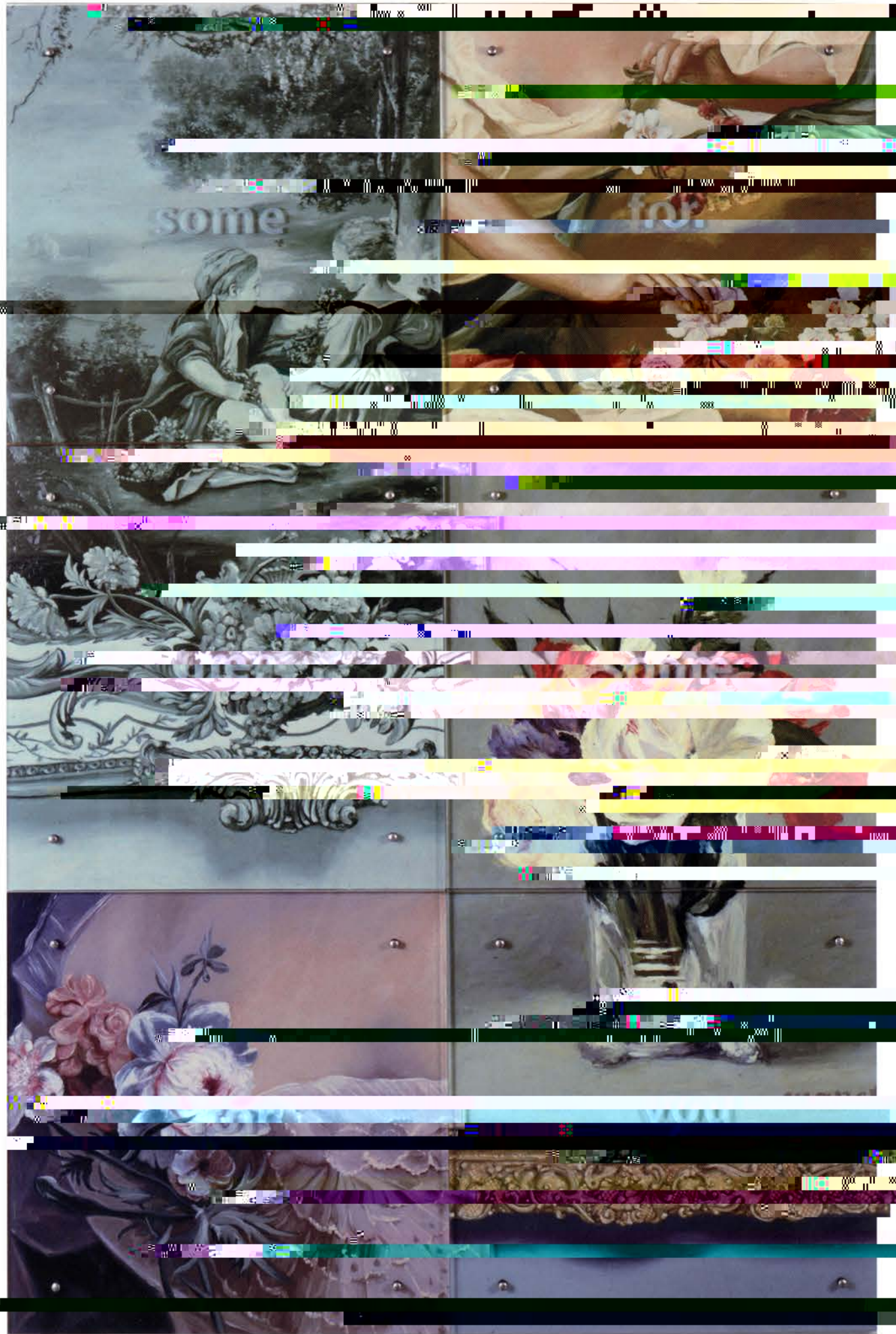


SOME FOR ME, SOME FOR YOU
Paintings by Ken Apter

SOME FOR ME, SOME FOR YOU
Paintings by Ken Aptekar



SOME FOR ME, SOME FOR YOU
Paintings by Rhydderch Iwan

2008 Dr. Roy E. Morgan Exhibition
January 14–March 2, 2008

Acknowledgments

Throughout the planning for this exhibition and catalogue we have had the good fortune of working with the expertise and enthusiasm of many individuals.

