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FROM CONSUMER TO USER

Illicit Drugs and Pharmaceuticals in Postmodern Art

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Spring Semester, 2019

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Introduction

In her work on art of the 1960s, Anna Dezeuze has posed the following important question: "[H]ow can artistic practices offer effective models of interaction between people and objects, and among human beings?"[1] My own interest in art history is provoked by this type of question; it serves as the point of departure for the research conducted in this thesis, where I seek to uncover a discreet and relatively unexplored relationship between postmodern art and drug use (as a lesser known subset of modern society's well-documented consumerism). This question came to fruition during an art history methods and theories course while studying Marxist models of class. I became fascinated by the ways in which different class experiences are materialized in artworks, which in some cases intentionally attempt to deconstruct and overthrow hierarchies of social and economic power. Part of this thesis proposes that the desire to participate in a universal class experience is one of the driving forces behind the rise in illicit drug consumption, and that the trajectory of this desire can be traced through the appearances of drugs in postmodern art. The wider scope of this thesis seeks to situate illicit drugs and pharmaceuticals in their overtly social and political contemporary histories, and to introduce them to the existing discourse on mass culture, consumerism, and art.

My thesis operates under the understanding that much of Western art of the 20th century is marked by a desire to investigate and expand the structures of class and experience in society. Though this nearly ubiquitous desire has roots that well precede the year 1900, it becomes emphatically apparent with the Dadaists in the second decade of the new century. Avant-garde artists did not just overturn the media and aesthetics of art; they changed the conversation of art

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[1] Anna Dezeuze, "The 1960s: A Decade Out-of-Bounds," in Amelia Jones, ed. *A Companion to Contemporary Art since 1945* (Malden: Blackwell, 2006), 38-59.

history to one of politics and the struggle for power to define class values. This kind of conversation became one of the accepted standards for evaluating 20th century art. The ideological shift from modernism to postmodernism in the middle of the century, however, saw the production of art that no longer just attempted to render and criticize the conditions of life, but rather, to interact with and possibly change the world.

This change in art's ambitions engendered new dialogues about the inextricable relationship between different works and the specifics of class experience. In the 1960s, consumer culture became one of the most prevalent themes among pop artists, many of whom appropriated images from mass-media and popular culture in order to analyze the effect of capitalism and consumerism on different classes. Consequentially, art of this decade emerged as unprecedentedly egalitarian (in regards to subject matter, media, audience, and even the artists themselves). Some art historians believed that the complete democratization of art was at hand. That is not the claim I am making here. Instead, I am investigating two coinciding and overlapping trajectories: that of drug use since 1950 and that of postmodern art. As will be made more apparent in the chapters of my thesis, changes in art over the last half-century have indicated the course of this subculture of drug use. Each chapter will be treated as a case study of an artwork from approximately each decade since 1960. As my thesis progresses, I hope to demonstrate an escalating relationship between drugs and postmodern art and analyze the intersecting ways in which they are sustained by mass culture and consumerism. This relationship begins as a relatively subtle one; aesthetic investigations into drugs as a social value and interest in the 1950s and '60s was a nascent topic. Only a few decades later, however, it was receiving explicit and immediate treatment by artists. This relationship has continued to grow in

relevance and is rapidly becoming a more compelling topic of interest for artists as we enter a contemporary opioid epidemic.

The first chapter of my thesis will look at Tom Wesselmann's 1962 piece, *Still Life #22*, in the context of 1960s pop art and as an early example of the incorporation of drugs into art. This chapter will begin the evaluation of drugs as a mass-produced consumer good, worthy of attention by serious artists. Wesselmann's aesthetic treatment of these pills is the same as any other consumer good in his vast oeuvre of still lives, illustrating how commonplace pharmaceuticals were in the middle-class household. This chapter will situate early pharmaceutical drugs in the socioeconomic context of the 1960s and will look at a number of different social classes and groups, including Andy Warhol's Factory and the Situationist International, and the culture that attended their drug use. The most widely used drugs in this decade were not illegal; they were prescribed. However, the alarming rate at which such drugs were prescribed and consumed foreshadowed the trajectory of illicit drug use that was to follow.

My second chapter will move this trajectory along to the subsequent decade: the 1970s. This chapter will look at the juxtaposition of Duane Hanson's two sculptures, *Supermarket Lady* (1970) and *Drug Addict* (1974). The first sculpture is a visceral denouncement of consumer culture. The woman, over-weight and hair still in curlers, pushes a shopping cart nearly overflowing with factory-produced packaged food – not a single piece of fresh produce is visible. Upon closer inspection, the woman looks as if she herself is rotting (in contradistinction to the products she is buying, with their protracted shelf life). The blood vessels of her eyes are inflamed, her skin covered in splotchy red patches. Perhaps most telling are the scabs on her chest and face, particularly the one near the corner of her mouth. She is suffering from the visible effects of addiction. This sculpture, when viewed by itself, suggests that she is addicted to

consuming store-bought goods. But when it is considered alongside *Drug Addict* (produced only four years later), it suggests a direct relationship between consumerism and illegal drugs. Hanson shows the devolution of consumer culture into a society of illicit addiction. What I posit in this chapter is that Hanson's work implies that widespread drug addiction may have very well been partially caused by a national psychological addiction to consume mass-produced goods. This is not a scientific hypothesis, but one which can be explained – at least plausibly – through art.

The third chapter of my thesis will concentrate on a number of works by Damien Hirst, including his two series, *Medicine Cabinets* (1988-2012) and *The Last Supper* (1999), as well as his installation, *Pharmacy* (1992). Each containing its own unique assortment of drug packaging neatly aligned on the shelves, his *Medicine Cabinets* employ and inspect the purpose of aesthetics in pharmaceuticals. *The Last Supper* draws a cogent relationship between the traditional class- and consumer-conscious art and art history of the '60s and the contemporary circumstances of industrialized medicine. *Pharmacy* was featured in the Tate's 2002 exhibition, *Shopping: A Century of Art and Consumer Culture.* Here, the presentation of pharmaceuticals is compared with that of food at grocery stores, both attempting to appeal to the same audience. Throughout his career, Hirst not only investigates the aesthetics of pharmaceutical packaging, but makes decidedly strong observations of capitalism and its role in enabling a society inextricably reliant upon drugs. This chapter will situate drugs and art in a more overtly political and capitalistic climate, particularly as the result of the sharp growth of a pharmaceutical economy over the preceding few decades. It will also consider an inspection of Reagan-era "War on Drugs" politics and policies, which specifically and cynically targeted the African-American population.

My fourth and final chapter will look at Jean Shin's installation series from 2005 to 2009, *Chemical Balance,* and the recent anti-opioid protests staged by artist and activist Nan Goldin in major Sackler family-funded arts institutions. This chapter will consider Shin's work as indicative of the current discourse surrounding the opioid epidemic, and then situate it directly within the complexities of a robust capitalist society. This will also include a close look at various lawsuits that have been filed against large pharmaceutical companies like Purdue Pharma. I will investigate how works like Shin's can be used to spur protest or provoke discussion of contemporary issues. Such works are acute realizations of the ambitions of postmodern art. This final chapter will analyze the most recent juncture of drugs and postmodern art, but it is not meant to be conclusive of the two overlapping trajectories.

In my conclusion, I will summarize the interplay of the two trajectories since 1950 and assert that their relationship is still very much in flux. I will also suggest some important related questions that could prompt and sustain future research on this topic. I believe that considerations of art and drugs will become increasingly popular among artists and scholars alike as the opioid crisis continues to affect Western culture, and as other formerly illicit drugs—like marijuana and psychedelics—grow increasingly mainstream.

Chapter One – Pharm Party: Popping Pills in Pop Art

In 1966, a group of teenagers from Medford, Massachusetts were allegedly hospitalized after participating in a "fruit salad party."[2] The "fruit salad" consisted of a variety of pharmaceuticals; every party-goer was required to contribute at least three different pills to the bowl. After this concoction of drugs was mixed, each person then consumed a random assortment of three pills. Over the years, similar reports popped up all over the country. The actual prevalence of this absurd drug abuse is disputed; many historians now believe the "fruit salad party" was just a myth created and dispersed to convince parents to hide their prescription drugs from their risk-seeking teenage children. Similar events, now known as "pharm parties," are still forewarned against by health education teachers today. This strange practice, whether real or myth, is a reflection of a trend that has permeated society in the second half of the 20th century – that is, a drug culture that has been enabled specifically by capitalism and industrialized production.

It is no coincidence, then, that drugs should make an acute appearance in art beginning in the 1960s. That is not to say that drugs have not been illustrated or creatively articulated through imagery before – we will see later in this chapter, and throughout the others, that drug packaging and presentation itself becomes intertwined with aesthetics. However, what I would like to suggest here is that high art has taken drugs as its subject matter in an effort to critique mass-consumerism's retrogressive effect on contemporary Western society. However, the consumption of illicit drugs specifically (or the consumption of legal drugs in a very non-legal way) occupies a more complicated space in the hierarchy of commodities. Many of the drugs that I will be investigating throughout this thesis are legal in their own right, but the cultural and

[2] *Lowell Sun*, March 30, 1996.

ritualistic practices around consuming them are anything but. It is this relationship between consumer and commodity, user and drug, that I would like to introduce to the discussion of postmodern art.

The ingestion of substances for their narcotic effects is not an innovation of the modern world, but the industrial production and mass consumption of such substances certainly is. Pharmaceutical companies experienced exceptionally strong periods of growth during both World Wars. It is well documented that many soldiers, Allied and Axis alike, were intentionally given stimulant drugs – particularly in the Second World War. Benzedrine, which was first marketed in 1933 as an antidepressant inhaler, was the first commercially developed amphetamine.[3] It was known for its many side effects such as increased confidence and amplified adrenaline – which combated fatigue and produced a heightened "morale" among its users.[4] Despite studies providing evidence of the addictive and detrimental qualities of this drug, it was continuously distributed. Predictably, many soldiers remained addicted long after they returned home from war.

Amphetamine consumption was not limited to soldiers; they were also widely prescribed to the general public. Doctors prescribed Benzedrine as an antidepressant, but its stimulating effects were not a well-kept secret among users who sought out these properties. In the famous 1963 novel *The Bell Jar,* Sylvia Plath's semi-autobiographical main character Esther Greenwood even mentions this drug when describing college seniors finishing their honors theses, who subsisted "on a diet of coffee and Benzedrine."[5] The novel, which is set ten years prior to its

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[3] Nicolas Rasmussen, "Making the First Anti-Depressant: Amphetamine in American Medicine, 1929-1950," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 61, no. 3 (2006): 288-323.
[4] Nicolas Rasmussen, "Medical Science and the Military: The Allies' Use of Amphetamine during World War II," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 42, no. 2 (2011): 205-233.
[5] Sylvia Plath, *The Bell Jar (New York: Harper & Row, 1971),* 137.

publication date, suggests how early this abuse of pharmaceuticals began. Amphetamines were also marketed as weight-loss medicine and sold as the widely popular pill, Obetrol, in the 1950s and '60s. This diet pill was famously used among Andy Warhol's social circle. In his 1980 memoir, Warhol wrote,

> I could never finally figure out if more things happened in the sixties because there was more awake time for them to happen in (since so many people were on amphetamine), or if people started taking amphetamine because there were so many things to do that they needed to have more awake time to do them in. It was probably both. I was taking only the small amount of Obetrol for weight loss that my doctor prescribed, but even that much was enough to give you that wired, happy go-go-go feeling in your stomach that made you want to work-work-work, so I could just imagine how incredibly high people who took the straight stuff felt.[6]

Warhol indicates here that users were abusing both the pharmaceutical, doctor-prescribed pill and the illicit version of it – the "straight stuff."

I would like to suggest that drug consumption is very much an important constituent of consumerism, and as such, should be critically investigated with regards to its relationship to postmodern art. Most existing art historical scholarship has yet to recognize the compelling role of drugs as a consumer commodity, and thus, as a topic scrutinized by artists. Recently, there has been emerging research on the various psychoanalytic effects of drugs on art production, but that is not what I am primarily interested in. Instead, I am situating drugs and art in their respective and inextricable socioeconomic trajectories. Take, for example, Tom Wesselmann's 1962 assemblage, *Still Life #22* (fig. 1). This work is one of the many famous still life assemblages he created throughout the '60s, which feature collage-like displays of commodity goods in middle-class domestic settings. While other artists of the same decade appropriated and rendered images and scenes from popular culture, Wesselmann incorporated actual industrially produced objects in a kind of neo-Duchampian readymade aesthetic. *Still Life #22* is unique in that includes a real

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[6] Andy Warhol and Pat Hackett, *POPism* (New York: Harper & Row, 1983), 33.

bottle of pills – and not in a drug cabinet, but in a kitchen on a shelf next to a soda bottle and a timer-like appliance. Within the perimeter of the work itself, the pill bottle is centrally located with the other two industrially manufactured objects. If we consider art as a record of its cultural milieu, then this work indicates a society where pharmaceutical pills are beginning to occupy a more centralized and perceptible place in everyday life – and in art. The boy in the bottom left corner, taken from an advertisement, is featured drinking Canada Dry ginger-ale in a time-lapse. The placement of the pills and soda bottle on the shelf by the boy's hand suggests that they are readily available for consumption. The compulsively repetitive nature of the boy's drinking and Wesselmann's unconcealed treatment of the manufactured commodities seem to have supplanted the "real food" below it (the fruit) – and along with it the genuine relationships we were once able to establish with the goods in our lives. Home-grown and cooked meals were being replaced with pre-packaged food; generationally inherited knowledge of remedies for ailments and sicknesses was traded in for mass-produced pharmaceuticals; soon, authentic experiences and emotions were to be made obsolete in favor of the artificial, standardized ones facilitated by drugs. So, too, was the very production of art subject to this industrialization of contemporary life, as seen in rising taste for art that was or appeared to be mechanically produced and that which was evidently manmade falling quickly out of style (this will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter).

Wesselmann was keenly aware of the new type of egalitarianism ushered in by consumer culture. Mass-produced commodities enabled people across classes to share the same experience when they interacted with the function of the commodity good (whether that be to ingest, wear, or utilize the product). Warhol famously encapsulated this idea in 1975, writing that "A Coke is a Coke and no amount of money can get you a better Coke than the one the bum on the corner is

drinking."[7] This concept is not foreign to drugs. In fact, when drugs are consumed illicitly (or are illicit to begin with), a universal class experience may be realized in the most literal and explicit terms. The consumer undergoes a virtually standardized change in his or her state of mind. The experience, of course, is dependent on which drug has been consumed. In the 1960s, this experience was largely fostered through prescribed (and abused) amphetamines. The market for drugs, both legal and otherwise, was perpetuated by the same capitalistic drive that other commodity-focused industries subsisted on. Pharmaceutical companies mass-produced amphetamines like Obetrol and made them available to everyone. If one wanted to get a hold of the "straight stuff," it was not hard to find.

Still Life #22 features an actual bottle of blue pills on the kitchen shelf. The only available image of this assemblage is not quite clear enough to make out the label on the bottle, but the Estate of Tom Wesselmann has supplied me with supplementary archival images that were collected before the piece was sold at a Christie's auction in 1999. I was provided with a photograph of a smaller version of the same pill bottle as the one featured in Wesselmann's still life. The pills are labeled "Upjohn's Unicap Senior," which is a vitamin and mineral supplement for the elderly (fig. 2). While these aren't amphetamines, they are certainly still a consumer commodity manufactured by the pharmaceutical company, Upjohn, which was founded in 1886. Further research into the history of this company revealed an intricate and complex web of entanglement consisting of drugs, consumerism, and capitalism. Wesselmann's still life situates this dense web in the heart of 1960s pop art aesthetics and criticism.

