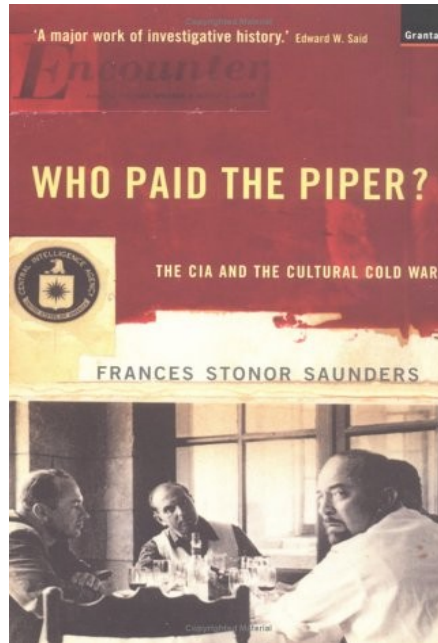


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The Cultural Cold War



by Miles Mathis

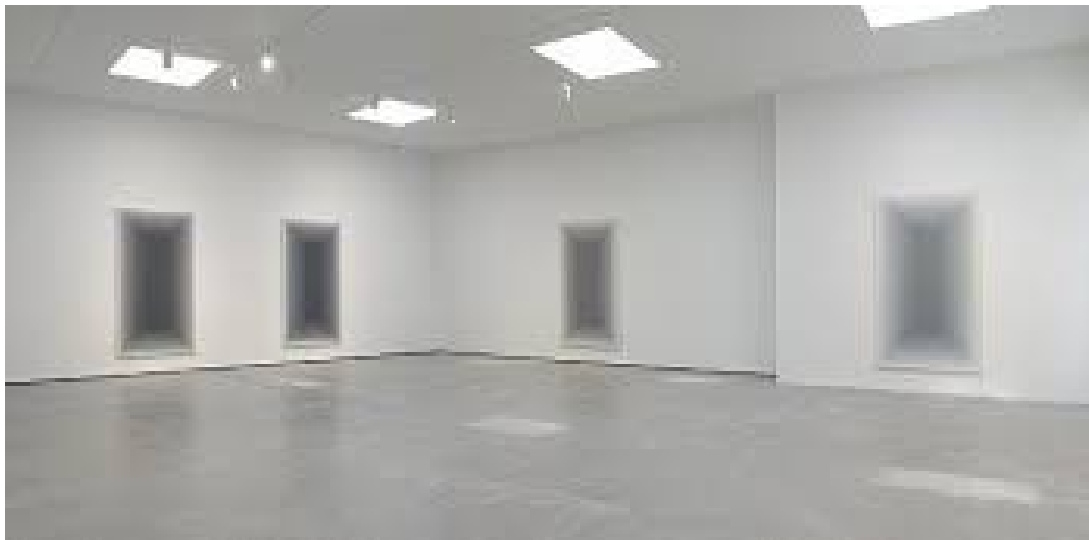
When artists are made the slaves and the tools of the state, when artists become chief propagandists of a cause, progress is arrested and creation and genius are destroyed.

President Eisenhower, 1954

Eisenhower said the above in his “Freedom of the Arts” address at MoMA for its 25th anniversary gala. Yes, MoMA and the Rockefellers could even afford to hire the President to read their scripts. Although he was intending to condemn Russian realism and promote Abstract Expressionism, we can now see that his words were upside down, as usual. Most of the 20th century was upside down to the truth and this is just one more example. For his words are a perfect description of Modernism and its purposeful subordination of art and artists to politics, Theory, and financial speculation. This subordination was not engineered from Moscow. It was engineered from New York City and DC. And it turned out to be even worse than Eisenhower warned. If progress had only been arrested, how happy we would now be. Due to the engineered collapse of art in the 20th century by speculators, propagandists, paid academics, and New-World-Order architects, we have *regressed* no one knows how many centuries.



before: Tate Britain 19th century gallery



after: Pace Gallery, 2010

We can see from these before and after photos what Eisenhower's “freedom of the arts” really meant. It meant the freedom of art to devolve from something large and beautiful into something small and meaningless. It was an early example of Newspeak, telling you one thing while selling you the inverse.

This has now been proven. It is no longer a theory or an opinion. Documents have been declassified, agents have gone on record, and fully researched books have been written. We now know exactly which artists were slaves (all the famous ones) and which artists were propagandists (all the famous ones). We can only guess at the genius destroyed, since most of it was never allowed to see the light of day. Thousands of talented artists have been suppressed, ignored, slandered, and ultimately lost to history. Some quit, some killed themselves, and others just faded out.