To our guests, especially those who have contributed to this catalogue lends a particularly insightful dimension to the project.

We are also especially grateful to the individuals who have loaned important works from their own collections, including Konstantinos Barin, Marianne, Andrew and Heidi Seminar, and the James J. Ruffalo Foundation, New York. A special thank you to Robert Ostojic of Forest Hills, NY, Robert Holman of Boca Raton, FL. The richness and depth of the exhibition would not have been possible without their generous contributions.

Finally, this exhibition is dedicated to the late Dr. Roy L. Sordani, a distinguished drama critic for *The Times* and a long-time friend and supporter of the Sordani Art Gallery.

Cover: *Some For Me*

© 2008 Sordani Art Gallery
150 South River Street
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18726
Tel: 717-824-5700 ext. 570-408-4325
Fax: 717-824-5700
wilkes.edu/sordaniartgallery

Ronald R. Bernier, Ph.D.
Director

Brittany Kramer DeBari
Coordinator

2000 copies were printed by Zodiac Printing Corp.

Catalogue design: John Bernier
Typeset by: Display Type, Inc.

January 2008

ISBN 0-942945-28-X

An Introduction and an Invitation

Rebecca M. Brant

This exhibition forms part of a larger conversation about the role of the artist in the world. In 2004, a series of exhibitions into contemporary painting's recent return to realism and figuration, and in particular its engagement with the past, opened an intellectual dialogue with its own past. That is to say, we set out to consider a kind of painting that, in appropriating, reframing, and recasting Art History's forms, figures and historical allusion with contemporary consciousness.

"In the beginning was the Word," announced the critic Tom McEvilly in 1992, "and since then there's been a lot of talk." However, this prophecy has resister in trade more than ironic parody and clever pastiche, which the exhibition is thought to affect a cynical critique of the Modernist cult of originality and authenticity. Yet there are those rare occasions, as in the current exhibition, when the viewer is treated with greater respect. Ken Aptekar's pilfering from a painting's past, or more accurately fragments of a past, are themselves subjected to manipulation, and in so doing, raise questions about authority and influence, past and originality, and more insistently about more lasting effect.

In a process that integrates the past into the present, and through the re-use of art historical forms, patterns, and figures, Aptekar enacts a kind of postmodernist homage to Old Master veneration. As if to complicate the anachronism, he bolts to the wall his panels singlehandedly with handwritten text by various artists over the image—sometimes narrative autobiographic narratives about his own artistic genealogy, and his gendered, religious, and ethnic identities as in *What Somewhere Sometime* (2000), *People All Over Are Starving* (1996), and *Sincere of Rembrandt* (1997), while in others he elicits the voices of other contemporary viewers as in *I'd Just Look Around* (1997), while in others he asks the viewer to reflect on their own experience as in *Did That Make You Feel?* and *Ordering for Lady at Restaurant* (all 1992).

1. See Tom McEvilly, "In the Beginning Was the Word," *Artforum*, vol. 30, no. 10 (2001), 108-110.
2. Thomas McEvilly, *Art & Otherness: Crisis in the Contemporary* (New York: Museum of Contemporary Art, 1992), 108-110.
Reality Bites: Realism in Contemporary Art, Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art & Design, 1996, 28.

It is the *dislocation* of word and image in painting that creates a temporal shift in our re-viewing, just as meaning shifts from source to copy, just as we move forth between the “then and there” and the “now and here.” Scholar Mieke Bal has coined the term *preposterous history* to describe this process, in which the chronically first (pic-) is an audience behind its later recycling. This is not unlike what literary theorist Harold Bloom has called *anxiety of influence*, in which a new poet’s [the] precursor, so that the

In these pages, the poet and art critic Barry Schwabsky similarly acknowledges how the text in Aptekar’s painting at once *distances* us, the viewers, in standing between us and the image, forcing a different modality of attending—reading over viewing, and draws us closer by slowing down our lingering gaze, holding us in a time of *resisting* hesitation and heightening our urge to look through the marked and reflective glass to the paintings’ surfaces. Viewer response, then, is no longer an “after” or “supplementary” to the primacy of visual meaning; rather, it is the very constituent of meaning at the moment of looking. Thus Aptekar challenges the tyrannical notion that painting has intrinsic meaning known to the initiated. In the end, we are left with the presence of the image, and a plenitude—*some for me, some for you*—that depends on

performed within the relationship between the text/picture and the reader/viewer. Ken

Aptekar, to put it more simply, is that which matters. As one reviewer has recently put it, “Aptekar believes, and his art demonstrates, that interpretation is a creative process, and that it is our viewers to add their own interpretive voices.”