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[7] Andy Warhol, *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol: From A to B and Back Again* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975), 101.

A massive collection of the Upjohn Company's corporate history was made publicly available after old archives were uploaded to the public domain on the internet in 2013. This wealth of information includes photographs, letters, company annual reports, product catalogs, salaries, and even records of the fine art purchased by the company—it turns out that they owned a vast number of Norman Rockwell paintings. A collection of Upjohn's 1950s cardboard cutout advertisements for their Unicap multivitamin pills (the same the ones featured in Wesselmann's still life) reveals a shared aesthetic between the pharmaceutical company and Wesselmann (fig. 3). These cardboard cutouts were illustrations of different foods, and when opened, contained facts about the Unicap multivitamin which could provide the same nutrients as the food depicted. These foods are illustrated in the typical cartoonish advertisement-style of 1950s mass media – the same types of images that Wesselmann appropriated and collaged into his still life assemblages. Their shared aesthetic, drawn from popular culture, only reinforces the immediacy of the mid-century confederation of consumerism, drugs, and art.

I also found many letters that detail Upjohn's intense efforts to supply deployed U.S. troops in the Second World War with a number of drugs. An interoffice memo dated to May 5th, 1946 lists sulfadiazine, sulfanilamide, penicillin, and chemical pellets as some of the most produced products on war contracts.[8] These were all used to prevent and treat the infections of wounded soldiers. One photograph in a war-era three-panel display created by the Upjohn Company claims that the "average consumption of pharmaceuticals of men overseas is two pounds per man per month."[9] This massive amount of consumption is arguably warranted by the

[8] "Upjohn Support for the Military in World War II," Jeremy Winkworth, last modified February, 2018, http://www.upjohn.net/other/warwork/ww2/ww2.htm.
[9] "World War II Era Photos," Jeremy Winkworth, last modified February, 2018, http://www.upjohn.net/other/warwork/ww2photos/ww2photos.htm.

nature of modern war. It perhaps becomes a greater concern, however, when such pharmaceutical amphetamines are being manufactured at even higher rates for the general public. A 1962 Upjohn news editorial promoted their own weight-control pill: Didrex.[10] The article begins with the description of a woman who has an "attractive face" but nonetheless does not feel very attractive because she is overweight. Didrex is marketed as the solution pill, which suppresses appetite. It is a benzphetamine, which, once metabolized by the user, becomes active as an amphetamine and methamphetamine in the body. This version of the diet pill was an attempt to placate those who were becoming increasingly aware of the addictive qualities of the pills with more potent quantities of amphetamine, like Obetrol. Nonetheless, Didrex was still a stimulant and its users were prone to abuse. Historian Nicolas Rasmussen, who has written extensively on the history of amphetamines, cited a disquieting statistic when writing about early amphetamine epidemics in America,

> … according to the FDA, of the roughly 8 billion to 10 billion 10-mg amphetamine tablets manufactured by drug firms annually in the United States by the late 1960s, up to one half were "diverted" from medical channels altogether.[11]

Not only were amphetamine-based drugs being manufactured at astronomically high rates (8 billion tablets each year!), approximately half of the output was illegally acquired by non-medical buyers. Pharmaceutical consumption had become as much a part of quotidian life as drinking a Coke. Wesselmann's inclusion of an Upjohn product in his work highlights this condition of contemporary life.

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[10] The Upjohn Company, *Upjohn News*, volume XVI, no. 8 (Kalamazoo, Michigan: The Upjohn Company, 1962).

[11] Nicolas Rasmussen, "America's First Amphetamine Epidemic 1929–1971: A Quantitative and Qualitative Retrospective with Implications for the Present," *American Journal of Public Health* 98, no. 6 (2008): 974–985.

The success of the pharmaceutical companies in the cultivation of such a vast consumer base is reliant upon many factors. Western society was certainly predisposed to addictive behaviors. But there was something altogether more attractive and potent in participating in this subculture of illicit consumption than buying a can of Campbell's soup or a bottle of Coke. Using drugs exceeded the limitations of class barriers in ways that other commodities could not. Under the narcotic effects of a recreationally used drug (including the abuse of prescribed amphetamines), class awareness might potentially be suspended by the user, who may be able to relinquish him or herself to the immediate experience.

Still Life #22 does not necessarily attempt to illustrate these neurological changes, perhaps because the public was only just becoming aware of how pharmaceuticals fit into modernized industry and consumer trends. The novel ways of art making in the 1960s were enabled by the same industrial innovations that made mass-production of commodity goods possible. Pop artists incorporated technologies like cameras, screenprints, and projectors into the processes of creating works of high art. Warhol famously employed others to produce screenprints in his studio, literally known as The Factory, blurring the conventional distinction between artist and worker. Wesselmann obtained actual industrially produced objects to incorporate into his assemblages, challenging the formal standards of high art. He purchased manufactured objects like refrigerator doors, kitchen timers, and pill bottles to feature in his work. They are literal representations of exactly what they *are.* Wesselmann does not lack the artistic adeptness to render these objects himself – he has chosen to let these objects convey the real, tangible, existence of their manufactured properties. To purchase these cheap commodity goods and feature them in his work is thus a triumphal (and cunning) inquiry into consumer culture.

Wesselmann's inclusion of a real bottle of pills produces an immediate and visceral emphasis on not just the pills and their narcotic effects, but their processes of industrial manufacturing. The production of art in the '60s mimics the production of consumer commodities, including drugs. One may even have difficulty in distinguishing a pop artist's studio from an industrial factory, since both are full of technological apparatuses and workers (figs. 4 and 5). Furthermore, artists and factory workers alike were exposed to the toxicity of the chemicals involved. The finished products, too, are more alike than we may think; the artwork and the pill often conceal the industrial manufacturing processes that created them. Yet, the synthetic, inorganic qualities of both are unmistakably apparent, perhaps more indicative of the conditions of modern life than something which is fraught with the symptoms of man-made subjectivity.

If the responsible use of pharmaceutical prescription drugs facilitated a pseudo-utopian, machine-like society, then the illicit misuse of them undermined this function. Consumers, in a pseudo-Marxist defiance of complacency with what the upper hand was quite literally feeding (read: prescribing) them, assumed temporary control of their own experiences. They used drugs to fuel social interaction, productivity, appearance, and experience. Artists like Warhol and his Superstar circle readily embraced the stimulating effects of amphetamines to sustain a massive work output. In many ways, amphetamine consumption nourished the immense prolificacy of '60s pop art. As it turns out, however, consumers welcomed this subculture of illicit drug participation a little *too* readily. In a rather quick turnaround, pharmaceutical drug misuse anticipated an epidemic of abuse and addiction, a trajectory that will be followed over the next three chapters.

The critical theory of the Situationist International offers a more nuanced understanding of how illicit drug consumption performs an equivocal role in the social experience, and thus, its ambivalent value to society and art. The Situationists detested the "society of the spectacle," in which citizens are all enslaved by the commodification of everyday life. The spectacle, enabled by capitalism and consumer culture, generates individuals who are incapable of confronting and transfiguring their own realities. Though they did not publish or make statements condoning or condemning the illicit use of drugs, the Situationists often utilized them to construct desirable, non-commodified situations of social interaction. A 1997 interview with Henri Lefebvre, the French Marxist philosopher whose early work informed and influenced the Situationists, discloses that the group in Amsterdam counted on LSD for exactly these reasons—the Parisian Situationists, on the other hand, mostly just vigorously drank alcohol.[12] The Situationists, to a significant extent, utilized drugs as a tool of social intervention. They eagerly recognized that narcotic effects had the potential to detach users from the spectacle and promote non-commodified interaction in social situations. Perhaps this was provisionally true. After all, it helped them to get closer to their own perfected vision of the world. This practice, however, was not sustainable; if they were to habitually resort to drugs, they would face the risk of becoming addicts and fail to realize the Situationist ideal. Furthermore, their reverence for drugs as a tool was a fundamentally flawed resolution, as drugs are prone to the deceptions described in Karl Marx's theory of commodity fetishism.

A commodity in a capitalist society abstracts and disguises the social networks and production behind it, even claiming for itself an inherent, independent value. The commodity

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[12] Kristin Ross and Henri Lefebvre, "Lefebvre on Situationists: An Interview," *October* 79 (1997): 69-83.

becomes fetishized when we forget that its real value was socially constructed, and that a complex nexus of labor and exploitation is intrinsic to its production. We idolize these commodities at the utter expense of human social knowledge and praxis. Drugs – pharmaceutical and illicit alike – fall prey to these issues, which become even more complex when the status of a drug's legality implicates varied social networks (the next chapter will look more closely at the centuries-old history of the opium trade and the international black market distribution and production of drugs like crack-cocaine and heroin). Not unlike the outlandishly synthetic quality of mass-produced consumer goods like Coke and television sets, a pharmaceutical pill's perfect, standardized tablet form conceals everything that went into its production– from years of lab work and research to its laborious, human-operated machine manufacture and packaging. (Chapter 4 will see examine Damien Hirst's interest in these qualities.) The pill supplants these processes and systems of social meaning; it becomes fetishized as a commodity the very moment the consumer/user evaluates the pill only with regard to its ability to generate their desired effects. The Upjohn vitamin advertisements mentioned earlier perfectly encapsulate this, replacing real food and all of its value (both nutritionally and socially, such as the cultural practice of sharing meals with friends and family around a table) with a single daily-dose pill.

Perhaps the role of amphetamine in the 1960s can best be illuminated by the words of Don McNeill, writing in *The Village Voice* in 1967:

> In the last decade, amphetamine has been conveniently and quietly accepted by the American culture. It is a drug tailored to the temptations of the times. For the executive and for those striving to succeed him, for anyone overcome with delinquent demands, it is an elixir of energy, a solution to the deadline dilemma, an antidote for drudgery. It offers a seductive illusion of brilliance and an abundant supply of enthusiasm.[13]

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[13] Don McNeill, "The A-Heads: An Amphetamine Apple in Psychedelic Eden," *Village Voice*, February 2, 1967, 11.

Amphetamines were used as a tool to function within the conditions of modern life. But, they were also virulent commodities greedily marketed and sold to unsuspecting consumers. They occupy a place of ambivalence in the 1960s, where the tension between user and drug does not favor a side. Wesselmann articulated the uncertainty of this relationship in *Still Life #22* by showcasing a real bottle of pills among other consumer commodities on a kitchen shelf. He expresses the proliferating presence of drugs in society, but his cool, commercial '60s pop aesthetic does not reveal the ultimate fate of mass consumerism. The productive consumption of drugs in the '60s could not be sustained for long; the West would soon be met with the callous epidemic of addiction.

Chapter Two – *Drug Addict*: The 1970s War on Drugs

The 1970s ushered in a profusion of new ideas, sentiments, and social practices, many of which will seem irrevocably at variance with the investigations and claims in this chapter. Most of us associate the decade with notions of free love, activism, bodily autonomy – and yes, drug-induced states of euphoria. These associations are not unsubstantiated, but as with anything, they need to be critically probed, for there may prove to be less-than-favorable relationships at play. The malign relationship between consumer culture and illicit drugs was rapidly becoming more apparent in the United States, where it was thrusted to the frontline of politics when President Richard Nixon officially declared drugs as America's "public enemy number one."[14] This war on drugs was not met quite so eagerly, of course, by those who were consuming the marijuana, LSD, and heroin that the government detested. The policies created to combat this were (and are) enormously complex, and often rooted in racially-biased agendas. The intricacies of government involvement will be discussed briefly in this chapter, but will be given even greater attention when we arrive at the next few decades. For the moment, the '70s will operate under journalist Patrick Anderson's characterization,

> It was said that sex was the "dirty little secret" of the Victorian era; in the America of the late 1970s, drug use seemed to have become the secret vice, the one that almost everyone enjoyed and almost no one admitted to.[15]

The very end of the last sentence is telling: while many people were using and enjoying drugs, there seems to have been a consensus that there was something fundamentally wrong about it, since "almost no one admitted to" participating. Was this because the government was pursuing

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[14] "Thirty Years of America's Drug War, a Chronology," Frontline, *PBS*, https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/drugs/cron/

[15] Patrick Anderson, *High in America: The true story behind NORML and the politics of marijuana* (New York: Viking Press, 1981), 13.

strong legal action against it and users did not want to be caught, or because they were coming to their own realizations that many of these drugs were highly addictive and/or detrimental to one's health? I cannot answer this conclusively, for it is certainly dependent on many factors and requires sociological research beyond the scope of this thesis. Instead, I hope to introduce consumer culture and art to this conversation. Two sculptures by American artist Duane Hanson can plausibly help us to see the trajectory of drug abuse continuing through the '70s as an expansion of the addictive consumer behavior fostered by the preceding two decades.

Hanson's grotesquely life-like sculptures of the '60s, '70s, and '80s are bizarrely funny, repulsive, surreal, and beautiful all at the same time. His 1970 *Supermarket Lady* is no exception (fig. 6). The beauty of the piece might be reserved for the immense talent of Hanson, who has created a figure so real and familiar that we virtually know her from somewhere else (actually, most of us share some commonality with her). She might even be taken as an icon of Hanson's contemporary America: an overweight, distasteful consumer. She wears her hair in curlers, sticking out of a kerchief tied around her head. She pushes a shopping cart nearly overflowing with packaged food and consumer goods, but she looks ahead in a distracted, blurry-eyed daze, appearing almost hypnotized – perhaps by the unseen aisles of factory produced food stretching into infinity before her. A cigarette teeters precariously between her lips, yellowing teeth arranged inside her open mouth. Her eyes are red from inflamed blood vessels and her waxy skin is marked by bruises and splotches like an overripe banana. Scabs mottle her chest and face, most notably the one by the corner of her mouth. Art historian Erika Doss described such work of Hanson as "deliberately crafted social portraits."[16] In her essay, she looks at a related 1971 sculpture: *Woman Eating*. Created only a year after *Supermarket Lady*, they can almost be seen

[16] Erika Doss, "Duane Hanson's Woman Eating," *American Art* 20, no. 2 (2006): 9.

as the same woman captured in two of the key moments in (food) consumer culture: buying and eating. It is not, in fact, the same woman, but the two pieces seem to participate in the same critique. On some level, many figures in Hanson's body of work *do* look similar – that is, ordinary, anonymous, but exceedingly detailed American stereotypes (and if you were to have any doubt as to what stereotype is being characterized, you need only consult the title of each piece).

These sculptures are not unlike Wesselmann's still lives as they both engage with mass culture and consumerism, making use of both actual and replica consumer goods as objects featured in the work. *Supermarket Lady*'s cart is full of factory produced food, both name-brand and generic. At least four cans of Coke sit on the bottom of the cart, buried under Sunshine store-brand cans of beans, a box of chocolate chip cookies, and five boxes of "Dinner Turkey" and "Dinner Ham" among other unappetizing artificial packaged foods.[17] Hanson diverges from Wesselmann, though, by his treatment of the human subject. Where Wesselmann's still lives rarely featured people (and if they did, they were cut and pasted from source material like advertisements), Hanson has dedicated his career to creating unfathomably hyperrealistic figures though a meticulous process by hand. In other words, Wesselmann is primarily concerned with the faculty of consumer products whereas Hanson emphasizes the *human dimension* of mass cultural participation.

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[17] It is possible that the Sunshine brand label featured in the cart of *Supermarket Lady* is from the grocery store chain that was popular in the Midwest from 1931 to 1996. Hanson, who was born and raised in Minnesota, would have likely shopped at these grocery stores.
(Eric Renshaw, "Looking Back: The soaring rise of Sunshine grocery stores," *Argus Leader,* January 6, 2017, https://www.argusleader.com/story/life/2017/01/06/looking-back-soaring-rise-sunshine-grocery-stores/96218378/.)