I have referenced the work of Frances Stonor Saunders in three previous papers, including her 1995 article in the London *Independent* and her 1999 book *Who Paid the Piper/The Cultural Cold War*. While using parts of her research, I nonetheless mentioned several times that I found her work to be a probable diversion. In other words, I think it is likely the book was either suggested by Intelligence, overwritten by them, or written in full by them with only her byline. I come to this conclusion from several facts, which I will now share with you. The first curious fact is that this book which is sold as an exposé of the CIA managed to be reviewed by top mainstream sources, including the London *Times* and the *London Review of Books*. Her initial article also managed to get published by the London *Independent*. Since Intelligence owns the London press just as it own the US press, we must assume Intelligence is trying to spin information that has already been leaked.

With more research, that is precisely what I found. Saunders admits that much of the information in her book was leaked or published in various places decades earlier, and though it has been suppressed since then and is now barely remembered, it means her research is not new. In this context, her article and book appear to be the somewhat late effort to spin old information, for reasons unknown to me. It seems to me they would have been better off keeping quiet about it, but I don't know what undercurrent they might have been trying to quell in the late 1990's. Probably they know their own jobs better than I do.

Another thing that leads in this direction is her bio, which is almost non-existent. Both parents were in the British peerage, which is in itself a red flag in this case. The first thing on her bio is this CIA exposé, which she produced at age 29. So there is an 8-year gap in her bio, from age 21 to age 29. She then became an editor at the *New Statesman*, another red flag. Her own book ought to tell us that, since it admits most of these journals had been taken over by Intelligence soon after WW2 (or even before). But the warning is even easier to hear when we find that Saunders was at the *New Statesman* under the leadership of Ian Hargreaves, a big supporter of Tony Blair. Blair, like Bush and Obama, was just a puppet of Intelligence.

But it is the content of the book that is the real indication it was written to whitewash and spin information. Although she and her editors manage to compile a lot of old evidence that someone like me can use to his own purposes, most people reading the book will not be able to take the information they receive and sew it into their own shirts. Most readers will take the information as Saunders gives it to them, and Saunders is careful in most cases to make Intelligence look not-so-bad-after-all.

I have already shown in my previous papers how ridiculous the main thesis is: that Modern Art was sold as part of the Cold War, to combat Communism and the backward ideas about art professed by the Russians. I agree that the Soviets were wrong about just about everything, including politics and art, but that doesn't make the US position right. Saunders helps sell the peculiar idea that a government either has to outlaw “decadent art”—as the Soviets did—or promote it wildly, as the US did. She helps those she quotes at Intelligence gloss over the possibility that we might have done neither. We might have promoted the American art of the time in proportion to its merits. . . which was not much. Or, since we were supposed to be an example to the world of free-market capitalism, we might have let the free markets promote the art of the time, letting the buyers and the public decide its merits. Instead, we chose to propagandize it to the greatest extent possible, outdoing any propaganda Hitler or Stalin ever dreamed of. We then tried to sell this propaganda as pure simply because it was ours. “Their propaganda is manipulation; our propaganda is just 'fair promotion' of 'free enterprise.'”

I have shown the main thesis of the book is false, since the art they chose to promote wasn't chosen

based on merit, much less on its ability to fight Communism or make the US look creative. The works were chosen because the Rockefellers had already invested in them, and the Rockefellers controlled both the museums and the CIA. That information is buried in the book, but since it isn't highlighted or stressed, readers will tend to miss it.

In this paper I wish to continue pulling apart the book by concentrating on chapter 16, "Yanqui Doodles." It is in this chapter that Saunders finally gets to the paintings of Pollock, Rothko, de Kooning, Motherwell, and others. Before we get to the analysis of the text, let me just say that I agree that the Abstract Expressionists aren't very decadent. I have always found them more boring and pointless than decadent. They tie into the adjective "decadent" not in the way Duchamp did before them or Warhol would after them. That is, they don't obviously try to tear down culture by any direct attack. They still give you colors and shapes, some of which might be called interesting in a small way. However, they *are* decadent in the sense that they were used by critics and others to continue the destruction of art, by the loss of old conventions. They aren't *morally* decadent, they are *aesthetically* decadent. They represent the decay and loss of old standards, old conventions, and all the means the artist historically used to create beauty, meaning, depth, and subtlety. Remember, Abstract Expressionism wasn't and isn't sold as just another artistic possibility. It was sold by critics like Clement Greenberg as the historical *replacement* for old aristocratic art—meaning high realism. Even the artist Ad Reinhardt—Greenberg's archenemy—said that Abstract painting was "the last painting that anyone could paint." The new art was promoted as superior in every way, immediately mothballing all art that had come before. It was the art of a new century, the art of America!, the art of the future, blahblahblah. So in promoting Abstract Expressionism and Modernism in general, the salesmen in Intelligence were at the same time *forbidding* the old realism.

Saunders' book and Tom Braden's lengthy quotes in it only tell you about the promotion side; they forget to tell you about the suppression side. They forget to tell you that while they were promoting Modernism, they were implicitly forbidding anyone from painting the old way. The old painting was dismissed as outdated, regressive, undemocratic, and generally small minded. No, they didn't outlaw realism, but any artist of the time who wished to be noticed got the message very clearly: do not paint in the old way anymore. If you do, we won't like you.

