of artworks in *MOSA* are grainy and glitchy, as they have been left in a state that clearly presents them for what they are: second-order depictions or images (Figure 13). Through their distortion, visitors of *MOSA* can apprehend their transformation into reproductions. Furthermore, only in relation to each other, the artworks in *MOSA* have this new meaning, which is decontextualized from the inscriptions of original artworks and initial contexts given to them by art historians, biographers, art critics, collectors, and of course institutions.[224]

2.6.2 *MOSA* and the Constructivist Museum

While conceptualizing *MOSA*, Schneider was attending a class taught by Nancy Hechinger that primarily focused on modern-day museology.[225] On the reading list for the class in fall 2015, a year after MOSA was released to the public, was George E. Hein's chapter from his publication on knowledge dissemination describing the *Constructivist Museum*.[226] The prerogative of the *Constructivist Museum*, which is not to be confused with the art movement of constructivism, lies in its conscious orientation towards a knowledge construction-based methodology. The notion of the *Constructivist Museum* was heavily influenced by Jean Piaget's theory of cognitive development and social constructivism.[227] This kind of educational museum allows for better contextualization of the artworks, but with an imminent danger of creating errors in the learning process. Hein writes that "[t]he *Constructivist Museum* makes a conscious effort to allow visitors to make connections between the known

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[222] Battro 2010, p. 142.

[223] See Appendix B, p. 169.

[224] The names and titles of artworks are also inconsistent, and one slight change in the title or the name of the artist can lead to confusion or an inability to retrieve information about an artwork on the internet. For example, see Appendix C.

[225] See Appendix A, p. 157.

[226] 'Library | Cabinets of Wonder 2014' <https://itp.nyu.edu/classes/cow-fall2014/library/> [accessed 30 January 2019].

[227] "Constructivism is a theory that asserts that learning is an activity that is individual to the learner. This theory hypothesizes that individuals will try to make sense of information they perceive, and that each individual will, therefore, 'construct' their own meaning." Steve Olusegun Bada, 'Constructivism Learning Theory : A Paradigm for Teaching and Learning', 2015, p. 69.

[what is familiar to the visitors] and the new [unfamiliar of the galleries]."[228] The familiar objects are those kinds of objects where at least some aspect is familiar to visitors. In *MOSA,* there are (mock-)exhibitions displaying the most famous looted European masters (Figures 21–37), and there are (mock-)exhibitions featuring nameless artworks (*The Looting of Iraq* and *The Looting of Afghanistan*). There are examples of artworks looted from public collections (Figure 22) and artworks looted into private collections (*The Private Collection of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos*). These two characteristics clearly indicate Schneider's reciprocation of the idea of the *Constructivist Museum*. The additional meaning produced by *MOSA* is the realization that, in fact, the entire picture is constantly incomplete. To guide the visitor to this realization, Schneider employs two strategies: firstly, using the lure of the familiar to engage the visitor with the matter, and secondly, using the lure of the challenge to keep the visitor engaged (Figure 5).[229] These two strategies reflect Schneider's intentions of creating a *Constructivist Museum* in which, as Hein phrases it, "[o]ne is to acknowledge that exhibition-making in not displaying truth, but interpretation. [. . .] The other is to pursue aggressively the study of how visitors make meaning in the museum."[230] Accepting that all exhibitions are constructed and channeled by the subjectivism of curators, Hein adds that the *Constructivist Museum* "will view itself as a learning institution that constantly improves its ability to serve as an interpreter of culture by critical examination of exhibitions and programs."[231] By mere selection – displaying the reproductions of stolen artworks – *MOSA* is an illustration of the viewer's blindness to the gaps in the history of art.

The privilege that *MOSA* gives to its visitors is the permission to feel the frustration caused by the loss of loved objects, to memorize objects that they would otherwise probably never have seen, and to learn by constructing their own understandings. Using *MOSA* as a practical example, it becomes clear that the theoretical bases behind *Imaginary Museum* and *Constructivist Museum* coincide in at least these three aspects. The aim of both the *Imaginary Museum* and the *Constructivist Museum* is to go beyond the display and the collection. In this sense, Schneider first and foremost utilizes the teachings of the *Constructivist Museum* by creating *MOSA* to engage the spectator visually as well as emotionally to produce memories.[232] For example, through her narrations, Schneider shares

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[228] Hein 2002, p. 157, 161.

[229] Ibid. p. 176.

[230] Ibid. p. 177.

[231] Ibid. p. 178.

[232] "Every museum building will send a message (or multiple messages); every exhibition will invoke feelings, memories, and images; every encounter with an object brings about a reflection (even if it is only incomprehension and frustration); every social interaction reinforces connections, stimulates new ones, or

her frustration with the ridiculousness of art thefts.[233] In conclusion, layering the idea of the *Constructivist Museum* over the idea of the *Museum without Walls* describes exactly what kind of museum *MOSA* is.

3 Erasure and Storage

"Every time there is a gain, there is a loss, too."

— Paul Virilio[234]

The field of art history—like any historical science—is constantly being challenged by the decay and disappearance of artworks. Hence, art history represents a field of constant preservation and resurrection. The artwork reproductions featured in *MOSA* are reproductions of objects classified as missing or stolen at the time *MOSA* was created, and as long as these artworks are visually present, regardless of their authenticity, they continue to exist in the visitors' memories. If *MOSA's* default state is one of predetermined erasure, however, this raises the question of what options virtuality has to offer to compensate the imminent loss of artworks. As I have argued in the previous chapter, "Physical and Virtual", virtuality has been around for centuries in various forms. For example, virtual exhibition practices were often employed by avant-garde artists Kiesler and Moholy-Nagy to create alternative realms for their perceived realities. The virtual space, which is comparable to any other storage space, comprises an area of shifting perspectives and of lingering. Hence, the chapter *Erasure and Storage* focuses on the *loci* where the viewer of *MOSA* is supposed to linger. Since virtuality can be employed as an informational medium, but also as a catalyst restructuring information, the question remains as to what kind of information *MOSA* conveys and restructures, and most importantly, why.

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triggers personal anxieties." Ibid. 179.
[233] One such example can be seen in Appendix B, p. 167.
[234] Virilio 2000[1999], p. 42.

3.1 Erasure or the Act of Disappearance

"Whether denied, forgotten, destroyed, or merely virtual, the series is still present."

— Jean Baudrillard[235]

MOSA represents a highly specific virtual museum installation dealing with a particular topic—the lost and the found of the art world. According to the artist, *MOSA's* explicit prerogative is to expose the mechanisms of erasure that occur along with the forceful removal of objects from the field of vision, which ultimately leads to influencing the collective knowledge and memory.[236] Nonetheless, art criminals are not the only culprits responsible for the loss of culturally significant objects; virtual mishaps are equally as hazardous as improper security systems. According to Schneider, the missing artworks are being inadequately portrayed through the databases that aid their recovery.[237] Subsequently, the physical mechanisms of erasure that *MOSA* explicitly addresses are discussed before exploring the elusive and systematic phenomena of artwork disappearance rooted in hegemonic societal structures, which are implicitly revealed upon viewing *MOSA*. To conclude, the mechanisms of storage, such as memory, archive and database, are discussed in accordance with their relevance for the art project *MOSA* in the latter part of this chapter.

The violent processes of erasure, such as art theft and loot, contribute to the main focus of three (mock-)exhibitions: *Recently Stolen, Stolen Photographs*, and *Stolen European Painting* in *MOSA*. To better understand an art project such as *MOSA*, or its fixation on the rise of art crime, it is important to discuss the phenomena of art theft and loot in an historical context. Compared to the first three (mock-)exhibitions, the (mock-)exhibition titled *The Private Collection of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos* provides a thematic contrast and addresses art crime on a profound systemic level.[238] The artworks initially belonging to the notorious Philippine pair were most likely purchased legally at the time of acquisition, but

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[235] Jean Baudrillard, *The System of Objects* (London ; New York: Verso, 1996), p. 93.
[236] See Appendix A, p. 158.
[237] Ibid.
[238] See Appendix B, p. 181-182.

their acquisition remains problematic due to the origin of the questionable financial assets used to purchase the artworks.[239] In the case of *The Private Collection of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos*, the artworks themselves were not initially stolen, but instead disappeared when the Marcos fled the Philippines in 1986 following the People Power Revolution, according to the in-app narration.[240] In the aftermath, the Philippine state created an *impromptu* online database decades later that featured the missing artworks that the Marcos supposedly kept or sold in order to retrieve and sell them on the open market.[241] The history and classification of art theft and loot prove to be insufficient when conveying the message framing *The Private Collection of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos*. The mentioned (mock-) exhibition also demonstrates how the agendas of dubious collectors, whether private persons or public entities, may further contribute to the decay or disappearance of cultural heritage. Moreover, subtle structural and systemic mechanisms of erasure, such as omissions from grand narratives, can occasionally play a crucial role in the disappearance of cultural heritage as well.

When discussing the physical processes of erasure, the reasons for erasure are usually rather trivial, non-spectacular and often overlooked when compared to the high-profile art thefts of the last two decades. High-profile art thefts have been frequently broadcast in the media, and thus receive the most attention.[242] Compared to highly mediated cases of art theft, manmade negligence combined with natural deterioration can also lead to permanent disappearance of artworks; be it through the improper storage of artworks after they have been stolen, their destruction after the thieves have been captured, or even when the institutions that were supposed to guard the artworks are faulty, unprepared or under-equipped, works of art can disappear due to pure nonchalance.[243]

3.2 Art Loot and Theft

Comprehending the history of art theft and loot is crucial for more deeply understanding the questions that *MOSA* raises. Ivan Lindsay made a strong argument in his book *The History*

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[239] See Appendix B, p. 181-182.
[240] Ibid.
[241] 'The Theft | Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum' <https://www.gardnermuseum.org/about/theft-story#chapter1> [accessed 7 May 2018].
[242] See Appendix C.
[243] See Appendix B, p. 178.

of Loot and Stolen Art regarding the prevalence of art theft and loot in nearly every culture through the assemblage of known written records about the crimes dating back to ancient times, as well as descriptions of armies that would repeatedly wage wars over bounty and plunder the defeated opponents.[244] Both phenomena, art theft and loot, are supposedly rooted in humanity's relentless desire to improve its existence and surroundings.[245] The selfish acts of art loot and theft, both representing forceful removals of the artwork from their owner, collector or institution, can instantaneously alter the perception of historic lineages.

3.2.1 Art Loot

Lindsay's brief glance through history's written records illustrated numerous accounts of art loot going back as far as ancient Rome, where looting was perceived as a legitimate means of gaining wealth, since the loot was displayed publicly to project the conquerors' political power in a public forum.[246] Indeed, imperialistic expansions are almost always accompanied by a lust for bounty and looting. Lindsay's list of art atrocities is impressive: Alexander the Great (356–323) financed his campaigns by looting Persian treasuries, Crusaders repeatedly sacked the Holy Land, Henry VIII emptied English monasteries in the 1530s, and Queen Christina of Sweden stole the art collection of late Habsburg ruler Rudolf II in Prague in 1649.[247] Therefore, it is not necessary to stress that all the colonization projects were necessarily accompanied by and financed through expansionism, plundering and looting.

Even in the late modern period, financing war campaigns represented a central motive behind looting treasures across continental Europe.[248] Moreover, atrocities beyond all possible imagination have been witnessed that exemplify this trend's continuation into the twentieth century. From 1939 to 1945, according to Lindsay, Germany removed tons of gold from occupied countries and looted an estimated fifth of all artworks in Europe, many of them intended for Hitler's unrealized Führermuseum in Linz, Austria.[249] After World War II, the Soviets found the Nazi artwork depositories and, acting on behalf of Stalin's orders, the Soviet armies took an estimated three million objects of cultural significance back with them

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[244] Ivan Lindsay, *The History of Loot and Stolen Art: From Antiquity until the Present Day*, 2nd ed.. (London, England: Unicorn Press Ltd, 2014), p. 14.
[245] Ibid.
[246] Ibid.
[247] Ibid.
[248] Ibid.
[249] Ibid. p. 14-15.

to Russia.[250] In 1995, Petersburg's Hermitage Museum notoriously placed some of the art looted during World War II on display under the exhibition title *Treasures Revealed*.[251] The exhibition, which was preceded and succeeded by similar shows in Moscow and St. Petersburg, was heavily criticized and opened a wave of discussion regarding restitution.[252] To this day, the debate has yielded no comprehensive solutions, but remains connected to the specific policies of individual nation states.

All these examples demonstrate highly unreasonable and dubious attitudes toward the normality and frequency of art loot in Western civilization. However, Lindsay mentioned written accounts of art loot beyond expansionist and imperialistic Europe as well. Having said that, it would be extremely exciting to compare the European history of art loot with art loot cases on other continents, but this would exceed the methodological framework of this thesis. In conclusion, art loot appears to be a legacy embedded in human behavior through our relationship toward objects laden with symbolic value. Regardless of war- or peacetime, removing and/or destroying cultural property constitutes an attempt to rewrite history from the winner's perspective. Art loot could thus be imagined as a monopoly game, with the ultimate prize being domination over cultural narratives. In this game of possession and re-possession, it is impossible to determine who the real perpetrator is and whose heritage the items initially belong to. With art objects disappearing and reappearing constantly, Schneider proposed that the future generations of artists should at least be able to fully access the virtual visual repositories.[253] Disappointingly, with the exception of The Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston, which dedicated an entire website to the famous heist of 1990, the missing artworks are predominantly represented through random bureaucratic databases.[254] Thus, the question arises regarding the extent to which Schneider's quest to prosthetically augment the representation of missing artworks is a lost cause. To this end, the plausibility of Schneider's cause is addressed in the latter part of this thesis in the chapter "Revealing and Hiding".

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[250] Linsday 2014, p. 15.
[251] Cf. Seth Stuhl, 'Spoils of War? A Solution to the Hermitage Trove Debate', *University of Pennsylvania Journal of International Law*, 18.1 (1997), p. 411.
[252] Ibid. p. 417-421.
[253] See Appendix A, p. X.
[254] Daniel Birnbaum and Sven-Olov Wallenstein, 'From Immaterials to Resistance: The Other Side of Les Immatériaux'. See also Appendix C.

3.2.2 Art Loot and the Development of the Protective Legal Framework

Despite the widespread nature of art crime, research has primarily emphasized art loot in the period prior to World War II. Lindsay concluded that, compared to art loot, petty art theft cases largely remained undocumented before World War II.[255] Although plundering was, historically speaking, widely accepted and tolerated in most societies, in certain cases, it was occasionally so intense and brutal that it was considered immoral, especially when it occurred during peacetime. Lindsay mentioned written records dating back to ancient times describing crimes that would be considered art theft even by today's standards.[256]

Through the institution of law, Romans legalized and legitimized plunder during and immediately after wartime, but condemned looting in peacetime.[257] However, despite written records mentioning restitution cases in ancient Rome, the actual laws and regulations concerning restitution remained extremely sporadic and inconsistent.[258] Whenever the act of looting was considered immoral or disputable, Roman laws usually referenced the case of Roman prosecutor Marcus Tullius Cicero against Sicilian Governor, Gaius Verres, who abused his position to loot Sicily of its culturally significant artifacts.[259] Cicero *versus* Verres formed a precedent for legislatively handling cases of art theft in ancient Rome and served as a model for the majority of laws concerning art theft and restitution of artworks thereafter, such as the Lieber Code in the United States, which first acknowledged cultural property as a category of objects under special protection during wartimes.[260] Only after the atrocities of World War II was the legal framework for handling art theft and loot developed on an international level through the Hauge Convention in 1954.[261]

To this day, restitution remains a lengthy process, as the consequences of the great plunder of artworks in Europe during World War II are still tangible decades later. Whereas the cultural genocide has been addressed through protective legislation, the creators of treaties such as the Lieber Code and the Hauge Conventions were unable to predict the

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[255] Lindsay 2014, p. 15.
[256] Ibid.
[257] Ibid.
[258] Ibid. p. 17.
[259] Ibid. p. 15.
[260] Margaret M. Miles, 'Cicero's Prosecution of Gaius Verres: A Roman View of the Ethics of Acquisition of Art', *International Journal of Cultural Property*, 11.1 (2002), <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0940739102771567>, p 43.
[261] Ibid.

transformation of art into big business that unfolded after World War II.[262] As legal scholar Seth Stuhl phrased it, "The frames of these treaties did not contemplate any economic motivation in disputes over cultural heritage and […] the economic perspective is not incorporated under the applicable law."[263] Nonetheless, recovery of artworks can raise economic, legal, political, cultural and historical polemics, and sometimes exclusivity, serves the museums more than inclusivity, presuming that the objects possess a questionable ownership record. Hence, this offers an explanation as to why the reproductions in *MOSA* stem from databases not originally intended for museum purposes.

3.3.3 Art Theft

Reasonably, collective sackings of entire civilizations were documented far more extensively than small-profile art theft. Undoubtedly, art loot's prevalence over art theft in research is as apparent in problem solving as it is in problem definition. *MOSA*, too, primarily focuses on art theft, likely reflecting the trend in research on art crime online.[264] Nonetheless, art theft has either been gaining momentum in the public sphere over the last few decades, or it has at least been methodologically and systematically better documented than ever before. According to INERPOL's website on Crime Area Works of Art, "Over the past decade, we have seen an increasing trend of illicit trafficking in cultural objects from counties in the Middle East affected by armed conflict. The black market in works of art is becoming as lucrative as those for drugs, weapons and counterfeit goods."[265] Moreover, according to a study published by Lindsay, an art dealer himself, in 2013, an estimated 15% of all artworks reported missing were actually recovered.[266] At the point the interview was conducted with Schneider, none of the artworks featured in *MOSA* were actually recovered using *MOSA*.[267]

In the chapter "The History of Loot and Stolen Art", Lindsay mentioned that art theft represents INTERPOL's third priority after drugs or arms. In fact, INTERPOL's database of stolen artworks, supposedly the world's largest database on missing artworks,[268] is also referred to as the "Museum of the Missing," ironic given that it is a non-museal institution. *MOSA* can be understood as a visualization to this "Museum of the Missing." Thus, when

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[262] Stuhl 2014, p. 442.
[263] Ibid.
[264] See Appendix C.
[265] 'Works of Art / Works of Art / Crime Areas / Internet / Home - INTERPOL' <https://www.interpol.int/Crime-areas/Works-of-art/Works-of-art> [accessed 15 May 2018].
[266] Lindsay 2014, p. 476-649.
[267] See Appendix A, p. 162.
[268] Lindsay 2014, p. 15.

Schneider deals with the amount and value of the missing artworks in her (mock-) exhibitions, she is addressing issues such as the increasing trend in art theft and sometimes dubious and puerile motivating forces behind art crimes.[269] That being the case, both Lindsay and Schneider shattered the myths regarding secret collectors ordering a hitman-style robbery solemnly because of the symbolic value of the desired artworks.[270] According to Lindsay, the rates of petty art thefts in particular are increasing, possibly due to other economic indicators, such as a short economic downfall or a long-lasting recession, during which people tend to behave more erratically than usual.[271]

3.3.4 The Role of the Art Market in Art Theft

Besides providing an explanation of and for art theft, Lindsay also differentiated between two major art theft categories: opportunistic and specialized art theft. While some art thefts are committed with the aim of targeting specific artworks, the majority of art thefts are motivated by an anticipated financial gain.[272] Opportunistic art theft can be classified as a random robbery during which criminals or criminal organizations forcefully remove artworks not necessarily with the intention of actually stealing artworks, but rather to steal valuables in general.[273] This would, for example, relate to the art theft in the Kunsthal Museum in Rotterdam in 2012, also mentioned in *MOSA*.[274] Specialized art thefts, being planned and premeditated, occur much more seldomly, such as the heist at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum.[275] Whilst opportunistic art thefts are exclusively motivated by material gain, specialized art thefts are designed to attain the prestige object of a limited edition. Regardless of the motivation, these crimes are ill-considered and reckless, as high-profile or famous artworks are nearly impossible to sell on an open art market.[276]

To summarize, the reasons and motivations behind art objects being stolen or destroyed vary. Lindsay, who views the art crime situation as endemic, associates the rise in art theft with the rise of artwork values on the art market.[277] To illustrate this trend, it is worth noting the auction sale involving Da Vinci's masterpiece *Salvator Mundi.* This work*,* which was

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[269] See Appendix B, p. 167.
[270] Lindsay 2014, p. 481; also see Appendix B, p. 172.
[271] Lindsay 2014, p. 509.
[272] Ibid. p. 472.
[273] Ibid.
[274] See Appendix B, p. 174.
[275] Lindsay 2014, p. 475.
[276] Ibid. p. 481.
[277] Ibid. p. 472.

purchased in the 1950s for an amount equivalent to under 100 dollars, reached a net worth of 450 million dollars in approximately 60 years.[278] Today's art market represents a highly accelerated financial market, and artworks are increasingly resembling investments on regular financial markets. Lindsay even equated art to a currency: "Art became a currency and even attracted art funds in the 1990s. Art was seen as a new asset class that could be discussed in terms of yield and have a return like a bond or stock. Art is a good investment, but only for the rich collector who can sell at the right moment and from a position of strength."[279] In his many writings on the topic of object perception, philosopher Jean Baudrillard elucidated that such aggressive erasures of artworks are caused by their symbolic value in certain cultures, upon which all other value systems are connoted:

> "In order to become object of consumption, the object must become sign; that is, in some way it must become external to a relation that it now only signifies, a-signed arbitrarily and non-coherently to this concrete relation, yet obtaining its coherence, and consequently its meaning, from an abstract and systematic relation to all other object-signs."[280]

According to Baudrillard, an object can thus feature two functions—namely, "to be put to use and to be possessed,"[281] thus the use value and sign value. Regardless of the previous epochs, artworks today are measured by their worth as both cultural and fiscal capital. This becomes evident when the usual information on artworks is preceded or followed by the market value, such as in the narration to *Stolen Photographs* in *MOSA*.[282] Certain artworks represent the cornerstones for defining cultural narratives, but the same artworks also possess the potential to become cornerstones of the financial market as well. In MOSA, Vermeer's masterpiece *The Concert* is described as one of his pivotal works, but this is further accompanied by the estimated market value in the narration.[283]

Upon examining the intentions behind art thefts, Baudrillard concluded that the art objects are generally stolen because of their sign value, presently perpetuated by an "abstractness of possession."[284] The act of possession has continually been the act of displaying power outwards, explaining the reason behind the destruction of a given society's treasures as a

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[278] 'Timeline: How "Salvator Mundi" Went From £45 to $450 Million in 59 Years', *Artnet News*, 2017 <https://news.artnet.com/market/timeline-salvator-mundi-went-45-to-450-million-59-years-1150661> [accessed 15 May 2018].
[279] Lindsay 2014, p. 504.
[280] Baudrillard 1988, p. 22.
[281] Ibid. p. 86.
[282] See Appendix B, p. 177.
[283] Ibid., p. 169.
[284] Baudrillard 1996, p. 86.

preferred apparatus for domination in wartimes. Nonetheless, in peacetime, artworks'
commercial value has been rising rampantly over the last 60 years. Thus, collecting as an
organizational principle is collapsing functionality into subjectivity, in turn transforming
possession into utility. As such, the sign value converts into use value, even though the
object cannot be put to any active use.[285] With the sign value increasingly corresponding to
the artworks' market value, it is not surprising that art crime has increased throughout the
second half of the twentieth century. Baudrillard added that

> "The past in its entirety has been pressed into the service of consumption. This has
> even created a kind of black market. [. . .] Statues of the Virgin and saints are stolen
> from churches, paintings are stolen from museums, then this booty is sold secretly to
> rich people whose residencies are too new to give them the kind of satisfaction they
> want. It is cultural irony—but an economic fact—that this thirst for 'authenticity' can
> now be slaked only by forgeries."[286]

The major shift occurred through looting artworks with seemingly no use value, but such
phenomena remain sensical, because the artwork's sign value was being defined by
prestige, scarcity and symbolic gain.[287] By merely being a part of an organizational principle
in a collector's subjective fantasy, they possessed a sign value. Baudrillard argued that the
"[missing] object attains exceptional value only by virtue of its absence."[288] When artworks
are perceived through their sign value, they are most commonly looted or stolen, because
they signify the missing pieces in the collection to the collector, resulting in possession
becoming the ultimate neurosis and the objects being forcefully removed.[289] The artworks
were converted into more than symbols of monetary power, as the object's use value was
replaced by its commercial value and worth was determined by collectors' fanatic and
subjective convictions regarding the object's exclusivity and authenticity.[290] Hence, when
Schneider provided info on net worth alongside her (mock-)exhibitions, she offered an
explanation regarding the presently progressive trend in art theft. Thus, the artworks'
symbolic cultural significance is overshadowed by their commercial value, which only further
clarifies the rise in the number of crimes related to art theft to a certain degree. Disturbingly,
the visual depository that should and could serve as a source of inspiration or knowledge
about the past is highly unattainable, as argued in the latter part of this chapter.

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[285] Baudrillard 1996, p. 86-87.
[286] Ibid. p. 84.
[287] At this point, again, see Caravaggio – *Nativity with St. Francis and St. Lawrence.*
[288] Baudrillard 1996, p. 92.
[289] Cf. ibid. p. 86.
[290] Cf. Ibid. p. 88.

3.3 Institutional and Societal Nonchalance or Amnesia

Initially, *MOSA* comprised an interesting case study due to connotations Schneider made between the market value of artworks featured in *MOSA* and art thefts associated with the featured artworks. However, by comparing thefts of institutionally and privately owned artworks during the research process, ingrained structural and institutional deficits became increasingly apparent. In addition to art theft or loot being motivated by supposed symbolic or financial gain, art crimes are, to a certain degree, frequently enabled by negligent or improper care and storage by the stolen artworks' possessor. In certain cases, burying specific artworks in depositories has been a mechanism of deliberate institutional and societal amnesia used to erase certain objects from the collective memory. Oftentimes, the crimes were committed because the institutions, including high-profile museums, were underprepared for protecting these artworks.[291]

As previously discussed in this chapter, art crimes are being committed on an unprecedented level in recent history. Lindsay also mentioned that numerous stolen or looted artworks were incorporated into the exhibitions and collections of reputable art institutions, which ignored questioning their origins or indeed appropriated the information to the institution's needs, prompting art dealers and auction houses to distort the artworks' provenance to make them more lucrative for potential buyers.[292] Most of the world's respected museums or private collections contain artworks looted during World War II.[293] Subsequently, the majority of art institutions were contorted into a state of denial and essentially enabled art dealers and auction houses to ignore the issues of questionable provenance and continue to sell looted artworks under false pretenses.[294]

Given that INTERPOL's Art Crime unit has been in place for over 60 years, but throughout this entire time has been constantly dealing with member states' non-compliance with sharing the provenance information with INTERPOL, it is evident that crimes of art loot and

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[291] The 2010 theft in the Museum of Modern Art in Paris was one such occurrence, where a single rock was used to break a window, through which the burglar climbed into the museum. For further information, see Appendix B, 172.
[292] Lindsay 2014, p. 467.
[293] Ibid.
[294] Ibid. p. 500.

theft of the past strongly correlate to the present perceptions of missing artworks.[295] Furthermore, institutions of the art world perpetuate art theft and endanger cultural property in two ways: by conforming to ascribing financial value to artworks, and by constantly redefining artworks as investments or assets on the art market. When the institutions are being non-transparent in sharing the information about their collections, they are simultaneously veiling highly questionable origins of the owned artworks. In turn, when the institutions become the victims of such crimes, they are intercepting and distorting the information about the artwork, which might then never be retrieved again. The absence of detailed open-source information in these databases is reflected in *MOSA*, as there is sometimes an abundance of information, and other times none at all.[296]

Lindsay also mentioned that the issue's complexity increases with the museums' flawed approaches to restitution, as most of the artworks are being sold in the art market and ultimately end up in exclusive private collections after their repossession by their rightful owner.[297] Supposing the artworks were not looted, *per se*, the fact that some were sold under the price frequently out of necessity or extortion during wartime makes their ownership morally questionable.[298] Essentially, financial transactions determine how cultural heritage is going to be perceived in the public sphere, as well as the extent to which the public has access to it. In this uneven playing field, neurotic and obsessed collectors are recklessly gambling with the cultural property's interpretation and genealogy under the lucid eye of public institutions.

Moreover, Lindsay introduced another category of more sophisticated art crime. These crimes involve acquiring financial assets illegally through forging artworks or using falsified or questionable information to achieve financial gain. Amongst these crimes are "inflated insurance valuations as collateral for dodgy loans, fakes and forged paintings, smuggling without correct documentation, defective title on looted or stolen artworks, and modern reproduction of 'old' furniture."[299] Eventually, it becomes apparent that commodifying the artwork has reached its pinnacle, as even terrorist organizations and drug gangs are frequently targeting artworks and using them as currency for their deals worth a fraction of their value on the open market, or to laundry money through these transactions, or even to

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[295] Lindsay 2014, p. 467.
[296] See Appendix C.
[297] Lindsay 2014, p. 504.
[298] Ibid.
[299] Ibid. p. 469.

merely demonstrate their power.[300] Through the (mock-)exhibition *Private Collection of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos* in *MOSA*, Schneider exposed the irony of private collections purchased with laundered money or of public collections comprised of looted, previously privately owned artworks by juxtaposing it with the (mock-)exhibition *Stolen European Paintings.*[301] By acquiring works of art primarily by famous European artists, Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos were portraying an image and defining themselves through their collections instead of their actions, as "[a]ll individuals are [often] described in terms of their objects."[302] This raises the question of whether the same could be said about grand museums.

The two thematic scopes could not be more closely related to each other, yet they are presently still viewed as two completely opposite phenomena. However insightful *MOSA* is, it disappoints in the selection of looted and stolen artworks, often favoring famous artworks and high-profile art thefts. Most of the cases are deeply affected by the hegemonic reasoning of the West. Nonetheless, the artist did initially release two additional (mock-) exhibitions, *The Looting of Iraq* and *The Looting of Afghanistan*. While currently not on display, these focus on wartime art crimes in the Middle East. However, as most virtual realities do, *MOSA* merely reflects the preexisting power structures in society.

In conclusion, *MOSA* further reflects which losses and erasures exactly are being rehashed and forgotten in the collective memories. As Battro argued, the virtuality illustrates that the "reality is produced by a society's culture, it is not given. A reality that has been produced by one society will be taken over, and changed by another, younger society, producing a fresh reality. This happens first by mimicry, then by substitution, and the original reality will, by that time, be totally forgotten."[303] Simultaneously, *MOSA* further demonstrates which memories of loss and erasure are being omitted from our collective memories. In architecture and landscape, places to be erased from memory are often neglected, left uninhibited and bare. They become physical black holes of urban culture until the time heals the wounds inflicted upon society at that specific site. In exhibition design, Staniszewski warned that "what historians omit from the past reveals as much about a culture as what is recorded as history and circulates as collective memory."[304] Adjusted to the activity of collecting, the same might be said about collectible art. It is thus crucial to understand that the art history of the missing is as important as the art history of the present.

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[300] Lindsay 2014, p. 479.
[301] See Appendix B, 181-187.
[302] Baudrillard 1988, p. 20.
[303] Virilio 2000[1999], p. 43.
[304] Staniszewski 1998, xxi.