Supermarket Lady conveys a timely representation of Americans' detrimental infatuation with consumption. The intentionally incorporated signs of bodily decay are indicative of this; they are in contradistinction with the protracted shelf life of the products piling up in her shopping cart. They reinforce the mortality of human life versus the synthetic, unchanging permanency of most consumer goods. Where supermarkets may appear a utopian arena of obtainable abundance, the human body reveals the dystopian reality. Hanson shows this reality to be one that is fundamentally adverse to the human condition (hence, Anderson's characterization of late '70s drug use as Americans' "vice"). Her bruised arms, bloodshot eyes, and skin mottled with scabs suggest that she is suffering from the effects of addiction. Hanson was not necessarily critiquing the drug market or the specific use of drugs, but this sculpture can be understood as equating consumer addiction with the potency of drug addiction. This would have been immediately recognizable in 1971, particularly considering that Nixon's declared "War on Drugs" made headlines that very same year.

The false desirability of the universal class experience one might obtain through participating in mass culture and consumption was dethroned by Duane Hanson's uncomfortably revealing sculptures. Hanson was not degrading the middle- and working-class people he portrayed (in fact, he greatly admired the way that the grubbiness of their appearance showed that they had "fought the battle of life").[18] Instead, he was exposing the not-so-attractive effects of consumerism on the human psyche. It is not so outrageous, then, to see his 1974 work, *Drug Addict*, as an extension – or perhaps future version of – *Supermarket Lady* (fig. 7). *Drug Addict* portrays a disheveled young man sitting with his back against the wall (whichever wall the sculpture is placed against). The left sleeve of his wrinkled, blue unbuttoned shirt is rolled up

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[18] Erika Doss, "Duane Hanson's Woman Eating," 12.

past his elbow, revealing a band tied around his lower bicep. The white undershirt is dirty around the chest – perhaps with sweat, perhaps dirt. The figure is wearing red bell-bottom pants, soiled white espadrille shoes, and a pair of aviator sunglasses hang from his shirt pocket – so iconic of '70s fashion. His eyes are closed, mouth slightly agape, and his head is rolled back against the wall, his Adam's apple protruding from his neck. A spoon, piece of foil, and package of needles are on the floor between his splayed legs. A syringe loosely hangs between the fingers of his right hand as his banded left arm rests on the inside of his thigh, palm open. It is unclear if his expression and loose posture are the result of the euphoric rush from shooting heroin, or if he has lost consciousness. It doesn't really matter; this is not a judgement passed on the user, but a visceral display of the kind of unmistakable addiction that has become prominent in American society.

If, for a moment, we consider *Drug Addict* as a kind of "phase two" of *Supermarket Lady,* it suggests a direct relationship between consumer culture and drug addiction. It poses consumerism as the precursor to, or even a cause of, illicit addiction. It proposes the devolution of our sociocultural trajectory. Moreover, this seemingly exponential trend of increasingly threatening addiction is engendered by a capitalist society – one that favors monetary gain over the well-being of the individual (and even of society at large). This reading of Hanson's sculptures makes use of existing theories to formulate a possible new understanding of the way in which the intersection of art and drugs may convey the changing zeitgeist of a postmodern America, particularly during the '70s.

The 1970s may have been a decade of bell-bottom jeans, free love, and prolific art production, but it was also a decade of presidential scandal, war, and drug abuse. These two disparate visions of the '70s seem to form a dichotomy, much like *Supermarket Lady* – but a

more comprehensive look at the nexus of these seemingly dissimilar sociopolitical forces reveals a society that had been a long time in the making. A 1971 congressional report on the alarming rates of heroin addiction among U.S. troops in Vietnam also exposed the drug's unprecedented infiltration of mainland Americans:

> Five years ago the heroin problem was restricted to the ghetto areas of our major cities. Now it is spreading to the suburbs and is found among the children of the wealthy and well-to-do as well as among the poor.[19]

Heroin was proving to be a cross-class agent, much like the amphetamines of the 1960s. The paramount difference, though, is that heroin was just about universally recognized as "bad" (whereas amphetamine-based drugs were regularly prescribed and frequently misconstrued as safe). Furthermore, heroin acquired in the '70s was illegal, traded on a rampant black market. I am not claiming that the amphetamine consumers of the '60s specifically turned into the heroin users portrayed by Hanson's *Drug Addict* (heroin as a recreational drug actually far predates the amphetamine crisis). What I postulate is that narcotic addiction had grown increasingly more severe after the onset of capitalist-driven mass consumer culture in the '50s – and that, mostly unbeknownst to art history, art was alert to this trajectory.

Opium has intentionally been cultivated for its euphoric effects since ancient times, and its globalized trade has invariably led to immense conflict, particularly during the mid-19th century "Opium Wars" waged on China by the British.[20] Despite the devastating effects of the opium trade on countless people, Western artists romanticized the drug and its "orientalism."

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[19] Morgan Murphy and Robert Steele, Committee on Foreign Affairs, *The World Heroin Problem: Report of Special Study Mission (pursuant to H. Res. 109)* (92nd Congress, 1st session), Washington: Government Printing Press, 1971, 8.

[20] Nick Miroff, "From Teddy Roosevelt to Trump: How drug companies triggered an opioid crisis a century ago," *The Washington Post,* October, 17, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/retropolis/wp/2017/09/29/the-greatest-drug-fiends-in-the-world-an-american-opioid-crisis-in-1908/?utm_term=.44c24c1073f0.

Georges Clairin's 1872 oil painting, *The Opium Smokers*, is not the only artwork to feature such drugs (fig. 8). This work, though, does not critically evaluate the role of opium in society or its interaction with the market. The pieces treated as case-studies in this thesis were selected because they do disclose greater insight as to how drugs, people, the capitalist market, and art historical theory meaningfully intersect in a postmodern society. Like amphetamines, modern day abuse of opioids has been largely fostered by war; Civil War veterans were among the first morphine-dependent addicts in America.[21] In 1898, heroin was produced and marketed as a less-addictive pharmaceutical substitute to morphine.[22] Shortly thereafter, the Harrison Act of 1914 restricted the importation, sale, and possession of opiates to the "medical channel."[23] Then, in 1924, the United States Congress passed the Anti-Heroin Act, completely banning opium for the manufacture of heroin. This legislation produced a vacuum for a virulent heroin black market to emerge.

The illegal importation, distribution, and consumption of heroin was left relatively unbridled (mostly operating under the radar) until it grew substantially large enough that the U.S. government could no longer ignore it. The report on American troops' heroin addiction helped catalyze government intervention. The report's most damning sentences implicate not just the troops overseas, but American society at large,

> Contributing to the epidemic use of heroin is its ready availability, the frustrations and boredom growing out of the war, and the fact that the drug culture in the Armed Forces reflects American society as a whole… Those who have become addicted to the high quality heroin available in South Vietnam will have no choice but to inject the much more diluted heroin that is available in the United States.[24]

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[21] Nick Miroff, "From Teddy Roosevelt to Trump: How drug companies triggered an opioid crisis a century ago."
[22] John Kaplan, "A Primer on Heroin," *Stanford Law Review* 27, no. 3 (1975): 802.
[23] Ibid., 805.
[24] Morgan Murphy and Robert Steele, Committee on Foreign Affairs, *The World Heroin Problem: Report of Special Study Mission,* 18.

That "the drug culture in the Armed Forces reflects American society as a whole" had been presented to Congress indicates that the "secret vice" of drug use in the '70s described by Anderson was not so secret after all. It was, however, fecund grounds for artists like Hanson to critique and articulate. Wesselmann and Hanson may be among the first prominent artists to specifically respond to this concept through their artistic practices, but that is not to say that other important artists and movements have not critically engaged with indirectly related topics. The question of commodity fetishization that was discussed in relation to Wesselmann's *Still Life #22* and factory-produced pharmaceutical pills in the previous chapter holds even more application in the context of '70s activism and the cultural climate.

In 1969, the newly founded Art Workers' Coalition was one such group of artist activists that sought to bring attention and value to the processes and inherent work involved in art making. Julia Bryan-Wilson writes that the term *art work* implicates the "artists' collective working conditions, the demolition of the capitalist market, and even revolution."[25] The artists who identified as part of this group pushed back against the traditional museum-artist relationship, which essentially fetishized the artwork, disregarding the networks of social relations and work that produced the art. Bryan-Wilson quotes a statement from artist member Lee Lozano during the Artists' Worker Coalition's opening hearing on April 10th, 1969 in New York City,

> For me there can be no art revolution that is separate from a science revolution, a political revolution, an education revolution, a drug revolution, a sex revolution, or a personal revolution.[26]

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[25] Julia Bryan-Wilson, *Art Workers: Radical Practice in the Vietnam War Era,* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 1.
[26] Ibid., 17.

Lozano mentioned just about every type of "revolution" that was taking place in the '60s and '70s; the "drug revolution" was one among many in her comprehensive portrait of the contemporary sociopolitical landscape. Additionally, her statement asserts that each type of revolution – even of drugs – is inextricable from the revolution of art. To be sure, Lozano was thinking of a drug revolution in a decidedly different way than the premise of this thesis. A multi-media artist, she often created instructions or text pieces that documented and described various experiments. During her 1969 work, *Grass Piece,* she got unceasingly high from smoking marijuana every day for just over the period of one month (fig. 9).[27] She attempted to end the experiment with taking a cap of mescaline (an illicit psychedelic that has hallucinogenic effects comparable to those of LSD), but she wrote that it "blanked out, must've been a dud, a bad cap." Over the course of this piece, she remarked on how it took increasing amounts of the drug to reach a high. She was developing a tolerance and postulated that her "feeling wasted might be from smoking so much grass." This type of artwork engages with the relationship between the properties of the drug and the user and is largely confined to the scope of one artist's personal experience. While this thesis is primarily interested in creating a new discourse that considers the wider sociopolitical implications of a society that is increasingly consuming illicit drugs, and how the simultaneous trajectory of art has made room for works that indicate and critique these implications, such subjective and personal works like *Grass Piece* still certainly deserve attention. The more intimate relationship between an artist and his or her own drug use is symptomatic of the "drug revolution" of the '60s and '70s and can add a great deal to the

[27] At the bottom of Grass Piece, a note from Lozano reads, "Aside from when I woke up (down) in the morning there were two occasions when I wasn't high during this piece, about a couple of hours each."

discourse surrounding this topic (in fact, it will be considered in the final chapter with artist and activist Nan Goldin).

Heroin in America is an archetypical instance of Marx's commodity fetishization. The illicit drug, like amphetamine, was consumed across classes – but unlike the largely prescribed pharmaceutical pills of the '60s, heroin users relied on a flourishing black market to acquire that ever-so-desired commodity. The narcotic's virulent history consisting of trade, war, and imperial domination was no less convoluted in the '70s. The same 1971 report that exposed the prevalence of heroin addiction among U.S. troops in Vietnam (as well as the American people at large) also included an extensive account of the global production, distribution, and consumption of heroin. The report even contained a four-tiered pyramid to illustrate the illegal heroin market in South Vietnam – which can also be used to outline the illegal heroin market anywhere, including the United States (fig. 10).[28] A black market as large as the one for heroin operates precariously and convolutedly with regards to the legal capitalist market, but it is no less capitalistic in its structure and ambitions. The pyramid illustration categorizes the four tiers of the heroin market in a way that is not unlike the Marxist demarcations of class. The financiers and backers occupy the top of the pyramid, rather similarly to the bourgeoisie, both maintaining monetary control over the means of production. The second tier consists of the producers, smugglers, and importers while the third tier is populated by the drug distributors. The second and third tiers are comparable to the petty bourgeoisie and proletariat, as they are dominated by, or sell their labor power to, the financers and backers. Finally, the fourth tier and bottom of the pyramid consists of the street peddlers, undoubtedly the equivalent of Marx's lumpenproletariat.

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[28] Morgan Murphy and Robert Steele, Committee on Foreign Affairs, *The World Heroin Problem: Report of Special Study Mission,* 22.

They are the ones who are completely exploited by the system and receive virtually no monetary or status benefit. This structure is an illegal one, but it is one of labor nonetheless. Moreover, the social networks and systems inherent in the black market for heroin are permeated with violence, corruption, and inequity. None of this matters to the user who shoots up and fetishizes heroin, but in Hanson's *Drug Addict*, it is all implied.

Supermarket Lady and *Drug Addict* were selected for this chapter because they convey two acute points along the trajectory observed in this thesis. The devolution of '60s licit consumerism and mass culture is rendered by the dystopian juxtaposition of the grotesquely-familiar, decaying human body and the cornucopia of nearly-immutable consumer goods. It is one of the first postmodern works that could be read as suggesting reference to the degenerative social and physical effects of societal addiction. Four years later, *Drug Addict* thrust this implicit relationship to the forefront of the American consciousness, exposing '70s heroin culture as a severe consequence of mass consumerism. As illicit drug use proliferated across the classes and the government declared war on drugs, the sociocultural-sentient artist Duane Hanson augmented his oeuvre of "social portraits" with two unforgettable characters: the consumer of yesterday and the user of today. In the subsequent part of this trajectory, the visual presentation of drugs themselves will become potent aesthetic agents.

Chapter Three – Just Say Yes: Aesthetics Versus Policy in the '80s and '90s

In 1982, First Lady Nancy Reagan beseeched American youth to "Just say no," but the oeuvre of British artist Damien Hirst and the convoluted landscape of American politics show that drug culture in the capitalist West was far more complicated than she hoped. In the 1980s, unprecedentedly aggressive Reagan-era policies took illicit drugs to task, transmuting the dangers purported by Nixon into draconian laws that disproportionately targeted black and Latino communities. Meanwhile, pharmaceutical companies were offering their own advice to the white population – that is, just say yes. The pharmaceutical industry did not actually have its own three-word catchphrase to entice legions of customers and consumers, but it did subscribe to a strategy that was altogether more compelling: marketing wrapped up in aesthetic appeal. Furthermore, this specific aesthetic appeal was uniquely potent in a consumer society, one which had been primed by the prior decades of supermarket "utopia" investigated by the pop artists. Various large-scale works of Hirst in the '80s and '90s contemplate pharmaceutical drugs and social desires in the setting of a capitalist society that has also taken punitive (and racially-biased) measures against illicit drug consumption. The writings of art historians that ponder consumerism and egalitarian class experience illuminate the tangled hypocrisy of such government-imposed policies and help us to make sense of how the aesthetics of pharmaceuticals have appealed to a consumer society and perpetuated the trajectory of addiction.