I will be told that was a blessing: we didn't want any more of that Nazi realism or Communist realism. We didn't want that arid, stiff, poster-art, selling the party-line. But again, that kind of argument creates the illusion of only two possibilities. You are led to believe that you must either promote poster-art realism that glorifies the State, or you must promote Modernism. I beg you to remember that *all* of the high realism before 1900 falls into *neither* category. In arguing against Modernism, I am not promoting Soviet realism or Nazi illustration. The mainline argument in the book, like the argument of the 20th century, is a finessed argument. It presents the choice as being between one of two categories, and real art isn't in either category.



Barnett Newman



Jackson Pollock

But let us return to Abstract Expressionism. Abstract Expressionism was chosen as the lead for the book for the same reason it was chosen as the lead for the CIA. Since the decadence of AE is far less obvious than the decadence of most other Modern Art, the CIA and Saunders can dodge the decadence question. Most people think of decadence in terms of moral decadence. If they even know what aesthetic decadence is, it doesn't mean anything to them. So most readers will look at a Pollock and say, "well, I don't like it, but I don't see how it is decadent. If the CIA wants to promote that to combat Communism, OK." Most readers won't understand why the Soviets were saying AE was decadent, why they were banning art, or why the US was promoting it. As long as the CIA can spin this as some patriotic crusade, most people will give them a pass.

But what Saunders and the CIA are leaving out is the other art of the 20th century, which Intelligence also promoted. Saunders keeps your eyes on Pollock and Rothko, and off Duchamp, Manzoni, Fontana, Nitsch, Quinn, Hirst, and the Chapman Brothers. Since thousands of promoted 20th century artists—including many in 1950's and 60's—have explicitly and vocally been trying to be *both* morally and aesthetically decadent, it must look odd to argue that Modern art is *not* decadent—as Saunders does in chapter 16. It is a mystery to me how 20th century art can be promoted as gloriously decadent for 90 years, but when a Congressman or Harry Truman says he doesn't like it because it is decadent, he is a "philistine."



Duchamp



Manzoni



Hirst

[I can't even show you Nitsch, since you may have just eaten. If you search on him, be warned]

When the Soviets say this art is decadent, they are out-of-touch and backwards and regressive and anti-democratic.

No, they have just read the artists' own press releases, where they brag about how decadent they are. Painters and writers have been bragging about their decadence since the time of Baudelaire, so when we see historians like Saunders clicking their tongues at those who have found it decadent, we can only laugh.

This is not to say that I think Duchamp or any of the rest should have been banned. They should have just been ignored. Since it is too late for that, they must be exposed for what they were: closeted fascists destroying art on purpose, at the behest of even more closeted masters in Intelligence.

I must say this goes for the Abstract Expressionists as well as the Dadaists before them and the postmoderns after them. Although they may not have been as decadent as some, they were still fascists. Pollock, Motherwell, Calder and Bazziotes were all members of the American Committee for Cultural Freedom [ACCF], which was an Orwellian name for yet another CIA organization. The figurative artist Ben Shahn called it the ACCFuck. Although its stated purpose was to promote art as free expression, its actual purpose was to promote the art the Rockefellers had invested in, and since these member/artists had been invested in, they were happy to join that promotion. However, this promotion also entailed the anti-promotion of everything else, so that abstract painting became the new religion. As Saunders puts it,

The Museum of Modern Art, described by one critic as the “overgeared cartel of Modernism,” held tenaciously to its executive role in manufacturing a history for Abstract Expressionism. Ordered and systematic, this history reduced what had once been provocative and strange to an academic formula, a received mannerism, an *art officiel*.

I encourage you to have that quote in mind as you re-read my undertitle quote from Eisenhower. Rather than being the antithesis of propaganda or slave art, the art of the 1950's (and after) was actually its perfect representation. It was part of a “manufactured history” promoted by a cartel. It was “official art.” Not only was it promoted by the state, but it was promoted covertly by a secret state agency. If nothing illegal or unseemly was going on here, why keep it all in the dark?

New York Times art critic John Canaday said, “an unknown artist trying to exhibit in New York couldn't find a gallery unless he was painting in a mode derived from one or another member of the New York School [Abstract Expressionism].” And Peggy Guggenheim—a Rockefeller competitor—apparently had an even better grasp of the situation, saying “the entire art movement had become an enormous business venture.” [p. 274].