3.4 Storage or what is *MOSA* for?

Through mimicking sacred temples and creating sacred rituals, museums' activity roughly equates the realm of men to realms of god(s). The museum offers a site where those two worlds intersect: a pure egoism of men, a territory riddled with powerful objects and their possessors—eternally a palace of exclusion and exclusivity entangled in ritual-like organizing principles. The question of collections is always one of memory and its storage. Baudrillard argued that "Objects undoubtedly serve in a regulatory capacity with regard to everyday life, dissipating many neuroses and providing an outlet for all kinds of tensions and for energies that are in mourning."[305] On the one hand, there is the physical or structural act of removal, and on the other is the compensation for this loss. As an institution aimed at collecting objects deemed worthy of preserving, a museum is structured much like an archive. Countering the forces of erasure, the museum institution is constantly compensating for gaps of flawed memories. The tension between memory and its representation through databases appears frequently throughout *MOSA,* such as when Caravaggio suddenly becomes a Spanish painter on the walls of *MOSA* (Figure 27). Thus, the chapter below is dedicated to the relationships between memory, archive and museum in postmodernity.

3.4.1 Memory as an Archive

Memory, or the utilization thereof, describes an engagement similar to a greatly flawed, unpredictable and interactive archive: the imagination. Hence, the appropriation of memory into a sustainable medium constitutes an extremely difficult undertaking, because the subjective perception of the event strongly influences memorizing the event. *MOSA*'s sole purpose is much like the drive that drove Kiesler's designs for his Vision Machine, in which, according to Phillips,

> "[the images] stream forth in memory between two poles of the imagination, as ideas and afterimages. Surrounded within a world of virtual images, the Vision Machine and shadow box devices simulated not only conscious perception by taking snapshots of passing reality, but the imagination correlating together images through memory to create new ideas/forms."[306]

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[305] Baudrillard 1996, p. 90.
[306] Phillips 2017, p. 180-181.

Furthermore, Malraux's imaginary museum functions similarly to the Vision Machine, as both processes involve forming instant connections between the known and unknown to cope with gaps in the representation or memorization procedure. How Philips described the Vision Machine's functions resonates with how *MOSA* unifies the reproductions: "In all of them, perception worked similarly to a series of photographs that fragment and immobilize time […] into 'fixed' moments of consciousness, while our memory 'solidifies into sensible qualities the continuous flow of things.'"[307]

Evidently, memory plays an important role in *MOSA,* too, as according to Schneider, she relied on Sophie Calle's *Last Seen . . .* from 1991 as an inspiration.[308] *Last Seen* represented an installation piece commemorating the great art theft of thirteen artworks, including Rembrandt's *Storm on the Sea of Galilee* (1633), from the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in March of 1990.[309] Shortly thereafter, Calle interviewed the personnel present on-site regarding how they had experienced stolen artworks prior to the heist, upon which the artist transcribed and exhibited these interviews in the altered textual form next to the empty frames representing the space where the stolen paintings used to hang on the exhibition room walls.[310] Afterward, when viewing Calle's installation, the exhibition visitor has to rely on imagination to recreate the images of missing paintings according to museum personnel's memories of them, featured in the texts hung next to the empty frames.

Two decades later, Calle returned to the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum for a follow-up project, *What Do You See?* This 2012 project was structured similarly to the initial project of 1991, though this time, it involved museum personnel as well as visitors.[311] While the interviewees familiar with the collection could still recall the missing images, the rest would conjure abstract concepts or use imagination to recall details that were not originally depicted in the images.[312] Thus, in a span of twenty years, the memory of the stolen artworks has already begun to fade.

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307 Phillips 2017, p. 181.
308 See Appendix A, p. 161.
309 Kimberly Chou, 'Sophie Calle: Remembrance of Gardner Paintings Lost', *ARTnews*, 2013 <http://www.artnews.com/2013/11/04/scenes-of-the-crime/> [accessed 22 April 2018].
310 Ibid.
311 Ibid.
312 Ibid.

In Malraux's *Les Antimémoires*, the author repeatedly questioned memory's role for consciousness. Along with the passage of time, a fictional autobiography such as Malraux's *Les Antimémoires* could become a matter of fact, as the mental process of recollection is one of reconstruction.[313] Memory formation possesses limitations and deformations and is always partial, but it remains the substantial element for recollection. Battro lamented that "All [artists] had to appeal to their memory, some took written notes or sketched a drawing [and] [. . .] many reproductions were faulty and inadequate."[314]

Whereas Calle and Schneider both examined the subject of uncovering the mechanisms of remembrance and dis-remembrance, Schneider's approach differed from Calle's, as Schnieder likely used a collage of online articles to generate the stories transmitted through the narration playing in the background while the visitor is using the *MOSA* app.[315] Furthermore, *MOSA* represents an installation mimicking a museum, and thus also includes more objects than *Last Seen…*, which was an installation integrated within the traditional museum context and architecture. In addition, *MOSA*'s narrators described what various articles said happened to the works, while Calle actually interviewed the on-site employees regarding their memories of the stolen paintings. Whereas Calle utilized primary sources, which she then altered through formatting, Scheider relied on secondary sources and database images. As such, the degree of memory distortion was doubled, because a database offers a collection of primary sources based on memories and descriptions altered by the data input worker.

Schneider's technique might be explained through the title "Prosthetic Knowledge = n. Information that a person does not know, but can access as needed using technology"[316] on a Tumblr page where her art was featured back in 2015.[317] Prosthetic knowledge lacks an ontology, but can be described as a method for saving objects from oblivion by sifting through the digital memory and breathing the objects back to life through their reproductions

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[313] Battro 2010, p. 140.
[314] Ibid.
[315] See Appendix A, p. 159.
[316] 'Prosthetic Knowledge', *Prosthetic Knowledge*, 2015 <https://prostheticknowledge.tumblr.com/post/107798773141/the-museum-of-stolen-art-virtual-gallery-project> [accessed 11 August 2019].
[317] See Appendix A, p. 161.

so they may become immortal. In the words of Baudrillard, "It seems that the most contemporary art culminates in an effort of self-deterrence, in a process of mourning the death of the image and the imaginary, in an aesthetic mourning, that cannot succeed anyway, resulting in a general melancholy in the artistic sphere, which seems to survive by recycling its history."[318] Schneider's cry for prosthetic knowledge is a cry for lost muses—the memories that could have been had, but ultimately cannot be. The summary of prescribed reading material for lectures of Scheinder's professor Nancy Hechinger in the fall of 2015 included a text by Michael Fritsch discussing the role of memory in history.[319] Here, American studies scholar Fritsch stressed that "[w]hat matters is […] what we are able to remember and what role that knowledge plays in our lives […] and the ability to imagine and create a different future through a reuse of the past."[320]

3.4.2 Archive as a Memory

"Archives validate our experiences, our perceptions, our narratives, our stories. Archives are our memories."

— Joan M. Schwartz and Terry Cook[321]

Memory describes a preconditioned internalized collecting mechanism, and the physical collection represents a physical manifestation and externalization of the memorized collecting principle, called the archive. Consequently, every institutionalized museum features a structured organizational concept or archive for storing and retrieving information. In order to fully grasp the new collecting mechanism—which, for *MOSA*, is the database as a central sourcing system—it is of vital importance to understand the role and function of its immediate predecessor: the archive. Archive theorists Carolyn Steedman, Joan Schwartz and Terry Cook previously summarized cultural theorists' perception regarding archives.

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[318] Jean Baudrillard, 'Objects, Images, and the Possibilities of Aesthetic Illusion', in: Nicholas Zurbrugg D.Phil B. A. and Nicholas Zurbrugg, *Jean Baudrillard, Art and Artefact* (London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: SAGE, 1997), p. 7.
[319] 'Library | Cabinets of Wonder 2014'.
[320] Michael Frisch, *A Shared Authority: Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Oral and Public History* (SUNY Press, 1990), p. 16.
[321] Joan M. Schwartz and Terry Cook, 'Archives, Records, and Power: The Making of Modern Memory', *Archival Science*, 2.1–2 (2002), p. 18 <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02435628>.

This was accomplished using the works of Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida as a theoretical point of reference to define the archive as a social construct systematizing human memory as well as the unconscious mind, and thus remains constantly in flux.[322] "The archive then," Steedman argued, "is something that, through the cultural activity of History, can become Memory's potential space, one of the few realms of the modern imagination where a hard-won and carefully constructed place, can return to boundless, limitless space."[323] The archive follows the principles of unification, indexation and classification through collecting in highly heterogeneous and unsystematic matter, as well as in the process of collecting, which alters the matter it stores.[324]

Schwarz and Cook added that archives play a prominent role in structuring a society: "They are a product of society's need for information, and the abundance and circulation of documents reflects the importance placed on information in society. They are basis for and validation of the stories we tell ourselves, the story-telling narratives that give cohesion and meaning to individuals, groups, and societies."[325] Hence, the process of creating such matter of knowledge always remains incomplete, because this consists of selected documentation and mad fragmentation remotely stored in spaces of insulation until it is read, used and narrativized by someone.[326] With countless interpretations associated with the same matter, a continuous power struggle takes place concerning whose interpretation will be approved within the institutional and societal framework.[327] Thus, the archivists wield substantially more power over reshaping, reinterpreting and reinventing the archive than previously thought. Archives represent active sites where the past, present and future of social power, values, memory and identity are negotiated, contested and confirmed. As such, they wield immense power over the histories being told regarding individuals, groups and entire societies.[328]

In conclusion, archivists and interpreters of archived matter not only possess power over

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[322] Carolyn Steedman, *Dust: The Archive and Cultural History*, 1. publ. in the USA (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UnivPress, 2002), p. 68.
[323] Ibid. p. 83.
[324] Ibid. p. 68.
[325] Schwartz and Cook 2002, p. 13.
[326] Steedman 2002, p. 68.
[327] "The archive is this kind of place, that is to do with longing and appropriation […]; a place where a whole world, a social order, may be imagined by the recurrence of a name in a register, through a scrap of paper, or some other little piece of flotsam." Ibid. p. 81.
[328] Schwartz and Cook 2002, p. 1.

collective remembering and forgetting, but also the power to privilege and marginalize, because merely a fraction of all created records are actually appraised, selected and memorialized as archives.[329] The vast majority of collected records is not being preserved, and the unpreserved matter is subsequently lost forever. Steedman argued that "the archive cannot help with what is not actually there, […] with the past that does not, in fact live in the record office, but is rather, *gone (that is its point; that is what the past is for); it cannot help with parchment that does not in fact speak.* It is a dream that the Historian makes in the Archive, and it is the dream to which we must return."[330] In the absence of plurality and pure absence of matter, archives can become a tool of hegemony, but they also have the potential to be a tool of resistance, under the condition that the power the archives hold becomes recognized and can be questioned, made accountable and transparent.[331]

3.4.3 Database as a Memory

Before databases, there were archives, but at the core of both is preservation of memories, and subsequently, the shaping of histories. The proliferation of information technology sharpened the tension between memory and archive as representational prosthetics for lost items. The database is essentially the virtual exhibition or electronic augmentation of an archive to provide access to records, and thus "amplifies archives' traditional power to mediate access to the record."[332] To conclude, databases bear the same power as archives regarding what will be known about what has been preserved. For example, Schneider contributed Half Shell Nautilus to Lewis Hine (Figure 45) or made Caravaggio Spanish (Figure 27). Compared to the source databases, *MOSA* clearly demonstrates that only visual data was taken into the consideration.[333] The process of collecting units previously confined to archival storage morphed into a never-ending online database reducing every artwork into a two-dimensional screen icon, and upon clicking the very same icon, the reproduction turns into a high-resolution panorama.

In a frequently referenced reader, *Museums in a Digital Age*, which has been instrumental for the previous chapter's analysis, Lev Manovich entertained the notion of a database as a

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[329] Schwartz and Cook 2002, p. 13-14.
[330] Steedman 2002, p. 81.
[331] Schwartz and Cook 2002, p. 13.
[332] Ibid. p. 15.
[333] See the links to the databases in Appendix C.

symbol form. According to Manovich, "Database is defined as a structured collection of data. The data stored in a database is organized for fast search and retrieval by a computer and therefore anything but a simple collection of items."[334] Depending on the collector's requirements, different types of databases have been developed: hierarchical, network, relational and object-oriented.[335]

Furthermore, Manovich argued that computerized collections—or databases—differ from narratives in their manner of modeling the world.[336] The author is deeply convinced that databases influence society's perspective on reality by shifting the perspective with which the world view is interconnected: "Following art historian Ervin Panofsky's analysis of linear perspective as a 'symbolic form' of the modern age, we may even call the database a new symbolic form of the computer age […] a new way to structure our experience of ourselves and of the world."[337] Consequently, the same power dynamics present in the archives are causally being imbedded into databases. When discussing the digitalization of museums, a typical virtual museum's database comprises a virtual online album of the museum's collections, or as Manovich would describe it, "a database of images representing its holdings, which can be accessed in different ways: chronologically, by country, or by artist."[338] These images offer digital reproductions of existing artworks.

Through his analysis of photography, Baudrillard best described how the technology of accelerated reproduction has shaped the art of the objects' disappearance: "Everything pivots upon the art of disappearance. But nevertheless, this process of disappearing has to leave some kind of trace, be this the site at which the other, the world or the object appears."[339] For Baudrillard, digital photography is traceless, because the negative of analogue photography has been replaced through a seemingly invisible computer code.[340] *MOSA* proves Baudrillard wrong, because the trace is sometimes the only thing that remains of an object, whether that trace is a negative or a code. Digital technology has become so developed that it merges the object and the image into one virtual item, but when we only

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[334] Manovich 2010, p. 64.
[335] Ibid.
[336] Ibid. p. 65
[337] Ibid.
[338] Ibid.
[339] Baudrillard 1997, p. 28.
[340] "In high definition, the (electronic, numerical or synthesized) image is nothing more than the emanation of the digital code that generated it." Ibid. p. 25.

have the image and the object is missing, the image is still perceived as something other than the object; it is the virtual object. The image, if applying the principle of "prosthetic knowledge," becomes fused with the memory of that object, as the viewer is creating imaginary memories.

Essentially, when examining *MOSA*, one can see a collection of traces of objects, with the object's materiality under threat and the object's existence in question. A missing artwork's place of both origin and existence is the database until the artworks reemerge in a new context. As long as they are being manifested in virtuality of *MOSA*, they exist in the viewer's imagination. In the context of *MOSA*, the reality is being experienced in a non-linear fashion. Stripped to its basic core, the Internet represents an enormous collection mechanism for retrieving and creating information to be shared instantaneously and globally. It is a global hyper-archive in flux with different access points because "most web pages are collections of separate elements: texts, images, links to other pages or sites."[341] The latter part of the term "hyper-archive" suggests that, similarly to the archive, the database is necessarily a mechanism of power executed by excluding and including the information in the collection. Baudrillard assessed the influence of databases and informational technology on the archival processes in the following terms:

> "All this generates a mass of deferred possibilities, and an idea that a machine is there that can deal with these possibilities, can stock them, filter them (an answer-machine, a memory bank), and progressively absorb and reabsorb them, is very comforting. All these machines can be called virtual, since they are the medium of virtual pleasure, the abstract pleasure of image, which is often good enough for our happiness."[342]

If Baudrillard's assessment of the current state of informational technology is used to describe *MOSA*, *MOSA* could be characterized as a highly optimistic solution to the problem, but most certainly not the ultimate answer to the problem of missing artworks. To be hyper and in flux does not automatically mean that the information is accurate, accessible, evenly dispersed or transparent. Hence, the imperfect information provided by *MOSA* reflects the organic development in data storage online.[343] Web pages are permanently being altered or closed down, and gathering the data represents an ongoing

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[341] Manovich 2010, p. 65.
[342] Baudrillard 1997, p. 24.
[343] "What the computer gives you, too easily perhaps, it takes away just as easily." Baudrillard 1997, p. 25.

hyper-process that constantly rearranges and modifies the data's sequence.[344] The Internet is thus constantly metamorphosing hyper-texts and hyper-documents by sorting them into the hyper-archive, and the narrated computerized experience would be a computer game that follows the logic of an algorithm on a continuous loop.[345] *MOSA* thus comprises an algorithm imbedding information from the databases.

3.4.4 Database/Algorithm as a Museum

The discussion of the database as collective memory and its relation to the museum institution in *MOSA* concludes in the chapter "Erasure and Storage". Contemplating the museum as a physical institution with its own tradition is critical for understanding the concept of the *Imaginary Museum,* the predecessor of the *Virtual Museum*. According to Battro, most of the virtual museums in the Internet "consist[s], in effect of 'mass reproductions' of works of art, in all forms and formats."[346] Digitalization introduced large-scale image reproduction of highly scattered and exclusive works, with museums placing more and more of their collections online in the format of digital reproductions, such as *Google Art Project*.[347] A museum's online database visualized through a web page may serve two purposes: archive and gallery. Both collecting systems, archive and database, store and retrieve information, but archive concerns storage for physical objects, whereas database involves storage of information. However, the major difference between database and archive is that the visitors of websites such as *Google Art Project* are often data-mining programs.[348] As a result, the high degree of automatization traps information and knowledge within the logic of the algorithm's circuit, including and excluding data according to a set of curious criteria.

Initially, digitalization projects in museums appear to have concentrated on constructing digital archives, whereas in the recent past, online exhibitions have been introduced, such as Tate's *The Gallery of Lost Art,* which basically mirrors a research process in the archival context. Malraux saw the salvation of fine art in printing, and if he was still alive today, he

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[344] "All this further contributes to the anti-narrative logic of the web. If new elements are being added over time, the result is a collection, not a story." Manovich 2010, p. 66.
[345] Ibid.
[346] Battro 2010, p. 141.
[347] Ibid. p. 140.
[348] Ibid. p. 145.

would likely see it in the personal computer as well, which has largely augmented the printing process. As Battro phrased it, "The computer, with its accessories and networking, is the printer of the new digital era, of the new virtual culture."[349] Computerized and digitalized photography does provide a compensation for the lost objects, to a certain degree. Battro's understanding of the imaginary museum strongly resembles the previously mentioned definition of prosthetic knowledge:

> "Moreover, it [photographic reproduction] is frequently the only available means to fill in gaps in our historical knowledge. Many times large works have disappeared and we only have the testimony of the smaller ones. [. . .] In summary, the imaginary Museum of reproductions incites us to provoke the metamorphosis of the original object, it invites us to discover and exhibit as a novelty that which was implicit in the art work but not apparent to the naked eye."[350]

This leads to the conclusion that, in a portable museum such as *MOSA,* as Battro also argued, the "visitor to the imaginary Museum can visualize a reproduced artwork without actually seeing the original."[351] The miniatures in *MOSA* are intended to activate emotions and serve as petite tokens of contemplation regarding what is, what is possible, and what could be possible in a museum context. The accumulation of all the collected material—in this case, a database—is what is called the *Virtual Museum*. However, *MOSA* is best described as a virtual gallery installation in the form of an algorithm.

Manovich supposed that "data structures and algorithms are two halves of the ontology of the world according to a computer."[352] Clearly, *MOSA* follows the logic of a computer game, and therefore constitutes an algorithm, and not a database. If a database represents an imperfect solution to the problem of missing artworks, *MOSA* is clearly not the ultimate answer to dealing with stolen art, but merely an attempt to find some sort of traction in the public virtual space. In general, data has to be generated, collected and organized, and therefore always remains in a form of a mediated information following the logic of a cultural algorithm. Manovich stressed that information collected from the physical world is digitalized through computing and ends up in the virtual online database, where it can be retrieved and used in a form of reinterpretation in the physical world.[353]

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[349] Ibid. p. 141.
[350] Battro 2010, p. 143.
[351] Ibid.
[352] Manovic 2010, p. 67.
[353] Ibid. p. 68.

Ironically, *MOSA* exhibits what a machine cannot do—namely, construct a narrative. However, it also expresses the power of the human mind to imagine and connect between the dots. Furthermore, *MOSA* exemplifies that the virtualization does not lead to action, as none of the artworks featured in *MOSA* were found using *MOSA*, but instead offers a substitution for the action.[354] For all the potential that technology harbors, it simultaneously remains in constant development. In addition to the already mentioned negative repercussions of digitalizing museum collections, hidden potentials of artwork collection digitalization are evident, including the subtle tendency toward more or less globally accessible high-quality reproductions readily available for research and automatized exposure of vast artwork collections that are usually stored away or lie forgotten in archives.[355] However, the high accessibility is contrasted with the constriction of copy rights. If museums are public institutions dedicated to education, their collections should be fully transparent, and they should strive to adapt the library system to develop a global database that is not bound to tech companies.

Using digitalization and virtualization of artworks, *MOSA* plays into the problem of hidden and inaccessible objects, rightfully questioning their physical and virtual presence as well as knowledge gaps created through their inaccessibility. Thus, virtualization in the case of *MOSA* enables comparison and contextualization of artworks that might never have been cross-compared before and inspires new linkages in the viewer's memory. In comparison to virtual reconstructions of actual physical museum spaces and their archives, such as *Google Art Project*, *MOSA* comprises a web-only in-app museum inviting visitors to immerse themselves within a newly created virtual space of contemplation, eradicating viewers' surroundings in the hopes of suspending time and physical space. Just like Malraux's museum, neither the former nor the latter are intended to replace or substitute the actual museum, but rather to augment it. As Battro argued, "Malraux never thought of his imaginary museum as a substitute for a real one, but as particular extension of the latter, with specific functions of artistic appreciation and historical research. The same occurs with virtual museums."[356] Hence, the physical and virtual reality should complement one other.

In the case of the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, the museum initially displayed empty frames in place of the missing artworks after the heist, but later, the artworks from the heist

[354] Baudrillard 1997, p. 24.
[355] Battro 2010, p. 146.
[356] Ibid. p. 145.

joined the interactive online exhibition with additional information regarding the works themselves, as well as the heist.[357] Virtual museums have become vast repositories of digital images, but are only now exploring the potentials and threats of the digitalization evolution. Baudrillard's critique is highly important, as most databases do not rely on high-quality digital reproductions:

> "An image is an abstraction of the world in two dimensions. It takes away a dimension from the real world, and by this very fact the image inaugurates the power of illusion. […] Virtuality tends toward the perfect illusion. But it isn't the same creative illusion as that of the image. It is a 'recreating' illusion (as well as a recreational one), revivalistic, realistic, mimetic, hologrammatic. It abolishes the game of illusion by the perfection of the reproduction, in the virtual rendition of the real. And so we witness the extermination of the real by its double."[358]

In fact, every single database of missing and stolen artworks referenced in *MOSA* merely delivers sub-standard quality of reproductions. To achieve a didactic surplus, there has to be a marker of differentiation or a point of reference.[359] In *MOSA*, this consists of the loss of the reproductions' visual data quality due to an informational deficit that naturally occurs along the data input process. Offering unscreened sources and communicating partial information in *MOSA* exemplifies the flaws of databases as a mechanism for storing a given society's memories.[360] What becomes evident when sifting through various databases is that this process is especially true for art objects with a defined physical presence. When searching for reproductions of the missing artworks featured in *MOSA*, the disillusion regarding the mediated reality can be grasped, as these reproductions are no longer high-resolution simulations of the real objects, but instead fragmented depictions randomly left behind.

To conclude, if the theory of disappearance is applied to museums, Baudrillard might imply that museums are subsequently killing the viewer's imagination by masking the absence in their collections. The Internet, as the newest and wide-spread depository mechanism, poses a new kind of threat to collective memory. To some extent, databases create black holes in knowledge and memory. These virtual black holes swallow entire objects, literally or metaphorically, on an informational level, without them being stolen in the first place. The

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[357] 'The Theft | Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum'.
[358] Baudrillard 1997, p. 9.
[359] "Each image must take something away from the reality of the world; in each image, something must disappear." Ibid.
[360] See Appendix C.

sheer amount of information is overwhelming, and the categories structuring them remain extremely lax. On the one hand, there is a surplus of information, and on the other, retrieval mechanisms are highly unreliable. The desired information might quickly fall through digital cracks; this quandary has perpetually increased throughout the entire process of mapping the lives of objects for *MOSA*, even morphing into an unbearable mass of contradicting and reality-distorting information, and upon viewing the databases the reproductions originate from, artworks with no visual representation remain absent in *MOSA*.

4 Revealing and Hiding

The manner in which information is accumulated can drastically change the perception of that information, thereby also transforming the message being delivered. Moreover, as discussed in the previous chapter, information is perpetually being selected, arranged then rearranged, and presented in various contexts, such as in *MOSA*. The three domains of interpreting data that influence the meaning correspond to the three central domains of curating. New media curator Peter Weibel indicates the problematic of curating new media or internet-based art due to a lack of appropriate theoretical foundation.[361] However, by applying the same approach as in the "Physical and Virtual*"* chapter of this thesis, theoretical lineages can be drawn from established curatorial theories, and these lineages have the potential to create a base for the analysis of art projects such as *MOSA*. In addition to the avant-garde projects discussed in "Physical and Virtual*"*, a more contemporary rendition of avant-garde exhibitions practices, such as Jean-François Lyotard's *Les Immatériaux*, which was greatly influenced by avant-garde authors Malraux and Benjamin, will provide the visual standards against which *MOSA* can be compared. Thus, the chapter "Revealing and Hiding" deals with the *modus operandi* of displaying data or information in *MOSA* from the perspective of an artist as an interpreter or curator of archived matter. An iconic figure in the field, Hans Ulrich Obrist has conducted numerous interviews on the issue of contemporary curating. Hence, it is only suitable to assemble the theoretical framework regarding the curatorial approach to analyze *MOSA* from a selection of interviews from Obrist's *Everything you always wanted to know about curating: but were afraid to ask* and *A brief history of curating*. However, with the introduction of the internet and smartphones, perspectives on curating are once again shifting, as shown in the interviews in *A brief history of curating new*

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[361] Peter Weibel, 'Curating, Research, Festivals… ' (Sarah Cook, interviewer), in: Sarah Cook, *A Brief History of Curating New Media Art: Conversations with Curators* (Berlin: The Green Box, 2010), p. 31 <http://d-nb.info/1000500942/04> [accessed 16 May 2018].

media art: conversations with curators, edited by Sarah Cook. I have filtered the three collections of interviews for alternative approaches to curating, as *MOSA* itself belongs to alternative exhibition practices.

That being said, how can alternative curating practices be theoretically grasped? Mary Anne Staniszewski, who theorized the power of (exhibition) display by analyzing numerous avant-garde and modern exhibitions in the Museum of Modern Art, understands curating as a powerful institutionalized domain of knowledge utilized by individuals or a group of individuals who use history and ideology to enforce a certain narrative by means of politics and aesthetics.[362] Furthermore, Mathew Higgs notes that every contemporary art project is embedded in the sphere of commercial galleries, financial markets, and the institutional framework of the museum.[363] Because they are not lucrative and do not fit mainstream institutional frameworks, it is difficult for art projects such as *MOSA* to gain traction aside from tech collaborations, but this also gives them experimental freedom in the selection, arrangement, and presentation of featured items. With this definition in mind, *MOSA* will be deciphered and documented in terms of curating. This means, foremost, being aware that behind every archive, database, and collection is a human agent with his or her own archive of memory inserting the data into the system (with the exception of automated programs, where the end result is filtered by a human to syphon meaning), creating what Steve Dietz terms an "algorithm for curating."[364] Secondly, when reflecting on curating, it is crucial to be aware that the online image of an institution is closely related to its offline image. As argued by Barbara London, unless institutional change is brought upon from within the institutions or the institutions are willing to incorporate new trends, technology can neither aid nor destroy the chronological and mainstream history.[365] Lastly, the exhibition design plays a key role in revealing the hidden and hiding the revealed. Staniszewski argues: "I also refer to the 'unconscious' of exhibitions and of the Museum, using the metaphor to suggest that which is present – and powerful – but often unseen, overlooked, and unacknowledged."[366] Exhibitions

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[362] "[I]nstitutions are composed of individuals who create and sustain them and who produce the archives, publications, publicity, and countless practices that include exhibitions." Staniszewski 1998, p. xxviii.

[363] Matthew Higgs, 'Curator as Editor, Online Artist' Registry, Legacies… ' (Sarah Cook, interviewer), in: Sarah Cook, *A Brief History of Curating New Media Art: Conversations with Curators* (Berlin: The Green Box, 2010), p. 158 <http://d-nb.info/1000500942/04> [accessed 16 May 2018].

[364] Steve Dietz, 'Public Space, Public Domain, Platfoms… ' (Sarah Cook, interviewer), in: Sarah Cook, *A Brief History of Curating New Media Art: Conversations with Curators* (Berlin: The Green Box, 2010), p. 193 <http://d-nb.info/1000500942/04> [accessed 16 May 2018].

[365] Barbara London, 'Museums, Video, Streaming… ' (Sarah Cook, interviewer), in: Sarah Cook, *A Brief History of Curating New Media Art: Conversations with Curators* (Berlin: The Green Box, 2010), p. 65 <http://d-nb.info/1000500942/04> [accessed 16 May 2018].

[366] Staniszewski 1998, p. xxviii.

convey complex stories; they have the potential to be the catalysts between archive, knowledge, and society, putting objects into context and relating them to each other and to the spectator. Thus, by choosing to work with stolen artworks, Schneider addresses multidimensional issues by applying the curating approach rooted in what Higgs calls "relational aesthetics, where social, discursive spaces become a common project."[367] Relational aesthetics concerns the profound "changes that are happening in society and to some degree artists reflect those changes, creating a new kind of work, kind of subject matter, whether they are working in digital technology or not."[368] With an extremely immaterial selection of objects, an exclusively a-linear storytelling, and an immersive non-space for presentation, *MOSA* is a highly unique example that can be used to study alternative curatorial practices. In comparison to the majority of virtual art collections created by museums, the reproductions of artworks assembled together in the virtual space of *MOSA* evidently tell untold stories of the featured objects. They are narrated and they are most certainly curated by the artist. *MOSA* is an exhibition, a display, and certainly not an archive or a database, though it does build upon the collective memory stored in databases, the successors of the archives. Thus, *MOSA* can only have broader implications after being viewed multiple times and upon further reflection.[369]

4.1 Selection of Immateriality

Baudrillard argues that the virtual database of a museum's collections collapses into a kind of ready-made state: "Any object, any individual, any situation today could be a virtual ready-made. For all of them might be described in much the same way as Duchamp implicitly categorizes his ready-made object: 'It exists, I met it!' This is the only label for existence."[370] Selection of the items influences the relational arrangement of the objects to each other, and the narrative first and foremost. In the case of the Gardner Museum in Boston, founder Isabella Stewart Gardner expressed a wish in her will that the permanent collection should not be altered after her passing.[371] This legal expression of ownership coincidentally resulted in the blank gaps on the museum's walls, which are there to stay and to remind us of what

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[367] Higgs 2010, p. 156.

[368] Lawrence Rinder, 'Installation, Net Art, Physical Space,...' (Sarah Cook, interviewer), in: Sarah Cook, *A Brief History of Curating New Media Art: Conversations with Curators* (Berlin: The Green Box, 2010), p. 82 <http://d-nb.info/1000500942/04> [accessed 16 May 2018].

[369] Cf. London 2010, p. 64.

[370] Baudrillard 1997, p. 21.

[371] Chou 2013.

the collection was initially like before the thirteen artworks were stolen. Where have the blanks and the gaps in other collections and museums gone? If there were no such gaps on the walls of the Gardner Museum, no poetic and striking inspiration would have incentivized art installations such as *Last Seen…* from Calle, or art projects such as *MOSA* by Schneider.