Hirst has demonstrated a near-obsession with pharmaceuticals throughout his career; he has produced multiple series dedicated to the subject since the late '80s, ranging from paintings and screenprints to sculptures and full-scale installations. In 1998, he even opened a restaurant that was designed to look like a real pharmacy – both on the exterior and interior (fig. 11). It was apparently so convincing that Hirst was threatened with "legal action by the Royal

Pharmaceutical Society for misleading the public."[29] Although the original restaurant has since closed, Hirst opened a newer version in 2016, aptly named *Pharmacy 2*. Here, visitors are invited to drink and eat in a space modeled to look like a pharmacy that has embraced contemporary art and aesthetics. The restaurant features pieces from Hirst's series, *Medicine Cabinets.* Even the bar's façade is wrapped in a long back-lit image of a colorful cornucopia of pills (fig. 12). This restaurant has given new, more tangible meaning to the '60s concept investigated in the first chapter: the "fruit salad-" or "pharm-" party. Here, handfuls of pills are not actually consumed (except visually), but the romanticized concept of pills in contemporary Western society has been capitalized on. Somehow, the vibrant concoction of pills is appetizing and associated with the kind of commercialized consumption that is specific to the satisfaction of eating food. This has been a long time in the making; the trajectory of drugs depicted in postmodern art has been recorded by artists like Tom Wesselmann and Duane Hanson, but the work of Damien Hirst has explicitly and consciously put pharmaceuticals, art, and capitalism into the same physical arena. That is not to say, however, that illicit drugs like heroin and cocaine had faded from the social landscape. On the contrary, while pharmaceutical industries were celebrated for creating larger-than-ever (white) consumer bases, the Reagan administration was strategically imprisoning communities of color for recreational drug use.[30] A society rife with such contradictions and hypocrisy is not unusual or unfamiliar to us, but often remains difficult to analyze. Hirst's

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[29] "Pharmacy Restaurant & Bar," Exhibitions & Events, Damienhirst.com, http://damienhirst.com/exhibitions/projects/1998/pharmacy-restaurant#_ftnref.

[30] The mass incarceration of people of color over recreational drug use (particularly under the policies of the Reagan administration) is critical to understanding the trajectory of drugs in Western culture, but I cannot give nearly enough attention that it deserves in this chapter alone. This is among one of the most important topics in 20th century American history, though it has been one of the least discussed. For a poignant and comprehensive introduction to this discussion, I cannot recommend enough Netflix's documentary, *13th*, directed by Ava DuVernay – who also directed the critically praised film, *Selma*.

pharmaceutical artworks can help us to understand how the course of drug consumer culture – illicit and legal alike – has diverged in this way.

Although it is not Hirst's first encounter with the subject of drugs, his 1999 series, *The Last Supper,* draws a cogent relationship between traditional views regarding consumption, and the modern agency of the pharmaceutical industry. This series is composed of thirteen screenprints, each resembling various prescribed drugs in pharmaceutical packaging. Comically, each package consisting of a real drug like "Ethambutol Hydrochloride" (used to treat tuberculosis) is given a brand name in larger font after foods like corned beef and meatballs (fig. 13). The concept of this series primarily acknowledges two things: a direct relationship between food and prescribed drugs as consumer goods (and thus, the inherent capitalist forces that drive their production), and the conscious integration of aesthetics into pharmaceutical packaging. The first is a more obvious interpretation of this series. Hirst proposes a similarity between food and pharmaceutical drugs that has already been developing for a few decades. Wesselmann's still life examined in the first chapter implied this relationship (albeit less consciously), without the foresight of knowing where the trajectory was heading. These screenprints are thus not anticipatory or predictive, but rather a reflection of the contemporary socioeconomic reality in the West. What exactly is that reality? It is one where the consumption of medicine (and by extension – all kinds of drugs) is just as banal and ubiquitous as, say, a steak and kidney dinner – and where drugs are perhaps even consumed quasi-religiously, as implied by the title of the series. A critic's review from the same year wrote that this series suggests a "…futuristic world where food is ingested like a gel-cap, or, – maybe worse – a present day of takeovers and monopolies run amok, where food and drugs mingle in the belly of a single multinational."[31] The

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[31] "The Last Supper by Damien Hirst," *Art on Pape*r 4, no. 2 (November-December, 1999): 76.

economic implications of this series were not lost on contemporary viewers. The scope of this thesis posits that certain artists have been attentive to the ways in which the trajectory of consumerism has plausibly contributed to licit and illicit drug addiction in the West. *The Last Supper* reveals that food and medicine have a uniquely dynamic relationship. Strangely enough, the pharmaceutical industry is heavily reliant upon the food industry. It is well documented that industrially produced food has contributed to deteriorating health among consumers, causing many health defects and complications like heart disease. The pharmaceutical economy has benefited immensely from manufacturing and selling drugs to undo or combat such adverse health complications. The short essay accompanying Hirst's series on the Tate's website puts this succinctly,

> Medicines, prescribed by doctors to alleviate and cure illness, are commodities manufactured and sold by large corporations. Like the Brillo boxes, Coke bottles and Campbell's Soup packaging imitated by American artist Andy Warhol (1928-87) in the 1960s, Hirst's version of *The Last Supper* refers to the everyday dependence on reliable panaceas which medical and fast food industries feed off.[32]

This sentence not only puts pharmaceuticals and food on the same plane of commodification, but also links late '90s British consumerism with that of '60s America. Hirst's work thus becomes an extension of the ideas and socioeconomic environment scrutinized by American pop artists like Warhol and Hanson. This trajectory of drug consumption is not specific to America, but rather a phenomenon of the capitalist West. This first reading of *The Last Supper* serves as an excellent summation of the *transition* of mass food consumption into licit and illicit drug addiction. Like Warhol, Hirst is borrowing from popular culture, using mass commodity goods as subject matter. Illicit drugs as commodity goods and mass-produced pharmaceuticals are rarely recognized as

[32] Elizabeth Manchester, "Corned Beef," Art & Artists, Tate, 2002, https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/hirst-corned-beef-p11653.

elements of popular culture, which is likely a reason they have received little attention from art historical scholars. It is exactly because licit and illicit drugs alike are, in fact, considerable elements of mass consumerism that Hirst's pharmaceutical artworks are so effective at communicating notions about popular culture.

Another concept that *The Last Supper* acknowledges – which has not been discussed by art historians – is the integration of aesthetics into pharmaceutical packaging, an integration which has in turn been appropriated by Hirst to create art. More modern packaging has embraced streamlined, minimal designs often with bright or bold colors. While pharmaceutical packaging is not artistic *per se,* it certainly is aesthetically informed. Hirst plays around with these elements in *The Last Supper* while maintaining the standard pharmaceutical look (in fact, many of the screenprints are slightly altered versions of real pharmaceutical packaging featured in his *Medicine Cabinets*). He traces the origin of contemporary pharmaceutical aesthetics to minimalism: "…a lot of the actual boxes of medicines are all very minimal and could be taken directly from minimalism…"[33] Indeed, the top of Hirst's "pharmaceutical" package screenprint, *Chicken,* looks like Donald Judd's various copper and steel rectangular bars stacked on the wall (fig. 14). The other screenprints feature very basic yet consciously designed elements, imitating the pharmaceutical packages lining the shelves in real-life pharmacies. Hirst even dissects corporate branding, manipulating the logo of what would be each drug's respective manufacturer, replacing it with his own name transformed into a trademark logo. Many of the "Hirst-brand" logos are derived from real existing ones from many of the pharmaceuticals displayed in his *Medicine Cabinets* (such as the companies Roche, Bayer, and Allen and

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[33] Elizabeth Manchester, "Chicken," Art & Artists, Tate, 2002, https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/hirst-chicken-p11649.

Hanburys). *The Last Supper*, like Warhol's soup cans and Brillo boxes, appropriates pre-existing aesthetic schematics from industrially produced consumer goods, but Hirst has managed to implicate two seemingly unrelated industries: that of food and that of pharmaceuticals.

The function of aesthetics in pharmaceutical packaging and displays can perhaps be even better understood through Hirst's series, *Medicine Cabinets,* and his room-size installation, *Pharmacy*. He first began working on the series in 1988 with *Sinner,* eventually submitting a total of 12 medicine cabinets for his thesis show in 1989 at Goldsmiths College of Art in London.[34] Each cabinet is named after a different track from the Sex Pistols' 1977 album, *Never Mind the Bollocks, Here's the Sex Pistols,* including *Bodies, Liar, Pretty Vacant,* and *New York.*[35] Hirst first acquired the empty pharmaceutical containers and packages from his grandmother after he requested she leave him her medicine upon her death.[36] Like a vitrine displaying a museum's most precious artifacts through a protective glass veil, the wall-mounted white medicine cabinets contain carefully arranged assortments of colorful prescribed and over-the-counter pharmaceutical drugs behind sliding glass doors. *Enemy*, part of Hirst's 1989 thesis,

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[34] Arthur C. Danto, "Damien Hirst's Medicine Cabinets: Art, Death, Sex, Society and Drugs," Texts, Damien Hirst, 2010, http://damienhirst.com/texts/2010/jan--arthur-c-dan.
[35] The Sex Pistols occupied a palpable place in 1970s Western popular culture and are often credited with ushering in the punk movement in the United Kingdom. The notorious life of band member Sid Vicious (born Simon John Ritchie) was saturated with dramatic and mysterious circumstances – most notably involving illicit drugs. He was charged with the murder of his girlfriend, Nancy Spungen, who died in a Manhattan, New York hotel from a stab wound in 1978 (the year following the album's release). Vicious reportedly awoke from a drugged stupor to find her dead in their hotel bathroom. Vicious pleaded not guilty and posted bail, only to die from a heroin overdose in 1979 four months after Spungen's murder. Vicious' mother, Anne Beverly, allegedly administered the fatal dose of heroin to her son, who did not want to go back to prison and had wanted to uphold a "death pact" he purportedly made with Spungen. Although this episode of the Sex Pistols' history was not referenced by Hirst, it was the history that he was all too familiar with when he began the *Medicine Cabinets* in 1989.
[36] "Medicine Cabinets," Texts, Damienhirst.com, http://www.damienhirst.com/texts1/series/medicine-cabinets#_ftnref2.

is one such medicine cabinet (fig. 15). It features, among a profusion of other pharmaceuticals, OxyContin, OxyNorm, and Depakote. It also houses a container of baby powder, the alcoholic antiseptic Videne, and a package of vitamin B1 pills. If we consider, for a moment, the blue Upjohn multivitamin supplement in Wesselmann's 1962 still life and the topic of the final chapter of this thesis (contemporary opioid addiction – largely spurred by the over-prescription of drugs like OxyContin), Hirst's *Medicine Cabinets* seem perfectly poised in the middle of the trajectory of drug consumerism. *Enemy,* does, after all, house both vitamin B1 pills and OxyContin in the same medicine cabinet, like a profile of one individual's descent into drug addiction. I am not claiming that Hirst was intentionally acknowledging this specific moment of time between the '60s and the '90s, but his art was nonetheless aware of or responsive to a cultural and socioeconomic phenomenon. He was certainly conscious of the pervasiveness of pharmaceutical drugs in everyday life, taking their places amongst other mass-produced consumer commodities. And, like the pop artists of the '60s, Hirst has taken to making art out of industrially produced goods. He has revealed much about this process, admitting that his arrangements would make sense to any viewer but an actual pharmacist or somebody with knowledge of medical drugs,

> …the arrangement would make no clinical sense to someone who understood medicines – why this drug is here and that drug is there… 'I was unaware of what the drugs do. I just put like with like. So I quite liked the idea that to a hell of a lot of people they looked so confident, but then to somebody who knows what's going on…it's a mess.'[37]

Among "like with like" (regarding colors and design), Hirst also cited the physical anatomy of the human body, life, and death as sources of his earlier aesthetic direction. It is particularly interesting to look at the *Medicine Cabinets* as they evolved with each new addition to the series,

[37] Arthur C. Danto, "Damien Hirst's Medicine Cabinets: Art, Death, Sex, Society and Drugs."

extending all the way to 2012. It is evident that Hirst has refined his aesthetic overtime, each cabinet becoming much more deliberately and intentionally arranged (in 2008, he even made four *black* cabinets instead of his typical white ones). After trying to understand these works in the context of consumerism, I believe there is an even more compelling reason why pharmaceutical packaging appeals to consumers – and by extension, why these works succeed as art. The answer lies partially with the logic traditionally used in postmodernist theory to rationalize mass consumerism. Max Hollein's description of consumers as "less attracted by products and services than by projected contents and characteristics" readily applies to pharmaceutical consumers, too.[38] The illusion of what these drugs promise – perfect health, weight loss, better breathing, even an extended life span – is more alluring than the drug itself, yet the physical drug and one's projected image of their most perfect self are conflated into one. This superficial edge to pharmaceutical drugs is reinforced by the *Medicine Cabinets*. The packages do not actually contain drugs; they are empty. But, the illusion is there all the same, and knowing that they are empty does not detract from the aesthetic pleasantness of or desire to consume Hirst's artworks. The physical drug is secondary to its "projected contents." Never mind spotty success rates, adverse side effects, and often burdensome medical costs – pharmaceutical drugs, so plentifully stacked in a cabinet waiting to be plucked from the shelf and swallowed with a glass of water, pledge the perfected version of one's self.

Hirst's 1992 site-specific installation, *Pharmacy*, may very well be the perfect summation of the intersection of pharmaceuticals and postmodern art. Included in the Tate's 2002 exhibition, *Shopping: A Century of Art and Consumer Culture,* this room-size installation was

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[38] Max Hollein, "Shopping," in *Shopping: A Century of Art and Consumer Culture*, ed. Christopher Grunenberg and Max Hollein (Hatje Cantz Publishers: 2002), 13.

like a real pharmacy with a few additions typical of Hirst's bizarre and grotesque style (fig. 16). It has been the subject of many different interpretations and discussions, but it is particularly compelling within the framework of this thesis. In his essay published in a book accompanying the Tate's 2002 exhibition (the book and exhibition share the same title), Hollein describes the "fundamentally creative dialogue between art and consumer aesthetics":

> The methods and special effects of modern shopping – the endless, the excessive, the superabundance, the created fireworks of colours and shapes, the emphasising of the surface and the easy decodability find an echo in their systematic methods, fascination, beauty and perfidy…During the whole of the twentieth century artists were fascinated by the magnitude of the temple of consumption and enticed by the subtlety of the commercial methods of display and presentation.[39]

The pharmacy may be the zenith of commercial presentation, perfecting the systematic method designed to attract consumers. Hirst was acutely aware of this beguiling effect of a modern pharmacy. In an interview, he admired the way refined, minimal pharmaceutical packages harmonize with each other, rather than the "big battle for attention" among competing brands in a supermarket.[40] There was undoubtedly aesthetic intent behind the packaging and display of pharmaceuticals, much the same as the goods in any supermarket or store selling commodities. The pharmacy, arguably, has found an even more successful (read: appealing) system. While complete and unobstructed access to these bountiful shelves of ailment-treating drugs is restricted for the typical consumer or shopper (one does need a degree, after all, to become a pharmacist and stand behind the counter), Hirst's installation has made it possible for the viewer to immerse herself in the infinite possibilities of industrial medicine. With this installation, Hirst has crossed the boundary from consumer experience into art; the relocation of the "pharmacy" to

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[39] Max Hollein, "Shopping," 14.
[40] Damien Hirst, "In Conversation," interview by Gordon Burn, *Explore Damien Hirst's Pharmacy*, Excerpt One, Tate, October 3, 2001, https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/hirst-pharmacy-t07187/explore-damien-hirsts-pharmacy.

an art gallery and the unrestricted (visual) access granted to the viewer finally lets the full effects of pharmaceutical aesthetics materialize. That this installation even found its way into a massive exhibition on shopping over the last century is indicative of the changing perception and function of pharmacies. Once reserved for the occasional bout of illness, runs to the pharmacy have become as frequent an errand as a run to the corner store for milk. *Pharmacy* recognizes that industrially produced drugs were increasingly being seen as regularly consumed commodity goods rather than a last hope for an affliction.