Since these leading artists of the New York School like Pollock and Motherwell were members of CIA organizations, they could not have been on any “long leash.” These were dogs leading their masters, yapping and leaping. Almost a decade before the ACCF, Rothko and Gottlieb had founded the Federation of Modern Painters and Sculptors in 1940, which was already fiercely anticommunist before the US declared war on Japan. “Rothko and Gottlieb led these efforts to destroy Communist presence in the art world.” [p. 277] This by itself proves two things. One, in earlier chapters, CIA agents like Tom Braden told us that the US had secretly promoted leftist artists during the Cold War to fight Communism. This was supposed to be ironic or something, but it turns out to be false. The few artists that had ever been red or pink hadn't been pink since the 1920's. The ones sold to us as leftist after WW2 weren't leftists then, and weren't leftists before the war. It wasn't McCarthy who turned them, or new-found patriotism. It was the desire to get noticed by the Rockefellers and MoMA. Rothko and Gottlieb were acting as little McCarthys in 1940, purging the artworld of opposition. So much for

freedom of expression. Two, we were also sold the idea that this art propaganda only started after the war, as part of the Cold War. But we see that isn't true, either. If Rothko and Gottlieb were founding an anti-Communist artist organization in 1940, then this whole program couldn't have been started after the war or by the CIA. There was clearly covert promotion of Modern art before the war, by pre-CIA intelligence as well as by MoMA.

So the argument of Saunders and the CIA doesn't add up. Neither does their attack on Truman and the post-war Congress. Although I normally don't have much use for Harry Truman, when he says Modern art looks pathetic compared to Rembrandt or Holbein, I can only agree. Saunders quotes him as saying,

The Dutch masters make our own modern day daubers and ham and egg men look just what they are.

That is simply a true statement. Saunders doesn't try to refute it by any cogent argument or direct comparison, putting a Pollock next to a Rembrandt, for instance. She only jumps immediately into this:

Those European vanguardists who had fled the Fascist jackboot were now startled to find themselves in an America where modernism was once again being kicked about. This was, of course, consistent with the cultural fundamentalism of figures like McCarthy, and part of the confusing process by which America, whilst advocating freedom of expression abroad, seemed to begudge such freedoms at home.

I almost doubt that Saunders wrote those particular sentences. Frankly, I would bet they were inserted into her draft at some point by Intelligence. Most of Saunders' book is on or least near the mark, and even where it is off she is only subtly turning you from the truth. But here, all subtlety is gone. The fact that Truman preferred Rembrandt to Pollock has absolutely nothing to do with Joseph McCarthy and his Communist witch hunts. Truman didn't dislike Pollock or any of the others because they were Communists. He says it very clearly in his own words: he dislikes them because they don't impress him in any way *as artists*.

Beyond that, promotion of the Abstract Expressionists or other Moderns had absolutely nothing to do with freedom of expression. I am all for freedom of expression, and I think all people who are creating art *for their own purposes* should be allowed to do it. But that doesn't mean I think they should be promoted by the CIA just because they have done it, or made rich and famous because they have done it.

Remember, freedom of expression applies to the audience as well. The audience should be free to *express* their dislike for Modernism if they honestly do dislike it, without being attacked as philistines. Saunders—or whoever wrote those sentences—is implying that those like Truman who disliked Modernism were “kicking it about” or denying the artists freedom to create. But neither Truman nor anyone else ever suggested Modernism should be banned. Almost without exception, those in Congress or in the press who were against Modernism in the early years were simply making the argument that it shouldn't be promoted with taxdollars. They thought the US should either be promoting really fine art or no art at all. There is no “jackboot” involved in either idea. In reality, the jackboot involved is in forcing people to like Modernism when they don't: taking their taxdollars under the threat of jail, then spending that money to promote art they strongly dislike, as part of expensive propaganda initiatives their representatives haven't voted on. *That* is what is anti-democratic.

The jackboot is also involved in funding decades of domestic propaganda for Modernism in magazines, trade journals, professional journals, academic journals, books, TV, and film. The jackboot is involved

in telling several generations of art students they cannot create any realism and be taken seriously. The jackboot is involved in calling the art market pluralistic and free, and then consciously excluding any form of realism from that market for many decades. The jackboot is involved in a century of bold lies, by which artists and the public are told Modernism is being promoted to advance freedom, encourage expression, celebrate diversity, and air important political issues, when in fact we find the opposite has always been true. After the unmasking, we see that Modernism was promoted mainly to protect the investments of the Rockefellers, but that when there was an agenda beyond that purely financial one, it was an agenda of destabilization, stupefaction, liquefaction, misdirection, and obliteration. It was the century-long program of taking everything solid in art, atomizing it, and selling us back the fragments at a vicious mark-up.

Large parts of chapter 16 in Saunders' book look to have been inserted later by external hands. Great swaths of it don't even parse like her common sentence structure. On p. 253, we get this:

This was not a propitious time for modernists. Most vulnerable to the attacks of the Dondero caucus [in the Congress] was a group of artists that emerged in the late 1940s as the Abstract Expressionists. . . . They were linked by a similar past: most of them had worked for the Federal Arts Project under Roosevelt's New Deal, producing subsidized art for the government and getting involved in left-wing politics.