Compensating for the loss, Schneider found an outlet in collecting digital miniatures and information from databases that were never intended for curatorial, preservation, or registry purposes. Benjamin Weil compares creating a collection to "trying to gather traces of things that have been happening and trying to understand how to create an historical continuum. . ."[372] However, databases randomly portray cultural heritage that has been lost to society in one densely concentrated virtual space; they provide distorted traces of the past to an average person surfing the internet. In most cases, grainy and low-quality reproductions are all that is left after the criminal act is over. The survival of such objects is dependent on the extent of their publicity and the amount of available informational coverage as everything else slowly disappears into an abyss, making the information a crucial domain for artistic inspiration.[373] Thus, MOSA compares to what John Rajchman describes as "'presentations of ideas', which, in contrast to mere 'documentations of history', would suppose another idea of archive, related to theatre (or to sound or music), and of the scripts through which they are reproduced"[374] when discussing Jean-François Lyotard's approach to curating. Rajchman outlines Lyotard's concept of "immateriality" in his article *Les Immatériaux or How to Construct the History of Exhibitions* (2009). *Les Immatériaux* is where the information takes center stage, outshines the artworks, and creates the spectacle of information. In *MOSA* as well, the performance of the written and non-written outshines the artworks, as they become alive through the stories and their net value information. Rajchman argues that with *Les Immatériaux,* the idea of the exhibition was rethought in terms of presentation and representation.[375] Similarly to *Les Immatériaux*, *MOSA* breaks with the known curatorial aesthetics, as the information is the centerpiece of this art project.[376] Another important characteristic that *Les Immatériaux* and *MOSA* share is that they are both a "part of a

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[372] Benjamin Weil, 'Net Art, Physical Space, Producer Model…' (Sarah Cook, interviewer), in: Sarah Cook, *A Brief History of Curating New Media Art: Conversations with Curators* (Berlin: The Green Box, 2010), p. 113 <http://d-nb.info/1000500942/04> [accessed 16 May 2018].

[373] See Appendix C.

[374] John Rajchman, 'Les Immatériaux or How to Construct the History of Exhibitions', *Tate Papers*, 12 (2009) <http://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/tate-papers/12/les-immateriaux-or-how-to-construct-the-history-of-exhibitions> [accessed 22 April 2018].

[375] Ibid.

[376] See Appendix B.

possible 'history of exhibitions', involved with the 'dramaturgy of information' and with the role of time, matter, and technology in this history…"[377] Exhibition concepts witnessed in *MOSA* or *Les Immatériaux* focus on the method of presenting ideas to highlight how curating relates the information to history.[378] Just as *Les Immatériaux* is about the relationship between the body and language, *MOSA* is in fact more than a mere display of missing art objects. The information gathered from databases about the missing objects is used to reconstruct or create the viewers' thoughts about the missing artworks; it is about the tension between constantly forgetting and remembering. If Lyotard was displaying an assembly of mechanical gadgets alongside conceptualized areas of the exhibition, *MOSA* showcases the potency and impotence of the internet. *MOSA* represents exactly the kind of world of the "post-industrial" and techno-scientific condition in which our society is embedded, thinking there is solution for every problem in the newest technology when, in fact, memorization is profoundly and exclusively a flawed human experience (Figure 1).

Lyotard's notion of immateriality was based upon shifting "'materiality' away from that of 'formed matter' (including the 'modernist' distinction between form and content) and towards the 'techno-sciences' and the city."[379] A similar pattern of separating materiality from matter towards new technologies, but not necessarily the city, is present in *MOSA*. The formed matter is absent, as the missing artworks are only represented through heavily mediated reproductions. Instead, the materiality of the work is barely suggested, sometimes through imagination and traces (Figure 12). Considering *MOSA*, materiality that is highly subjective and dependent on viewers' self-awareness is explicitly related to the value that a culture inscribes onto the matter. Every reproduction featured in *MOSA* is a disruption that divides its materiality from matter before the spectator's eyes. Inasmuch as Lyotard was highly aware of the broader implications of his experimentations, his motivation was not to create the Malrauxian imaginary museum, but to integrate Malraux's theory into practice. Rajchman sees in *Les Immatériaux* the potential to transform museums and cultural institutions into cultural laboratories, as a sort of cultural bank storing invaluable valuables.[380] Using Rajchman's approach, *MOSA* could be seen as an art project transforming the public virtual space into a cultural laboratory and not an imaginary museum. The immateriality has been used to spark a discourse, thus making discourse the true artwork of this project. Certainly,

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[377] Rajchman 2009.
[378] "Lyotard was keen to insist that the aim of Les Immatériaux was not to display objects, but to make visible, even palpable (and so 'present') a kind of 'post-industrial' techno-scientific condition, at once artistic, critical and curatorial." Ibid.
[379] Ibid.
[380] Ibid.

Schneider had the traction to attract the PCGG by releasing the art project to the virtual public.[381] In addition to the discourse-oriented nature of MOSA, which is akin to that of *Les Immatériaux*, Schneider also resembles Lyotard in her methodology of revealing the hidden. Similarly to Malraux, to whom Lyotard dedicated a biography, Lyotard was fascinated with revealing the hidden.[382] In the curatorial practice, revealing the hidden is about a constant discourse about the unknown. "[I]t's getting the balance right between material that is completely unknown and material that has been visible and that has perhaps lost some of its visibility, so in making it visible again, it actually appears new, and at the same time trying to find points of connection between them…"[383] For Lyotard, according to Rajchman, curating had the role of unveiling the artwork's materiality on the one hand, and the function of a research laboratory on the other hand: "Exhibitions, beyond the reproduction of given forms ('stupidities') of knowledge, can be involved in the 'presentation of ideas' as part of laboratories of research…"[384] Lyotard's exhibition practice concepts were nested somewhere between the presentation of ideas and the activation of imagination that enabled introspective societal insights into the postmodern condition beyond the objects they displayed. Hence, the presentation of ideas in *Les Immatériaux* is materialized through the Malrauxian notion of the "imaginary" — the random lineages that the human mind creates after it has been activated through tech-induced stimuli.[385] Upon entertaining the notion of the exhibition beyond merely displaying a museum's collections, the institution of the museum can be seen as an enormous collecting machine that suspends all cultures.

Schneider uses her app to make the visitors to *MOSA* aware of how fragile materiality has been throughout written history, because as the curators Sahar Cook and Beryl Graham have suggested, "[t]he documentation issue also has some serious implications in regard to how art history gets written, too."[386] *MOSA* displays the objects with their materiality in question; they have to be reimagined and planted in the viewer's mind as fake memories, memories of immaterial objects. Moreover, the medium Schneider has chosen is highly minute and will probably be obsolete in the next decade. *MOSA* is explorative and

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[381] See Appendix A, p. 160.

[382] "Indefatigable, Lyotard hoped to recast Malraux's old question of 'silences' in terms of his own idea of making visible, audible, and thus 'think-able', what cannot be seen, heard or thought, and to recast the 'imaginary' side of the museum accordingly." Rajchman 2009.

[383] Higgs 2010, p. 164

[384] Rajchman 2009.

[385] Ibid.

[386] Sarah Cook and Beryl Graham, 'Research, Discussion Lists, Theory/Practice… ' in: Sarah Cook, *A Brief History of Curating New Media Art: Conversations with Curators* (Berlin: The Green Box, 2010), p. 22 <http://d-nb.info/1000500942/04> [accessed 16 May 2018].

innovative, but it is itself immaterial and in danger of being lost, potentially before the lost artworks that *MOSA* features cease to exist in the viewers' memories, and unless documented, *MOSA*, too, will cease to exist.[387] *MOSA* is more than a simple transmission device for digitalized data; it uses the internet as a medium to convey a specific point, and as such it can be classified as net art that goes beyond the "transmission function."[388] According to new media curator Rudolf Frieling, the selection of the material combined with a powerful concept is the formula for creating an online artwork according to new media curator Rudolf Frieling. "And the beauty of works lies often in the specificity of a concept or material combined with the openness or lack of instruction in terms of its activation."[389]

When Obrist described his own approach in an interview with Gavin Wade, it was Eric Hobsbawm who made a strong impression on Obrist, who called his work "a protest against forgetting,"[390] an enigma to be solved as to why the hidden has actually been hidden, "to understand why these things are not known"[391] and not to historicize the events. By means of journaling the interviews, Obrist has kept the memories alive as he uncovers the power structures that sustain curating practices. The combination of the immateriality of the stolen artworks in an a-linear and non-historicizing manner in *MOSA* is similar to Obrist's methods for building a theory of reflection. With her app, Schneider is resurrecting missing artworks, and this thesis is a documentation of that process. For Obrist, it is collecting interviews, while for Schneider the protest against forgetting takes the form of collecting digital miniatures. A powerful interconnection exists between archiving and curating. As undeniable as they are often invisible, not tangible, both activities shape the contemporary perceptions of artists, artworks, exhibition rooms, and the institution of the museum itself.[392] The missing data in *MOSA* testifies to the fact that the information selected and presented is only as good as the information stored. To summarize the influence of the selection of the matter on the exhibition design in *MOSA*, *MOSA* is an art project featuring missing and stolen artworks. It

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[387] "So unless you've got documentation within both the curator's own practice and the institution history, that bit gets written out of art history completely." Cook and Graham 2010, p. 23.
[388] Dietz 2010, p. 182.
[389] Rudolf Frieling, 'Participation, Interaction, Audience...' (Sarah Cook, interviewer), in: Sarah Cook, *A Brief History of Curating New Media Art: Conversations with Curators* (Berlin: The Green Box, 2010), p. 199 <http://d-nb.info/1000500942/04> [accessed 16 May 2018].
[390] Hans Ulrich Obrist cit. in Gavin Wade, 'A Protest Against Forgetting', (Hans Ulrich Obrist, interviewer) in: Hans Ulrich Obrist, *Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Curating: But Were Afraid to Ask* (Berlin [u.a.]: Sternberg Press, 2011), p. 130.
[391] Ibid.
[392] Wade 2011, p. 135.

is about the ephemeral nature of ever-evolving media, but also about the visualization of common cultural heritage for the means of preservation. Finally, *MOSA* deals with the question of whose heritage is worth saving. Interwoven with concepts of ownership, preservation, artwork commodification, and digital representation, Schneider's selection of objects for *MOSA* is a selection of immaterial information objects in her own protest against forgetting. However, only time will tell how (un)successful such experiments will be at creating the narratives of the future.

4.2 Arrangement or Disarrangement?

Museums are constantly rearranging artworks to display certain narratives. The origins of the modern exhibition design, which Staniszewski calls exhibition design is in its essence curating, can be traced back to Alexander Dorner, who from the 1920s onwards transformed the way Hannover Landesmuseum was structured. Avant-garde exhibition designs were frequent additions or extensions to the chronological succession of epochs to feature the latest developments in art. Obrist claims that the exhibition design as it is presently known was a crucial part of modern exhibition practice, such as Lissitzky's *Abstract Cabinet*.[393] Lissitzky was invited to Hannover Landesmuseum by then director Dorner in 1927 to hang the artworks in the exhibition space or to arrange them.[394] Thus, *MOSA* is an art project where a contemporary artist is essentially hanging his or her entire collection and letting visitors interact with the artworks inasmuch as this is possible given their physical absence and virtual presence. The artist thus becomes a curator who shifts the viewer's focus to a chosen polemic that the artist deems relevant.

The research started and will conclude with Malraux's imaginary museum. Malraux was more fixated on creating a sort of domestic armchair museum, but his follower Jean-François Lyotard integrated Malraux's theoretical concept, which was encapsulated in a book, into an exhibition practice suitable for comparison with *MOSA*.[395] The results Lyotard achieved are a valuable reference for defining the type of arrangement of objects put into practice in *MOSA* by Schneider, who drew her ideas for the arrangement and presentation in

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[393] Hans Ulrich Obrist cit. in Wade 2010, p. 128.
[394] Ibid.
[395] Cf. Rajchman 2009.

part from Walter Benjamin.[396] The visitor to *MOSA* is cognitively simulated through total immersion and an exhibition arrangement style that is extremely non-linear and non-historicized so it allows for erratic conceptual linkages (Figure 1). With his museum without walls, Malraux wished to achieve a concept very similar to spontaneous conceptual connections. The Benjaminian or Malrauxian manner of narrativization in Lyotard's exhibition practice has already been extensively analyzed by Rachjman, who wrote an article on Lyotard's 1985 exhibition entitled *Les Immatériaux,* which took place at Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris. For the arrangement of the objects, Lyotard used the "aesthetic figure of the labyrinth"[397] to disrupt the linear narrative of the exhibition space, which has largely shaped the exhibition displays of modernity. History and information that shape society are never interconnected in a linear fashion, but they are constantly being reshaped. As argued in the *"Physical and Virtual"* chapter, the practice of linear narration in exhibition design was already being questioned in avant-garde shows. By incorporating montage and newly discovered technology, the avant-garde artists were attempting to disrupt the linear perception of history by means of innovation; Lyotard later employed the same tactic of showing innovation to trigger some form of contemplation in the observer. Lyotard attempted to convert Benjamin's *One-Way Street* into an exhibition space and to visualize how a non-linear narrative could be manifested in space.[398] *MOSA*, too, is such a spatial visualization of non-linear storytelling. The principle of Lyotard's labyrinthine theatre can also be found in *MOSA*, which is designed as a labyrinth as well and can be accessed only through the use of VR headset. In both instances, the maze or labyrinth and the new technology are used to physically manifest a break from traditional exhibition practices dominated by the linear canonized narratives and to introduce alternative ways of thinking about the present conditions.

Introducing databases and the new medium of the internet into an art project such as *MOSA* has propelled a natural development of the non-linear narration, as already examined by Lyotard. *Les Immatériaux* is equal to converting a book into an exhibition, similar to the semi-fictitious and a-chronological autobiography that Malraux wrote. Books and archives have been replaced by databases and hypertexts, and *MOSA* is one of the outcomes of this shift. Manovich has placed the narrative on the opposite side of the database:

> "As a cultural form, database represents the world as a list of items which it refuses

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[396] 'Ziv Schneider - Virtual Glue: The Many Futures of Our Past - YouTube'
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hNvj66ih7YY> [accessed 18 January 2018], 12:13.
[397] Rajchman 2009.
[398] Ibid.

to order. In contrast, a narrative creates a cause-and-effect trajectory of seemingly unordered items (events). Therefore, database and narrative are natural 'enemies'. Competing for the same territory of human culture, each claims an exclusive right to make meaning out of the world."[399]

When considering the possibilities of building a narrative in *MOSA,* the line between the narrative and database is blurred, as the narrative was drawn from the source databases and enhanced through online publications excluded in the databases to give a back story. Thus, database and narrative are not really natural enemies but thrive on each other. Occasionally the systemization or the organizing principle of the database can induce meanings, but it does not narrate a story on its own, as it always needs a human agent.[400] "An interactive narrative [... a hyper-narrative] can then be understood as the sum of multiple trajectories through a database."[401] In *MOSA,* several databases are conjured up to orchestrate the gallery of the missing, thus revealing the internet as a hyper-archive with its own inclusions and exclusions. Taking different paths through the database and in effect drawing different conclusions is similar to taking a path through *Les Immatériaux*, already a foreshadowing of the human condition of the present time.

However, simply creating these trajectories is, of course, not sufficient; the author also has to control the semantics of the elements and the logic of their interconnections for the resulting object to meet the criteria of the chosen narrative, as outlined above. Another erroneous assumption frequently made is that by creating their own path (i.e., choosing the records from a database in a particular order), the users construct their own unique narrative. Hence, if the users access different elements, one after another, in a random fashion, there is no reason to assume these elements will form a narrative at all. Schneider has built an interactive non-linear hyper-narrative through a collage of reproductions, web-based texts, and databases. The knowledge that is transmitted constitutes the narrative as a tool of remembrance. Through this process of knowledge creation, Schneider willingly or unwillingly exposes the constructedness of the curating process. To apprehend the narrativization in *MOSA*, the discussion between Seth Siegelaub and Obrist about the exhibition-in-the-form-of-a-book *Xeroxbook* conducted in the 1960s, which featured works from different contemporary artists at that time, is most helpful:

> "I think our problem in the area of curatorship was to become aware that this person – in this case me – was an actor in this process, and that he or she had an effect on what was shown; and being aware of this part of looking at art and understanding

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[399] Manovich 2010, p. 68.
[400] Ibid. p. 70.
[401] Ibid.

> how art choices are made. This is also the case for the role of the collector, and the effect he has on what art is made by encouraging this and not that. How to make these hidden private decisions more visible, how to make this dimension behind the public art exhibition and selection process more visible, was in part what I and others were thinking about."[402]

Xeroxbook showed how closely curating on the one hand and publishing and editing on the other hand are related. Although *MOSA* is not and cannot be equivalent to *Xeroxbook,* their lessons on viewing databases and curating are very similar: namely, they expose how curating is built upon existing collections and the totalizing principle of perpetually unfinished collections that influence the seemingly perfect narratives, but only about existing objects.

4.3 Presentation

Earlier in this thesis, I argued that some of the avant-garde and contemporary artists were inspired to experiment with new possibilities of visualization enabled by technology. In this section, I now claim that in those cases, artists' desire for experimentation was linked to the wish to change viewers' mindsets or perspectives about the arranged selection of objects. Contemporary curating can be categorized into three ideologies: atmosphere rooms, white cubes, and institutional off-spaces. For historic exhibitions, Alexander Dorner's atmosphere rooms situated in institutional contexts have remained the predominant ideology in the curatorial presentation of objects, elevating the presentation above the objects "with initiating a shift from 'objects' to 'spaces' (and hence from 'spectators' to 'participants')."[403] For his reconstruction of the Landesmuseum, Dorner created what he called "atmosphere rooms" to immerse the visitor in the spirit of the period.[404] This immersion was achieved by using different colors for different epochs.[405] With a few previously mentioned exceptions, modern and contemporary art is bound to an institutional context, but the atmosphere room has been replaced with the atmosphereless white cube, "which has become such a strong ideology that it's actually almost prevented anything else from happening."[406] The problem lies hidden beneath the surface of the museum façade, starting with the formalized and institutionalized forms of official archiving and hegemonic narrating multiplying white cubes around the world. Seth Siegelaub sees this problem as structural: "The problem of the museum is structural in the sense of its relationship to the ruling powers in society and their interests. Thus, a

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[402] Siegelaub 2008, p. 129.
[403] Rajchman 2009.
[404] Ibid.
[405] Staniszewski 1998, p. 20.
[406] Hans Ulrich Obrist cit. in Wade 2011, p. 129.

museum without this authority and its subservience to power could be very interesting, imaginative, and even spontaneous, but to the degree to which it achieves this authority, it loses these possibilities."[407] The white cube is not a space where experimentation can thrive; it is not a space of uncertainty, but a contemporary atmosphere room viewed as a curating standard in terms of presentation. For *MOSA,* Schneider chose a space resembling Dorner's atmosphere rooms more so than a white cube. However, all virtual exhibition halls are of the same wall color, creating unity (Figure 53).

The not-so-novel but reemerging off-site and non-institutional format of presentation of ideas, partially enabled by the rapidly evolving technological achievements of the past and current century, has only recently started to permeate the museum landscape. Rajchman himself asked where this zone for the "exhibitions of ideas" could be situated within cultural institutions.[408] Obrist specified this kind of exhibition as "a performative space, rather than a space of representation."[409] The space of *MOSA* is one of those off-spaces, in cooperation with certain institutions such as ITP and Samsung Multimedia Lab, but it is simultaneously an alternative solution or approach to the topic around which it revolves.[410] Through this off-space, the stimulation has the capacity to shift perspectives. Most importantly, *MOSA* is not a site for a database where "it is possible to change, at will, the scale of objects. This manipulation of scale has very interesting consequences. To some extent the original artwork is enriched. It provides a new vision."[411] The manipulation happens in reverse in the case of *MOSA,* which allows for a new vision as well, one ruled by the aesthetic of disappearance and not so much by the reconstruction of lost objects. Lyotard himself described his exhibition *Les Immatériaux* "*as an interface that need not limit itself to the presentation of objects, but can expand into a kind of immersive space.*"[412] The aim of *Les Immatériaux* was more to induce "reflexive unease"[413] about the blind spots of knowledge than to completely mesmerize the audience. The philosopher was firmly convinced that the observation of the external reality through real action performed was only one of many possible methods of forming memory. "[M]any other actions were possible and will remain inscribed in a virtual state. [. . .] [P]erception stops being 'pure', i.e. instantaneous, and how representational consciousness can be born of this reflection (in the optical sense), of this

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[407] Siegelaub 2008, p. 121.
[408] Rajchman 2009.
[409] Hans Ulrich Obrist cit. in Wade 2011, p. 125.
[410] Appendix A, p. 158.
[411] Battro 2010, p. 142.
[412] Jean-François Lyotard cit. in Birnbaum/Wallenstein 2019.
[413] Ibid.

'echo', of the influx on the set of other possible — but currently ignored — paths which form memory."[414] This is the same notion of prosthetic knowledge that was discussed in the previous chapter. Prosthetic knowledge requires a certain degree of virtuality (often technologically induced) or a virtual space of existence to manifest itself. Furthermore, in *MOSA,* "the content of the work and the interface become separate. It is therefore possible to create different interfaces to the same material."[415] One such interface is the Isabella Stewart Gardner website, and another is the PCGG's *Missing Art Movement* database. However novel its format may be, *MOSA* still operates in the mode of Malraux's miniatures of semi-fictitious art, though I argue that *MOSA* being created in the virtual dimension goes a step further. The virtuality is based on a similar principle as photography is, as it always masks the reality hidden behind the image. Virlio described the dimension hidden behind digital photography as aesthetics of disappearance:

> "But with the invention of photography, of the photogramme, that is of instant photography, and of cinematography, from that moment onwards, one enters into an aesthetic of disappearance. At that stage, persistence is no longer material but cognitive, it is in the eye of the beholder. Things owe their existence to the fact that they disappear, like they do on a screen for instance. They are there, they appear, and are in motion, *because* they vanish afterwards. […] So, this is the aesthetics of disappearance, it means that most of the art has vanished."[416]

Through its virtuality, *MOSA* stands in the tradition of engaging the spectator; out of passivity and into activity, it forces viewers to confront the content by actively participating in the recollection process, and it encourages spectators to investigate for themselves and leave a message on *MOSA*'s answering machine, rather than merely contemplating visual or ideological content. In the case of an art project such as *MOSA*, it is crucial to "trust artists and the power of their imagination,"[417] but Schneider also lulls the viewer into a maze where fake cannot be separated from the original and the stories become very similar to oral histories, which change with historical and societal contexts. Lyotard already thought of new technologies as devices of learning, "as material extensions of our capacity to memorize, [...] given the role played in them by symbolic language as supreme 'condenser' of all information."[418] Similarly to the majority of net art, *MOSA* has a strong performative component. In both performance and net art, "the space becomes the context for very different kinds of things."[419] Furthermore, both formats are bound to spaces of shifting

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[414] Jean-François Lyotard, *The Inhuman: Reflections on Time* (Stanford University Press, 1991), p. 42.
[415] Manovich 2010, p. 69.
[416] Virilio 2000[1999], p. 41.
[417] Liane Davidson, 'Labs, Artists in Residence, Media Art…' (Sarah Cook, interviewer) in: Sarah Cook, *A Brief History of Curating New Media Art: Conversations with Curators* (Berlin: The Green Box, 2010), p. 137 <http://d-nb.info/1000500942/04> [accessed 16 May 2018].
[418] Lyotard 1991, p. 43.
[419] Higgs 2010, p. 165.

contexts and discrepancies between the events and their documentation, which makes them highly unstable art formats for archiving. However, such formats have the charm of materializing, if only for a fleeting moment and with a strong experimental undertone, in a critical space. As such, these formats are in a permanent state of experimentation and incompletion, and London emphasizes that "[e]very experiment isn't always flawless or polished [. . .]"[420]

5 Conclusion

The ever-accelerated progression of technology has repeatedly transformed the landscape of cultural or artistic production. Attempting to develop a protest against forgetting throughout this thesis, *Museum of Stolen Art,* chosen as a case study, was documented and archived to be subsequently compared against the backdrop of theoretical approaches supported by examples of enacted artistic practices toward a virtualization of the art world, cultural heritage and curation to determine where on the axis between physical and virtual artistic practices *MOSA* could be placed, what statement Schneider is trying to make in *MOSA* and how her conviction is presented in terms of contemporary curating. Having no methodological precedent for analyzing such art projects, the artistic practices of modern and contemporary artists and theorists have been applied as a point of reference for developing the methodology for virtualized artworks including an interview, cataloguing and archiving practice in a slightly different manner than usual, because much of the research involved sifting through virtual databases or making screenshots of an app.

Endless online databases, apps, screenshots and hypertexts have significantly restructured possible means of expression for contemporary artists. However, unusual and groundbreaking virtual reality appears presently to be the desire of achieving a certain degree of virtuality, which has been present in artistic expression well before hypermodernity, such as with a stereoscope. Nonetheless, the same example can be used for describing the hypermodern condition that conditioned the development of *MOSA*, as in the case of the voyaging peep box, virtuality was employed to seemingly bridge what was out of sight due to the distance. The museum bridges the shortages in cognition, because

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[420] London 2010, p. 62.

the hypermodern period is a time of acceleration of informational exchange and fractalization of the subject matter. Furthermore, the online installation *MOSA* highly resembles the avant-garde use of the stereoscope in exhibition practice combined with exhibition books and the exhibition of ideas and concepts as opposed to exhibiting artworks. As such, it provides insights into the shifting paradigms about concepts such as artist, artwork, exhibition and museum. Schneider, who views herself as an experimental multi-media artist aiming to create a knowledge surplus, exemplifies the trend of transformation in the persona of the artist toward the artist-curator, curator-artist and collector-artist sliding into a role of an experimental artistic researcher, converting exhibition practice or curating into an art form itself by exhibiting or accentuating artworks belonging to other artists and primarily focusing on designing the exhibition design, which is a smartphone application. Such an artistic approach, which is closely aligned with that of performance art, is characterized by the displacement of the human performer and his or her demotion to the commentator or his or her promotion to a curator while the objects take centerstage. Perceiving the artist through the artworks, the reproductions presented in *MOSA* often reduce the persona of the artist to a name on the wall or the artwork itself and, in some instances, to the value added to the artworks, which are only recognized as such through their relation to their creators. The trend of perceiving curating as an independent art form began with avant-garde artists such as El Lissitzky or Friedrich Kiesler and continued after the Second World War with art projects including *Xeroxbook* or *Les Immatériaux*. Being aware of the power of curating, Schneider transforms herself into a cyborgian artist turned curator and artist turned collector by means of the latest technological achievements as she decides to create her subjective virtual non-museum. The experimenting artist becomes a distributor, multiplicator and diffuser of the information, intricate concepts, theories and knowledge available to her while simultaneously integrating the given mishaps of the virtual archival and collection mechanisms into the artistic process.

On the level of the artwork, the reproductions emanate the notion that creating art is a privileged spectacle and that artwork has become a highly valuable commodity in contemporary society. The information next to the artworks on virtual walls is sometimes missing or incomplete. Thus, Schneider is not depicting the world, or transcending some higher mysticisms, nor is she visualizing a certain art style or art theory but narrating a story of lost objects in a virtual gallery space. With the seemingly endless possibilities for reproduction, the artworks no longer have the need to reproduce reality, but the reality of those works must be reproduced constantly for their continuous existence. The high reproducibility of artworks has led to authenticity and originality becoming increasingly

irrelevant, because most of artistic creation is built upon the creations of the past generations. In contrast to the informational accessibility of visual data, the authenticity and originality of artworks have been transposed into marketable goods. To conclude, using only reproductions of lost artworks the actual artistic creation in *MOSA* is curating the reproductions through an algorithm that guides the spectator through the gallery of missing art. As such, *MOSA* is difficult to understand as a conventional artwork but is relatable to performance art, where the performative of the human agent has been replaced by a performative of the immaterial virtual non-objects. The virtual non-objects have been assembled in the non-linear algorithm-space of *MOSA,* which itself is a non-conventional exhibition space constructed beyond institutional frameworks. The hybridized art project MOSA focuses less on the crisis of originality and more on the crisis of representation, which is based on various databases.

The solution for Schneider lies in creating a poetic algorithm in opposition to the extremely categorical database, where the viewer can stroll through a virtual three-dimensional album of the immaterial lost objects. However, *MOSA* is not actually a museum in the traditional understanding, as the name of the art project suggests, but a virtual gallery installation in a non-institutional setting that highlights curating as a conscious and conceptual undertaking. The gallery was also the preferred space where avant-gardists would conduct their art experiments. In a formal sense. Schneider recreates the known architectural spaces for exhibiting artworks such as Dorner's immersion rooms. In the contextual sense, the virtual gallery or exhibition space is an informational space foremost, which is characterized by total immersion and insulation of the viewer who is stepping out of the place of privacy in their home into the fictional place of the internet, where non-material objects can continue their existence through the visitor's memories. The museum allows the visitor to voyage through his or her imagination and create subjective visions for alternative realities. The strong intention of uncovering latent contents was already present in the art installations of avant-garde artists such as Lissitzky with the *Abstract Cabinet*, Mogoly-Nagy and his *Light Prop*, as well as Kiesler with the *Vision Machine*. The realization of the fact that gaps in cultural object collections are so effortlessly camouflaged in standard curating practices metamorphoses *MOSA* into a critical space, which then allows further examination of the predominant exhibition practices and spaces. Thus, *MOSA* becomes a device for changing perspective by forcing the viewer to take the time to examine the reproduction for several seconds with the automatically trigged zoom-in of the viewed reproduction and by encouraging the viewer to leave a message with the information about featured artworks on an answering machine. Virtuality, which is giving the impression of spatiality but actually

existing only through visual information, partially allows the reframing and reexamination of the analogue exhibition space. Through substitution of the reality of missing works with the reality of the reproductions and databases, *MOSA* transforms into a critical space, a borderland for manifestation of latent knowledge. This type of vision materializes memory and creates alternatives for producing, reproducing and imagining exhibition spaces, but it is itself a tremendously unstable medium.

In summary, according to Malraux's vision, *MOSA* is in fact not a global virtual museum but a virtual gallery exhibiting reproductions of stolen artworks, mimicking the ideology behind museums' structures through the processes of reproduction, remote-access and interconnectivity. The exhibitions or the gallery are predominately temporally restrained punctual spectacles condensing and merely highlighting the vast collections belonging to the museums or private collectors. However, *MOSA* does fit into the Malrauxian methodological approach of metamorphosis and cannot be fully grasped without understanding the institutional framework of the museum, because *MOSA* is exactly what a museum is not. It is a non-museum or an ideological metamorphosis of a museum. While a museum primarily stores objects and some selected content about those objects and later rearranges them to create exhibitions, *MOSA* shows exactly how flawed and unconcise those collections and their institutional representations are. For Schneider, the visual data replaces the museum's heritage after the loss of an artwork, and this approach clearly has deficits. Upon scrolling through the databases of lost artworks, it becomes clear that *MOSA* excludes all the artworks missing some sort of visual reproduction. The artwork is then completely lost. Filling the gaps of a museum means to acquire and purchase and then acquire and purchase again. However, *MOSA* is a space that resembles a concept that Hein described as the *Constructivist Museum*, which is grounded in the conscious and repeated effort toward knowledge construction by introducing unknown matter alongside with known matter to the visitor and foreseeing or even anticipating misconceptions that occur alongside the viewing process. A familiar atmosphere of a museum and hip background music draw the app user into the museum. Known artists are mixed with unknown artists' names, photography is featured alongside paintings, and objects from museum collections are mixed with those from private collections. Nevertheless, art crime affects all those objects in the same way, and *MOSA* is a space where the frustration about such events can be felt and memories are to be made. In conclusion, *MOSA* is a combination of the *Constructivist Museum* and the prototype of *Virtual Museum* in the form of a virtual gallery installation at the intersection of the peep-hole show and the domestic pinacotheca. Visitors of *MOSA* are eventually challenged to go beyond the virtual walls into the databases and back into the

physical world and be aware of the missing artworks.