By the ‘90s, much of the West had accepted pharmaceuticals as just another commodity. Their manufacture was susceptible to the same consumer demands, market trends, and corporate imperatives as any other mass-produced good. They had become as much a part of life under capitalism as Coca-Cola or the latest style of blue jean – and consequently, were worthy of the attention they received from artists like Hirst. The bourgeois industries that owned their production accumulated massive wealth while intentionally stimulating a massive epidemic of (opioid) addiction that would soon hit the West. The next and final chapter will dissect this epidemic, but we must first pause to understand a sociopolitical paradox entrenched in racial prejudice that American politics inflicted on its non-white population. While pharmaceutical industries were marketing to the masses, coaxing them to consume the endless shelves of legally manufactured (yet nonetheless addictive and deadly) drugs, the American government was targeting and incriminating those who committed illicit drug offenses—even very minor ones. Nixon’s war on drugs was perpetuated by a dangerous set of policies that incarcerated disproportionate numbers of non-white recreational drug users. During the presidency of Ronald Reagan, the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986 established a 100:1 disparity in sentencing between crack cocaine and powder cocaine offenses, despite there being no rational basis for

distinguishing the two illicit drugs from each other (they are two forms of the same drug).[41] In other words, the "possession of five grams of crack cocaine would mandate the same minimum sentence as 500 grams of powder cocaine."[42] Congress was acutely aware that crack cocaine, the "cheaper" version of powder cocaine, was primarily used by those in a lower income bracket.[43] Accordingly, the punitive punishments disproportionately targeted, incriminated, and incarcerated minorities – that is, blacks and Latinos. A 1998 essay published by the Academy of Political Science stated that "in 1989, African Americans, representing 12-15 percent of all drug use in the United States, made up 41 percent of all arrests."[44] Moreover, the '80s were marked by a period of public distrust of the Reagan Administration and the CIA's handling of the Contra war in Nicaragua and the Iran-Contra affair. Reports and allegations emerged that the CIA was aware of and helped facilitate the smuggling of cocaine into the United States (the profits of which helped to fund the U.S.-backed Contras in Nicaragua), and thus prompted the growth of the domestic crack cocaine problem. Although an investigation launched by the FBI exonerated the CIA from the allegation of facilitating cocaine trafficking, reports concluded that U.S.

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[41] Deborah Small, "The War on Drugs Is a War on Racial Justice," *Social Research* 68, no. 3 (Fall 2001): 899.
[42] "U.S. Supreme Court Weighs 100-To-1 Disparity in Crack/Powder Cocaine Sentencing," ACLU, October 2, 2007, https://www.aclu.org/news/us-supreme-court-weighs-100-1-disparity-crackpowder-cocaine-sentencing.
[43] United States Sentencing Commission, "Special Report to the Congress: Cocaine and Federal Sentencing Policy," (February, 1995), viii, https://www.ussc.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/news/congressional-testimony-and-reports/drug-topics/199502-rtc-cocaine-sentencing-policy/EXECSUM.pdf, viii.
[44] Cathy Lisa Schneider, "Racism, Drug Policy, and AIDS," *Political Science Quarterly* 113, no. 3 (Autumn 1998): 438. A tangential but relevant contemporary statistic from 2010 reveals that the black population accounts for only 13% of the entire United States population, but 40% of all incarcerated people (jail, state, and federal prisons) (https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/rates.html).

officials were indeed aware of Contra culpability.[45] While the Reagan Administration continued its relentless war on drugs, many Americans held the view that the government was colluding with Nicaraguan cocaine smugglers. These statistics and political circumstances are alarmingly inequitable, but serve to demonstrate a critical point. American policy and economy in the '80s and '90s was largely hypocritical; while pharmaceutical companies – the gold standards of capitalist success – were legally contributing to and worsening drug addiction, the government was categorically condemning *illicit* drugs as they implied "undesirable" consumers.

When Wesselmann featured a bottle of blue multivitamin pills in his 1962 still life, he was conscious of the growing status of licit and illicit drugs as commodity goods. But, he could not have anticipated the convoluted nuances that would later define the perception and consumption of them in the pre-millennial West. Hirst's repeated attention to pharmaceuticals in the '80s and '90s showed us that the aesthetics of packaging and display were (and are) deliberate agents of marketing, feasibly with the intent of seducing users and promoting addictive consumer behavior. Inadvertently – or not, such aesthetics have played at least some part in the trajectory of Western addiction to drugs. *The Last Supper*, *Medicine Cabinets*, and *Pharmacy* are significant works that have confronted these issues candidly, all while retaining a truly postmodern character of contemporary art. Hirst's pharmaceutical works were not attentive to the racial discrepancies in American drug enforcement (he was, after all, living and working in London), but they still succeed both as prompts for socioeconomic discourse and fine art expressive of his peculiar but provoking style. In the next and final chapter, I will review how

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[45] Gary Webb's explosive "Dark Alliance" investigative journalism series that came out in 1995 reignited suspicions of U.S. involvement with drug trafficking and spurred further investigations. The topic remains a highly contentious one and has largely been an impetus for public distrust of the U.S. Federal Government.

capitalism has precipitated malevolent pharmaceutical industries and engendered the licit and illicit opioid epidemic of the last two decades through the consideration of Jean Shin's *Chemical Balance* series, as well as the many recent protests staged at major art institutions in the West.

Chapter Four – Prescription Blizzard: Art, Pills, and Protest

If Damien Hirst's *Medicine Cabinets* serve as an intimate look into the range of pharmaceutical drugs that could be owned by one person, then Jean Shin's *Chemical Balance* installation sculptures offer a survey of their collective social overconsumption. In both instances, the artists have relied on actual discarded pharmaceutical packages or containers that were once prescribed to and consumed by real people. But unlike the colorful, enticing displays of Hirst's symmetrical cabinets, Shin's work employs the unvarying and repeated form of the translucent orange (and occasionally green) prescription pill bottle, assembled with fluorescent lights to look like grand chandeliers, or stalactites and stalagmites forming in a cave (fig. 17). There have been at least five versions of Shin's *Chemical Balance* produced over more than a decade from 2005 until 2017. These installation sculptures lay claim to social commentary – or perhaps observation – in the form of visually jarring art pieces, and as such, have often been featured in exhibitions that endeavor to convey either some sense of the human experience, or the proliferation of new ways of art making in a postmodern landscape. In 2009, *Chemical Balance III* was shown at the Smithsonian American Art Museum as part of its exhibition, *Jean Shin: Common Threads*. In 2011, different iterations of *Chemical Balance* were featured in two different exhibitions: *American Chambers: Post 90s American Art* at the Gyeongnam Art Museum in South Korea, and *Extreme Materials 2* at the Memorial Art Gallery of the University of Rochester in New York. The work's inclusion in these various exhibitions suggests the variegated significance of *Chemical Balance* to the art world (or more narrowly, its curators), but these "meanings" are not mutually exclusive. In other words, an installation sculpture made out of empty pharmaceutical pill bottles does not have to be a material record of human experience

or an artistic experience in and of itself; it can – and does – simultaneously exist as both. I will examine *Chemical Balance* in each of its museum contexts in the first part of this chapter.

The second part of this chapter will turn its focus to the recent attention given to the politics of large art institution donations, specifically from the Sackler family, which owns the pharmaceutical company Purdue Pharma and developed the widely abused drug OxyContin (first introduced to the market in 1996). Artist and activist Nan Goldin is in the vanguard of this contentious debate, hosting a number of protests at such institutions that have accepted money from the Sackler family. The nature and context of this art-drug-money matter has resulted in demonstrations that are often inclined towards the same visual or artistic properties we might associate with participatory or performance art, and at times has even engendered creative, physical artworks (such as an 800-pound heroin spoon sculpture). These events are so recent that monumental developments have been unfolding as I write this final chapter. Goldin's 2018 demonstration in the Sackler Wing of the Metropolitan Museum of Art was not derivative of Shin's *Chemical Balance* installation sculptures, yet they share many essential aspects. In this final chapter, I hope to illuminate the convoluted relationship between art, protest, and the contemporary opioid epidemic. Shin and Goldin were not in conversation about their work, but their similarities are by no means a coincidence; only the specific conditions of today's sociopolitical landscape could precipitate two such cognate results.

Chemical Balance is typical of Shin's body of work; she is known for creating large, site-specific installations out of discarded, everyday materials that she often refers to as "cast-offs." In her artist's statement, she writes,

> The focus of my installations shifts continually between the identity of the individual and that of the group, the single unit and the larger whole, the intimate and the excessive. My

> elaborate process mirrors these dualities, as objects of mass production and consumerism are transformed by hand and through intense physical labor.[46]

Her installations each embody multiple dualities: individual versus collective identity; a single unit versus the larger whole; the intimate versus the excessive; and industrial versus manual labor. These dualities are both visually and conceptually available to the viewer, taking various structural forms comprised of materials like donated clothing, lottery tickets, computer keycaps, or in this case, empty prescription pill bottles. *Chemical Balance* shares all of these characteristics and even straddles many of the same dualities that were consciously or subconsciously present in the artworks described earlier in this thesis. The in-your-face directness of *Chemical Balance*, however, is more indicative of the current discourse surrounding the opioid epidemic than even Hirst's *Medicine Cabinets* – the later versions of which were produced at the same time. The visual playfulness of the *Medicine Cabinets* provokes questions regarding aesthetics, whereas while *Chemical Balance* is certainly not without aesthetic direction, it calls for conversation that is more concerned with social relationships. This is due, in part, to how it serves Shin's theoretical approach – particularly her investigation into individual versus collective identity and industrial versus manual labor. Upon closer consideration, another duality emerges that is specific to today's discourse on opioids: the "intended" effect versus the harmful reality of prescribed drugs. When I turn to the Sacklers later in this chapter, it will become more apparent how the "intended" effect of prescribed drugs (OxyContin) was – and is – a very corrupted one. For now, *Chemical Balance* can be understood as an artwork that immediately precedes the explosive protests regarding pharmaceuticals that have altered institutional monetary gift policies.

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[46] Jean Shin, "Artists Statement," Jeanshin.com, 2008, http://www.jeanshin.com/artist_statement.htm.

In 2009, *Chemical Balance III* was featured alongside other enormous "cast-off" installation sculptures in a solo exhibition of Shin's work in *Jean Shin: Common Threads* at the Smithsonian. Other works shown included *Untied* (hundreds of neckties hanging over a freestanding chain-link fence), *Chance City* (a "city" made up of thousands of lottery tickets stacked like several towering houses of cards), and *Everyday Monuments* (a couple thousand sports trophies arranged like the blueprint of the National Mall on the gallery floor). Each item used in the installations was discarded or donated. Seen in its entirety, *Common Threads* appears to be a macroscale version of what each individual installation sculpture attempts to convey. Standing alone, each installation maintains various dualities – but so, too, does the whole exhibition; viewed within this "larger whole," each installation is but a single unit. In effect, this also creates a dichotomy between the intimate and the excessive. If each installation were, by itself, an excessive accumulation of single items, then in *Common Threads* they are intimate worlds within the show. *Common Threads* thus becomes a show of multiple intimate conveyances of society's relationship to things – and the sociopolitical implications of these relationships. Each installation sculpture is worthy of its own independent research, but for the purposes of this thesis, I am primarily interested in *Chemical Balance III*. In the context of this show, it served to render one such important "society-thing" relationship visually: the relationship between consumers and prescribed pharmaceutical drugs. The existence of *Chemical Balance* is no doubt the symptom of a widespread societal reality (the overconsumption of overprescribed pills), otherwise it would not have been tangible enough as a concept for Shin to make an installation out of it. The National Survey on Drug Use and Health reported that an estimated 16.7 million people in the United States abused prescription drugs in 2012, an increase

of 250 percent over the previous 20 years.[47] It also reported that between the years 2000 and 2010, "accidental prescription opioid overdoses increased almost 400%, surpassing accidental overdose deaths from heroin, cocaine, and other stimulants combined."[48] Shin was producing her *Chemical Balance* sculptures throughout this time period of eruptive growth in prescription drug abuse, and even if she wasn't directly referencing these dramatic statistics in her work, she was certainly referring to the discernible presence of pharmaceutical overconsumption in contemporary America. In the context of *Common Threads*, this work suggests that pharmaceutical overconsumption is a collective problem; each empty translucent orange or green prescription pill bottle was consumed by *somebody*, but the repetition of the singular form reveals the sheer magnitude at which such pills were (and are) being consumed. Of course, not every prescribed drug is an abused one (undoubtedly many of the bottles in *Chemical Balance* likely contained rather benign drugs, like antibiotics or antivirals for treatment of an acute infection or common virus). Yet, *Chemical Balance* still suggests that the overconsumption of pharmaceutical drugs is a societal concern. Moreover, it poses pharmaceutical drugs as a commodity good alongside the other more "typical" commodities featured in the exhibition. In 2009, prescribed pills were just as widely produced and consumed as, say, neckties or lottery tickets. Here, *Chemical Balance* posits that "consumer" and "user" are one and the same.

Two years later, two iterations of *Chemical Balance* were included in the multi-artist shows, *American Chambers: Post 90s American Art* at the Gyeongnam Art Museum in South Korea and *Extreme Materials 2* at the Memorial Art Gallery of the University of Rochester in New York. In these contexts, the physical materiality of *Chemical Balance* seems to take

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[47] Kathryn McHugh, Suzanne Nielson, Roger D. Weiss, "Prescription Drug Abuse: From Epidemiology to Public Policy," *Journal Of Substance Abuse Treatment* (January 2015): 2.
[48] Ibid.

precedence over its relationship to consumerism. But make no mistake; this does not mean that it was any less indebted to its cultural context in these two exhibitions. Rather, *Chemical Balance* – and by extension, pharmaceutical drugs as subject matter for serious artists – is granted perhaps even more authority in the canon of art and art history by being featured in multi-artist shows like these. In *American Chambers*, Shin's pharmaceutical installation sculpture was featured alongside the works of artists including Bruce Nauman, James Turrell, Robert Rauschenberg, Yoko Ono, Kate Gilmore, Matthew Barney, Matthew Day Jackson, and Tony Oursler. It is noteworthy that *Chemical Balance* was included among many of the most prominent contemporary Western artists. Furthermore, this was an exhibition curated in South Korea intended to present the character and breadth of post '90s American art to a Korean audience. That a sculpture of pharmaceutical pill bottles should be included implies the relevance of pharmaceuticals to American art and culture at large. During the same year, another iteration of *Chemical Balance* was shown in the exhibition, *Extreme Materials 2*, in Rochester, New York. It showcased 41 artists who utilized atypical and extreme materials for their art pieces. Such materials included blood, breakfast cereal, condoms, tampons, bacteria, grasshoppers, and of course, Shin's pharmaceutical prescription bottles.[49] The inclusion of *Chemical Balance* in *Extreme Materials 2* only reconfirms the legitimacy of pharmaceutical bottles as a successful art medium. As I will soon demonstrate in the remainder of this chapter, *Chemical Balance* shares a direct conceptual, temporal, and aesthetic relationship with the visual form of protest adopted by the artist Nan Goldin and the activist group she has organized, known as P.A.I.N. (Prescription Addiction Intervention Now).

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[49] "Extreme Materials 2," Exhibitions, Memorial Art Gallery University of Rochester, https://mag.rochester.edu/exhibitions/extreme-materials-2-artist-list/.