The problem with that argument is that Congress was almost as marginalized in the late 1940s as now. No one was listening to Rep. Dondero or anyone else in Congress. Then as now, Congress was just a backboard against which Intelligence hit its tennisballs. Saunders admits that on the next few pages, where we are reminded that by 1946, a whole gaggle of critics (already being underwritten by the Rockefellers in various ways) were praising these artists to the skies. It is these critics who were being read by academics and gullible progressives. Those interested in art weren't reading the Congressional record, they were reading *Partisan Review* and *Commentary* and the *Nation*—and assuming, naively, that these magazines were independent. Saunders also admits that Pollock got his centerspread in *Life Magazine* in 1949 thanks to the CIA pressuring Henry Luce. So to say this was “not a propitious time for Modernists” is just hooley.

And we see from the quote above that other things in this chapter don't add up. Although all bullets for the book tell us it blows the whistle on CIA influence *after* the war, it is clear these people were being promoted and subsidized *before* the war and *before* the CIA was ever founded. Look again, these artists were “subsidized” under the New Deal. The New Deal was before the war, in the 1930's. As another example, we know Clement Greenberg was promoting Modernism fiercely before the war, and again, Saunders admits it, quoting from his “Avant-Garde and Kitsch” article of 1939 in the *Partisan Review*. That is before the war and before the CIA, so none of this started in 1947. Despite the fact that *Partisan Review* and Greenberg were saying the same things—at least regarding art—in 1948 that they were saying in the 1930's, why are we supposed to believe they were bought in the 1940s and independent in the 1930s? It is pretty obvious they were bought all along. After 1947, the Rockefellers paid Greenberg and *Partisan Review* via the CIA; before that they paid them directly.

Although we now know Greenberg was just a puppet, he was pathetic, talentless puppet. And if I hear one more time about how Greenberg was a “brawling, boozing, one-man slugfest,” I think I am going to cough up a lung. Greenberg was a short, bald, paunchy little creep even when he was young, and he looks like the kind of guy who only punched women and those in lower weight classes.*



My favorite story is how Greenberg started shoving the tiny Max Ernst, [only to get clocked by the long-armed Nicholas Calas](#). In 1961, the 52 year old Greenberg got caught with a left jab from the 57 year old de Kooning and wasn't able to respond. From my research, none of these fights ever got past one punch, so as usual it looks like a lot of posturing by armchair critics and fighters. Despite the fact that Greenberg is a minor character in her book, Saunders implies he—of all the people who pulled the Rockefeller oars (except possibly the Trillings)—was the most unctuous, the most reviled, and the most insincere. Which gives me an opening I missed [the first time I counter-critiqued](#) “Avant-Garde and Kitsch.” Coming to Greenberg from the assumption that Modernism was trying to sell itself as leftist and progressive, I hadn't been able to understand his assertion that the avant garde “belonged to the ruling class,” or that “it had always remained attached [to this ruling class] by an umbilical cord of gold.” But now that I understand that Greenberg was actually a conservative and a fascist, I see what he means. He is constructing a subtle *apologia* for his groveling at the feet of the Rockefellers. Art had always belonged to the ruling class, according to Greenberg, so why should he or his artists have any qualms about accepting their gold?

Leaving aside the moral or political aspects of that idea, we see a huge contradiction here. If the avant garde belongs to the ruling class, then the famous division of the avant garde from old “aristocratic” art evaporates, doesn't it? This division—which Greenberg helped to manufacture—has been one of the defining divisions of the century, being used to jettison any and all realism from the new definitions. I was personally excluded from the upper echelons of contemporary art based on that manufactured division. I was told my art was “aristocratic” and therefore outmoded, based only on its use of old forms and conventions—like figuration, representation, and attention to technique. But if both the old art and the new art “belong to the upper class,” then this slur against realism collapses. The old art is then not frowned upon because it is “aristocratic.” It is frowned upon because the new aristocrats like Rockefeller choose to frown on it. An art that “belongs” to the elite is then at the mercy of the elite. If they decide to redefine art to suit their portfolios, artists and critics can only go along. This is what Greenberg is really saying, in his nearly illegible way.

But back to Saunders' book. The more I reread chapter 16, the more it looks like a palimpsest, written over and written over again. It undercuts itself and then the undercut is re-undercut. We see this most clearly in the way Pollock is dealt with. Although the main line of the book would lead most people to dismiss Pollock as a CIA creation, someone underneath the top layer of this book is trying to save him with all the rest. We hear the tired superlatives once again: that Pollock was *the* great American painter [so says Budd Hopkins], the Hemingway of painting, the real American, the cowboy, the hard-talking heavy drinker with “the grittiness of Marlon Brando and the brooding rebelliousness of James Dean.” But then that sales pitch is destroyed in one sentence, where we are reminded that all of this is bunk: Pollock couldn't ride a horse and left Wyoming as a child. And this reminds us he was also terrorized by self-doubt (hence the drinking), couldn't hold his booze, and—like Greenberg—was short, bald and

unattractive. Pollock had nothing in common—even on the surface—with Marlon Brando or James Dean, much less John Wayne. He was neither a rebel nor a tough guy, spending his afternoons—like Woody Allen—in therapy. He saw his drip period as a lark and a marketing ploy, and felt guilty for the undeserved fame. He preferred his earlier work, and wished he were allowed to pursue figuration. This is the reason he went off the wagon after the Hans Namuth photoshoot in 1950 and quit doing the drip paintings. The photoshoot made him feel like a big phony.