As a specific gallery installation, *MOSA* features the disappearance of artworks caused by their forceful removal. However, the loss of objects along with the loss of cultural or artistic significance regardless of the context is imminent to a certain extent. Artworks in virtuality can thus disappear due to manmade or machine-caused reasons. Art loot, usually taking place in wartime, was prevalent throughout the known written sources and was initially addressed in *MOSA* by two (mock-)exhibitions, *The Looting of Afghanistan* and *The Looting of Iraq*, which were later moved and integrated in RecoVR. Looting artworks is mostly associated with the desire to rewrite a society's history by destroying objects of cultural importance. The collection of miniatures presently still on display in MOSA mostly involve either art theft or systemic art crime, such as insurance fraud, trafficking or money laundering. Throughout most of *MOSA*'s virtual space, the issue of the increase in art theft cases propelled by rising artwork prices on the art market is raised, because most of the art thefts that occur are motivated by some sort of financial gain. Following Baudrillard's theories, artworks' worth is increasingly being determined by their commercial value, which is further exacerbated by the supposed missing pieces that would then complete a subjective and arbitrary collection. Art thefts are rarely specialized and targeted to specific artworks, as in the case of the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. Although Schneider focuses on the phenomena of art theft and loot, implicitly or even incidentally, she reveals the mechanisms of informational erasure that govern the databases as storage sites and a part of a much grander web of structural and institutional deficits. The restitution to this day unsurprisingly remains a complicated legal issue with often inconclusive outcomes as can be seen through the example of the PCGG's *Missing Art Movement* project, because the majority of the globally known great museums are in possession of at least some artworks of a questionable origin. In addition, the auction houses and art dealers were also distorting provenance records to sell questionable artworks. Non-transparency of the records ultimately leads to the loss of the artworks with their physical disappearance, and financial transactions largely determine how cultural heritage is perceived and defined. As such, creating the art history of the missing is as important as writing the art history of the present, which is often created from the pens of an exclusive circle of privileged intellectuals.

Thus, the human experience is riddled by gaps: gaps of the memory, gaps of the archive and gaps of the virtual, all of which are intertwined with each other in an endless circle of compensating for one another. The process of (re)collection is highly flawed, as could be

seen in the consecutive exhibitions *Last Seen…* of 1991 and *What do you see?* of 2012 by Sophie Calle in the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, where the temporal distance clearly shows two realities, the latter one substituting for the former one. According to Schneider, technical innovation (i.e., prosthetic knowledge) was supposed to compensate for the loss of cultural heritage caused by art crime, but the databases deliver subpar results for the absent artworks. Indeed, the digital trace is occasionally the only visual trace that is left when the initial object has been lost to the viewer who has not yet been physically confronted with the object. Through the design of *MOSA*, Schneider was attempting to revive at least some of the lost visual repository of artistic expression for future generations of artists. However, the human condition is one of constant abstraction and amnesia veneered by intentional disruption of the (re)collections through power struggles or hysterical outbursts. Any kind of collection, be it a memorization or a physical manifestation thereof, such as an archive, a database or a physical arrangement of selected objects, is a constant work in progress, waiting in insulation until it is read, used and narrativized by someone. Moreover, for each single collection of objects, countless interpretations are possible. Archivists and later data input specialists and interpreters of the archived or digitally stored matter possess an enormous influence over the processes of remembering and forgetting in each society. The collection of lost artworks in *MOSA* visualizes the high number of objects that go missing daily. The museum does address important polemics about the increase in art crime, which apparently strongly correlates with the financial liberalization of the art market, but it ironically substitutes the missing artworks with immaterial objects of a questionable existence. The status of artworks in current society has increasingly shifted toward a financial investment, which not only leads to higher rates of art crime but also to a higher value and importance of portable artworks. Favored artworks that survive in collective memories could clearly be propelled by the aesthetics of the financial market. Performative art, net art, to which *MOSA* belongs, and other non-material or portable artworks and missing or stolen artworks, all slide through the institutional cracks of a totalizing collecting principle designed to build an unifying cultural monolith masking the gaps in existing collections. Schneider's peudo-datamining action for the Malrauxian-like collection of miniatures raises awareness about the loss of cultural heritage and the flaws of the collecting mechanisms trying to preserve cultural heritage, but it is not the ultimate solution to a problem such as database masks or make archived matter disappear in the same way as the archives do. The algorithm of *MOSA* is an experimental approach to the issue of art crime, and as such, it is a failed attempt to right the wrong, but it does compel the visitor to memorize the imperfect, glitchy, low-quality images and to start second guessing the conventional or institutionalized methods of preserving and conserving artworks.

The information stored in archives or in databases is perpetually being selected, arranged and presented for various purposes or reasons. The activities of selections, arrangement and presentation are essentially the key practices of curating, a strong component of knowledge production, which has also been affected by the technological development of the previous and present century. Schneider's main objective is to create and pass the knowledge of the missing to the visitors of *MOSA* by revealing the hidden and the usually unseen. At the expense of their collectability causing them to become unseen, art projects such as *MOSA* have a considerably higher range of freedom for artistic expression in all the areas of curating mentioned above by using relational aesthetics for initiating social discourse. The project presents a selection of immaterial objects through a non-linear narrativization fashion in an immersive critical space of the internet app and is thus a highly curated artistic endeavor. All three components have been largely enabled through the emerging communication medium of the internet and ever-shrinking personal computers, which have been reduced to a mobile phone's size and offer instant three-dimensional voyaging in the comfort of nearly any home.

Collecting the traces of stolen artworks that have been left behind in the databases not primarily intended to be used for curatorial, archival or preservation purposes, Schneider repurposes those data entries to create her own collection of immaterial miniatures to convey her opinion about the story of the missing art. Schneider's artwork lies in assembling and creating the virtual exhibition through experimentation with the newest technological achievements. By witnessing the shift of the materiality away from the formed matter, the realization strikes the *MOSA* visitors that the grainy, subpar and distorted images are all that the bright new technology has to offer to compensate for the lost artworks. The artworks become resuscitated merely by stories about them and through meticulous investigations. The informational structure of the internet highly resembles a labyrinth, much like the Malrauxian museum without walls and with limited possibilities of selection of informational objects that are placed in a zone of immersion into which the user immerses when retrieving and rearranging the information. When Schneider decided to curate the databases, she reenacted this a-linear information space of ideas that has been previously seen in the exhibition and curatorial practices of Kiesler or Lyotard. Such a space reflects the conditions of the World Wide web, where databases are constantly being updated and integrated into ever-changing narratives. The plurality of knowledge construction exacerbated recently by the internet is also characteristic for *MOSA*, which allows for the visitor to choose the point of

entry freely. For this reason, *MOSA* is in an interactive interface that merges several databases into one unity. With a strong performative component, *MOSA* is a virtual gallery installation in a rapidly shifting space of increased mediation, changing contexts and spontaneous, instant connections. As such, it is a critical, liminal space or borderland of knowledge production, which is threatened by the loss of the medium that carries the information of *MOSA* and can ultimately only be saved by my own protest against forgetting!

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Table of Figures

Figure Credits

Figure 1:   Tadeja Znidarko.
Figure 2-68:Ziv Schneider, 2014-present, see Appendix A, p 162.

Figures

Figure 1: Museum of Stolen Art, schematic floor map reconstruction.

Entry Hall
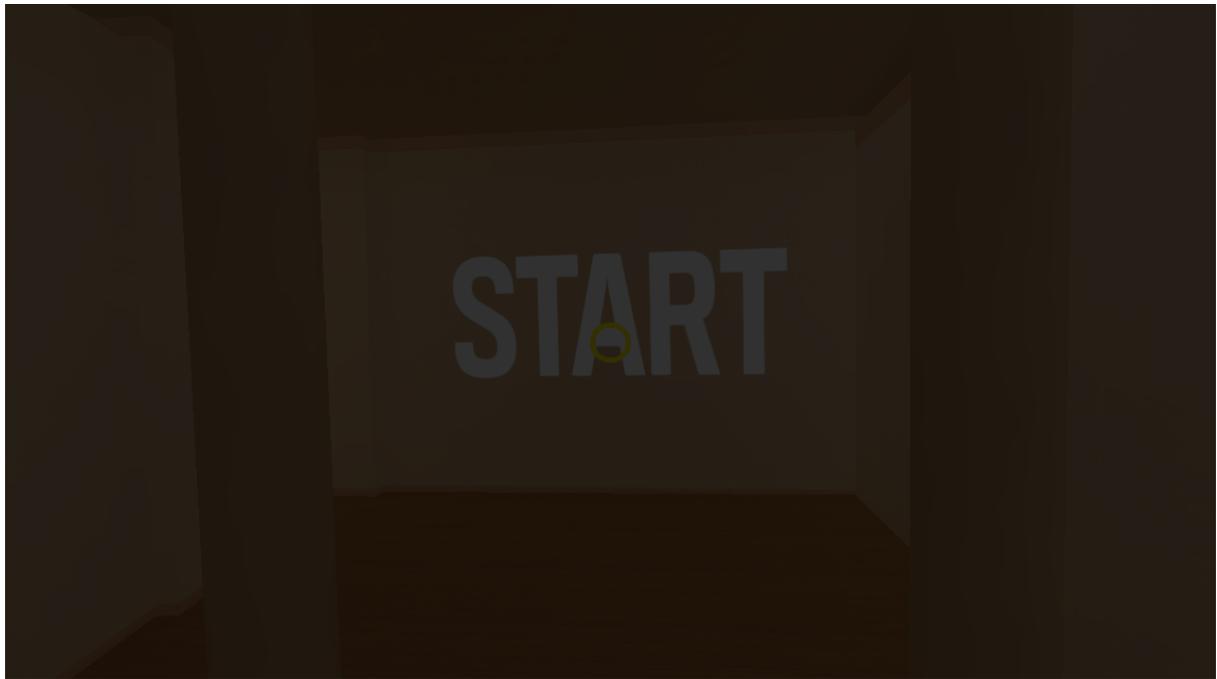
Figure 2: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art (2014-present), Entry Hall, Start Info Screen, screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2019.
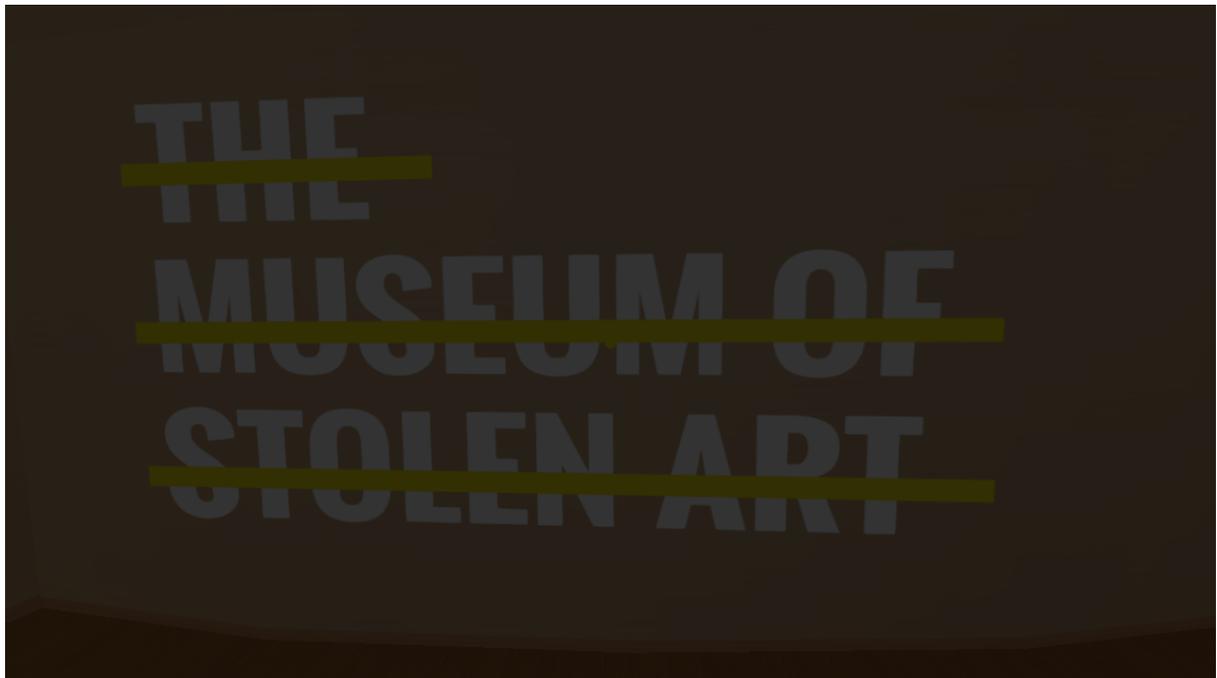

Figure 3: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art (2014-present), Entry Hall, Title Info Screen, screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2019.

Figure 4: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art (2014-present), Entry Hall, Current Exhibitions Info Screen, screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2019.
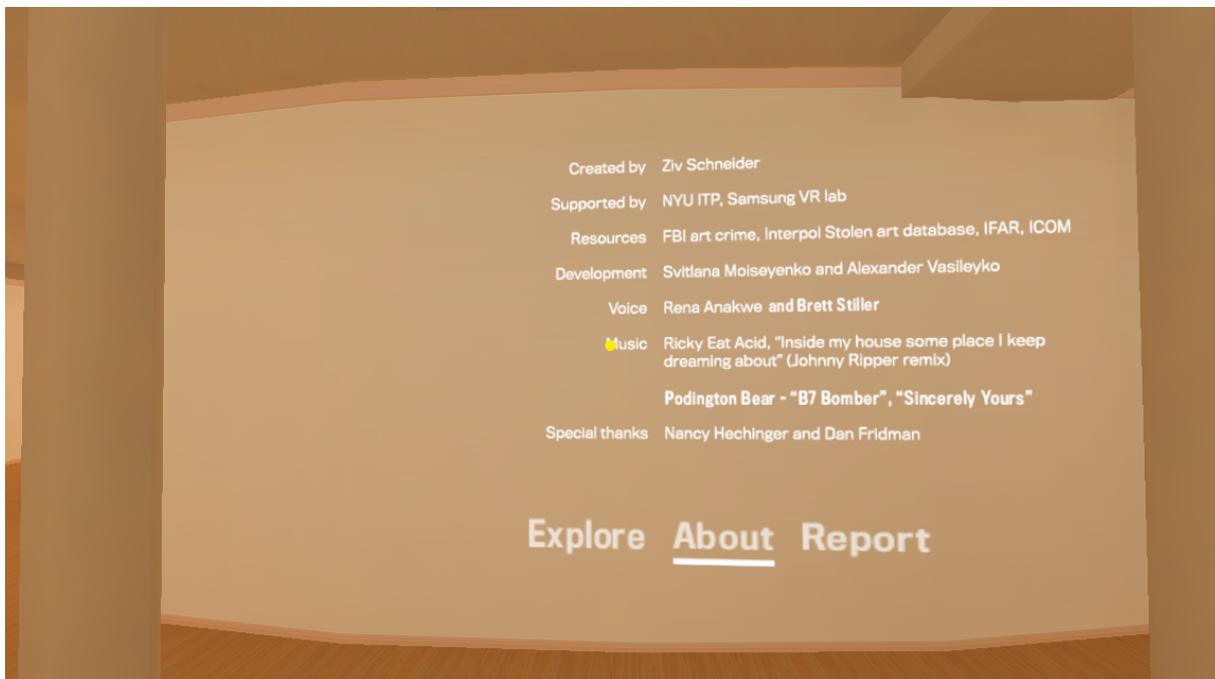
Figure 5: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art (2014-present), Entry Hall, Credits (About) Info Screen, screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2019.
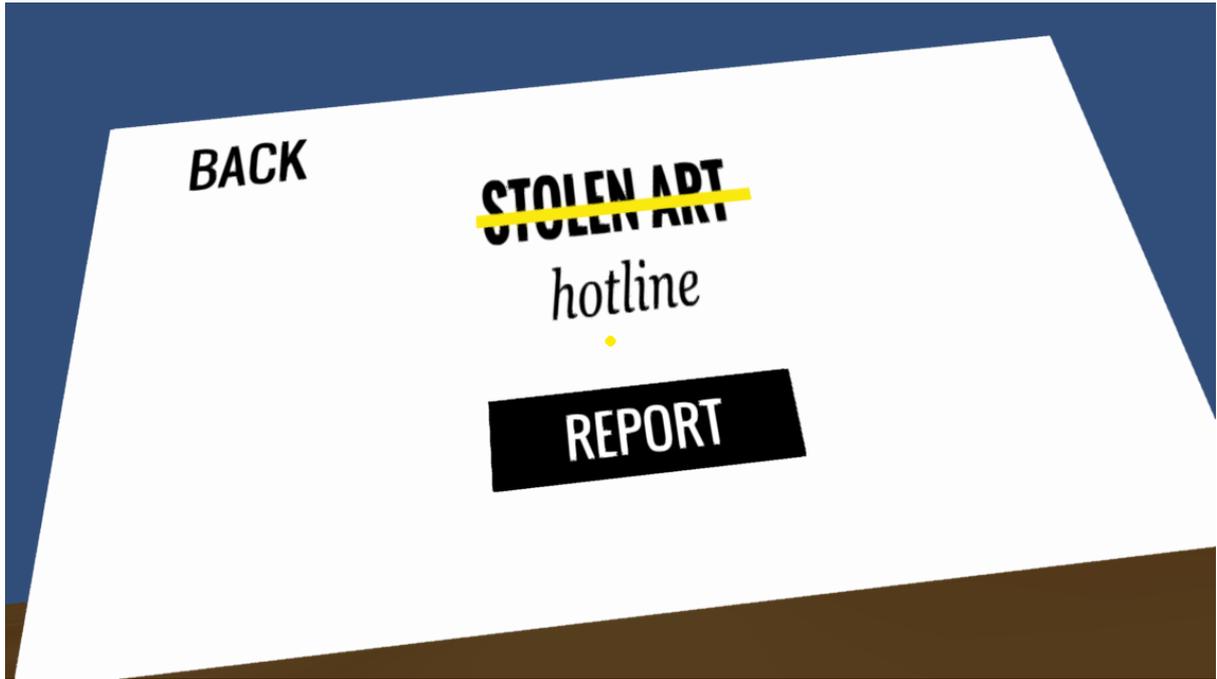
Figure 6: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art (2014-present), Report Space, Report Info Screen, screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2019.
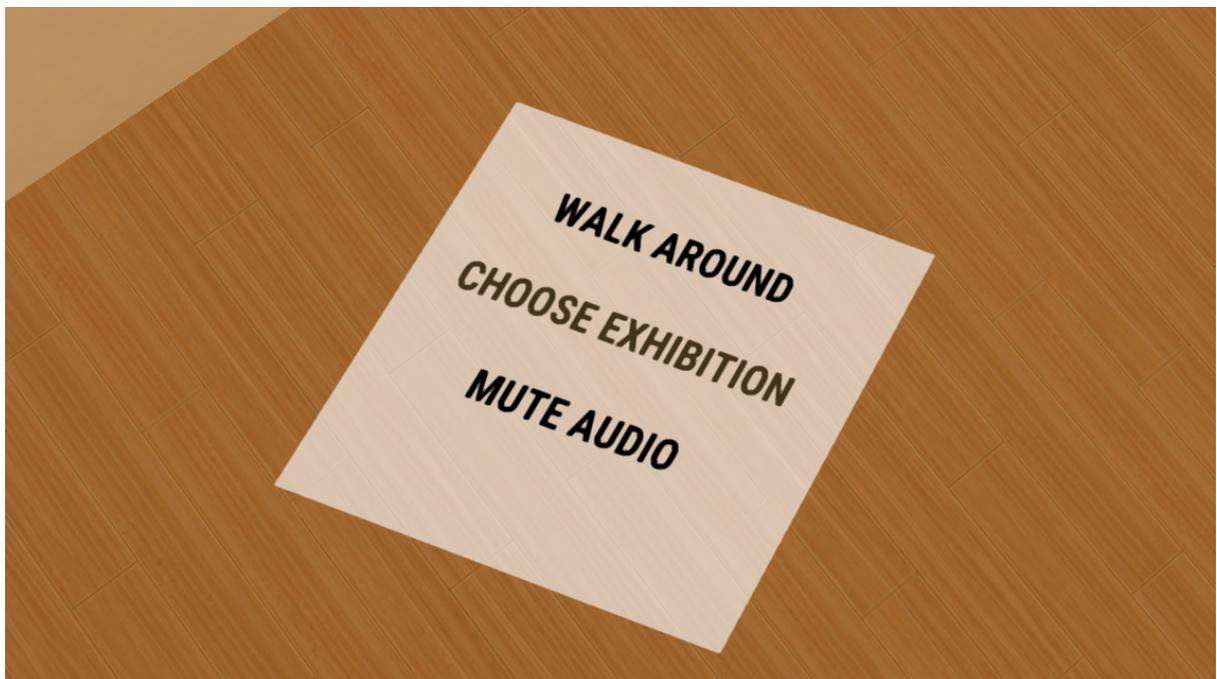
Figure 7: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art (2014-present), Navigator Sheet, screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2019.

Recently Stolen
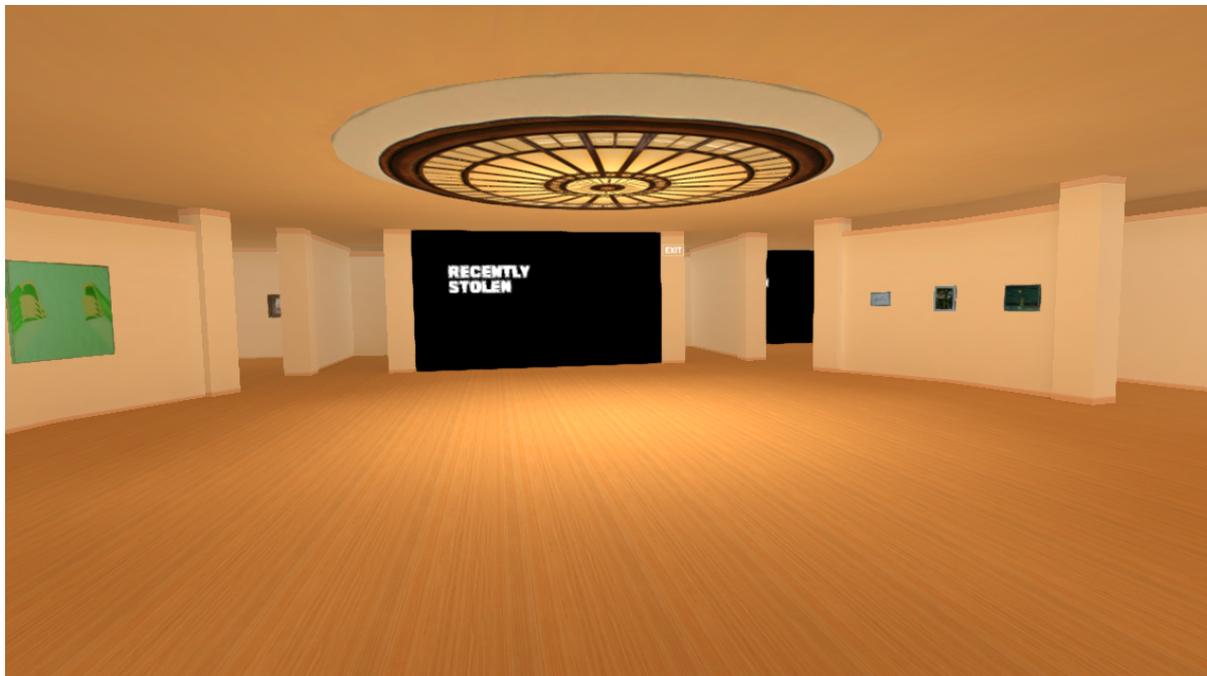
Figure 8: Museum of Stolen Art (2014-present), Recently Stolen, View from Inner Cercle towards Entry Hall, screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2019.
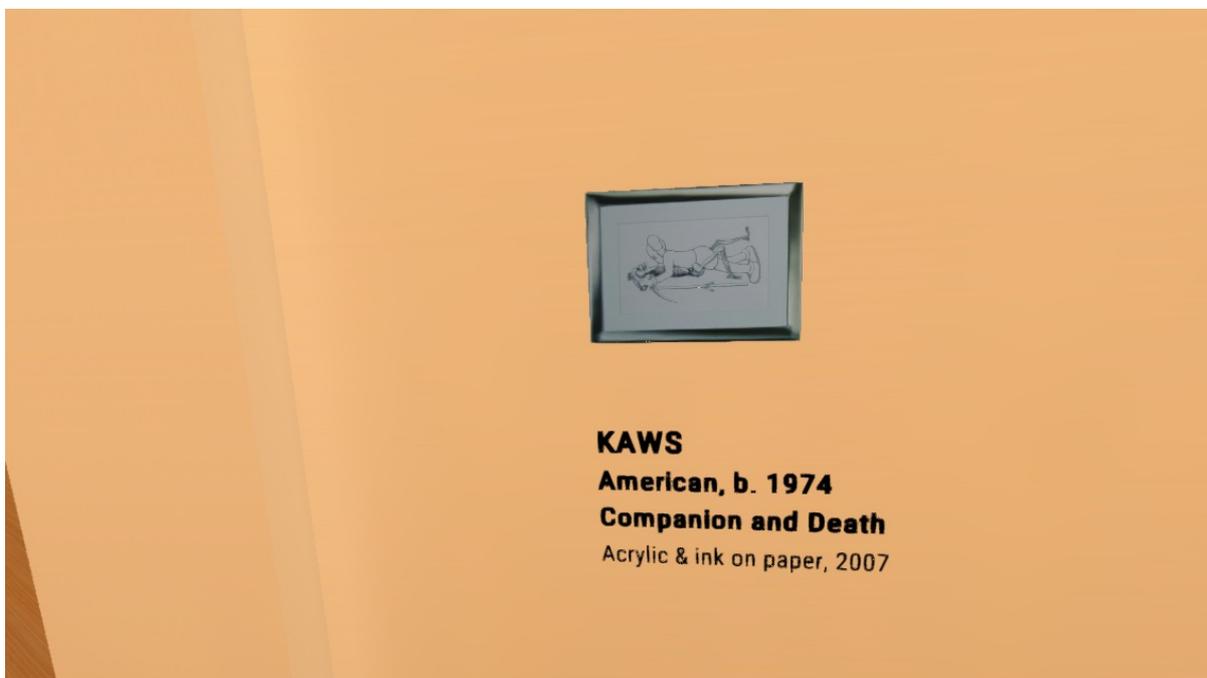
Figure 9: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art (2014-present), Recently Stolen, KAWS, Companion and Death, screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2018.

KAWS
American, b. 1974
Paper Smile
Silkscreen print #88/100, 2012

Figure 10: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art (2014-present), Recently Stolen, KAWS, Paper Smile, screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2018.

Emilio Sanchez
Cuban-born American, 1921
- 1999
Utitled
watercolor
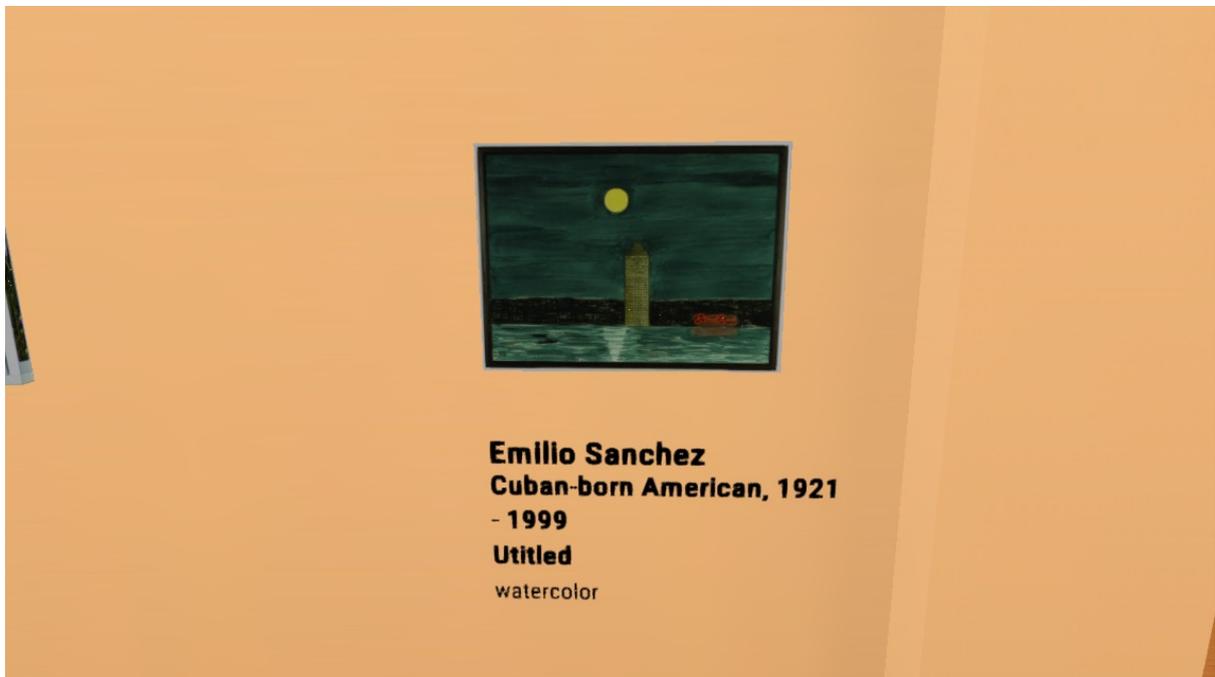
Figure 11: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art (2014-present), Recently Stolen, Emilio Sanchez, Untitled, screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2018.

Figure 12: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art (2014-present), Recently Stolen, Jan van Kessel the Elder, The Paradise, screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2018.

Figure 13: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art (2014-present), Recently Stolen, Ellison Hoover, Manhattan Moonlight, screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2018.

Laura Owens
American b. 1970
Untitled (bird on a branch)
Oil and acrylic on canvas, 2006

Figure 14: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art (2014-present), Recently Stolen, Laura Owens, Untitled, screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2018.