During the period in which Shin was producing and exhibiting her installation sculptures, Purdue Pharma, a privately held pharmaceutical company owned by the Sackler family, faced serious legal repercussions. In 2007, Purdue Pharma made headlines by agreeing to pay out over $600 million in criminal and civil penalties – one of the largest pharmaceutical settlements ever awarded (three executives of the company also pleaded guilty and agreed to pay another $34.5 million in fines).[50] Purdue Pharma "fraudulently marketed OxyContin for six years as a drug that was less prone to abuse, as well as one that also had fewer narcotic side effects,"—this drug accounted for "90 percent of the company's sales."[51] Their fraudulent marketing campaigns were so extensive that "company sales officials were allowed to draw their own fake scientific charts, which they then distributed to doctors, to support that misleading abuse-related claim."[52] OxyContin was aggressively (and misleadingly) marketed for the sake of profit, despite the known true addictive properties of the drug and the risk of abuse by its users. The *New York Times* reported that experienced and novice drug abusers alike (including teenagers), would chew an OxyContin tablet, or snort or inject with a needle the powder of a crushed one, to "produce a high as powerful as heroin."[53] Moreover, "skyrocketing rates of addiction and crime related to use of the drug" in the United States had become evident as early as 2000.[54] This was the context in which Shin was producing her *Chemical Balance* works. Though she did not specifically cite this astonishing legal case in her installations, the massive, glowing formations of pharmaceutical pill bottles decidedly drew from a very real culture of overconsumption of

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[50] Barry Meier, "In Guilty Plea, OxyContin Maker to Pay $600 Million," *The New York Times*, May 10, 2007, https://www.nytimes.com/2007/05/10/business/11drug-web.htm.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Ibid.

prescription drugs. Shin's *Chemical Balance* reflected the changing face of industrialized drug addiction in a postmillennial America.

Purdue Pharma's reputation has been consistently mottled with similar lawsuits and high profile settlements. Likewise, the Sackler family name was quickly becoming tainted with charges of corruption and greed after the 2007 settlement. Of course, Purdue Pharma was – and is – not the only actor on the stage; the list of enormously wealthy private pharmaceutical companies that have been charged with similar crimes is dishearteningly long. But, the hard-to-miss "generosity" of the Sackler family in terms of funding some of our most highly esteemed arts institutions makes this contentious subject a compelling (if not ironic) one for the trajectory of art, drugs, and capitalism – and their contentious collision in 2018 and 2019. Goldin's demonstrations with P.A.I.N. at places like the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, and the Harvard Art Museum (all places which have received significant funding from Sackler family members) have brought immense attention to this relationship between corrupt money and the arts. In the time between Goldin's first protest at the Met in March 2018 and the writing of this final chapter (keep in mind, this time period is barely over a year long), there have been significant changes to both the world of high art and public action against the opioid crisis. As of January 2019 there are 36 states suing Purdue Pharma and various Sackler family members. In March of the same year, the drug company and the Sackler family settled a $270 million lawsuit with the state of Oklahoma.[55] Purdue Pharma and the Sackler

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[55] The terms of the settlement require that Purdue Pharma "immediately contribute $102.5 million to establish a new foundation for addiction treatment and research at Oklahoma State University. Members of the Sackler family, who own the company but were not defendants in the case, will pay an additional $75 million in personal funds over five years. Purdue also will provide $20 million worth of treatment drugs, pay $12 million to cities and towns and cover about $60 million in litigation costs." (Larry Bernstein and Katie Zezima, "Purdue Pharma, state of Oklahoma reach settlement in landmark opioid lawsuit," *The Washington Post,* March 26,

family have been characterized as "one and the same" by Massachusetts attorney general Maura Healey, who also said that the Sackler family "used the power at their disposal to engineer an opioid crisis," which has killed nearly 400,000 people between 1999 and 2017.[56] To be clear: the opioid epidemic, which was declared a public health emergency by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in 2017, describes the abuse and overdoses attributed to of all forms of opioids, including prescription opioids (like OxyContin), heroin, and illicitly-manufactured fentanyl.[57] The first wave of this epidemic began in the 1990s as the direct result of increased prescribing of pharmaceutical opioids (as referenced in Shin's *Chemical Balance*).[58] In 2013, "nearly 80 percent of heroin users reported using prescription opioids prior to heroin."[59] But, prescription opioids like OxyContin were not only gateway drugs to more illicit versions of painkillers; an estimated 40 percent of opioid deaths are still attributed to, or involve, a prescription opioid.[60] Goldin, an artist by trade whose most famous work consists of photographs that document LGBTQ culture in Boston, New York City, Berlin, and beyond in the '70s and

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2019, https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/purdue-pharma-state-of-oklahoma-reach-settlement-in-landmark-opioid-lawsuit/2019/03/26/69aa5cda-4f11-11e9-a3f7-78b7525a8d5f_story.html?utm_term=.2dac7edb7443).

[56] *CBS News*, "Family behind OxyContin maker engineered opioid crisis, Massachusetts AG says," *CBS News,* January, 24, 2019, https://www.cbsnews.com/news/purdue-pharma-lawsuit-massachusetts-attorney-general-blames-sackler-family-for-creating-opioid-crisis-oxycontin/.

[57] "Understanding the Epidemic," Opioid Overdose, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, page last reviewed December 19, 2018, https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/epidemic/index.html.

[58] Ibid.

[59] "Prescription opioid use is a risk factor for heroin use," Prescription Opioids and Heroin, National Institute on Drug Abuse, page last updated January, 2018, https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/research-reports/relationship-between-prescription-drug-heroin-abuse/prescription-opioid-use-risk-factor-heroin-use.

[60] "What is the U.S. Opioid Epidemic?," About the Epidemic, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, content last reviewed on January 22, 2019, https://www.hhs.gov/opioids/about-the-epidemic/index.html.

'80s (like *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency*), revealed in 2017 that she herself had overdosed on fentanyl after developing an addiction to OxyContin,

> My relationship to OxyContin began several years ago in Berlin. It was originally prescribed for surgery. Though I took it as directed I got addicted overnight… In the beginning, forty milligrams was too strong but as my habit grew there was never enough. The drug, like all drugs, lost its effect, so I picked up the straw.
> I returned to New York. My dealer never ran out of Oxy and delivered 24/7. He had massive prescriptions and made massive amounts of money. For every penny he spent on a script he made a dollar on the black market. I went from three pills a day, as prescribed, to eighteen. I got a private endowment and spent it all… My life revolved entirely around getting and using Oxy. Counting and recounting, crushing and snorting was my full-time job. I rarely left the house. It was as if I was Locked-In. All work, all friendships, all news took place on my bed. When I ran out of money for Oxy I copped dope. I ended up snorting fentanyl and I overdosed.[61]

Goldin demanded that the Sacklers and Purdue Pharma redirect their massive fortunes "to fund addiction treatment and education," rather than towards philanthropic cover-ups.[62] Many of the world's most prestigious art institutions have received substantial funding from the Sackler family, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Sackler Wing), the Guggenheim Museum (Sackler Center for Arts Education), London's National Gallery (Sackler Room), Tate Modern (Sackler Escalator), the Victoria and Albert Museum (Sackler Courtyard), and the Louvre (Sackler Wing of Oriental Antiquities).[63]

To argue that museums should not accept money from donors associated with egregious actions, ideologies, or campaigns quickly becomes an ethical dilemma; in a world where the arts so desperately rely on private funding and support to survive and remain open to the public, institutions must decide where to draw a line. I am not writing this thesis to insert my own

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[61] Nan Goldin, public statement, New York, 2017, https://www.artforum.com/print/201801/nan-goldin-73181.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Elena Goukassian, "Our Incomplete List of Cultural Institutions and Initiatives Funded by the Sackler Family," *Hyperallergic,* January 11, 2018, https://hyperallergic.com/419850/our-incomplete-list-of-cultural-institutions-and-initiatives-funded-by-the-sackler-family/.

ethical principles into this contentious debate, but I do wish to consider how pharmaceutical drugs and the contemporary art world intersect. In 2018 and 2019, Goldin has exposed this relationship and helped to foster the changing policies of institutional donations.

On March 10th, 2018, Goldin and P.A.I.N. executed a shocking demonstration in the Sackler Wing of the Met. Goldin and a group of activists gathered around the pool across from the Temple of Dendur and promptly began throwing prescription pill bottles into the water while holding large banners that read "FUND REHAB" and "SHAME ON SACKLER."[64] Goldin and the group of activists surprised museum visitors, denouncing the Sackler family and demanded that "'instead of continuing to wash their money in great institutions…they donate their money to help combat the opioid epidemic.'"[65] Then, the group staged a die-in and collapsed to the ground while shouting, "'Sacklers lie, people die.'"[66] The sight of the orange pharmaceutical pill bottles littering the surface of the large, dark pool surrounded by "dead" bodies made for a striking visual spectacle (fig. 18). It is impossible not to recall Shin's *Chemical Balance* when looking at this scene; it is almost as if her pharmaceutical sculptures continued to accumulate bottles over the years and grew so large that they spontaneously shattered in 2018, and in the

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[64] It should be critically noted that the Sackler Wing of the Met was opened by Arthur, Raymond, and Mortimer Sackler in 1978, decades before the development and marketing of OxyContin. Arthur Sackler died in 1987 and his widowed wife, Jillian Sackler, has made public statements that any charitable donations from him were never funded by the profit of OxyContin, nor was he in any way involved in the company's launch of the drug. Jillian Sackler denounces the defaming of Arthur Sackler. His daughter, Elizabeth Sackler, has also played no role in Purdue Pharma and supports activist groups like Nan Goldin and P.A.I.N. fighting the opioid crisis. She has funded the Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art at the Brooklyn Museum in New York City.

[65] Andrew Russeth, "Nan Goldin, P.A.I.N. Group Stage Protest Against Sackler Family, Purdue Pharmaceuticals in Met's Sackler Wing," *ARTnews,* March 10, 2018, http://www.artnews.com/2018/03/10/nan-goldin-p-n-group-stage-protest-sackler-family-purdue-pharmaceuticals-mets-sackler-wing/.

[66]Ibid.

process left debris scattered around. Goldin and P.A.I.N.'s demonstration utilized a performative act and a very simple – but potent – symbol: the orange prescription pill bottle. Goldin has drawn from a real, existing tradition of illicit drug consumption and postmodern art (from Wesselmann's Unicap Senior pill bottle in *Still Life #22* and Hanson's *Drug Addict* to Hirst's *Medicine Cabinets* and Shin's *Chemical Balance*) to protest and change the very institutions which enabled the intersecting trajectories of drugs and art in the first place. That summer, Purdue Pharma was once again taken to task. As a guerrilla installation, artist Domenic Esposito and gallerist Fernando Luis Alvarez positioned an 800-pound handcrafted steel heroin spoon in front of Purdue Pharma's headquarters in Stamford, Connecticut (fig. 19). The larger-than-life sculpture is blunt and to the point: Purdue Pharma's OxyContin has generated heroin users and its executives should be made to face the reality of the crisis they have created. Esposito's sculpture comes on the heels of Goldin's demonstration, continuing the discourse on accountability and weaponizing art as a tool for protest.

Not even a full year later, Goldin and P.A.I.N. staged another demonstration in New York City – this time at the Guggenheim Museum. On February 9th, 2019, more than 100 activists gathered on the tiers of the Guggenheim's famous interior and hung banners similar to the ones used at the Met. Then, "a flurry of white paper 'prescriptions' rained down. The thousands of xeroxed slips of paper soon littered the lobby floor, bearing the text: 'If Oxycontin is uncontrolled, it is highly likely that it will eventually be abused... How substantially would it improve our sales?'" (fig. 20).[67] The quote was taken from an exchange between Robert Kaiko, the developer of OxyContin, and Richard Sackler, then chairman of Purdue Pharma (in the

[67] Caroline Goldstein, "'It's Time, Guggenheim': Nan Goldin Launches a Surprise Demonstration at the Guggenheim Museum to Protest Its Sackler Funding," *Artnet.com,* February 9, 2019, https://news.artnet.com/art-world/1461643-1461643.

month prior, incriminating court documents were made public in a lawsuit filed by Massachusetts attorney general Healy against Purdue Pharma and eight Sackler family members).[68] The "blizzard" of prescriptions raining down in the Guggenheim, Artnet reported, was taken directly from another statement by Richard Sackler (also made public by the court documents): "The launch of OxyContin tablets will be followed by a blizzard of prescriptions that will bury the competition. The prescription blizzard will be so deep, dense, and white."[69] He wrote in another 2001 email, "We have to hammer on abusers in every way possible."[70] These three quotes alone are enough to suggest that the Sacklers were not only aware of the devastating effects of OxyContin on its users, but that they actively sought to capitalize on its addictive properties and exploit users and abusers for profit. Once again, Goldin and the activists held a die-in – this time accompanied by the chants, "It's time Guggenheim" and "take down their name" (fig. 21).[71] After the demonstration, the activists marched down Fifth Avenue and to the steps of the Met, where they continued their protest chants and calls for action.

After Massachusetts' lawsuit against the Sacklers and Purdue Pharma made apparent the extent to which the opioid crisis was indeed "engineered," the Met's president, Daniel Weiss, issued a statement that "'The Met is currently engaging in a further review of our detailed gift acceptance policies.'"[72] Though he said that monetary support from the Sacklers began "decades

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[68] Barry Meier, "Sacklers Directed Efforts to Mislead Public About OxyContin, Court Filing Claims," *The New York Times,* January 15, 2019, https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/15/health/sacklers-purdue-oxycontin-opioids.html.
[69] Caroline Goldstein, "'It's Time, Guggenheim': Nan Goldin Launches a Surprise Demonstration at the Guggenheim Museum to Protest Its Sackler Funding."
[70] Ibid.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Jasmine Weber, "After Sacklers Named in Opioid Lawsuit, Met Museum Says It Will Review Its Donation Policy," *Hyperallergic*, January 22, 2019, https://hyperallergic.com/481065/after-sacklers-named-in-opioid-lawsuit-met-museum-says-it-will-review-its-donation-policy/.

before the opioid crisis," this was a significant instance of a highly esteemed institution taking early steps towards ethical considerations of donation policies. Then, in the midst of writing this final chapter, headlines broke that London's National Portrait Gallery had turned down a $1.3 million gift from the Sackler Trust. Only months earlier, Goldin had announced that "she would not collaborate with the Portrait Gallery on a possible retrospective if it accepted Sackler funds," after having been invited to show in the prestigious institution.[73] Just days after this decision, the Tate disrupted the art world by announcing that it will no longer accept donations from the Sacklers associated with Purdue Pharma. Tate's trustees reportedly made this decision "on the recommendation of the museum's ethics committee."[74] The museum said in a statement, "'We do not intend to remove references to this historic philanthropy. However, in the present circumstances we do not think it right to seek or accept further donations from the Sacklers.'"[75] The following day, the domino effect continued overseas; the Guggenheim also announced that it no longer plans to accept any gifts from the Sackler family. These momentous decisions indicate that the relationship between drugs and art is transforming – and assuming a decidedly self-critical and self-aware character.

Shin's *Chemical Balance* and Goldin's pivotal demonstrations with P.A.I.N. against Sackler philanthropy in the arts are where the trajectory of illicit and pharmaceutical drugs and postmodern art pauses in this thesis; the announcements by Tate and the Guggenheim of their decisions to stop seeking gifts from the Sackler family are nearly as recent as the formation of this sentence. As we move forward from here, I suspect that artistic renderings and academic

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[73] Ibid.
[74] Pac Pobric, "In a Major Move, the Tate Announces it Will No Longer Accept Funding From the Sackler Family," *Artnet.com,* March 21, 2019, https://news.artnet.com/art-world/tate-gallery-sackler-1495183.
[75] Ibid.

investigations into the subject presented in this thesis will only become more saturated with material. Shin and Goldin have laid bare the most present state of drugs and art, showing us that consumers have become addicts under the conscious and intentional direction of the companies that profited from their abuse.

Conclusion

Although this thesis has largely focused on a select number of artworks, there are undoubtedly other artists whose work is explicitly and implicitly engaged with the matter I have proposed: the entangled relationships between consumerism, drugs, and postmodern art in the West. My inclination towards these concepts was initially driven by contemporary political rhetoric surrounding the ubiquity of drugs, as well as my own interest in Marxist models of class, which I have found very effective in confronting my own frustrations regarding societal inequity. I quickly realized that drugs – illicit and pharmaceutical alike – had already carved out a significant place in the canon of postmodern art, and that the artworks disclose far more about the cultural, social, and political circumstances of drugs in the decades from which they come than I could possibly try to impose on them myself.