Which brings us to a curious outcome of my research on Pollock. Turns out Pollock spent some time pursuing Theosophy, attending retreats in California with Krishnamurti. That of course brings us back to [the paper that started all this](#), where I show that Theosophy was founded as a joint project of US/Russian Intelligence. So even before Modernism was infiltrated by the CIA, it had long been infiltrated by Intelligence through Theosophy and its offshoots. [Other artists who were influenced](#) by Theosophy include Rothko, Mondrian, Kandinsky, Brancusi, Gauguin, Itten, Marc, Pasternak, Blok, Katherine Mansfield, T. S. Eliot, Klee, Gropius, Delauney, Scriabin, and Schoenberg. **

Since Theosophy was founded in 1875, it would seem difficult to connect it to the Rockefellers. The Rockefeller fortune was just being made at that time, and most assume the first Rockefeller was too busy creating his monopoly to bother with spiritualism. But those who assume this would be wrong. Rockefeller not only [followed Vivekananda in the 1890's](#), he is one of the ones who brought him here. Vivekananda, like Krishnamurti, was one of the early importations of the Theosophists. What most people don't know is that [Vivekananda was a freemason](#). It is not widely publicized, but it is admitted even at Wikipedia. He was educated at the General Assembly's Institution, now known as the Scottish Church College. This is curious, since this college taught a “liberal Western” education. Vivekananda's favorite professor was from Trinity College. Also of interest is the fact that when Vivekananda came to the US for the first time in 1893, he went straight to Harvard and the waiting arms of William James. See [my previous papers](#) for the importance of that fact. To get you started, remember that James was a Theosophist and a mentor of Gertrude Stein.



But back to Saunders' book. Here's another strange contradiction in chapter 16. On page 256, we learn of an exhibition in 1947 called "Advancing American Art." We are told that speeches in Congress killed it after it got to Europe. This is supposed to be evidence of the power of the reactionaries in the House, including Rep. Dondero. But Saunders, in the previous paragraph, had just admitted that the show—which included works by O'Keefe, Gottlieb and Gorky—had already been to Paris and Prague, where it was "a major success." It was such a success, we are told, that the Russians had to immediately organize a competing exhibition. So we see the contradiction already. We are told that Congressmen killed the show, but if they had killed it, it would never have left New York. It opened first at MoMA before moving to Europe, and a proper "killing" would have prevented it from ever being shown at all, here or abroad.

What we learn [if we delve deeper](#) is that Congress voted funds for the show in the amount of \$50,000. With that money, 79 paintings were bought, and the funds also had to include travel expenses to Europe and Latin America. Which means the average price paid for an oil painting was about \$500. Since most were bought through galleries, each artist got about \$250. We are told the itinerary after Prague included Budapest and an "undetermined venue in Poland." That sounds fishy to me, since what major art exhibition goes to Europe without a firm itinerary? The "great success" in Prague also turns out to be pushed, since it is admitted that the opening attracted 1,000 visitors. That sounds pretty paltry to me, considering the show was supposed to have received advanced promotion from critics and accolades from Czech President Benes. If the President was in favor of the exhibition, why wasn't it shown at one of the National Gallery venues in Prague? Why was it relegated to an art cooperative?

The story completely unwinds when Saunders admits that after the show was "canceled," the paintings were sold off at a 95% discount as surplus government property. What? That means each painting fetched about \$25 on the open market! Two questions are begged by that: 1) if the exhibitions were such a success, why was no one interested in buying this "exciting new work"? We know most of the lots went to small museums in Oklahoma, Georgia and Alabama. If the works were so good, why didn't any of the major museums bid on them? Apparently it wasn't only Truman who didn't care for this work. The directors of 99% of the museums in the country also passed, even at a bid of \$25. 2) If the government and the CIA believed so strongly in Modernism, why did they sell off these works for almost nothing? The CIA agents themselves should have been bidding these works up into the thousands, right? No. The CIA believed in Modernism to the tune of less than \$25, and the rest is bluff.

But of course this means the whole story was manufactured. It wasn't the "philistinism" of Truman or Dondero or Busbey that killed this show. That story was created after the fact as spin. The show went to Europe and Latin America as planned and bombed on its own lack of merits. If the show really had

so much critical and academic support back in the US, the paintings would have sold to critics and academics. Anyone can afford \$25 for a painting, even a lowly art critic.