Howard Cook
American, 1901-1980
Cables and Arches of Brooklyn Bridge
Lithograph print, 1949
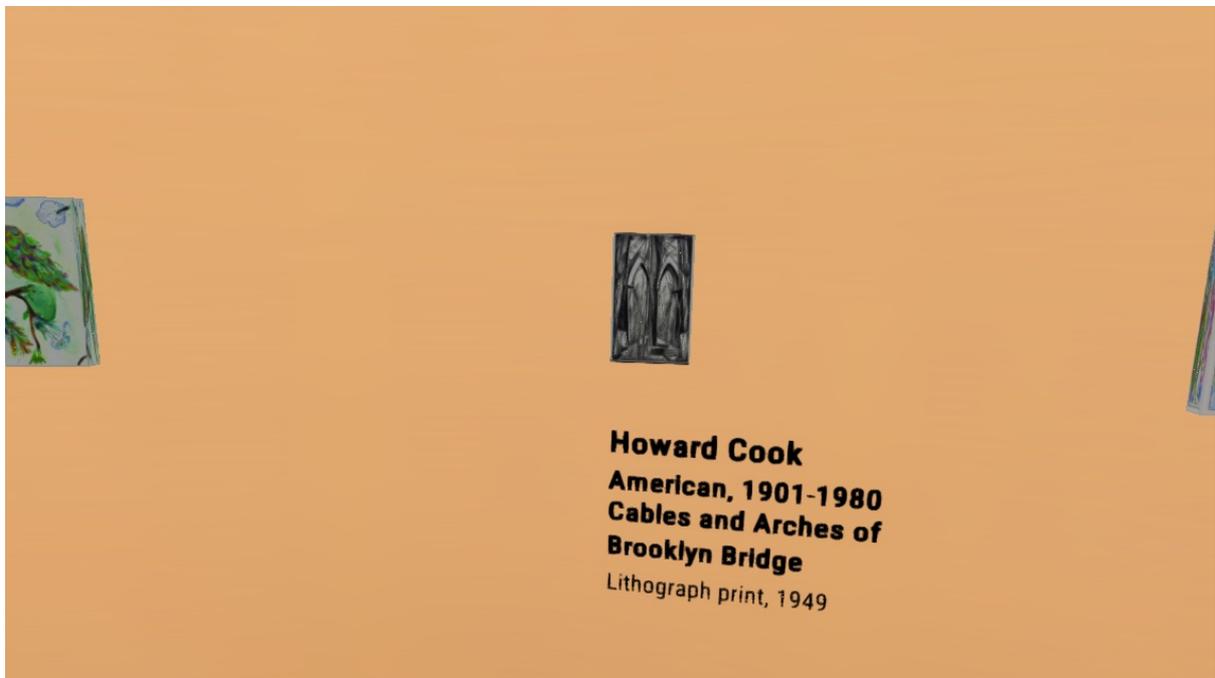
Figure 15: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art (2014-present), Recently Stolen, Howard Cook, Cables and Arches of Brooklyn Bridge, screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2018.
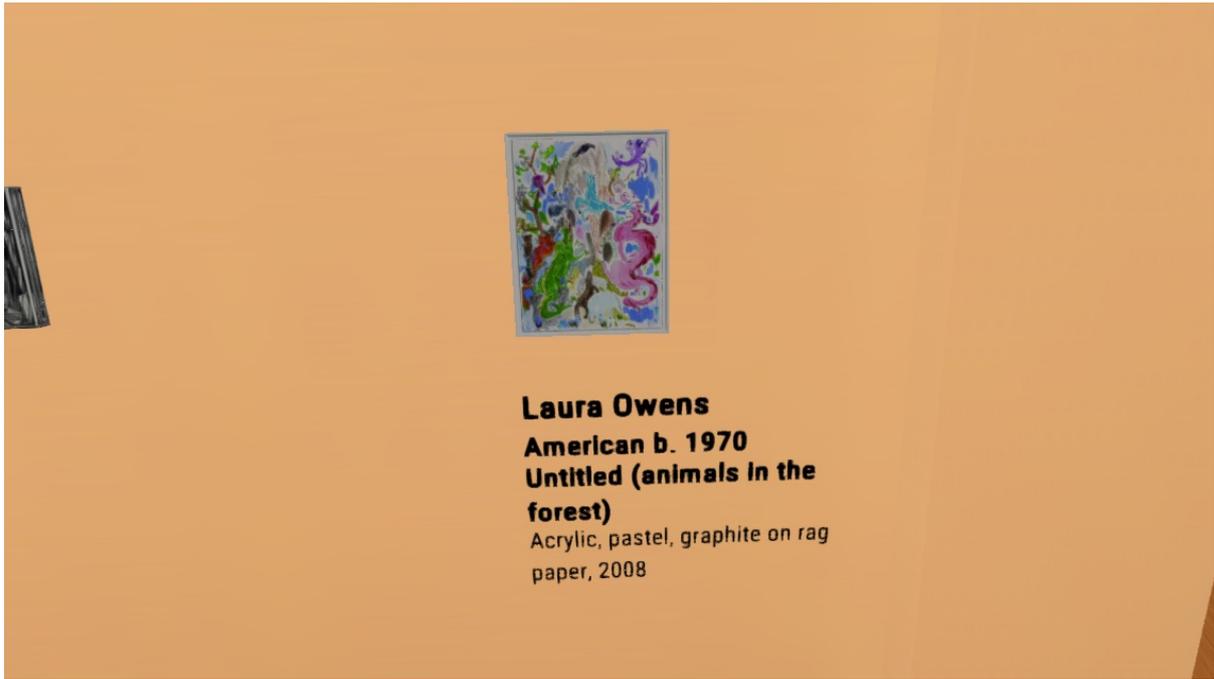
Figure 16: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art (2014-present), Recently Stolen, Laura Owens, Untitled, screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2018.
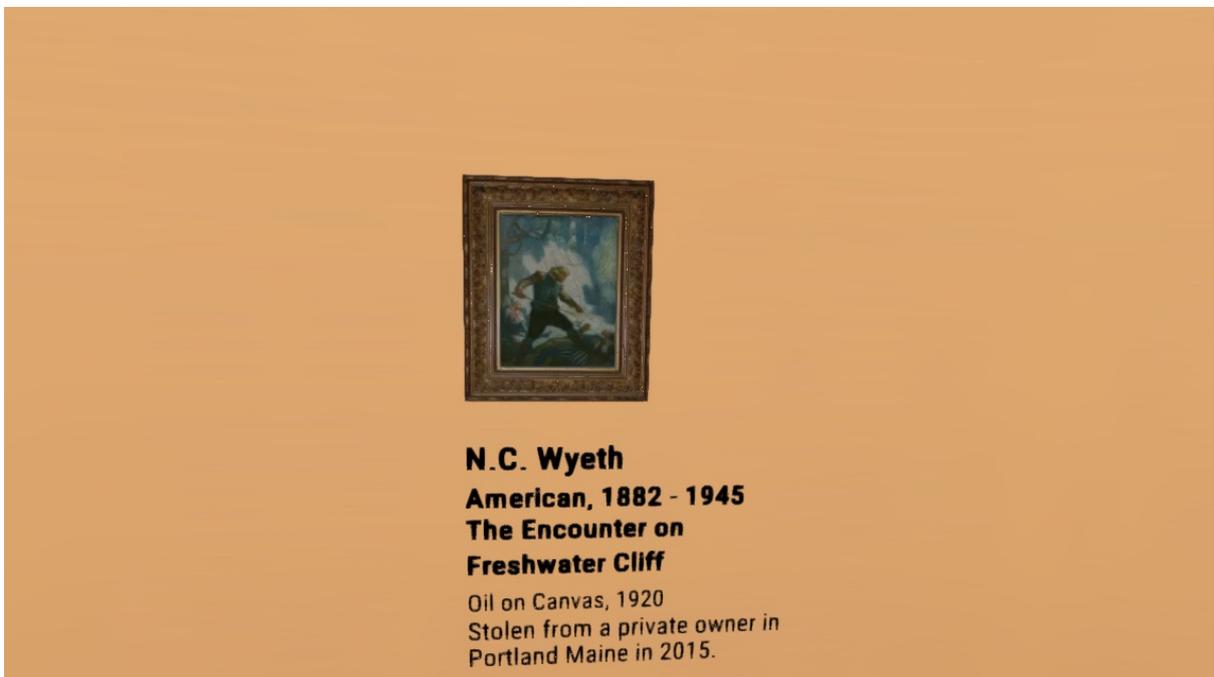
Figure 17: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art (2014-present), Recently Stolen, N.C. Wyeth, The Encounter on Freshwater Cliff , screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2018.
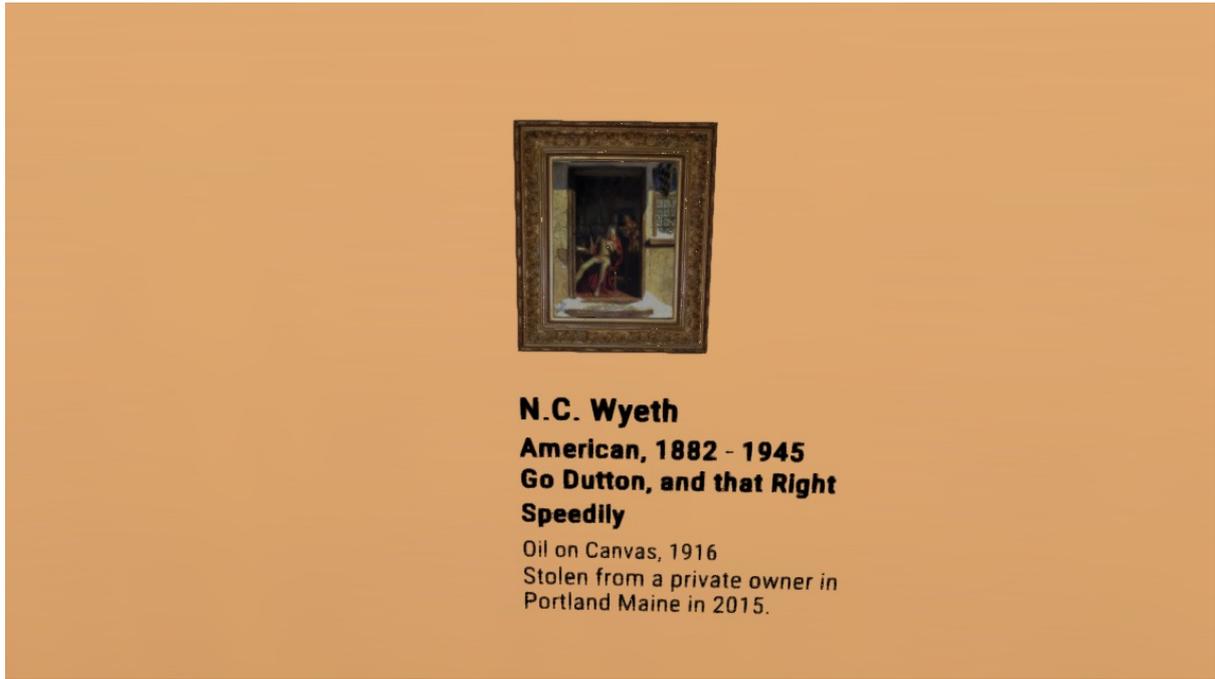
Figure 18: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art (2014-present), Recently Stolen, N.C. Wyeth, Go Dutton, and that Right Speedily, screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2018.

Figure 19: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art (2014-present), Recently Stolen, Andy Warhol, Portrait of Mick Jagger , screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2018.
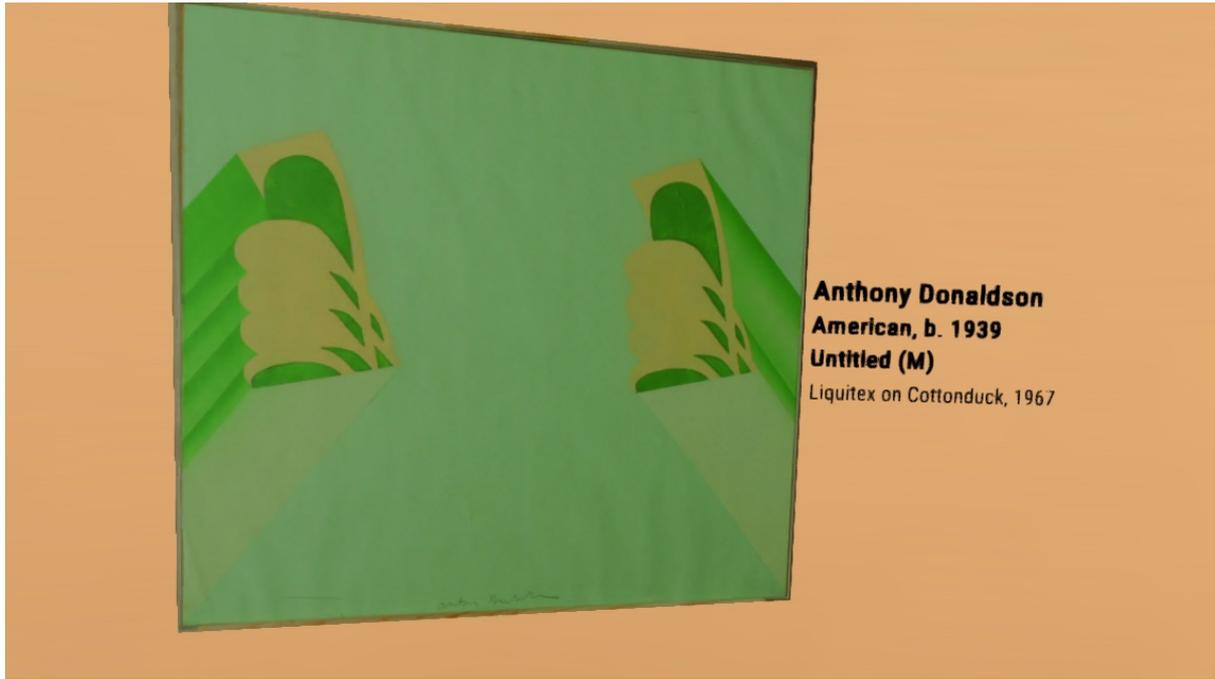
Figure 20: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art (2014-present), Recently Stolen, Anthony Donaldson, Untitled, screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2018.

Stolen European Painting


Figure 21: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art (2014-present), Stolen European Painting, Info Screen, screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2019.

Figure 22: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art (2014-present), Recently Stolen, Rembrandt van Rijn, The Storm on the Sea of Galilee, screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2018.

Figure 23: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art (2014-present), Stolen European Painting, Gabriele Münter, The House, screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2018.
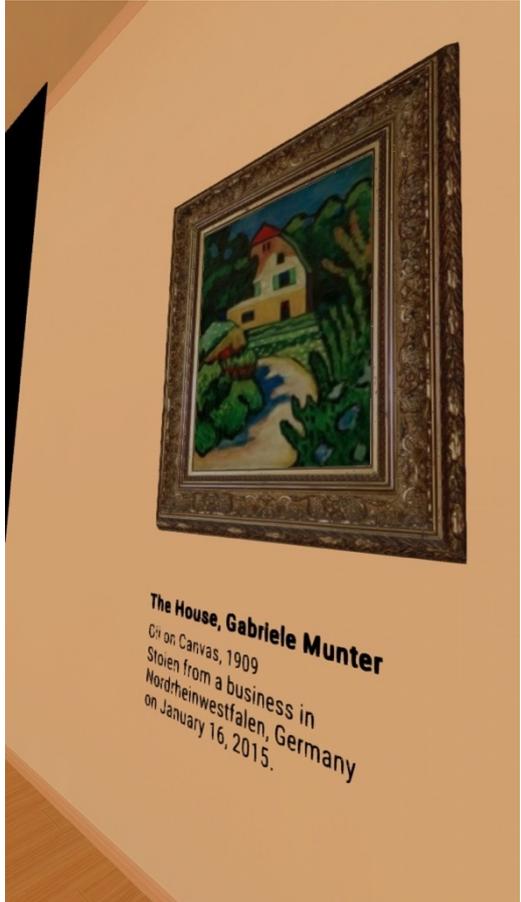
Figure 24: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art (2014-present), Stolen European Painting, Paul Cézanne, View of Auvers-sur-Olse, screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2018.
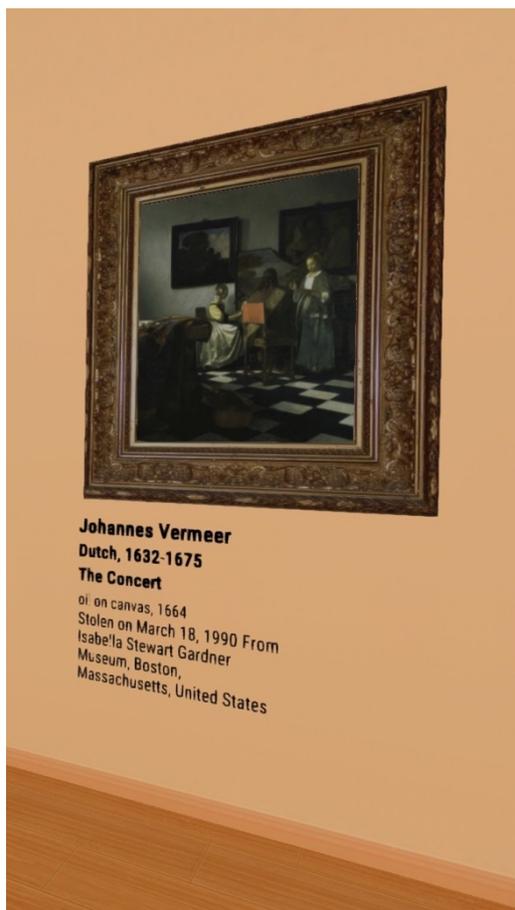

Figure 25: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art (2014-present), Stolen European Painting, Johannes Vermeer, The Concert, screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2018.
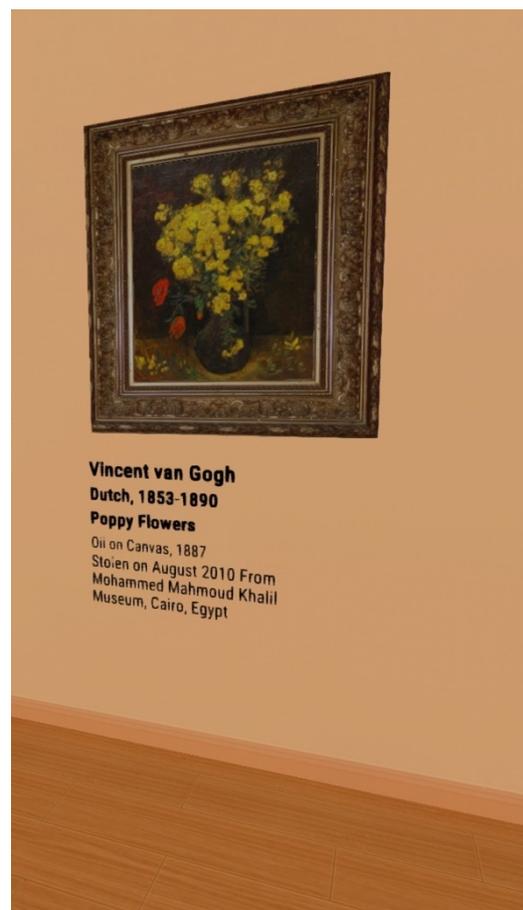
Figure 26: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art (2014-present), Stolen European Painting, Vincent van Gogh, Poppy Flowers, screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2018.

Figure 27: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art (2014-present), Stolen European Painting, Caravaggio, Nativity with St. Francis and St. Lawrence, screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2018.

Figure 28: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art (2014-present), Stolen European Painting, Vincent van Gogh, Congregation Leaving the Reformed Church in Nuenen, screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2018.

Figure 29: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art (2014-present), Stolen European Painting, Govert Flinck, Landscape with an Obelisk, screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2018.
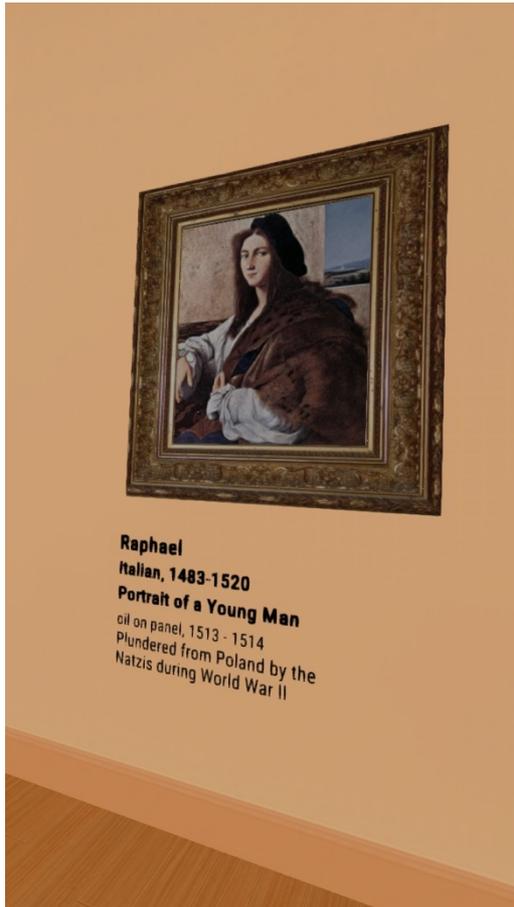
Figure 30: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art (2014-present), Stolen European Painting, Raphael, Portrait of a Young Man, screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2018.
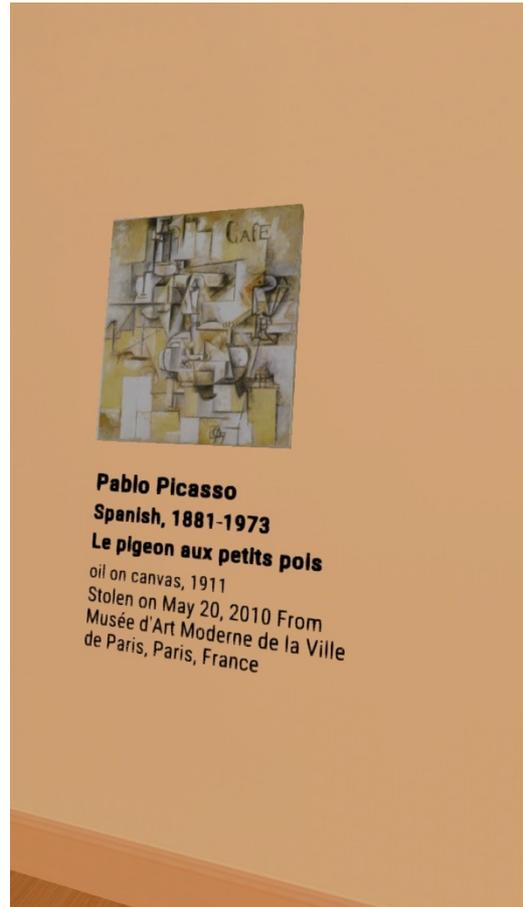
Figure 31: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art (2014-present), Stolen European Painting, Pablo Picasso, Le pigeon aux petits pois, screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2018.

Figure 32: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art (2014-present), Stolen European Painting, Vincent van Gogh, View of the Sea at Scheveningen, screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2018.
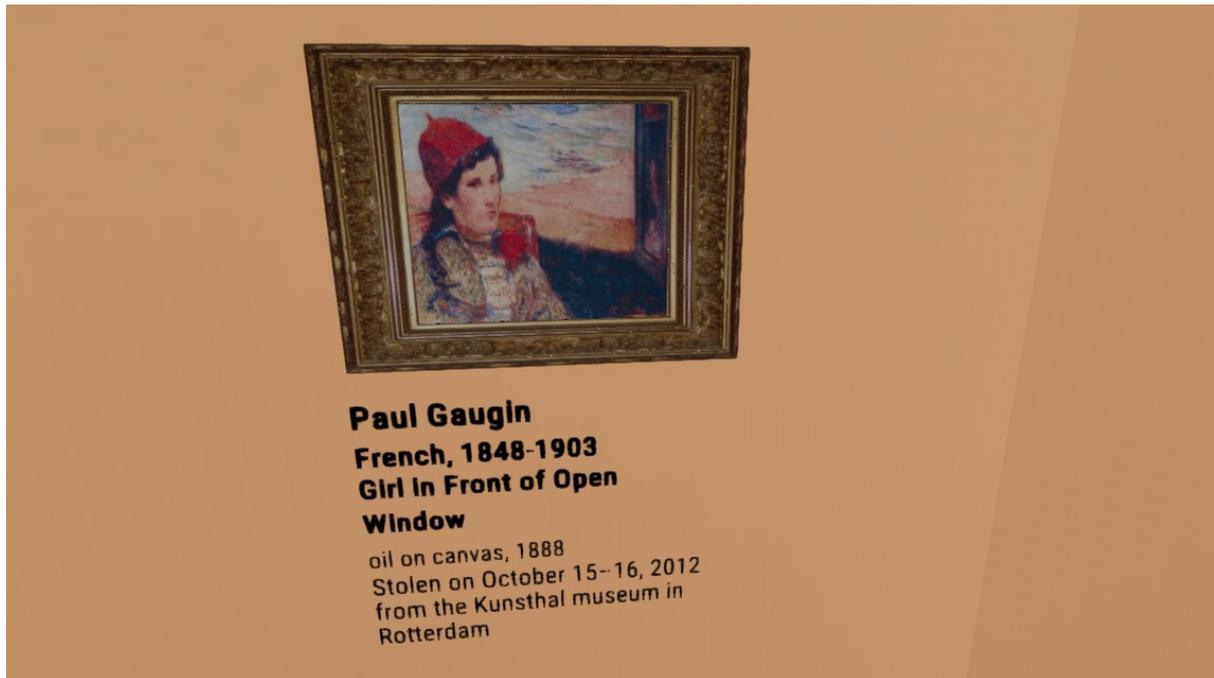
Figure 33: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art (2014-present), Stolen European Painting, Paul Gaugin, Girl in Front of Open Window, screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2018.
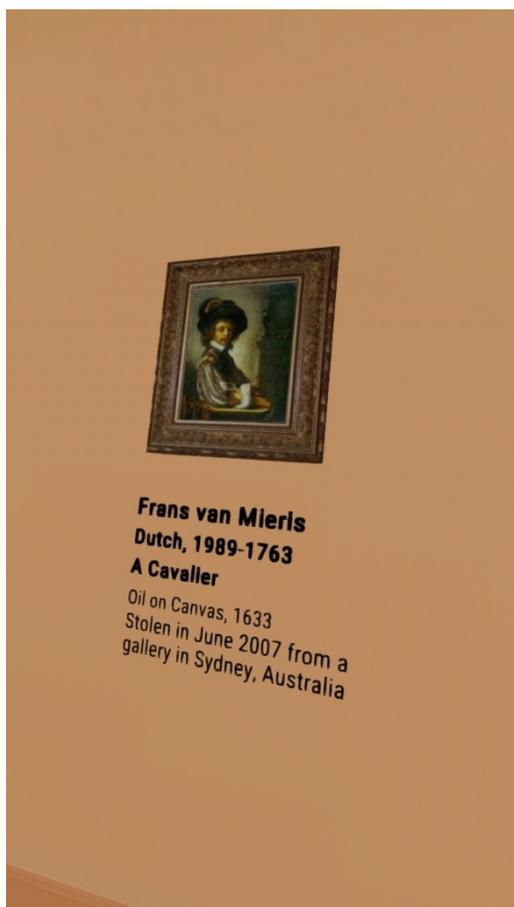
Figure 34: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art (2014-present), Stolen European Painting, Frans van Mieris, A Cavalier, screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2018.

Figure 35: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art (2014-present), Stolen European Painting, Meyer de Haan, Self-Portrait, screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2018.
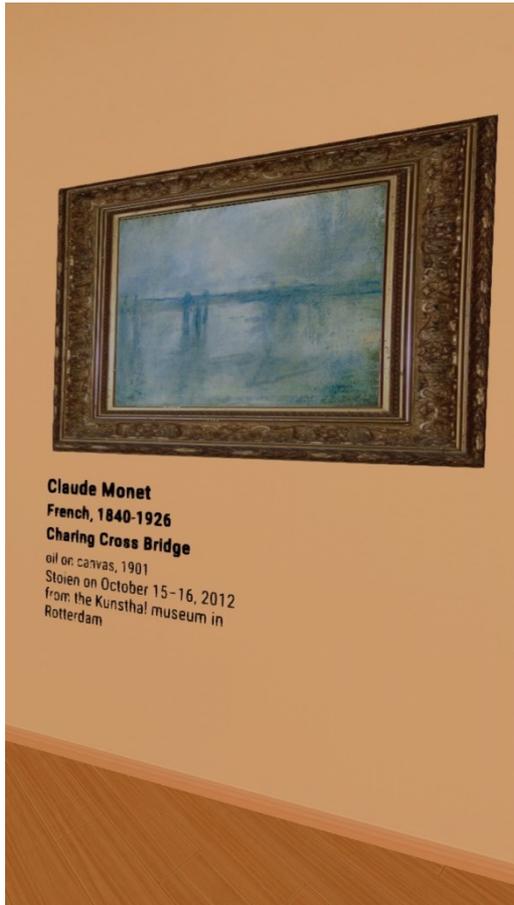
Figure 36: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art
(2014-present), Stolen European Painting,
Claude Monet, Charing Cross Bridge, screenshot,
iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2018.

Figure 37: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art
(2014-present), Stolen European Painting,
Claude Monet, Waterloo Bridge, London,
screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2018.

Stolen Photographs



Figure 38: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art (2014-present), Stolen Photographs, Info Screen, screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2019.
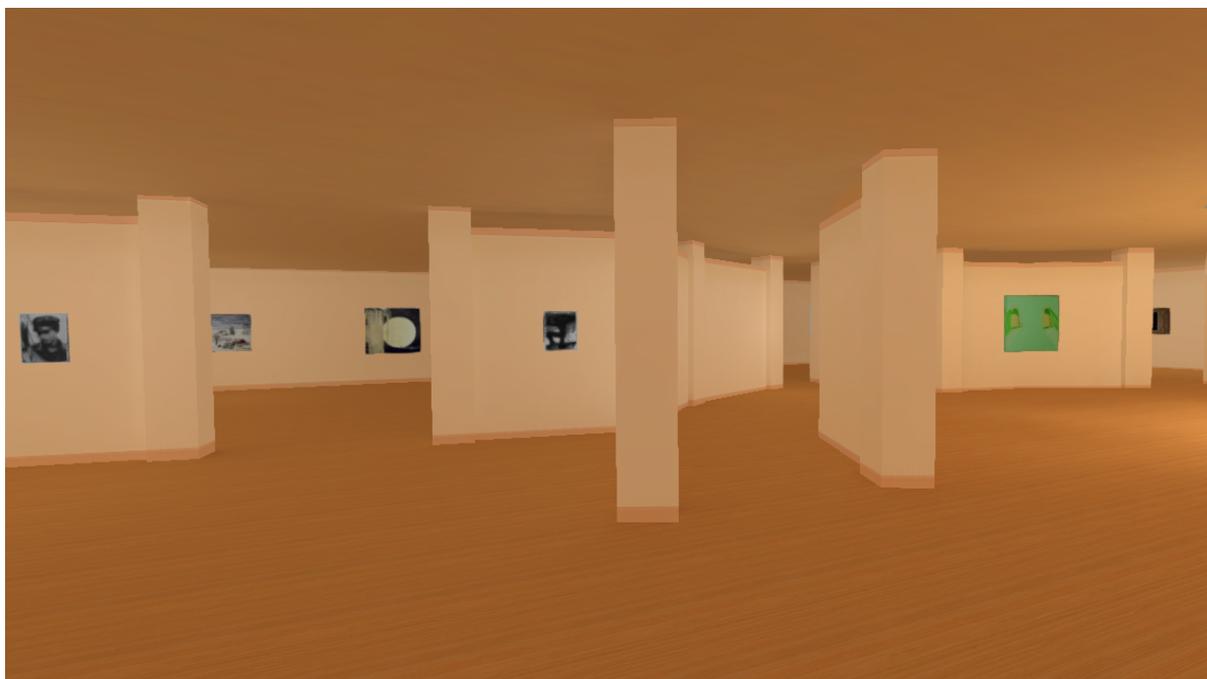
Figure 39: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art (2014-present), Stolen Photographs, View towards the Circular Corridor, screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2019.
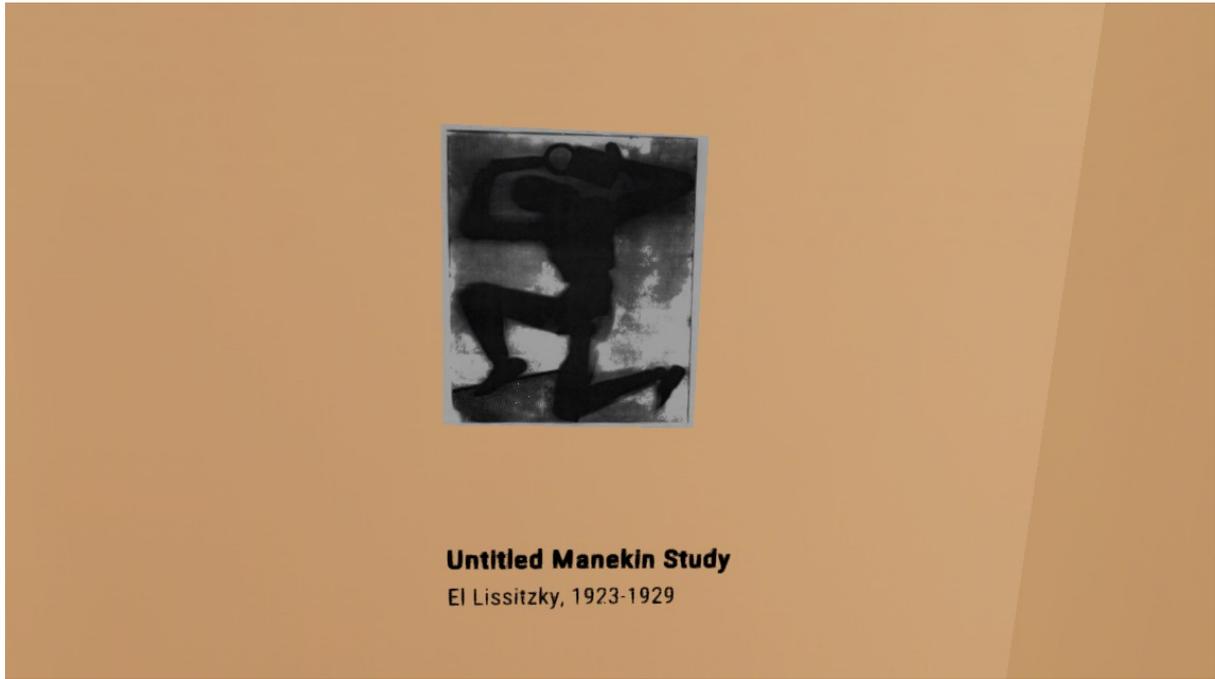
Figure 40: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art (2014-present), Stolen Photographs, El Lissitzky, Untitled Mannequin Study, screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2018.