A number of artists – like Lee Lozano, who was mentioned in the second chapter – have created works that catalogue the experience of taking a certain drug. It is worth noting, too, that drugs (illicit and pharmaceutical both) are not unique to the West; they permeate every part of the human world and can hold an entirely different value or significance within other cultures. It is safe to assume that an analysis of drugs and art, or art rendering drugs, from non-Western societies would produce equally fascinating and intricate relationships. Of course, this thesis has only just begun to uncover the pre-existing connections between drugs and postmodern art in the West and there is a great deal of space for further art historical research and a continued discourse. For the moment, I hope that my work has expanded the ways in which we think about the agency of art. The artworks considered in these four chapters recorded their own cultural and temporal milieus, creating a tradition of art that was attentive to the trajectory of illicit drugs and pharmaceuticals while largely evading art historical scrutiny.

Wesselmann's *Still Life #22* has showed us that as early as 1962, industrially manufactured pills were infiltrating the homes of middle-class Americans, taking up space on kitchen shelves alongside other mass-produced goods. Yet, there was nothing particularly noteworthy about this at the time; pills were a commodity just like everything else, a ubiquitous part of life, widely and regularly consumed. 1960s amphetamines, both prescribed and illegally acquired, served as cross-class agents that permitted anybody to achieve that "happy go-go-go" feeling that made them want to "work-work-work," as Warhol put it succinctly in his autobiography. But the drugs of the '60s also fell prey to commodity fetishism, and were consumed recklessly and without care.

Drugs are part of the same culture of mass consumerism driven by a false utopian ideal that is associated with industrially produced food, as represented by Hanson's two '70s sculptures, *Supermarket Lady* and *Drug Addict.* Hanson emphasized the human dimension of mass cultural participation, exposing the detrimental toll it takes on the human psyche. Viewed together, these two sculptures suggest that illicit drug addiction, like heroin use, is a later point on the same trajectory that began with regular commodity goods, then evolved to include the consumption of drugs. Hanson's social portraits describe the trajectory of Western addiction.

The dissonance between aesthetics and federal policy of the '80s and '90s became emphatically apparent with Hirst's several artworks about pharmaceutical drugs. *Medicine Cabinets*, *The Last Supper*, and *Pharmacy* revisit the idea of a consumer utopia – this time with industrially produced and doctor-prescribed drugs as the ultimate panacea. Hirst investigated and appropriated the way pharmaceuticals have embraced aesthetics, creating the "temple of consumption" described by Hollein. Hirst is one of the 20th century artists who has been "enticed by the subtlety of the commercial methods of display and presentation," and was able to

transfigure that consumer enchantment from a real-life pharmacy to an art installation. Meanwhile, the Reagan-era political landscape set up a draconian dystopian reality for black and Latino communities, enforcing racially-biased sentencing against crack-cocaine users.

In the last two decades, the trajectory of drug addiction has been dominated by the contemporary opioid epidemic (although that is not to say that other forms of drug addiction do not simultaneously exist and permeate Western societies). Shin's *Chemical Balance* installation sculptures offer a survey of the collective social overconsumption of pharmaceuticals. Her investigations into capitalism and pharmaceuticals immediately precede the eruptive protests staged by Goldin and P.A.I.N. at major Western arts institutions. Goldin's employment of the translucent orange prescription pill bottles in her demonstrations perpetuated the already existing intermingling of drugs and postmodern art, all while introducing a decidedly self-aware and self-critical dialogue. Her work has been formative in exposing and altering the monetary connections between several fine arts institutions and private profits made from exploiting the current opioid crisis.

While Wesselmann's 1962 still life is a distinct early work that incorporated drugs into art, it was still a rather nascent concept for artistic treatment. Each work subsequently introduced in this thesis became more explicit, or perhaps more deliberately engaged, with its contemporaneous trajectory. Industrially manufactured and capitalist driven drug production naturally fits into any historical or contemporary conversation regarding consumerism; as such, it has always been a compelling topic for artists concerned with mass culture. The conversations being had not only in art and art history, but indeed all academic and non-academic realms of life in the '50s, '60s, and '70s made room for works like *Still Life #22* and *Drug Addict* to emerge. Concurrent politics centered on a war on drugs pushed these themes even further into the

Western conscious, particularly in the ‘80s. In the more recent decades of the ‘90s and 2000s, artists like Hirst and Shin grappled with the profile of contemporary drug consumption – that is, an era of aestheticized marketing that is altogether beautiful and exploitative at the same time. Only in the last year has Goldin begun to turn this relationship on its head.

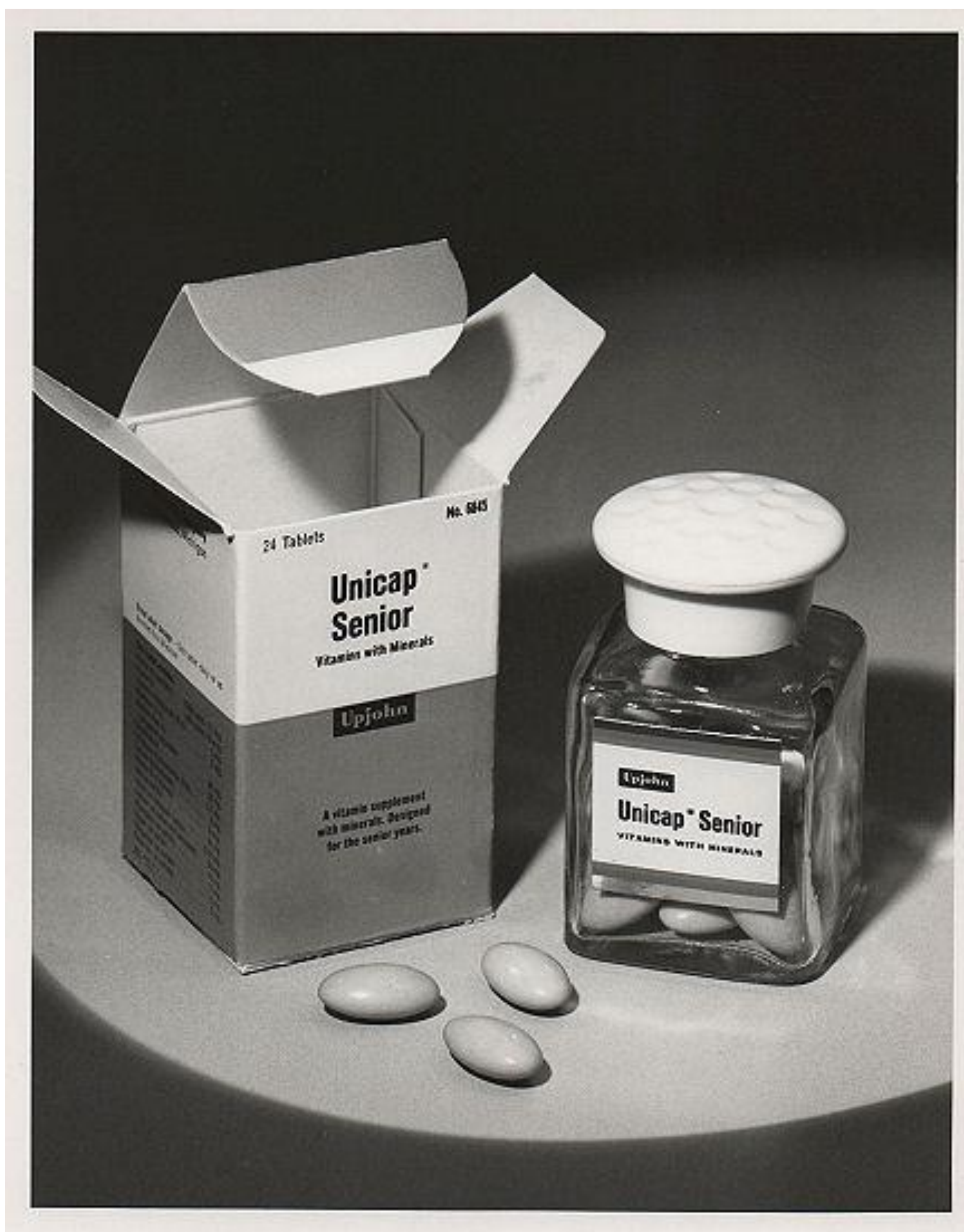
My point is this: the relationship between drugs and postmodern art that I have proposed in this thesis is not a retroactively projected one. It has always existed, even during times in which it was unbeknownst to critics, scholars, and to some degree, the artists themselves. The works I have chosen are perhaps the more obvious ones, but serve as an excellent starting point for this virtually unconsidered topic. With the most recent developments regarding institutional gifts (in light of the exposé on the Sackler family and Purdue Pharma’s deceitful and gravely consequential role in the contemporary opioid epidemic), I believe this trajectory is far from its conclusion. The next decade or two will undoubtedly see new art that continues to contend with and render its progress.

Images

Figure 1

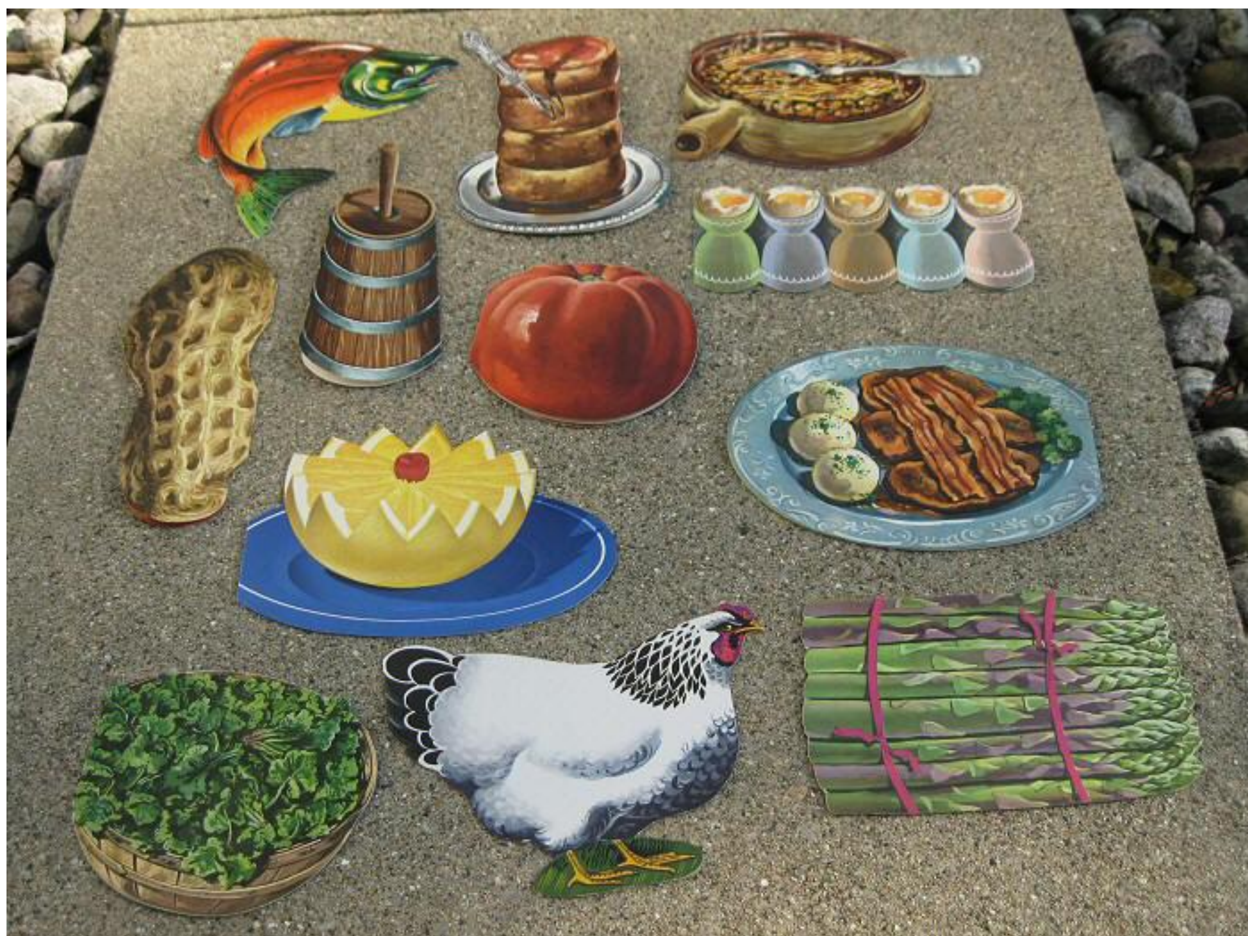
Tom Wesselmann, *Still Life #22,* 1962. Assemblage on board.

Figure 2



Tom Wesselmann Estate, archival photo of Upjohn’s Unicap Senior multivitamin. Photograph.

Figure 3



The Upjohn Company, series of cardboard cutout advertisements, 1950s.
In the collection of Joe Timko.

Figure 4

Andy Warhol and assistant in The Factory making a soup can screenprint. Photograph.

Figure 5

The Upjohn Company, pharmaceutical production in the 1960s and 1970s. Photograph.

Figure 6

Duane Hanson, *Supermarket Lady,* 1970. Polyester resin, fiberglass, polychromed in oil paint with clothes and accessories.

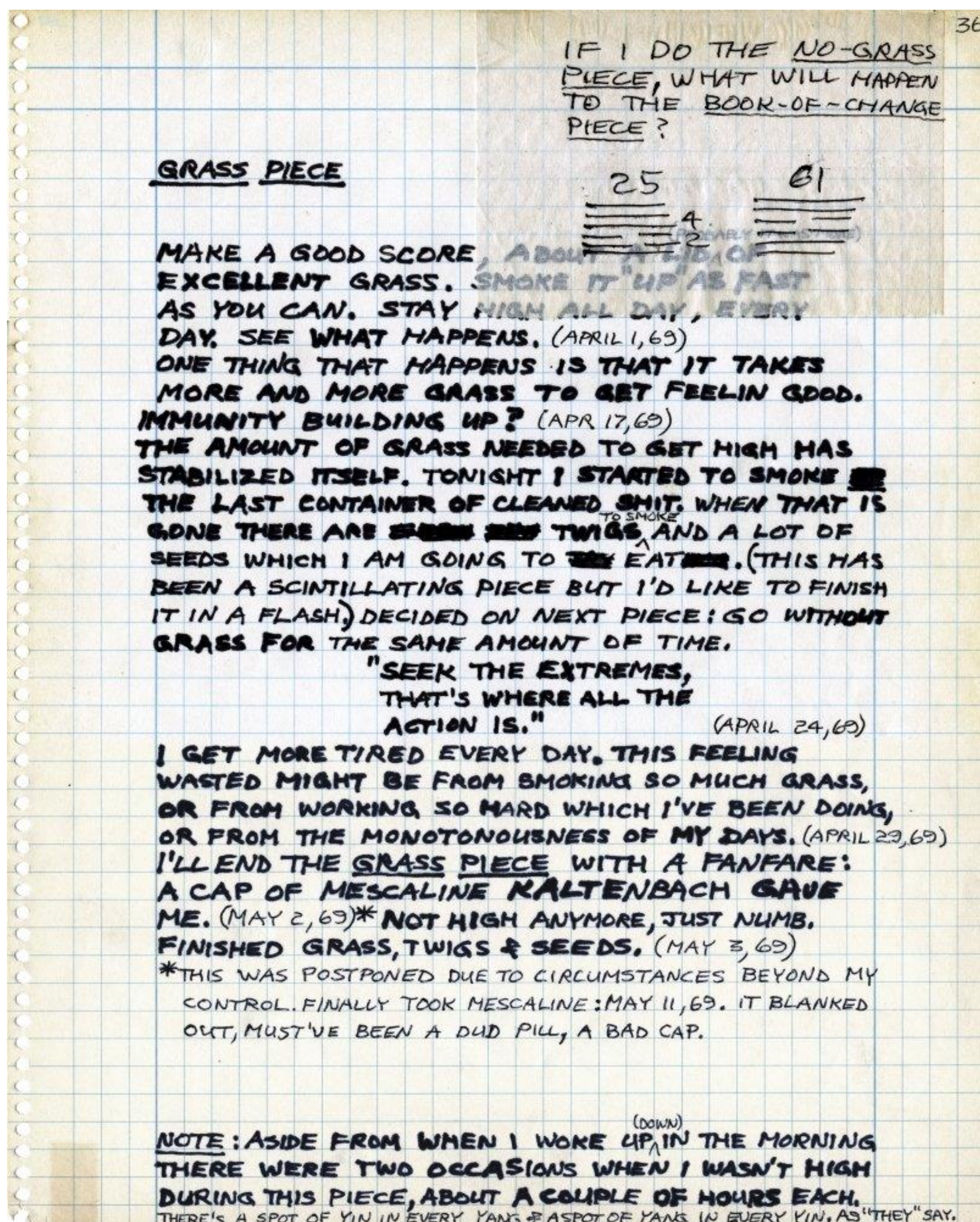
Figure 7

Duane Hanson, *Drug Addict,* 1974. Polyester resin, fiberglass, polychromed in oil paint with clothes and accessories.