The reason these early shows failed while later shows didn't is that the CIA hadn't yet assumed total control of the press in 1946. Some magazines and newspapers were still printing honest opinion at that time, which obviously got in the way of the propaganda machine. But within a couple of years, that changed completely. Whereas Hearst's *New York Journal-American* and *LOOK* magazine had panned the show in 1946, the CIA soon brought them onboard. And once the media was speaking with one voice, it didn't matter what Truman or any Congressman thought. The newspapers could be instructed not to report it, or to report it with a strong spin. If the newspapers got a hundred letters from readers panning the show and one extolling it, they would print the one and throw the other hundred in the trash. That is how things work to this day.



We see another bold contradiction on page 258, which starts off, “Supporting left-wing artists was familiar territory for the Rockefellers.” Saunders then repeats the story we all know about Diego Rivera being hired to paint a mural for Rockefeller Center. Rivera paints Lenin into the mural, Nelson Rockefeller asks him to remove it, Rivera refuses, and Rockefeller pays him off and destroys the mural with jackhammers. Saunders gives us the CIA spin here, which is that despite that, the Rockefellers continued to support left-wing artists. Of course she doesn't pursue the obvious conclusion here, which is that the Rockefellers promote left-wing artists only as long as “left-wing” means “Modern.” If left-wing has any *real* political meaning—as in supporting either Socialism or Republicanism—the Rockefellers run like the wind. They only support lefties that aren't really lefties. All the Rockefeller artists who are sold as lefties turn out on closer inspection to be righties sold as lefties. They are fascists posing as Marxists. In my previous papers we saw the same thing with Ezra Pound and many others. Sometimes, as with Pound, the fascists posing as Marxists then pose as fascists, just to be sure you are well and permanently confused.

On page 261, the tug of war between Saunders and her invisible re-writers continues, as she re-leaks the information that most of MoMA's trustees/directors/executives are from Intelligence, the invisible writers come on the page and spin that, and then she comes back and despins it. For the reader, the entire chapter is like riding a yo-yo. We are told that in addition to Nelson Rockefeller, the Intelligence/trustees included John Whitney, William Burden, Rene d'Harnoncourt, William Paley, Joseph Verner Reed, Porter McCray, Gardner Cowles, Junkie Fleischmann, Cass Canfield, Oveta Hobby, and Tom Braden. And although she lists the actual links to Intelligence, the invisible writer then pops in and says,

Of course it could be argued that this congruity revealed nothing more than the nature of American power at the

time. Just because these people knew each other, and just because they were socially (and even formally) enjoined to the CIA, doesn't mean that they were co-conspirators in the promotion of the new American art.

What? Yes, that is exactly what it means, Buddy. You have to be kidding me with sentences like that. Saunders is too good a writer to be caught writing that. "Congruity"? "Socially enjoined to the CIA"? What the fuck does that mean? Is the CIA now a cotillion? Saying that just because these people were in the CIA and running MoMA doesn't mean the CIA was running MoMA is like saying that just because these clothes are on my body doesn't mean I am wearing them. It is the dastardly attempt to dodge the definition of words. Only an organization as untouchable as the CIA would even think to put such an argument in print.

The invisible writer is so confident, he next sends you to Eva Cockcroft's 1974 article in *Artforum*—which is of course one of Saunders' primary sources for this 1999 book—but does nothing to spin it except to preface it as a "rumor." But since the CIA's Tom Braden has since confirmed large parts of that article, and since documents are referenced showing these people's official links to Intelligence and the government, none of this is a rumor, and hasn't been for decades. In fact, that is why Saunders' book was allowed to go to press, and why it was allowed to be reviewed by major media outlets in Great Britain: the CIA needed to spin it, because it was now common knowledge. You don't need to spin rumor, since you can dismiss it as rumor. You only need to spin things that are documented and making the rounds.

The confidence of the invisible writer is again apparent when he allows Saunders back on the page immediately to undercut him. As proof that MoMA's support for Abstract Expressionism was not linked to the CIA or the Cold War, Michael Kimmelman is quoted from 1994 telling us that MoMA didn't get involved in collecting or showing Abstract Expressionism until the late 1950's. But Saunders comes back in the next sentence to show that is an outright lie. She proves that not only was Kimmelman *paid* to say that by MoMA, but that it is easily refuted by the record. Saunders quotes from the Museum's own catalogs to show that it had been collecting all the big names since 1941. She finds a particularly damning entry in 1944, in which the Museum sold off "certain of its 19th century works" to buy more Pollocks, Motherwells, and Mattas.