Figure 41: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art (2014-present), Stolen Photographs, Hunt Collection, Egypt, screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2018.
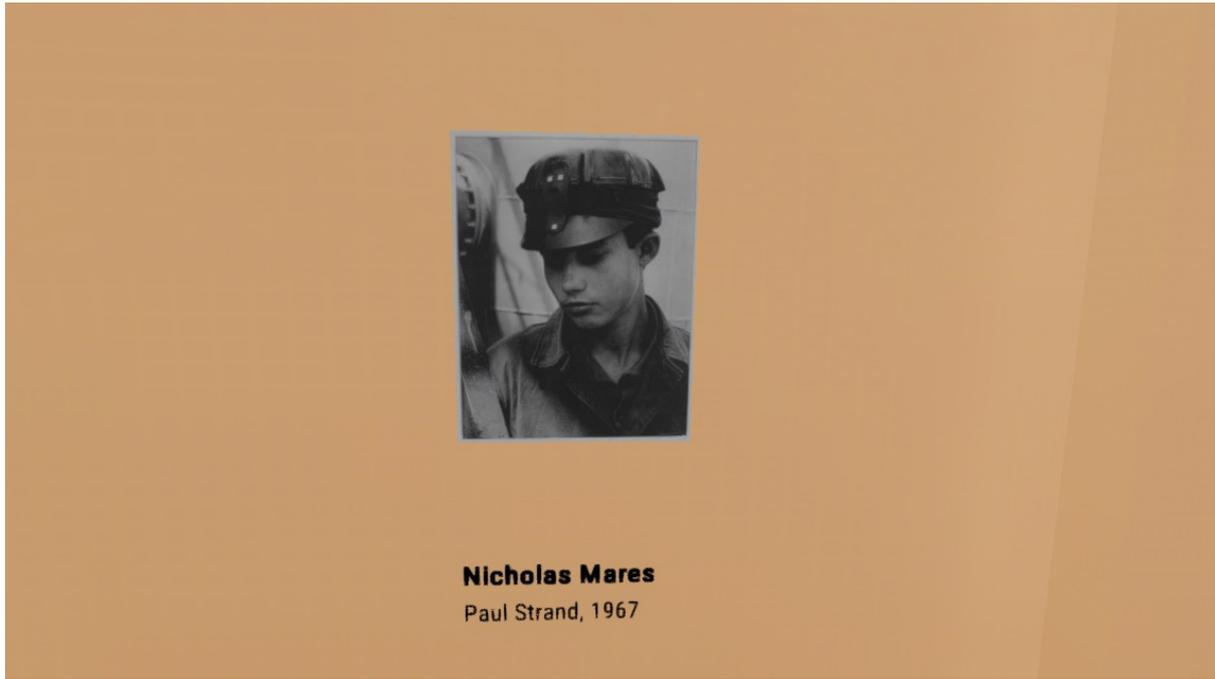
Figure 42: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art (2014-present), Stolen Photographs, Paul Strand, Nicholas Mares, screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2018.
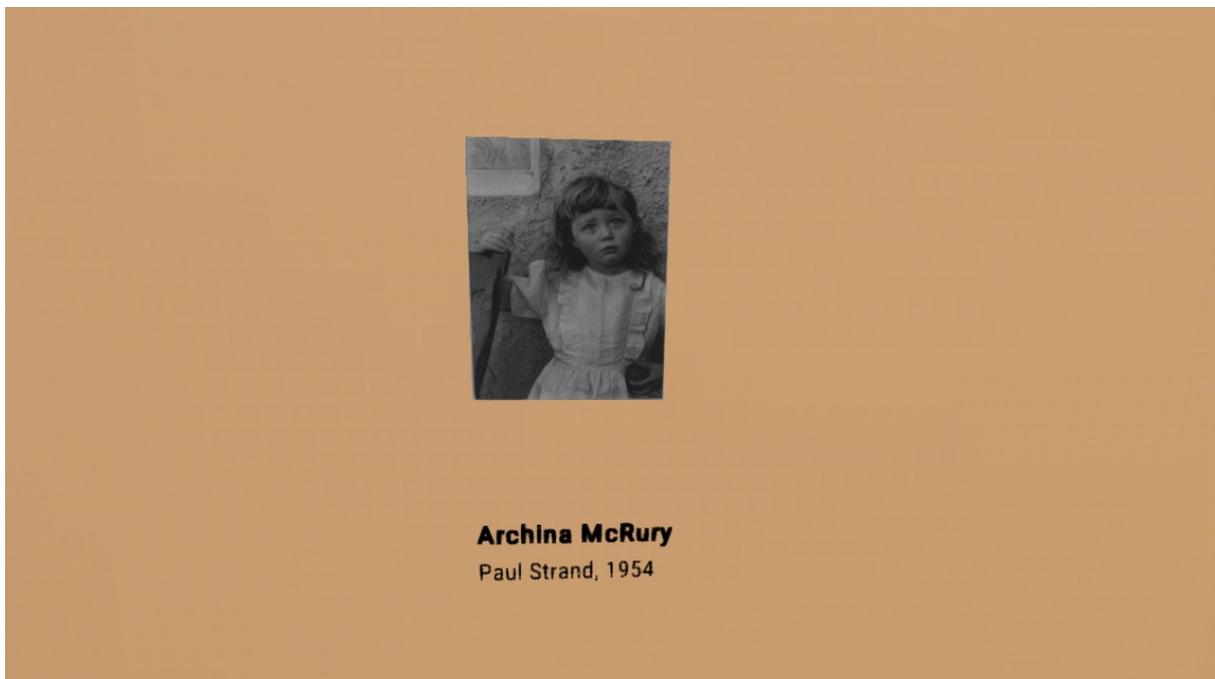

Figure 43: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art (2014-present), Stolen Photographs, Paul Strand, Archina McRury, screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2018.
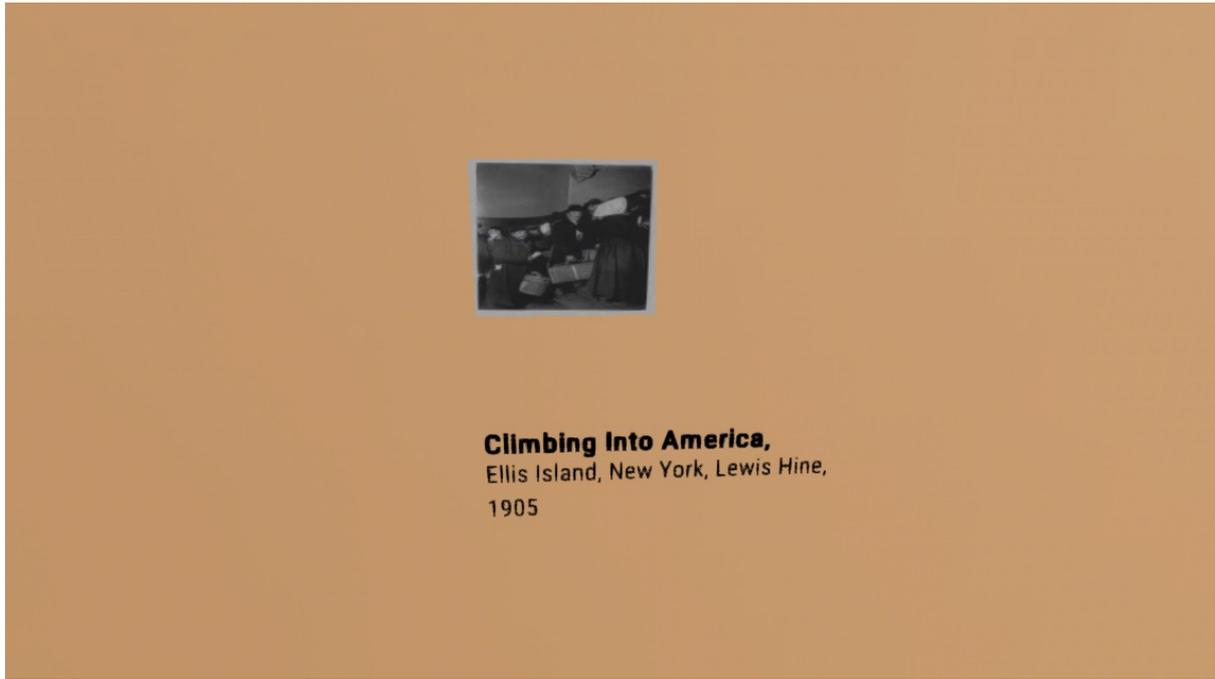
Figure 44: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art (2014-present), Stolen Photographs, Lewis Hine, Climbing into America, screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2018.

Figure 45: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art (2014-present), Stolen Photographs, Lewis Hine, Half Shell Nautalis, screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2018.
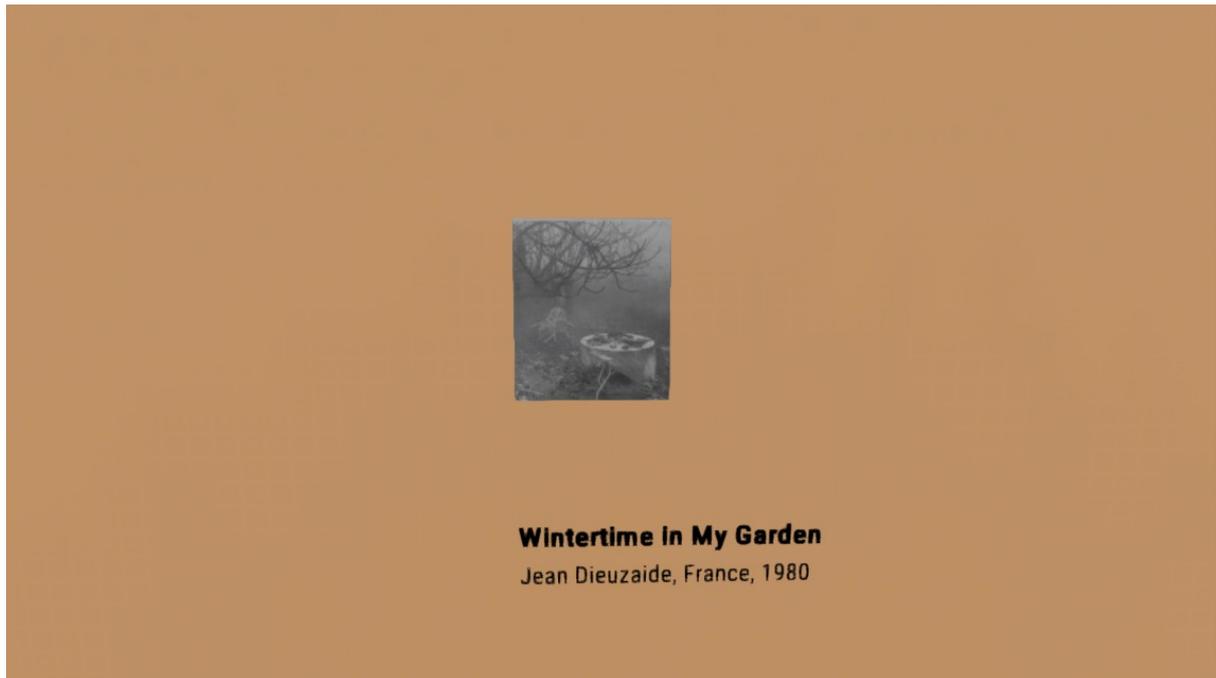
Figure 46: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art (2014-present), Stolen Photographs, Jean Dieuzaide, Wintertime in My Garden, screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2018.
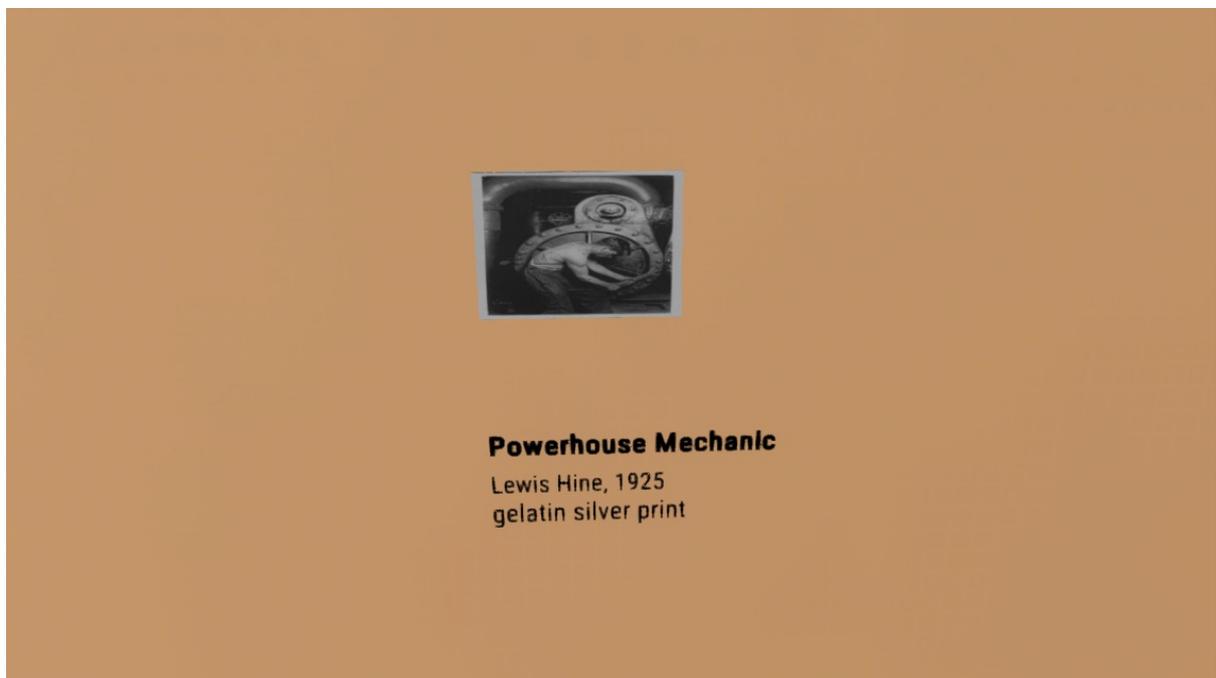

Figure 47: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art (2014-present), Stolen Photographs, Lewis Hine, Powerhouse Mechanic, screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2018.

Figure 48: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art (2014-present), Stolen Photographs, Berenice Abbott, 5th Avenue Row Houses, screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2018.
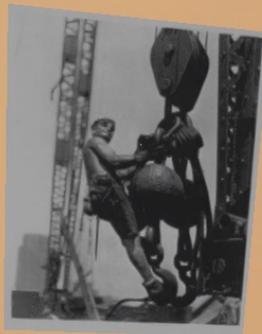
Figure 49: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art (2014-present), Stolen Photographs, Lewis Hine, Man on Hoisting Ball, Empire State Building, screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2018.
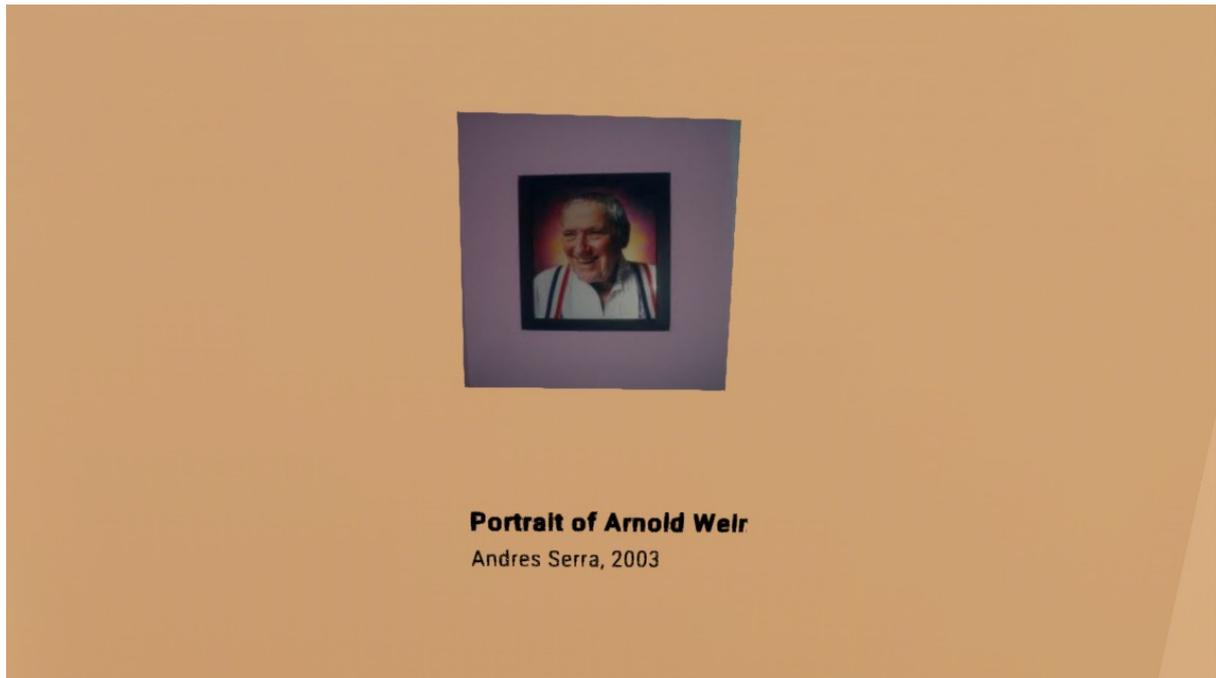
Figure 50: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art (2014-present), Stolen Photographs, Anders Serra, Portrait of Arnold Weir, screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2018.

The Private Collection of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos

Figure 51: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art (2014-present), The Private Collection of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos, overview, screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2019.
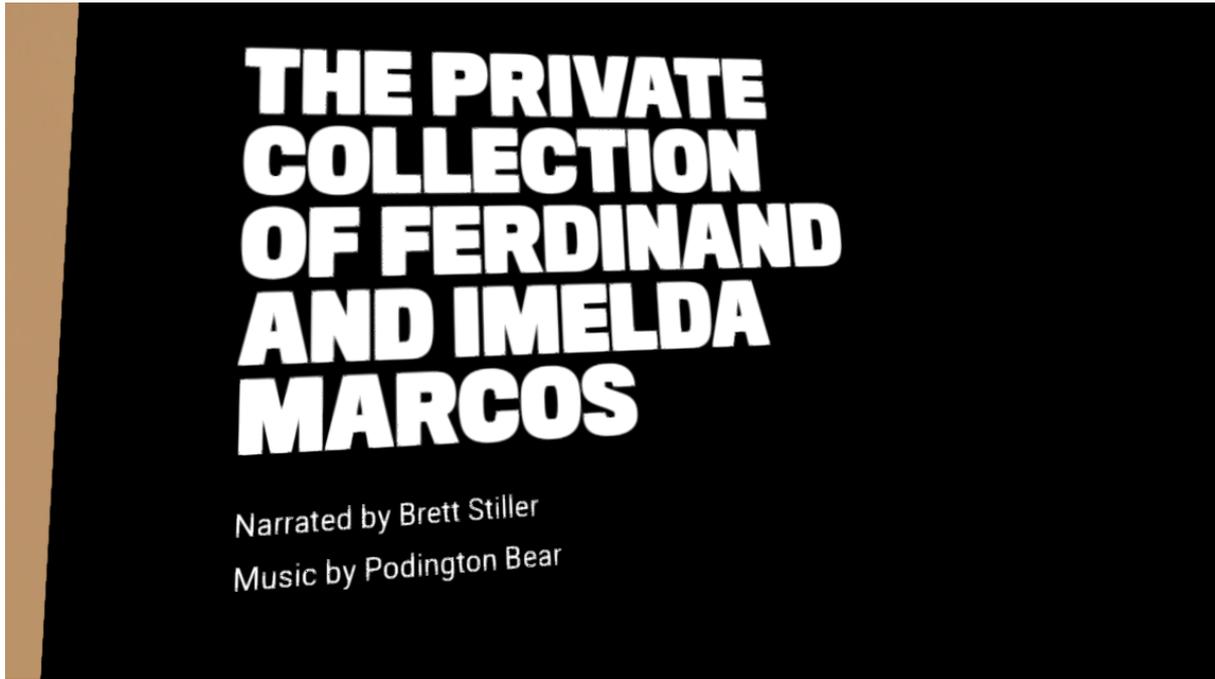
Figure 52: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art (2014-present), The Private Collection of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos, Info Screen, screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2019.
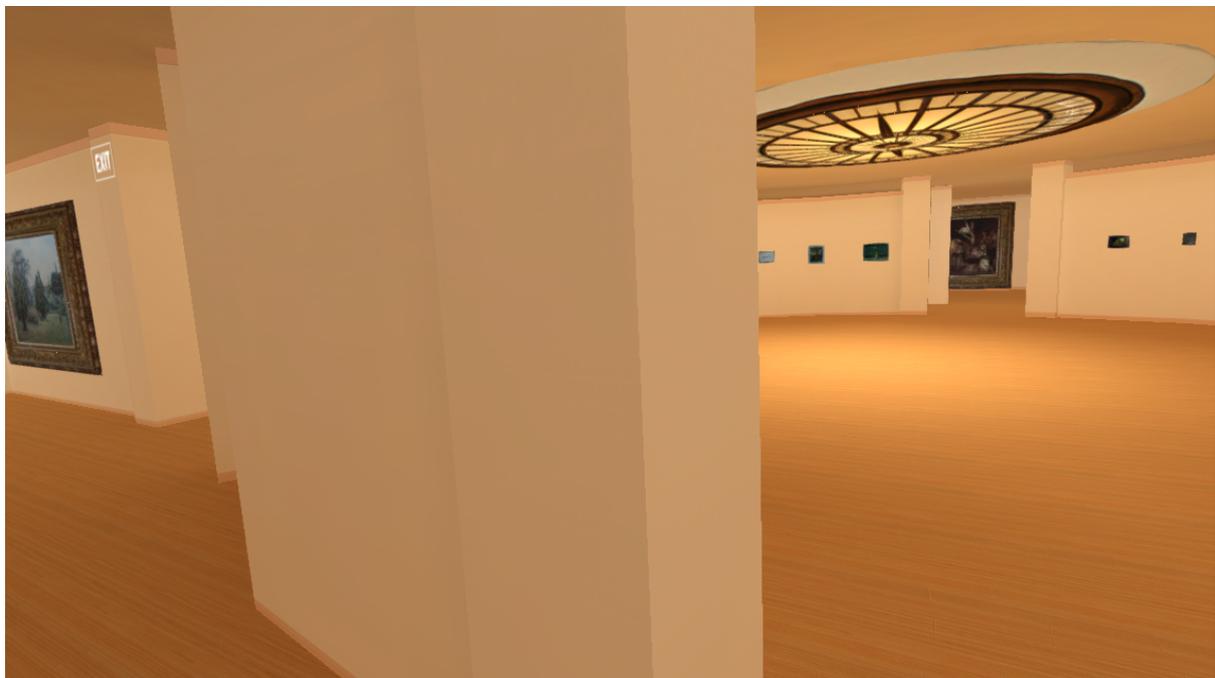
Figure 53: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art (2014-present), The Private Collection of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos, View into the Inner Circle, screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2018.

Figure 54: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art (2014-present), The Private Collection of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos, Camille Pisarro, Jardine de Kew Pres de la Serre, screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2018.

Figure 55: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art (2014-present), The Private Collection of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos, John Boultbee, Two Horses with a Groom, screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2018.

Figure 56: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art (2014-present), The Private Collection of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos, Francisco da Goya, Portrait of the Marqueza De Sta. Cruz, screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2018.
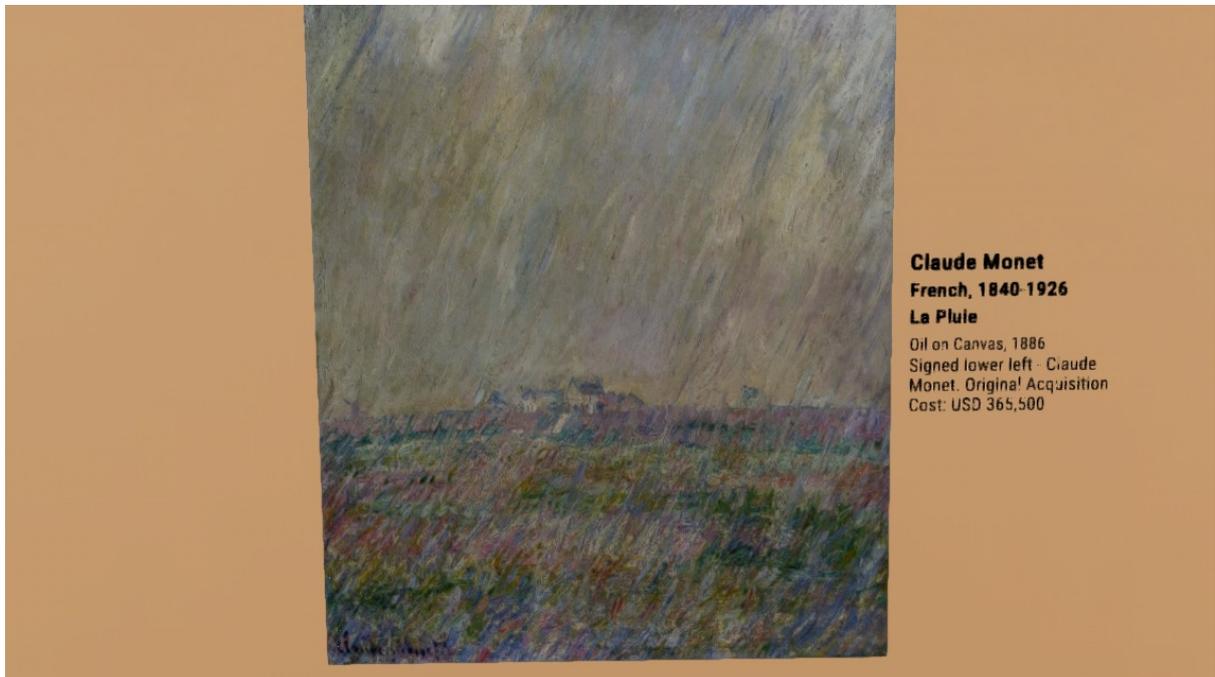