Figure 8

Georges Clairin, *Opium Smokers*, 1872. Oil on canvas.

Figure 9



36

IF I DO THE NO-GRASS PIECE, WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE BOOK-OF-CHANGE PIECE?

25 61

GRASS PIECE

MAKE A GOOD SCORE, ABOUT A 1/2 LB OF EXCELLENT GRASS. SMOKE IT UP AS FAST AS YOU CAN. STAY HIGH ALL DAY, EVERY DAY. SEE WHAT HAPPENS. (APRIL 1, 69)
ONE THING THAT HAPPENS IS THAT IT TAKES MORE AND MORE GRASS TO GET FEELIN GOOD. IMMUNITY BUILDING UP? (APR 17, 69)
THE AMOUNT OF GRASS NEEDED TO GET HIGH HAS STABILIZED ITSELF. TONIGHT I STARTED TO SMOKE THE LAST CONTAINER OF CLEANED SHIT. WHEN THAT IS GONE THERE ARE TWIGS TO SMOKE AND A LOT OF SEEDS WHICH I AM GOING TO EAT. (THIS HAS BEEN A SCINTILLATING PIECE BUT I'D LIKE TO FINISH IT IN A FLASH) DECIDED ON NEXT PIECE: GO WITHOUT GRASS FOR THE SAME AMOUNT OF TIME.

"SEEK THE EXTREMES,
THAT'S WHERE ALL THE
ACTION IS." (APRIL 24, 69)

I GET MORE TIRED EVERY DAY. THIS FEELING WASTED MIGHT BE FROM SMOKING SO MUCH GRASS, OR FROM WORKING SO HARD WHICH I'VE BEEN DOING, OR FROM THE MONOTONOUSNESS OF MY DAYS. (APRIL 29, 69)
I'LL END THE GRASS PIECE WITH A FANFARE: A CAP OF MESCALINE KALTENBACH GAVE ME. (MAY 2, 69)* NOT HIGH ANYMORE, JUST NUMB. FINISHED GRASS, TWIGS & SEEDS. (MAY 3, 69)
*THIS WAS POSTPONED DUE TO CIRCUMSTANCES BEYOND MY CONTROL. FINALLY TOOK MESCALINE: MAY 11, 69. IT BLANKED OUT, MUST'VE BEEN A DUD PILL, A BAD CAP.

NOTE: ASIDE FROM WHEN I WOKE UP (DOWN) IN THE MORNING THERE WERE TWO OCCASIONS WHEN I WASN'T HIGH DURING THIS PIECE, ABOUT A COUPLE OF HOURS EACH.
THERE'S A SPOT OF YIN IN EVERY YANG & A SPOT OF YANG IN EVERY YIN, AS "THEY" SAY.

Lee Lozano, *Grass Piece,* 1969. Ink on paper.

Figure 10

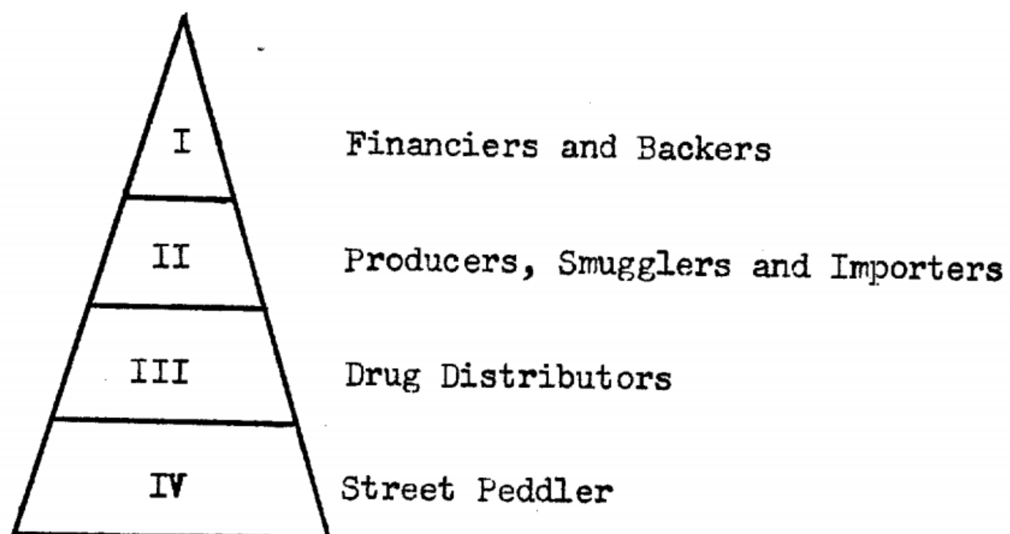


Illustration of the structure of the illegal heroin market, 1971.

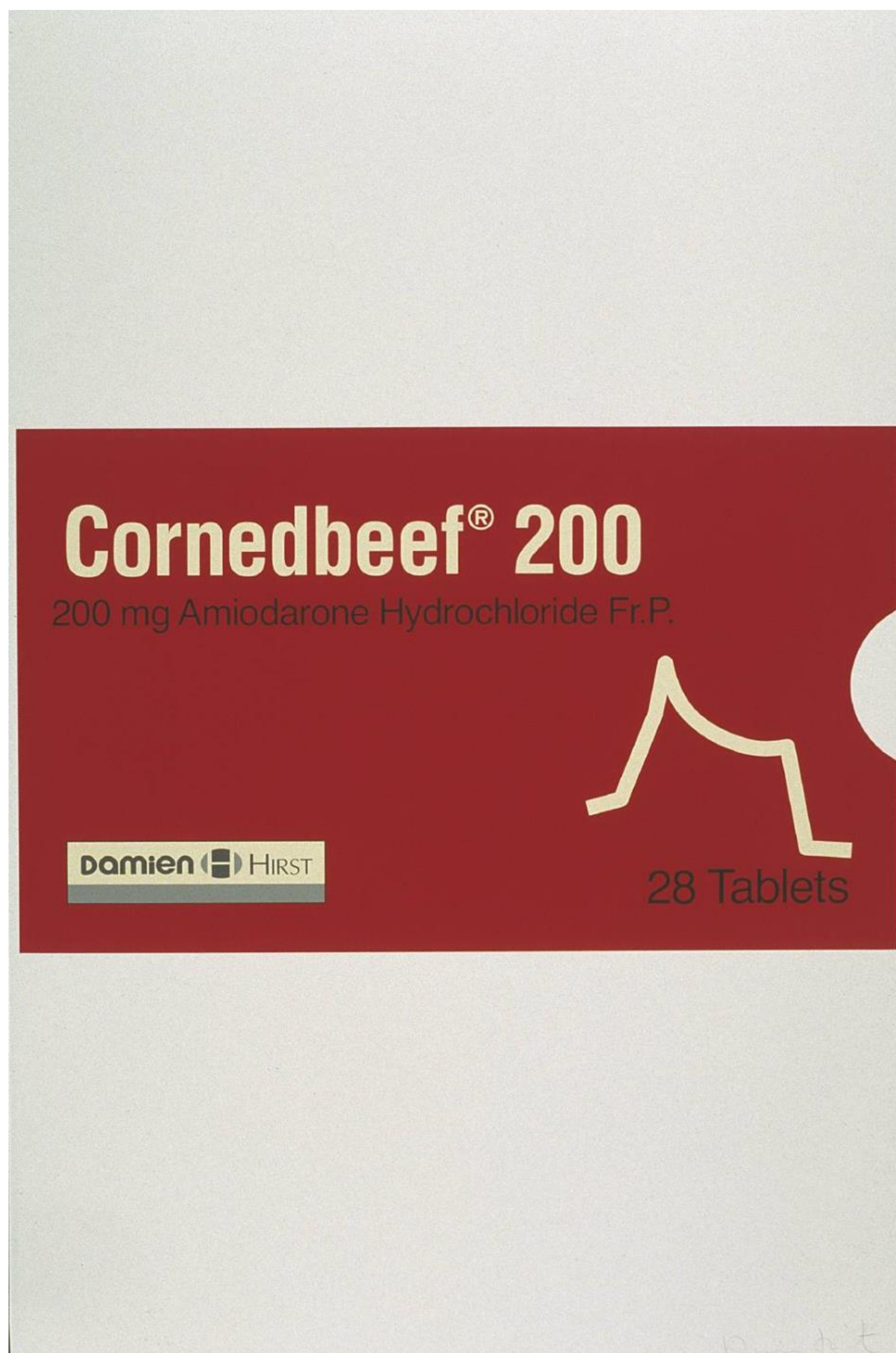
Figure 11

Damien Hirst, Pharmacy Restaurant & Bar, 1998.

Figure 12

Damien Hirst, Pharmacy 2, 2016.

Figure 13

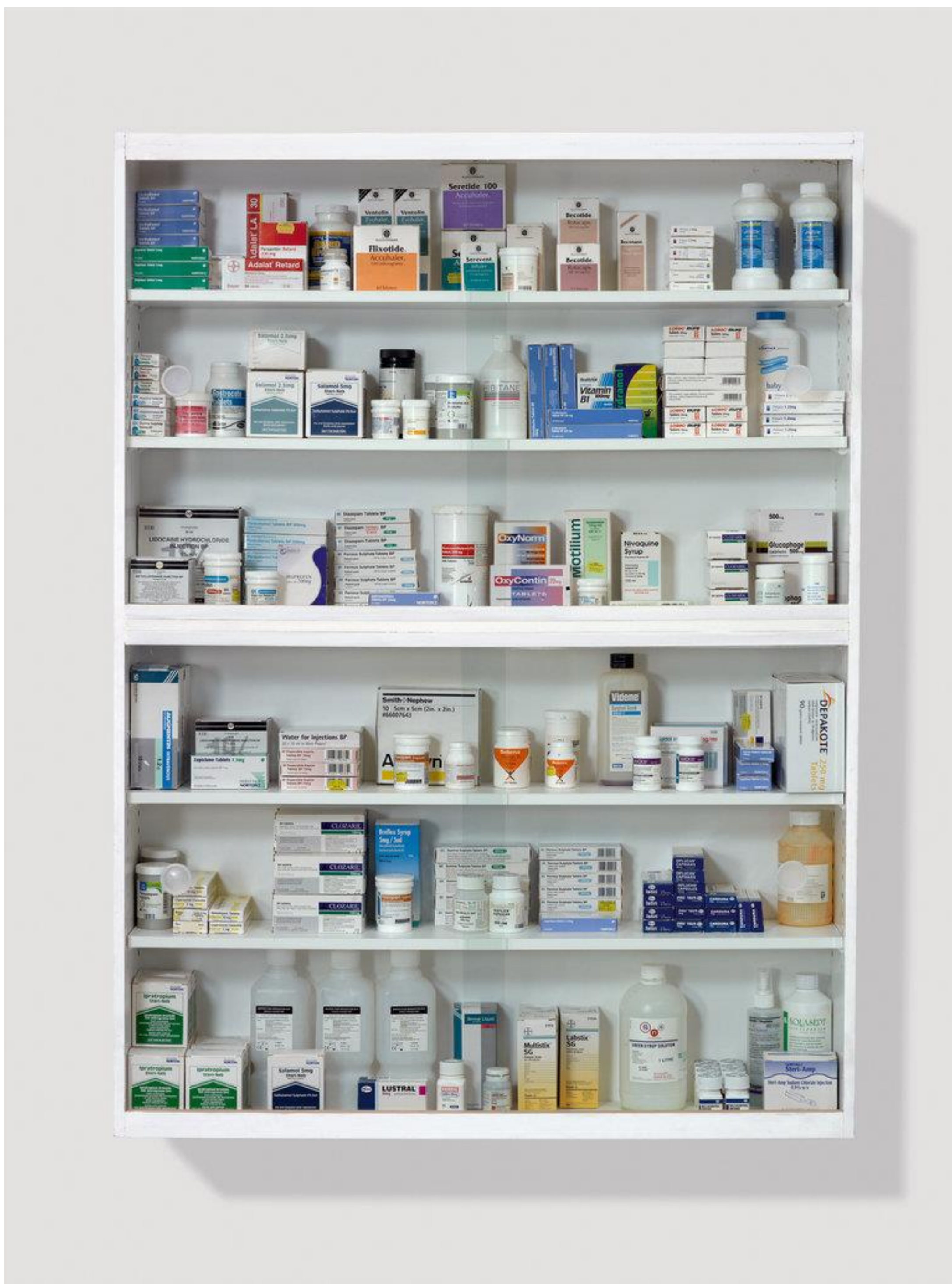


Damien Hirst, *Corned Beef*, 1999. Screenprint.

Figure 14

Damien Hirst, *Chicken,* 1999. Screenprint.

Figure 15



Damien Hirst, *Enemy*, 1988-1989. Glass, painted faced particle board, ramin, plastic, aluminum and pharmaceutical packaging.

Figure 16

Damien Hirst, *Pharmacy*, 1992. Glass, faced particleboard, painted MDF, beech, ramin, wooden dowels, aluminum, pharmaceutical packaging, desks, office chairs, foot stools, apothecary bottles, colored water, insect-o-cutor, medical text books, stationery, bowls, resin, honey and honeycomb.

Figure 17

Jean Shin, *Chemical Balance II,* 2005. Prescription bottles, mirror and epoxy, fluorescent lights.

Figure 18

Prescription pill bottles in the pool of the Sackler Wing at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City during Nan Goldin and P.A.I.N.'s protest on March 10th, 2018.

Figure 19

Domenic Esposito's 800-pound steel heroin spoon sculpture placed in front of Purdue Pharma's headquarters in Stamford, Connecticut on June 22, 2018.

Figure 20

“Blizzard” of prescriptions unleashed by Nan Goldin and P.A.I.N. activists during their demonstration at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York City on February 9th, 2019.

Figure 21

Nan Goldin and P.A.I.N. activists staging a die-in at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York City on February 9th, 2019.

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