In probably the last attack of name artists upon an American museum, we see in 1952 a group of fifty including realists Edward Hopper, Charles Burchfield and Jack Levine publishing a "Reality Manifesto" against MoMA, accusing it of propping up unpopular art for "dogmatic" reasons. Reading the manifesto, it is clear these artists had no idea of the real reason this art was being promoted. Since my realist friends and I still had no idea until recently, this is not surprising. The Rockefellers and CIA were not unmasked until the mid 1970's, and then only partially. Since that unmasking was in *Artforum*, no realist would have been expected to see it. They were unmasked again in 1995 by Saunders, but that was in London, and you could count the number of outspoken realists there on one hand. I would have expected to hear something from the Stuckists on this, but haven't. The article at the *Independent* seems to have only hit the web recently, and that is where I discovered it. I don't know of any realist since Thomas Hart Benton who is as outspoken as I am, so I suppose it is up to me to lead the first serious charge since 1952.



Motherwell



Matta

As part of that charge, we can borrow some firepower from Ad Reinhardt, a painter of little talent from the time in question, who we would have liked to have sicced on Clement Greenberg. Reinhardt would have pounded him into a meaty pulp. Reinhardt was a sort of anti-Agnes Martin, being famous for his all black canvases. He was also the anti-Agnes in that while she was semi-catatonic, he was a volcano. He claimed to be painting the “last paintings that anyone can paint,” so he was as full of air as the next Abstract Expressionist; but he is useful at least as a provider of interesting quotes against his fellow airmen. Reinhardt called Rothko a “*Vogue* magazine cold-water-flat-fauve,” and Pollock a “*Harper's Bazaar* bum.” Barnett Newman was “the avant-garde huckster-handicraftsman and educational shopkeeper.” He called art criticism “pigeon droolings” and ridiculed Clement Greenberg as a phony. He said the museum should not be a “counting house or amusement center,” which means he would not be comfortable in the Whitney, Guggenheim, MoMA, Pompidou, Tate or Saatchi Gallery. You almost have to like the guy, no matter what you think of his art. Although not much of a painter, he was at least not a bootlicker of the elite, and he was the only Modern artist to participate in the March on Washington for black rights in 1963. We may suppose the others were polishing their medals.



Of course, this is the reason you haven't heard of Reinhardt before now, despite the fact he was producing pretty much the same thing as everyone else. The others kept quiet and just pissed in the fireplace or something. He was foolish enough to think he was actually a real person, and therefore the owner of his own life.

To wrap this up, let us return to the book. Russell Lynes gives us a good quote to end with:

The Museum now had, and was delighted to have, the whole world (or at least the whole world outside the Iron Curtain) in which to proselytize—though this time the exportable religion was home-grown rather than what been in the past its primary message, the importable faith from Europe.

That is from his history of MoMA, and he is talking about the year 1950. It was upon reading this unparsable sentence that I finally figured out what the European exhibitions were all about. It wasn't about fighting Communism or showcasing democracy. It was about expanding the market. In order to drive the prices of their investments up, the Rockefellers needed to manipulate not just the US market, but the European market as well. Since the population of Europe was at that time about 3 times that of the US, the Rockefellers could quadruple their market for new art by expanding operations into Europe. Until the end of the war, Europe was too unstable for anyone to think of pursuing art markets there, but as soon as hostilities ended, the Rockefellers saw their opening. Hiding this move under the flag was the perfect cover. Samuel Johnson's "patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel" fits this ploy like a hand in a glove.

Since the recent NSA scandals have proven that we are being watched at all times, I will turn straight into the camera for this final paragraph, talking to the agents directly. It occurs to me you may be as surprised as all my other readers to discover the true story behind Modern art. Perhaps you have never cared enough about art to look closely; or perhaps you cared but—like me—just couldn't see through the many layers of veils. I beg you to ask yourself if this is really what you signed on for. Maybe you feel just as used as the rest of us. Since I have shown that patriotism was just a cloak here, your patriotism doesn't matter. Art history wasn't killed on the altar of patriotism or US political interests, it was killed only to enrich people that were already billionaires. You may say, "You are right, I don't care about art. Its loss means nothing to me." So substitute what you do care for instead of art. For the truth is, everything is being destroyed to enrich those who are already billionaires, and the destruction is always justified under the cloak of patriotism. Our health is being destroyed, the oceans are being destroyed, the fertility of the land is being destroyed, our water quality is being destroyed, our privacy is being destroyed, our very self-determination is being destroyed, and in each case those doing the destroying are hiding behind the flag. So I ask again, is this what you signed on for? It isn't what I signed on for when I squeezed through the birth canal.

*Like theater critic Lionel Abel, who was about 5'5". It takes a real macho man to attack a theater critic. After that, Greenberg went out and stole cookies from a girl scout.

** This link tying the Moderns to Theosophy is to a reprint of another article by Frances Stonor Saunders, although I wasn't aware of it until later. The website does not attribute the article, but it is from a BBC4 program book called *Hidden Hands*. According to the linked website, the article was on the web for a while but was later wiped. Curious, since we saw that Saunders' 1995 *Independent* article was also wiped from the web for about 15 years.