Figure 57: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art (2014-present), The Private Collection of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos, Claude Monet, La Pluie, screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2018.
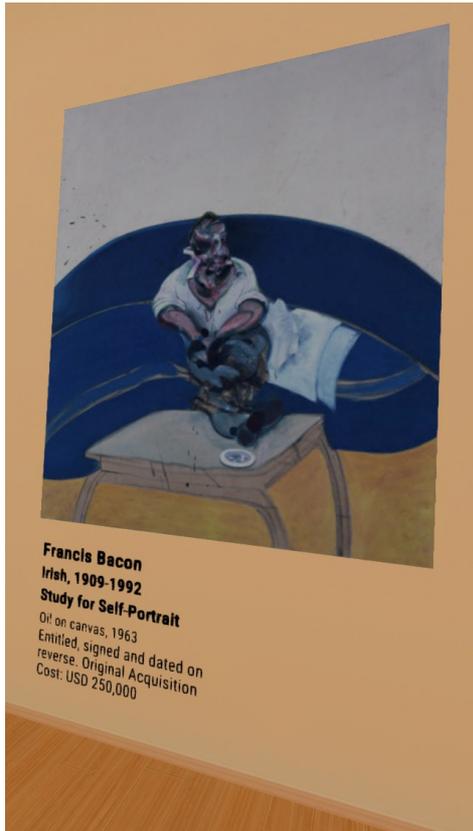
Figure 58: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art
(2014-present), The Private Collection of
Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos, Francis Bacon,
Study of Self-Portrait, screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5
SE, 2018.
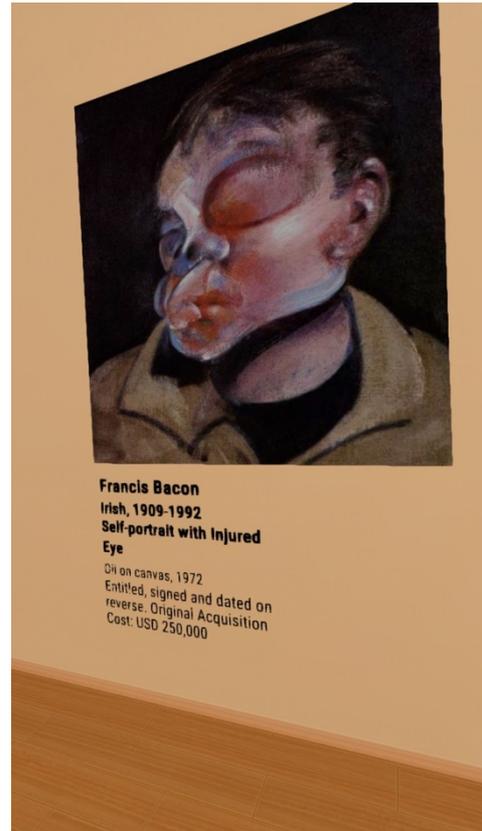
Figure 59: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art
(2014-present), The Private Collection of
Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos, Francis Bacon,
Self-Portrait with injured Eye, screenshot, iOS,
iPhone 5 SE, 2018.
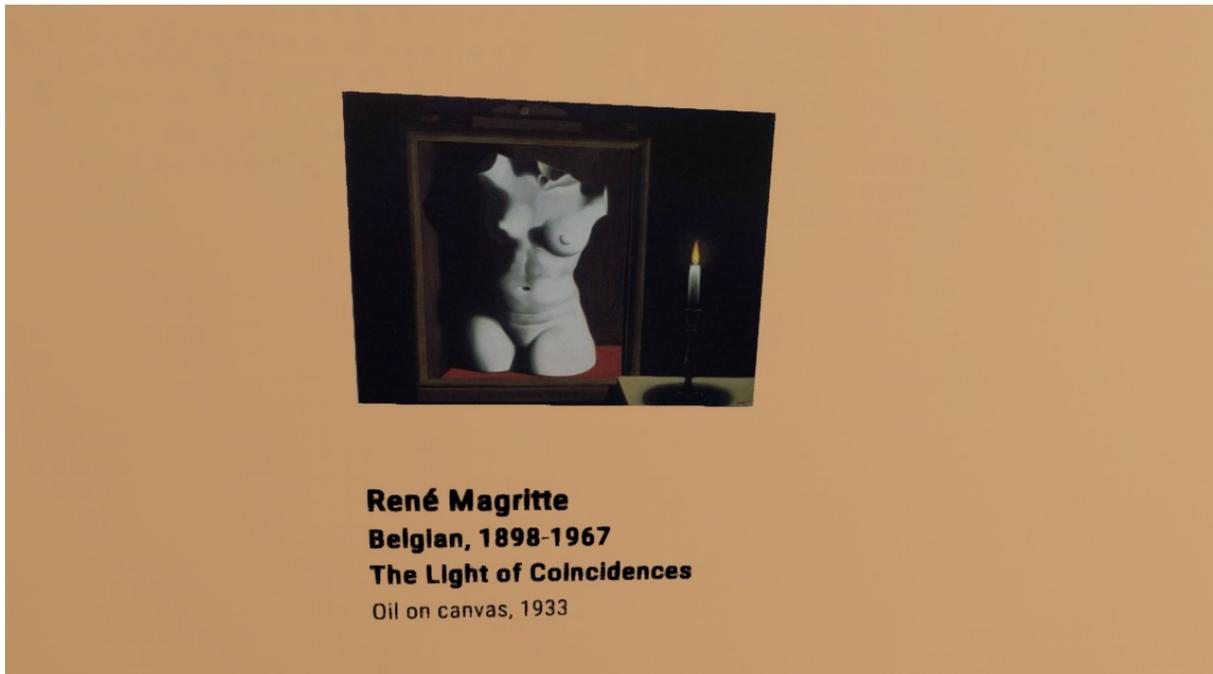
Figure 60: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art (2014-present), The Private Collection of Ferdinand and Imelda
Marcos, René Magritte, The Light of Coincidences, screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2018
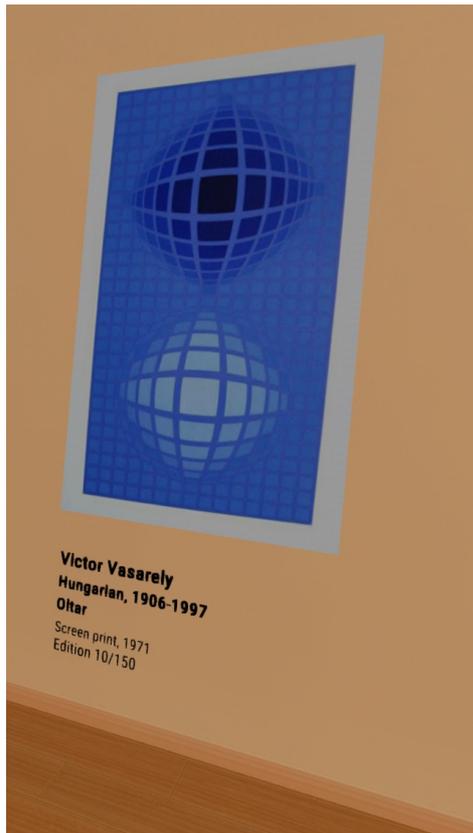
Figure 61: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art (2014-present), The Private Collection of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos, Victor Vasarely, Oltar, screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2018.
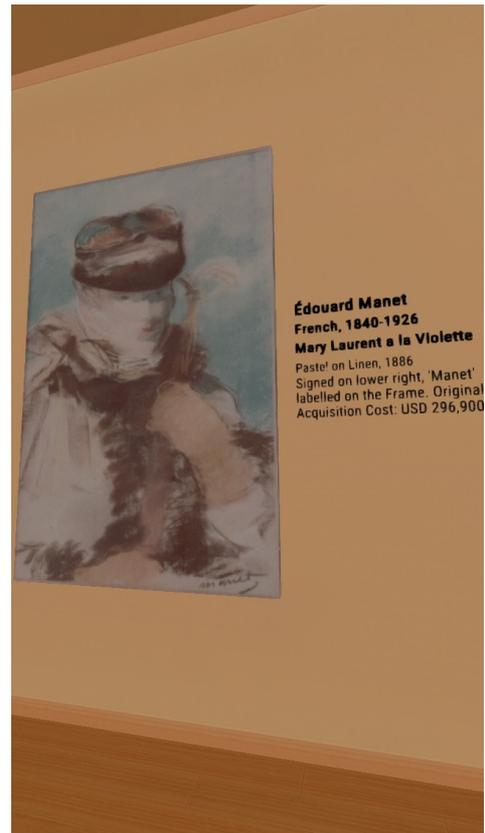
Figure 62: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art (2014-present), The Private Collection of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos, Édouard Manet, Mary Laurent a la Violette, screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2018.

Figure 63: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art (2014-present), The Private Collection of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos, Paul Gaugin, Still Life of Idol, screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2018.
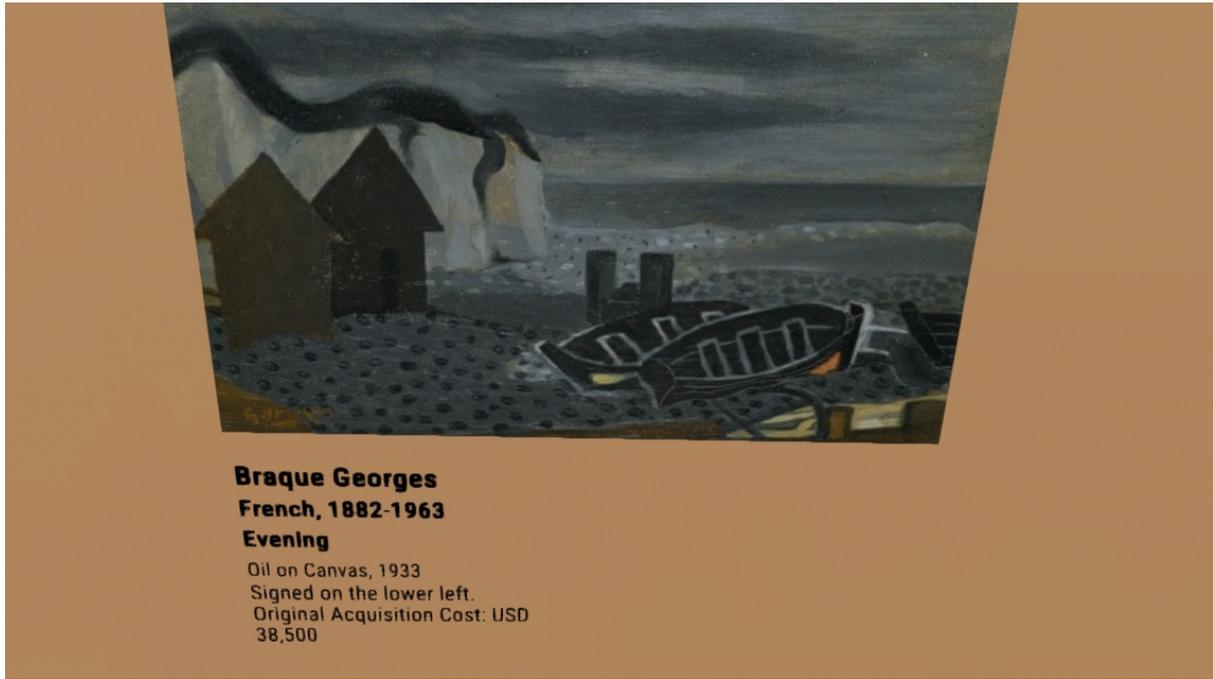
Figure 64: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art (2014-present), The Private Collection of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos, Georges Braque, Evening, screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2018.
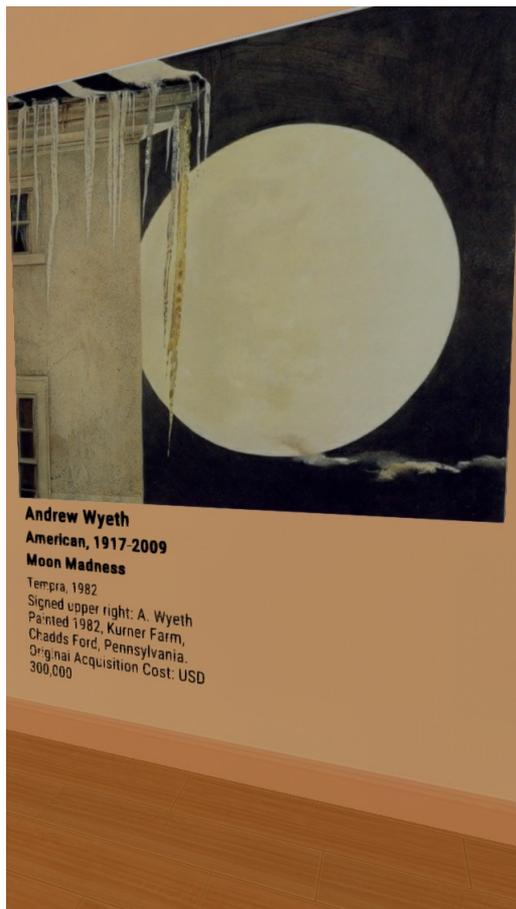

Figure 65: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art (2014-present), The Private Collection of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos, Andrew Wyeth, Moon Madness, screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2018.
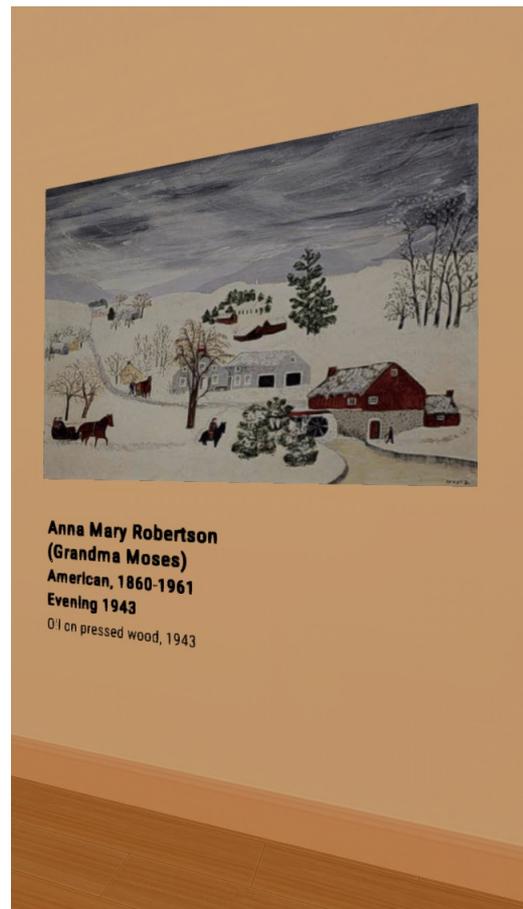
Figure 66: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art (2014-present), The Private Collection of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos, Anna Mary Robertson, Evening 1943, screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2018.
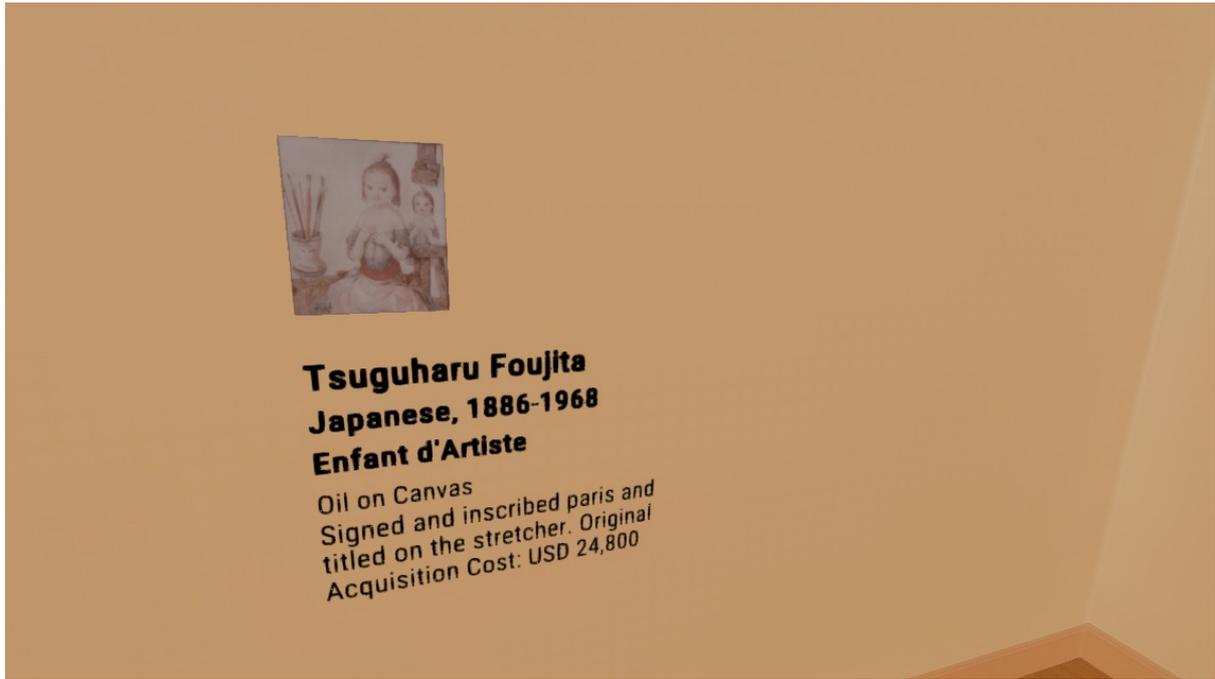
Figure 67: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art (2014-present), The Private Collection of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos, Tsuguharu Foujita, Enfant d'Artiste, screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2018.
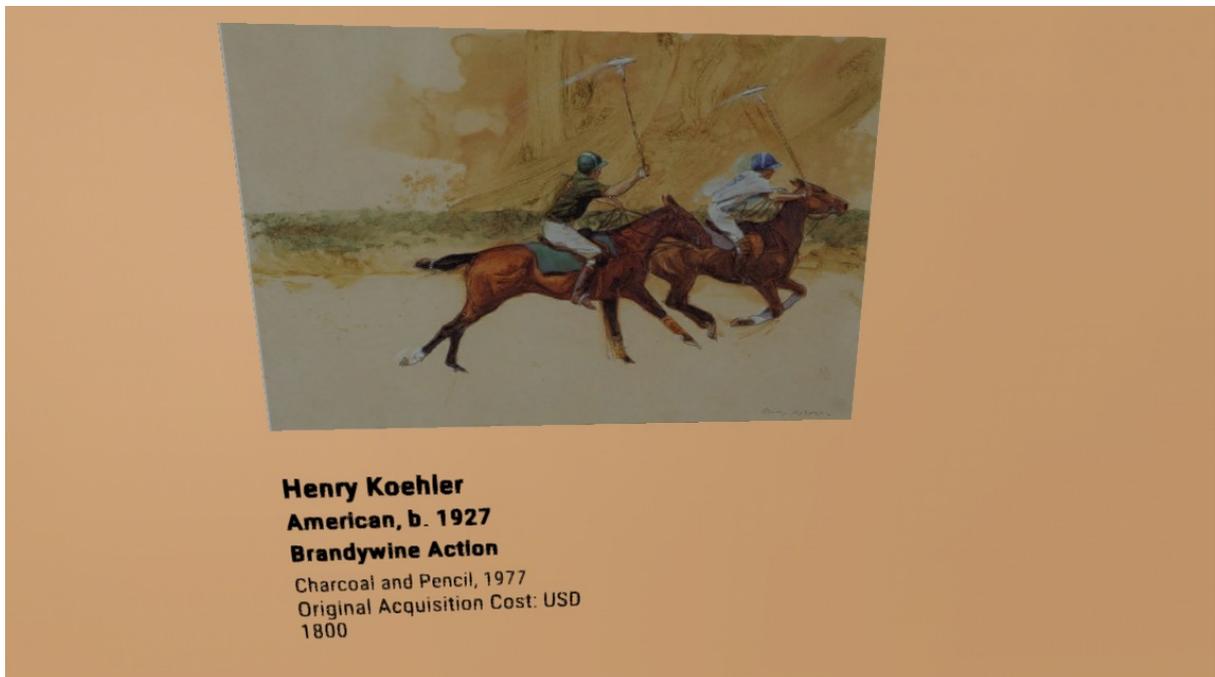

Figure 68: Ziv Schneider, Museum of Stolen Art (2014-present), The Private Collection of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos, Henry Koehler, Brandywine Action screenshot, iOS, iPhone 5 SE, 2018.

Appendices

Appendix A

What inspired you to become a multimedia artist? Who were your role models?

I studied graphic design in my undergrad (4 amazing years at a great program in Israel) and was always leaning towards using the tools I had for my own art aside from client work. Trips I took to London and Berlin made me want to pursue further education and I also recall seeing Taryn Simon's Bloodlines in Berlin as a life changing moment. She is one of my favorite artists.

What inspired you to start MOSA? Were there any particular buildings that inspired the virtual architecture of MOSA?

I was taking a class for my masters called Cabinet [sic!] of Wonder with Nancy Hechinger, about the past, present and future of museums. Our final assignment was to create our own museum. Being an online random database nerd, I had recently come across the FBI and Interpol databases. Some of the students were playing around with VR headsets and the idea kind of clicked. Initially it was like a joke and I had a lot of fun making the prototype and learning Unity in the process. For the museum building, I bought a simple gallery structure from the Unity asset store, which fit with the story I had in my head about the process of founding this speculative institution.

Can you explain how the Samsung VR lab functions and the role it played in creating MOSA?

The lab was an initiative by Samsung to nurture creators getting into VR, giving them guidance and snacks to help them make their pieces. For MOSA, it was a nice to have a structure and deadline for the mobile adaptation I wanted to make, though it wasn't made for Samsung headsets. The lab was also somewhat connected to my masters [sic!] program ITP.

What is your opinion on virtual museums and online databases created by museums?

I think it's highly important for museums to digitize their collections and provide access to it in an online database and preferably an API that artists can pull from.

Why stolen works? What is special to you about stolen and missing art?

I was excited about the concept of using VR to create an imaginary space that presents pieces otherwise inaccessible. The museum was a conceptual art piece in itself. Also, I have an ongoing interest in crime and found that the databases presenting stolen art do not do justice with the stories behind the pieces and could do a better job of achieving their goal of [sic!]

How did MOSA look like at different stages of development? Is there any difference between the iOS and Smartphone versions?

The first version for the oculus had bare concrete walls and the mobile version I released was closer to the original structure bought. There is no difference between the Android and iOS versions.

Why was MOSA altered (*The Looting of Iraq and Afghanistan* not on display anymore)? What were these two virtual exhibitions about and how did they look like?

The exhibitions featured artifacts from the Interpol database that were stolen from Iraq and Afghanistan (https://www.interpol.int/notice/search/woa). I decided to scale back the exhibition scope to work more in depth on the content. I also wanted to develop a method for showing the sculptural pieces included in these exhibitions.

Why was the full version of RecoVR never released to the public? What happened to RecoVR?

RecoVR was thought of as a single journalistic VR piece that could continue to a series, but we have yet to make a "sequel". At the Economist, we decided to release a version that would be accessible to the readership at the time, rather than the fully interactive "full" version that was shown at IDFA.

What were the criteria for selection of the art works? For example, why exactly those artworks in the Stolen European Painting?

This exhibition is dedicated to the most famous stolen paintings. Some of were actually in a

What were your principles behind curating (Why exactly these exhibitions)?

I curated the exhibitions and was guided by connections I could draw between the pieces, for example: the technique (photography), the origin (Iraq/Afghanistan) etc.

Where did the information come from (for the narration as well as the wall inscriptions)?

The information came from online research.

This question relates to the Private Collection of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos? How did you choose the works you from The Missing Art Movement? Why these works and not any other?

I filtered the works on their database and focused on the ones that were yet to be recovered and had images.

How did you come across The Missing Art Movement database?

I got an email from someone at the PCGG that suggested we collaborate.

What experiences did you make with databases in general?

I enjoy making work that uses databases as the starting point. One other example is http://interactivehaiku.com/facingthenameless/

What is your opinion on using reproductions in your app and online in general?

[not stated]

Have you had any experiences with IFARs The Art Loss Register?

I've gathered some information from IFAR as well.

Why is some information omitted, although it is available in some of the databases you used?

Could you provide an example?

Where did you get the information about stolen photographs from (especially the narration in the app)?

Online research and the original posting on the FBI database [sic!]

Is there any particular connection to Sopie Calle's *Last Seen*? If so, please elaborate.

I was happy I got to see Last Seen at the Gardner museum in Boston and Sophie Calle is also one of my favorite artists.

I'd like to think that MOSA i [sic!]

Why are the reproductions you used such low-quality?

Part of the idea of this app being a tool to get more people looking at these pieces so they could identify them if they were to be seen in "reality". For that purpose, whatever image could be traced would be helpful. The initial idea was even to automate the process so the images used in the original databases would be pulled directly into the frame.

What does "prosthetic knowledge" mean to you?

1. An awesome blog that is responsible for a snowball of media attention that MOSA received.

2. Quoting from the blog: n. Information that a person does not know, but can access as needed using technology (I guess for me it's the internet)

How does MOSA relate to previous known exhibition practices?

[not stated]

How many art works were actually recovered using MOSA?

None that I know of [sic!]

Do you have an estimate about the number of art works presented in MOSA that were actually recovered?

There is one Van Gogh I know was recovered.
https://news.artnet.com/exhibitions/van-gogh-paintings-italy-842474

The last project you were working on were Capsules, could you elaborate on that as well? In my opinion the capsules in Capsules seem to almost have sprung our of a Baudrillard essay.

"Capsules" ended up becoming "Watertight"
http://watertight.world/ inspired a bit by Baudrillard but mostly by Bauman.

What are you currently working on?

I am working on several other projects and currently wrapping up this project householdarts.raycaster.studio, will add you to my mailing list if you'd like!

Last but not least, may I use screenshots of your app for my Master's Thesis or are there any

copyright [sic!] laws I must comply with?

Sure, please credit Ziv Schneider?

[Original formatting was chosen by the artist and has been preserved.]
[Source: Ziv Scheider, Email Interview, June 15, 2018.]

Appendix B

Recently Stolen

[No in-APP spoken commentary for No. 1-11. Informational text is written below the reproductions of art works.]

[No. 1 on the right-hand side of the sign Recently Stolen]

[KAWS

American, b. 1974

Companion and Death

Acrylic & ink on paper, 2007]

[No. 2]

[KAWS

American, b. 1974

Paper Smile

Silkscreen print #88/100, 2012]

[No. 3]

[Emilio Sanchez

Cuban-born American, 1921

-1999

Untitled

Watercolor]

[No. 4]

[Jan van Kessel the Elder

Flemish, 1626-1679

The Paradise

Oil on Panel]

[No. 5]

[Ellison Hoover

American, 1888-1955

Manhattan Moonlight

Litograph print, 1942-1945]

[No. 6]

[Laura Owens

American b. 1970

Untitled (bird on a branch)

Oil and acrylic on canvas, 2006]

[No. 7]

[Howard Cook

American, 1901-1980

Cables and Arches of

Brooklyn Bridge

Litograph print, 1949]

[No. 8]

[Laura Owens

American b. 1970

Untitled (animals in the

forest)

Acrylic, pastel, graphite on rag

Paper, 2008]

[No. 9]

[N.C. Wyeth

American, 1882 – 1945

The Encounter on Freshwater Cliff

Oil on Canvas, 1920

Stolen from a private owner in

Portland Maine in 2015.]

[No. 10]

[N.C. Wyeth

American, 1882 – 1945

Go Dutton, and that Right

Speedily

Oil on Canvas, 1916

Stolen from a private owner in

Portland Maine in 2015.]

[No. 11]

[Andy Warhol

American, 1928-1987

Portrait of Mick Jagger

Screenprint #192/250, signed

By Andy Warhol and Mick

Jagger]

[No. 12]

[Anthony Donaldson

American, b. 1939

Untitled (M)

Liquitex on Cottonduck, 1967]

Stolen European Painting

In this hall you will find some of the most famous stolen paintings in history. Although every painting here has significant documentation it's whereabouts are unknown. Most often art is stolen by individuals or groups to collect ransom, resell, or used as collateral for loans. Only a small percentage of paintings gets recovered and estimates can range from about 5 to 10%. One very notable example is Leonardo da Vinci's Mona Lisa. The painting is renowned and on display in the Paris Louvre but was also once stolen in 1911. Some say that it's value and notoriety is somewhat contributed to it being stolen and recovered. Although most famous paintings obtain the highest value there are also often impossible to sell, because of how recognizable they are. If you are a clever thieve you might choose art with a lower profile than that and something that can be sold more easily.

[Works:]

[No. 1 at the beginning right to the sign for the "Stolen European Painting" room]

[Text on the wall below the painting:

The House, Gabriele Munter

Oil on Canvas, 1909

Stolen from a business in

Nordrheinwestfalen, Germany

on January 16, 2015.]

[No. 2]

[Text on the wall below the painting:

Paul Cézanne

French, 1839 - 1906

View of Auvers-sur-Olse

Oil on Canvas, circa 1889-91

Stolen on December 31, 1999

from Ashmolean Museum,

Oxford, England]

Auvers-sur-Olse is a landscape painting from Cezanne. It was stolen from the Ashmolean Museum on the night before the millennia, during the celebration of the fireworks. Painting was never signed or dated by Cézanne, because he thought of it as being unfinished.

[Works:]

[No. 3]

[Text on the wall below the painting:

Johannes Vermeer

Dutch, 1632-1675

The Concert

oil on canvas, 1664

Stolen on March 18, 1990 From

Isabella Stewart Gardner

Museum, Boston,

Massachusetts, United States]

Vermeer remains one of the most renowned painters of the 17th Century. Most of his remaining paintings reside in museums or the Royal Collection in London. His 1664 work,

the Concert, depicts two women and a man making music in a dim light parlor. In 1892 the famous philanthropist Isabella Stewart Gardner required the piece in an auction from the estate of the Parisian art critic Thoré and the piece went on display at the Isabella Stewart Garner Museum at 1903. On the 18th of March 1990 a couple of burglars dressed as Boston police officers arrived at the museum claiming to be responding to a call. Once inside, the pair stole in total 13 paintings including the Concert, and works from Flinck, Degas and Rembrandt. The Concert currently hold the record for the most valuable unrecovered stolen work of art with an estimated value of over 200 million dollars.

[Works:]

[No. 4]
[Text on the wall below the painting:
Vincent van Gogh
Dutch, 1853-1890
Poppy Flowers
Oil on Canvas, 1887
Stolen on August 2010 From
Mohammed Mahmoud Khalil
Museum, Cairo, Egypt]

[In-APP Spoken commentary]

It is believed that van Gogh painted poppy flowers in 1887, three years before his suicide. It's estimated at 50 million dollars. The painting reflects van Gogh's deep admiration for Adolphe Monticelli, the painter whose work he first saw in Paris in in 1886. The painting was stolen from Kairo's Mohammed Mahmoud Khalil Museum in August 2010. The same painting had been stolen from the same museum in 1977 and was recovered 10 years later in Kuwait.

[Works:]

[No. 5]
[Text on the wall right to the painting:
Caravaggio
Spanish, 1571-1610
Nativity with St. Francis and St. Lawrence
oil on canvas, 1911
Stolen on October 15, 1969
from San Lorenzo in Palermo,
Sicily]

[No. 6]
[Text on the wall below the painting:
Vincent van Gogh
Dutch, 1853/1890
Congregation Leaving the
Reformed Church in
Nuenen
oil on canvas, 1884
SStolen [sic!] on December 7, 2002
from Van Gogh Museum,
Amsterdam, Netherlands]

[In-APP Spoken commentary]

As a gift to his parents Vincent van Gogh painted this
depiction of the church in which his father was a pastor since
1882. At the time van Gogh's mother Anna had been healing
from a broken thigh bone and Vincent wrote of his mother:
˝Taking her difficult situation in consideration I´m glad to say
that mother's spirits are very even and bright and she is
amused by trifles. The other day I painted for her a little
church with a hedge and the trees." The letter included a

sketch with one person in front of the church: a peasant with a spade. X-rays from the painting indicate that van Gogh later added church members and autumn leaves to the previously bare trees which made the work more colorful. The changes were not likely made before the fall of 1885. Van Gogh may have added the woman in mourning and congregation members for his mother as memorial for his father's death. The painting was stolen from the Van Gogh Museum on December 7, 2002.

[No. 7]
[Text on the wall below the painting:
Govert Flinck
German, 1615-1660
Landscape with an Obelisk
oil on wood, 1638
Stolen on March 18, 1990 From
Isabella Stewart Gardner
Museum, Boston,
Massachusetts, United States]

[In-APP Spoken commentary]

The largest art theft in world history occurred in Boston on March 18, 1990. The thieves stole 13 pieces collectively worth 300 million dollars from the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. One of the pieces stolen is a Landscape with Obelisk which previously was attributed to Rembrandt. A reward of 5 million dollars is still offered for an information leading to their return.

[No in-APP spoken commentary for No. 8]

[No. 8]
[Text on the wall below the painting:
Raphael
Italian, 1483-1520
Portrait of a Young Man

oil on panel, 1513-1520

Plundered from Poland by the

Natzis during World War II]

[No in-APP Spoken commentary.]

[No. 9]

[Text on the wall below the painting:

Pablo Picasso

Spanish, 1881-1973

Le pigeon aux petits pois

oil on canvas, 1911

Stolen on May 20, 2010 From

Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville

de Paris, Paris, France]

[In-APP Spoken commentary]

Le pigeon aux petits pois by Pablo Picasso, one of the oddest art thefts in art history, took place in Paris, France around 7 AM on the 20th of May 2010. Picasso's 1911 Le pigeon aux petits pois (The Pigeon with Green Peas) was one of five paintings estimated at a total value of about 100 million euro stolen from the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville. A single smashed window and a broken padlock were found at the scene of the crime. The thief had the dexterity to carefully and quickly remove the paintings from their frames rather than using a knife to cut them out. Security footage revealed that burglary was a one man job rather than team of thieves. A man to be said to be a lone thief was found and convicted in 2011 and subsequently claim that he had panicked and thrown the painting in the garbage shortly after stealing it. Many people have expressed doubts over the thief's story and as of today the painting is still nowhere to be found.

[No. 10]

[Text on the wall below the painting:

Vincent van Gogh

Dutch, 1853-1890

View of the Sea at

Scheveningen

oil on canvas, 1884

Stolen on December 7, 2002

from Van Gogh Museum,

Amsterdam, Netherlands]

[In-APP Spoken commentary]

On December 7, 2002 at around 8 AM two men climbed two men climbed onto the roof of Amsterdam's Van Gogh Museum and broke into the building. The thieves only took two paintings: View of the Sea at Scheveningen and Congregation Leaving the Reformed Church in Nuenen. Both painted between 1882 and 1884. This period represented the peak of van Gogh's artistic achievements and the paintings are estimated to have a combined value of 30 million dollars. According to the museum gallery page: ″Van Gogh painted this picture on the spot in Scheveningen, a beach resort near The Hauge. He had to fight against the elements; the dust and wind, and the flying sand which stuck to the paint. Most of this was later scraped off but the few grains can still be found in some of the paintings. Two suspects were arrested in 2004 and they were sentenced up to 4 and a half years but the paintings have yet to be found. The museum currently offers a reward of 100 thousand euros for information on their whereabouts.

[http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/vincent-van-gogh-stolen-paintings-museum-heist-view-of-the-sea-at-scheveningen-congregation-leaving-a7641346.html]

[No. 11]
[Text on the wall below the painting:
Paul Gaugin
French, 1848-1903
Girl in Front of Open
Window
oil on canvas, 1888
Stolen on October 15-16, 2012
from Kunsthal museum in
Rotterdam]

This painting was stolen from the Kunsthal museum in Rotterdam, South Holland, along with six other paintings from artists including Picasso, Monet, Matisse and Freud. The burglary took place at around 3 AM and took only 3 minutes for the thieve to break into the museum, gather the 7 artworks and get out before any law enforcement arrived. The estimated value of the stolen artworks is around 18 million euro. A man named Radu Dogaru was arrested for the theft and eventually sentenced to 7 years in prison. The thief's distressed mother testified that she had burnt the paintings in her stove in Romania in order to protect her son. Authorities did in fact recover some paint and nails from the scene, however the identity of paintings still remains unconfirmed.

[https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2013/08/08/burned-art-masters-romania/2631903/]

[No. 12]
[Text on the wall below the painting:
Frans van Mieris

Dutch, 1989-1763
A cavalier
Oil on Canvas, 1633
Stolen on June 2007 from a
gallery in Sydney, Australia]

[No. 13]
[Text on the wall below the painting:
Self-Portrait
Meyer de Haan, 1889-1891
Stolen on October 15-16, 2012
from Kunsthal museum in
Rotterdam.]

[No. 14]
[Text on the wall below the painting:
Claude Monet
French, 1840-1926
Waterloo Bridge, London
oil on canvas, 1901
Stolen on October 15-16, 2012
from the Kunsthal museum in
Rotterdam]

[No. 15]
[Text on the wall below the painting:
Claude Monet
French, 1840-1926
Charing Cross Bridge
oil on canvas, 1901
Stolen on October 15-16, 2012
from the Kunsthal museum in
Rotterdam]

Charing Cross Bridge, London by Claude Monet: Famed impressionist Claude Monet depicted Charing Cross Bridge in London as part of a series painted between 1899 and 1904. The series depicts various versions of the bridge over different periods of day and night, allowing Monet to utilize his vast understanding of color palettes. The 1901 Rotterdam painting simply titled Charing Cross Bridge, London was part of Kunsthal museum theft in October, 2012. One of the men convicted of the crime claimed that the Monet along with the other stolen works was burnt in his mother's stove to hide evidence of the theft from government officials. Although certain traces of pigments were indeed found in the stove no solid evidence has been found proving his claim and the painting is still listed as missing.

[No. 16 ending left to the sign for the "Stolen European Painting" room]

[Text on the wall on next to the painting:

Rembrandt van Rijn

Dutch, 1606 - 1669

The Storm on the Sea of Galilee

Oil on Canvas, 1633

Stolen on March 18, 1990 from

Isabella Stewart Garnder

Museum, Boston

Massachusetts, United States]

The same robbery that took the famous Vermeer's The Concert from Boston's Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum also claimed Rembrandt's famous masterpiece The Storm on the Sea of Galilee. The artwork is Rembrandt's only seascape and depicts Jesus's miracle of calming the sea of Galilee as described in the gospel of Marc. The combined robbery is easily America's biggest art heist to date. On the 18th of March 2013 the FBI held a press conference claiming

that they knew who was responsible for the crime. Criminal analysis suggests an organized crime group rather than a single petty thieve committed the heist but that could not release the name while the investigation is ongoing. There has been no other public announcements since then. It has been over 20 years since the theft but the investigation is still considered an open case and there is currently a 5 million dollar reward for information as for the whereabouts of the painting.

Stolen Photographs

This room of the museum features stolen photographs fetched from the FBI's National Stolen Art File. Paintings and sculptures are the first to come to mind in fetching a high collector and auction value but certain photo prints have also sold for high bidding prices and are therefore desirable, particularly ones that include rare and old processes or are limited in their printing. Eight of the 25 most expensive photographs ever sold were taken by Andreas Gursky. Currently, the highest re-sale value of a photo to-date was an auction value of 4,3 million dollars for a piece by Gursky called Rhine II in 2011. Another valuable photo print is a tintype of the outlaw Billy ″the kid″ bought in an antique shop bought in Fresno, California in October, 2015 for less than two dollars and is expected to rise to a value of 2 million dollars due to its singularity, technique, and historic significance. Interestingly, many of the photos on view here are tied to one large theft that took place in June, 1998 when a large collection belonging to Halstead Gallery in Birmingham, Michigan was stolen from a mini-van that was parked in front of a hotel in Houston, Texas. The theft included Paul Strand and Lewis Hine prints seen here.

[No. 1 right to sign Stolen Phtographs]

[Portarit of Arnold Weir
Andres Serra, 2003]

[No. 2]

[Man on Hoisting Ball,
Empire State Building

Lewis Hine, 1925]

[No. 3]

[5th Avenue Row Houses
Berenice Abbott, 1936

gelatin silver print]

[No. 4]

[Powerhouse Mechanic
Lewis Hine, 1925

gelatin silver print]

[No. 5]

[Wintertime in My Garden
Jean Dieuzaide, France, 1980]

[No. 6]

[Half Shell Nautalis
Lewis Hine, 1925]

[No. 7]

[Archina McRury
Paul Strand, 1954]

[No. 8]

[Nicholas Mares
Paul Strand, 1967]

[No. 9]

[Untitled Manekin Study
El Lissitzky, 1923-1929]

[No. 10]

[Egypt
Hunt Collection, 1851/1852]

The Private Collection of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos

Ferdinand Marcos was first a president and then a dictator of Philippines from 1966-1986. His rule was supported by United Stated who regarded him as a strategic ally during the cold war, since he was one of the only democrats in Asia at the time of his election. Whilst his regime started in unprecedented number of infrastructural projects his legacy is mostly one of corruption and brutality. Ferdinand's wife and first lady Imelda, a former model and singer, became known internationally for her large persona which encapsulated her love of fashion and spending. Most famously, her shoe collection numbering almost 3000 pairs, in fact the term imeldific became popularly used as meaning extravagant, vulgar and wasteful. In 1986, after a failed election, the opposing People Power Movement received a boost and the Marcos' were encouraged by US to leave the Philippines. As their home, the Malacañang Palace, was stormed by protesters, they fled to Hawaii where Ferdinand died in 1989 and Imelda continues to live. The information about this art collection was gathered and published by the Presidential Commission on Good Government or PCGG, formed in the Philippines in 1986 after the People Power Revolution. The Marcos family and their entourage enjoyed a decadent lifestyle. Between 1972 and 1985 a period of martial law and time of financial struggle for the Philippines the Marcos' spent over 24 million dollars on paintings and various artworks using money syphoned from the national treasury. They have looted so much wealth from the Philippines that to this day the investigators have difficulty determining precisely how many billions of dollars were stolen. The purpose of PCGG is to recover the ill-gotten assets of the Marcos' and to return the billions of dollars to the Philippines. In the period immediately before and after the fall of the Marcos regime

significant amount of artwork and other valuables disappeared from Philippine government property including the consular town house in Manhattan. What remained in Malacañang and the abandoned properties were shipment records, gallery receipts, bronze plaques, and empty frames indicating the names of paintings and artists. The Marcos' also acquired and owned several New York properties including the Crown Building on 5th Avenue, Herald Center on 6th, 40 Wall Street, and 200 Madison Avenue. In fact, some of the paintings were last seen at these locations.

[No in-APP spoken commentary for No. 1-15]

[No. 1 right to the sign The Private Collection of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos]

[Text on the wall bellow the drawing reproduction:

Henry Koehler

American, b. 1927

Brandywine Action

Charcoal and Pencil, 1977

Original Acquisition Cost: USD

1800]

[No. 2]

[Text on the wall bellow the painting reproduction:

Tsuguharu Foujita

Japanese, 1886-1968

Enfant d'Artiste

Signed and inscribed paris and

titled on the stretcher. Original

Acquisition Cost; USD 24,800]

[No. 3]

[Text on the wall bellow the painting reproduction:

Anna Mary Robertson

(Grandma Moses)

American, 1860-1961

Evening 1953

Oil on pressed wood, 1943]

[No. 4]

[Text on the wall bellow the painting reproduction:

Andrew Wyeth

American, 1917-2009

Moon Madness

Tempra, 1982

Signed upper right: A. Wyeth

Painted 1982, Kurner Farm,

Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania.

Original Acquisition Cost: USD

300,000]

[No. 5]

[Text on the wall bellow the painting reproduction:

Braque Georges

French, 1882-1963

Evening

Oil on Canvas, 1933

Signed on the lower left.

Original Acquisition Cost: USD

38,500]

[No. 6]

[Text on the wall right to the painting reproduction:

Paul Gaugin

French, 1848 – 1903

Still Life of Idol

Oil on canvas, 1865

Original Acquisition Cost: USD

1,000,500]

[No. 7]

[Text on the wall right to the painting reproduction:

Édouard Manet

French, 1840-1926

Mary Laurent a la Violette

Pastel on Linen, 1886

Signed on lower right 'Manet'

Labelled on the Frame. Original

Acquisition Cost: USD 296,900]

[No. 8]

[Text on the wall below the print reproduction:

Victor Vasarely

Hungarian, 1906-1997

Oltar

Screen print, 1971

Edition 10/150]

[No. 9]

[Text on the wall below the painting reproduction:

René Magritte

Belgian, 1898-1967

The Light of Coincidences

Oil on canvas, 1933]

[No. 10]

[Text on the wall below the painting reproduction:

Francis Bacon

Irish, 1900-1992

Self-portrait with Injured

Eye

Oil on canvas, 172

Entitled, signed and dated on

Reverse. Original Acquisition

Cost: USD 250,000]

[No. 11]

[Text on the wall below the painting reproduction:

Francis Bacon

Irish, 1909-1992

Study for Self-Portrait

Oil on canvas, 1963

Entitled, signed and dated on

reverse. Original Acquisition

Cost: USD 250,000]

[No. 12]

[Text on the wall right to the painting reproduction:

Claude Monet

French, 1840-1926

La Pluie

Oil on Canvas, 1886

Signed lower left – Claude

Monet. Original Acquisition

Cost: USD 365,500]

[No. 13]

[Text on the wall below the painting reproduction:

Francisco de Goya

Spanish, 1746-1828

Portrait of the Marqueza De

Sta. Cruz

Oil on canvas, 1805

Original Acquisition Cost: USD

800,000]

[https://www.museodelprado.es/en/the-collection/art-work/the-marchioness-of-santa-cruz/e1d2cbc6-8549-4ade-9383-2dde4ee6dfeb]

[No. 14]

[Text on the wall below the painting reproduction:

John Boultbee

English, 1753 – 1812

two horses with a groom

Oil on canvas, 1805

Signed and dated 1794]

[No. 15]

[Text on the wall right to the painting reproduction:

Camille Pisarro

French, 1830 – 1903

Jardine de Kew Pres dela

Serre

Oil on canvas, 1892

Original Acquisition Cost: USD

420,000]

Appendix C

Table 1:   Mapping the lives of objects—internet research of the artworks featured in the Museum of Stolen Art app

Object (MOKA Collection)	Artist	Name	Database	Last owner	Source	Disappearance	How	Why	Source	Recovered	How	When	Source
Recently Stolen	1. KAWS	Companion and Death								Yes	LAPD		http://www.lapdonline.org/paintings_and_prints_k_t/content_basic_view/59816
Recently Stolen	2. KAWS	Paper Smile	National Stolen Art File (NSAF)						https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/violent-crime/art-theft/national-stolen-art-file?Subject=	No	LAPD		http://www.lapdonline.org/paintings_and_prints_k_t/content_basic_view/59650
Recently Stolen	3. Emilio Sanchez	Unknown (view of a nighttime skyline with single building, Pepsi Cola sign and river with boats)	National Stolen Art File (NSAF)						https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/violent-crime/art-theft/national-stolen-art?Subject=	No	LAPD		http://www.lapdonline.org/paintings_and_prints_k_t/content_basic_view/59636
Recently Stolen	4. Jan van Kessel the Elder	The Paradise	National Stolen Art File (NSAF)						https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/violent-crime/art-theft/national-stolen-art-file?q=Jan+van+Kessel+the+Elder&Subject=	No			
Recently Stolen	5. Eliseo Meisner	Manhattan Moonlight	National Stolen Art File (NSAF)						https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/violent-crime/art-theft/national-stolen-art-file?q=Eliseo+Meisner&Subject=	No			
Recently Stolen	6. Laura Owens	Untitled (bird on a branch)	National Stolen Art File (NSAF)						https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/violent-crime/art-theft/national-stolen-art-file?q=Laura+Owens&Subject=	No	LAPD		http://lapdonline.org/crime_alerts_and_latest_stolen_art/content_basic_view/58650
Recently Stolen	7. Howard Cook	Cables and Arches of Brooklyn Bridge	National Stolen Art File (NSAF)						https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/violent-crime/art-theft/national-stolen-art-file?q=HowardCook&Subject=	No			
Recently Stolen	8. Laura Owens	Untitled (animals in the forest)	National Stolen Art File (NSAF)						https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/violent-crime/art-theft/national-stolen-art-file?q=Laura+Owens&Subject=	No	LAPD		http://lapdonline.org/crime_alerts_and_latest_stolen_art/content_basic_view/58651
Recently Stolen	9. N.C. Wyeth	The Encounter on Freshwater Cliff	National Stolen Art File (NSAF)			Stolen 2013		to secure a loan	https://www.fbi.gov/image-repository/boston-press-releases-2015-recovered-wyeth-painting-the-encounter-on-freshwater-cliff-11-19-15/view	Yes	FBI	October 2015	https://www.fbi.gov/image-repository/boston-press-releases-2015-recovered-wyeth-painting-the-encounter-on-freshwater-cliff-11-19-15/view
Recently Stolen	10. N.C. Wyeth	Go Dutton, and that Right Speedily	National Stolen Art File (NSAF)	Portland businessman	Associated Press	May 2013	"Stolen from the private home by 3 men"		https://www.usnews.com/news/entertainment/articles/2015/11/19/remaining-2-nc-wyeth-paintings-stolen-in-2013-are-recovered	Yes	FBI	October 2015	https://www.fbi.gov/image-repository/boston-press-releases-2015-recovered-wyeth-painting-go-dutton-and-that-right-speedily-11-19-15/view
Recently Stolen					Reuters	May 2013			https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-crime-maine-idUSKCN0T62D020151119	Yes	FBI		
Recently Stolen	11. Andy Warhol	Portrait of Mick Jagger	National Stolen Art File (NSAF)			Stolen 2013			https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/violent-crime/art-theft/national-stolen-art-file?q=Portrait+of+Mick+Jagger&Subject=	No	LAPD		http://www.fbi.gov/wanted/art/mick-jagger/@@...
Recently Stolen	12. Anthony Donaldson	Untitled (M)	National Stolen Art File (NSAF)						https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/violent-crime/art-theft/national-stolen-art-file?q=Anthony+Donaldson&Subject=	No	FBI		
Stolen European Paintings	1. Gabriele Münter	The House	Stolen Art section of the IFAR Journal	Business in Northheimer stiftan, Germany		Stolen January 16, 2015			https://www.ifar.org/stolen_art_alert.php	No	IFAR		
Stolen European Paintings	2. Paul Cézanne	View of Auvers-sur-Oise	FBI Top Ten Art Crimes Art Crime Team	Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, England	The Guardian	Stolen December 31, 1999	"during the fireworks that accompanied the celebration of the millennium" / "a professional burglar who created a smokescreen to foil security cameras, it was disclosed yesterday"	Valued at £3 million	https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/violent-crime/art-theft/fbi-top-ten-art-crimes/theft-of-auvers-view-of-auvers-sur-oise / https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2000/jan/01/johnezard	No	FBI		
Stolen European Paintings	3. Johannes Vermeer	The Concert	National Stolen Art File (NSAF)	Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston	The Daily Beast / The Daily Mail	Stolen March 18, 1990	"a pair of thieves disguised as police officers entered the Gardner Museum and stole 13 works of art by world-renowned artists"	worth more than $500 million	https://www.thedailybeast.com/the-cezanne-stolen-in-the-perfect-art-heist-for-a-new-millennium / https://www.gardnermuseum.org/about/theft	No	FBI		
Stolen European Paintings	4. Vincent van Gogh	Poppy Flowers	INTERPOL stolen Works of Art	Mahmoud Khalil Museum, Cairo	The Guardian	Stolen August 18, 2010			https://secure.interpol.int/Private/Data/WorkOfArt/ItemID/... / https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2010/aug/21/vincent-van-gogh-painting-stolen-cairo	No	INTERPOL / security officers at Cairo airport from two Italians	Yes	
Stolen European Paintings	5. Caravaggio	Nativity with St. Francis and St. Lawrence	FBI Top Ten Art Crimes Art Crime Team	Oratory of San Lorenzo in Palermo	The Guardian	Stolen October 1969	"The FBI has said the stolen artworks were on sale in Philadelphia in the early 2000s, and that the heist was done by a criminal organization based in the mid-Atlantic and New England area, identifying one of two suspects as Boston gangster Bobby Donati, who died in a gang war in 1991."	value at $20 million	https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/violent-crime/art-theft/fbi-top-ten-art-crimes / https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2015/dec/03/restitution-lost-beauty-stolen-caravaggio-nativity-replica-brought-palermo	No	FBI		
Stolen European Paintings	6. Vincent van Gogh	Congregation Leaving the Reformed Church in Nuenen	FBI Top Ten Art Crimes Art Crime Team		NY Times	Stolen December 7, 2002	"But Mr. Durham did not know the historical background of the paintings. He said the paintings were the smallest ones in the gallery he targeted, and closest to the hole through which he entered. He stuffed them into a bag, and escaped by sliding down a rope he and his accomplice had put in place. When he hit the ground, he came down so hard that he smashed the seascape, chipping the paint. He left behind a black baseball cap. A security guard called the police, but she was not permitted to use force to try to stop the burglars."		https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/violent-crime/art-theft/fbi-top-ten-art-crimes/van-gogh-museum-robbery / https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/26/arts/design/van-gogh-museum-theft-octave-durham.html	Yes	recovered in September from the home of an Italian mobster's mother	September 2016	

Object (MoMA Collection)	#	Artist	Name	Database	Last owner	Source	Disappearance	How	Why	Source	Recovered	How	When	Source
Stolen European Paintings	7 Govert Flinck		Landscape with an Obelisk	National Stolen Art File (NSAF)	Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston		Stolen March 18, 1990	Broke through a window, stole the two works and then escaped out the side of the building using a rope	"Mr. Imperiale's defense lawyers, Maurizio Frizzi and Giovanni Ricci in Genoa, Italy, confirmed that Mr. Imperiale bought the paintings even though he knew they were stolen, because "he is fond of art" and they were "a good bargain.""	https://www.telegraph.co.uk/art/what-to-see/the-most-wanted-missing-paintings/	No			
Stolen European Paintings	8 Raphael		Portrait of a Young Man	INTERPOL stolen Works of Art	Czartoryski Museum, Krakow	Daily Art Magazine	Plundered October 31, 1939	Nazis	"The masterpieces decorated Frank's residence in Kraków before they were sent to Berlin, and Dresden, to become part of the Führer's own collection at Linz arranged by Hitler's plenipotentiary, Dr. Posse. It disappeared somewhere on the way there." / "In 1945, senior Nazi official Hans Frank took the paintings from the Führer's collection to the royal Wawel Castle."	http://www.dailyartmagazine.com/story-lost-raphaels-portrait-young-man/	No			
Stolen European Paintings	9 Pablo Picasso		Le pigeon aux petits pois	INTERPOL stolen Works of Art		Telegraph	Stolen May 20, 2010	"A lone thief broke into a Paris museum last night and stole five paintings possibly worth hundreds of millions of euros..." See No. 18		https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2010/may/20/picasso-matisse-stolen-paris-museum	No			
Stolen European Paintings	10 Vincent van Gogh		View of the Sea at Scheveningen	FBI Top Ten Art Crimes Team	Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam	NY Times			"The Italian culture minister, Dario Franceschini, said in a statement on Friday that the investigation "confirmed how much criminal organizations and/or von gogh paintings-recovered html"_r=0 / value of both works was 4 million euros"	https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/violent-crime/art-theft/fbi-top-ten-art-crimes/van-gogh-museum-robbery	Yes in September 2016	a specialized team in the Italian public prosecutions department		
Stolen European Paintings	11 Paul Gauguin		Girl in Front of Open Window	INTERPOL stolen Works of Art	Kunsthal Museum, Rotterdam		Stolen October 16, 2012	"The museum was guarded with alarm systems but had no guards. In a lightning fast theft, the thieves deactivated the alarms on the selected paintings and made off with the works."	"The estimated value of the paintings is as high as $134 million, and the theft put a spotlight on lax security at the Kunsthal and other smallish museums and galleries in Europe."	https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/world/2013/08/08/burned-art-masters-romania/2033903/	No			
Stolen European Paintings	12 Frans van Mieris		A Cavalier	FBI Top Ten Art Crimes Team	Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney		Stolen June 10, 2007	"The piece was stolen while the gallery was open for public viewing."	"The relatively small portrait measures 20 x 16 cm. Its value is estimated at over $1 million."	https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/violent-crime/art-theft/fbi-top-ten-art-crimes/theft-from-art-gallery-of-new-south-wales	No			
Stolen European Paintings	13 Meyer de Haan		Self-Portrait	INTERPOL stolen Works of Art	Kunsthal Museum, Rotterdam		Stolen October 16, 2012				No			
Stolen European Paintings	14 Claude Monet		Waterloo Bridge, London	INTERPOL stolen Works of Art	Kunsthal Museum, Rotterdam	Smithsonian	Stolen October 16, 2012			https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/thieves-stole-matter-minutes-of-dollars-of-free-art-133297347/	No			
Stolen European Paintings	15 Claude Monet		Charing Cross Bridge, London	INTERPOL stolen Works of Art	Kunsthal Museum, Rotterdam	Telegraph	Stolen October 16, 2012			https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/romania/10184189/Years-stolen-Picasso-Monet-and-Matisse-paintings-were-burned.html	No			
Stolen European Paintings	16 Rembrandt van Rijn		The Storm on the Sea of Galilee	FBI Top Ten Art Crimes Team	Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston		Stolen March 18, 1990			serco. 15	No			
Stolen Photographs	1 Andres Serra		Portrait of Arnold Weinstein	National Stolen Art File (NSAF)						https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/violent-crime/art-theft/national-stolen-art-file?Portrait+of+Arnold+Weinstein&Subject=photograph	No			
Stolen Photographs	2 Lewis Hine		Man on Hoisting Ball	National Stolen Art File (NSAF)						https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/violent-crime/art-theft/national-stolen-art	No			
Stolen Photographs	3 Berenice Abbott		5th Avenue Row Houses	National Stolen Art File (NSAF)						https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/violent-crime/art-theft/national-stolen-art-file?5th-Avenue-Row-Houses&Subject=photograph	No	Picture in DB is different		
Stolen Photographs	4 Lewis Hine		Powerhouse Mechanic	National Stolen Art File (NSAF)						https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/violent-crime/art-theft/national-stolen-art-file?Powerhouse-Mechanic&Subject=photograph	No			
Stolen Photographs	5 Jean Dieuzaide		Wintertime in My Garden	National Stolen Art File (NSAF)						https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/violent-crime/art-theft/national-stolen-art-file?Wintertime+in+My+Garden&Subject=photograph	No	Picture in DB is different		
Stolen Photographs	6 Lewis Hine		Climbing into America	National Stolen Art File (NSAF)						https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/violent-crime/art-theft/national-stolen-art-file?Subject=photograph	No			

Object	MoMA Collection	Artist	Name	Database	Last owner	Source	Disappearance	How	Why	Source	Recovered	How	When	Source
35	Stolen Photographs	7 Edward Weston	Half Shell Nautilus	National Stolen Art File (NSAF)						https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/violent-crime/art-theft/national-stolen-art-file?q=Half+Shell+Nautilus&Subject=photograph	No			
36	Stolen Photographs	8 Paul Strand	Anthea Mcllury	National Stolen Art File (NSAF)						https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/violent-crime/art-theft/national-stolen-art-file?q=Mcllury&Subject=photograph	No			
37	Stolen Photographs	9 Paul Strand	Nicolas Mares	National Stolen Art File (NSAF)						https://www.fbi.gov/Archives-Mcllury&Subject=photograph	No			
38	Stolen Photographs	10 Eli Lisitzky	Untitled, Mannequin Study	National Stolen Art File (NSAF)						https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/violent-crime/art-theft/national-stolen-art-file?q=Nicolas+Mares&Subject=photograph	No			
39	Stolen Photographs	11 Leavitt Hunt	Egypt	National Stolen Art File (NSAF)						https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/violent-crime/art-theft/national-stolen-art-file?q=Lisitzky&Subject=photograph	No			
40	Private Collection of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos	1 Henry Koehler	Brandywine Action	Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) - The Missing Art Movement						http://q=Egypt&Subject=photograph http://www.missingart.ph/artworks/brandywine-action-0	No	Information altered		
41	Private Collection of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos	2 Tsuguharu Foujita	Enfant d'Artiste	Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) - The Missing Art Movement						http://www.missingart.ph/artworks/enfant-dartiste	No	Meddling with information		
42	Private Collection of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos	3 Anna Mary Robertson	Evening 1953	Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) - The Missing Art Movement						http://www.missingart.ph/artworks/evening-1943	No	http://stmargaretside.org/oc.kool//ann-e.aigradima-moses-anna-mary-robertson-moses/		
43	Private Collection of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos	4 Andrew Wyeth	Moon Madness	Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) - The Missing Art Movement						http://www.missingart.ph/artworks/mood-madness	No	the information has been tampered		
44	Private Collection of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos	5 Braque Georges	Cabines et bateaux	Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) - The Missing Art Movement						http://www.missingart.ph/artworks/cabines-et-bateaux	No	http://www.artnet.com/artist s/georges-braque/cabines-et-bateaux-vbb80ikmbA40urKG-40iM42		
45	Private Collection of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos	6 Paul Gauguin	Still Life of Idol	Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) - The Missing Art Movement						http://www.missingart.ph/artworks/still-life-idol	No			
46	Private Collection of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos	7 Édouard Manet	Mary Laurent à la Violette	Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) - The Missing Art Movement						http://www.missingart.ph/artworks/mary-laurent-la-violette	No			
47	Private Collection of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos	8 Victor Vasarely	Oltar	Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) - The Missing Art Movement						http://www.missingart.ph/artworks/oltar	No	https://www.mutualart.com/ Artwork/Oltar/7D0B4D149968 F984		
48	Private Collection of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos	9 René Magritte	The Light of Coincidences	Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) - The Missing Art Movement						http://www.missingart.ph/artworks/la-lumiere-des-coincidences	No	The artist wrote on this page	https://collections.dma.org/artwork/4070137	
49	Private Collection of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos	10 Francis Bacon	Self-portrait with Injured Eye	Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) - The Missing Art Movement						http://www.missingart.ph/artworks/self-portrait-1972	No			
50	Private Collection of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos	11 Francis Bacon	Study for Self Portrait	Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) - The Missing Art Movement						http://www.missingart.ph/artworks/self-portrait-1963	No	information altered		
51	Private Collection of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos	12 Claude Monet	La Pluie	Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) - The Missing Art Movement						http://www.missingart.ph/artworks/la-pluie	No			
52	Private Collection of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos	13 Francisco de Goya	Portrait of the Marchioness of Santa Cruz	Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) - The Missing Art Movement						http://www.missingart.ph/artworks/portrait-marquesa-de-sta-cruz	No	https://derstandard.at/20000 5670310b/Goya-wiederentdeckt-Barfuss-auf-den-Philippinen Information altered		
53	Private Collection of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos	14 John Boulibee	Two Horses with a Groom	Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) - The Missing Art Movement						http://www.missingart.ph/artworks/two-horses-groom	No			
54	Private Collection of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos	15 Camille Pissarro	Jardin de Kew, Londres, près des serres, temps gris	Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) - The Missing Art Movement						http://www.missingart.ph/artworks/jardine-de-kew-pres-delia-serre-1892	No			

Abstract

With the simultaneous rise of artwork digitalization and art theft, the focus of this master's thesis lies at the intersection of these polemicized cluster issues. Throughout my thesis, I analyze phenomena such as virtuality, storage, and curating digital(ized) artworks in an era of hypermodernity by focusing on an art project, the *Museum of Stolen Art* (*MOSA*), a virtual reality application multimedia artist Ziv Schneider. Situated somewhere between fact and virtual fantasy, the *MOSA* deals with the relentless struggle to compensate for the loss of their valuable artifacts. The thesis deals first with the issue of what type of artistic expression *MOSA* is, second, for what purpose *MOSA* possibly could have been created, and, finally, how and to what extent Schneider succeeded in conveying the message *MOSA* was intended to carry through established curatorial practices. *MOSA* is the artist's pocket museum of miniatures, an immersive, narrated, virtual exhibition experience in form of a VR smartphone application aimed at transforming spectators' perception and awareness of stolen artworks. Schneider selects artwork reproductions from various archiving databases of missing artworks with the intention of compensating for the inevitable loss of chosen artworks and thus the symbolic value of cultural property caused by theft, looting, fraud, or structural phenomena. Schneider rearranges and presents the selected immaterial matter in a highly curated manner to induce prosthetic memories in the visitors of *MOSA* in hopes of prompting them to take action against the crime of art theft in handling the missing artworks either on- or offline.

Zusammenfassung

Mit dem gleichzeitigen Aufkommen von Digitalisierung von Kunstwerken und Kunstdiebstahl liegt der Schwerpunkt dieser Masterarbeit in der Erforschung der Überschneidung dieser polemisierten Clusterfragen. Ich analysiere Phänomene wie Virtualität, Akkumulation und Kuratierung digitaler und digitalisierter Kunstwerke in einer Ära der Hypermoderne, indem ich mich auf das Kunstprojekt Museum of Stolen Art (*MOSA*), eine Virtual-Reality-App der Multimedia-Künstlerin Ziv Schneider konzentriere. Die *MOSA* befindet sich irgendwo zwischen Fakt und virtueller Fantasie und beschäftigt sich mit dem unermüdlichen Kampf, den Verlust ihrer wertvollen Artefakte auszugleichen. Die Masterarbeit befasst sich zum einen mit der Frage, welche Art von künstlerischem Ausdruck MOSA ist, zum anderen, zu welchem Zweck *MOSA* möglicherweise hätte entstehen können und inwieweit es Schneider gelungen ist, ihre Botschaft durch virtuelle kuratorische Praktiken zu vermitteln. *MOSA* ist das Taschenmuseum für Miniaturen, ein kommentiertes virtuelles Ausstellungserlebnis in Form einer VR-Smartphone-Anwendung, die die Wahrnehmung und das Bewusstsein der Zuschauer für gestohlene Kunstwerke verändern soll. Schneider wählt Reproduktionen von Kunstwerken aus verschiedenen Online-Archivdatenbanken der gestohlener und verschollener Kunstwerke aus, um den unvermeidlichen Verlust ausgewählter Kunstwerke und damit den symbolischen Wert von Kulturgütern, der durch Diebstahl, Plünderung, Betrug oder strukturelle Phänomene verursacht wird, auszugleichen. Schneider ordnet und präsentiert das ausgewählte immaterielle Material auf kuratierte Weise neu, um den Besuchern von *MOSA* prothetische Erinnerungen zu vermitteln, in der Hoffnung, dass sie gegen das Verbrechen des Kunstdiebstahls vorgehen, wenn sie mit den fehlenden Kunstwerken online oder offline konfrontiert werden.