3. Mieke Bal, *Quoting Caravaggio: Contemporary Art, Preposterous History*, Chicago and London: Chicago

University Press, 2000, p. 104.

4. Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1983, p. 1.

5. Jean De Bascaris, *The Art of the Book*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005, p. 104.

A TEST OF PAINTING

Barry Schwabsky

It is not supposed to be mentioned in the art world, but

—painting a sort of *creativity*—the artist who indulges in language may find his duty of making images. There are many who feel that

In their eyes, Ken Aptekar must be, for his art has been rigorously

giving existing paintings, and they do them with v

do they see them as a way of seeing, not (or not

only) as simple or even plain anti-aesthetic attitude that is internal to any contemporary art worthy of the name.

From Aptekar’s work, it is clear that he is, asserts, the aesthete and the anti-aesthete, the hedonist and the moralist, the indulgent and the austere

but above all, the “aristocrat of culture,” (in Rine Dora’s pungent phrase) and the one who still feels in his work the discomfort in what the sociologist John Murray Cuddihy long ago called the “ordeal of civility.” Cuddihy

internalize the incomplete and related struggle of

that’s important to the culture of identity politics, and the sense of political self-awareness, in contrast

to the transcendental subject of aesthetics; yet it is in fact the predicament of nearly everyone who finds his way from the comforts and

consecrated art.

This predicament is vividly illustrated by Aptekar’s work for 1998, *People All Over Are Starving*. The image is taken from what is evident a seventeenth-century Dutch life.

One does not see the whole of the original painting, but

is anyone familiar with contemporary art history can tell, for both these plays are not only well attested in art since the 1960s but fundamental to it.

along with part of its frame and the flocked wall behind it, but it does not imply that the Old Master painting suggests at once extravagance (the overturned metal goblet is ornate) and the train in the foreground holds but a single olive. The amplitude here is not *only* modern; rather, seventeenth-century Holland, which realized the vanity of the material wealth it so assiduously gathered, was already modern. The viewer to whom all of this is evident will also see that the *monumentality* of the painting is not in the foreground. Only the specialist—or someone who has had occasion to do a little extra research—will be able to identify the *Silver Bowl*, which is in fact noted for his so-called *Silver Bowl*. On the other hand, he has flipped the image left to right, a curious aesthetic choice one might ponder.

But before this work addresses itself to a viewer, however knowledgeable or otherwise, it calls for a reader. As always with Aptekar's paintings, a glass pane with a text has been sandblasted has been bolted to the painting's surface, interposing itself between the viewer—the viewer—not translating the painting into another medium, the way an artist such as Louise Lawler would by photographing it, but putting the painting at a distance. What strikes the viewer is that it's hard to imagine that anyone literate in English could face the words before looking at the picture. It seems to be a sort of interior monologue, the sort of random rumination that might come into a person's mind in the presence of a painting that they are perhaps not terribly interested in, which they might even look at, but when they are not entirely ignoring either. God knows, I've had one forkful of brisket on my plate, a scene that has been transformed in this small remembrance of things past into a bear, but one about possessing prey in a world ruled by poverty echoes through the centuries. And yet the fact remains that this thought, that association, that daydream, and surely something that would crop up in a freshman art history paper: "Not paying attention," the professor might scold. Anyway, it's not the bread alone that is the focus of the painting, even one that depicts food.

The thought conveyed in this text is hardly that of someone who is distracted, inattentive, inattentive, immature subject is the one through whom an appreciation of painting can actually be reached, however partially and impurely, not only in the sense that the gaze must negotiate this distracting text in order to reach the painting, but also in the sense that the gaze, in seemingly irrelevant realities is the potential basis for an ethical reflection on the content and context of painting, a reflection which is equal to the painting itself. "When someone asks me what I do. I say I'm an artist who 'uses the ambiguity of art and bolt glass with words over it. The text is one piece of a puzzle; the painting between the lines is a clue. At the moment, I'm considering the image of angels in the mind of a Jew."



When someone asks, 2000, diptych, oil on wood, sandblasted glass, bolts, 30 x 60 in.

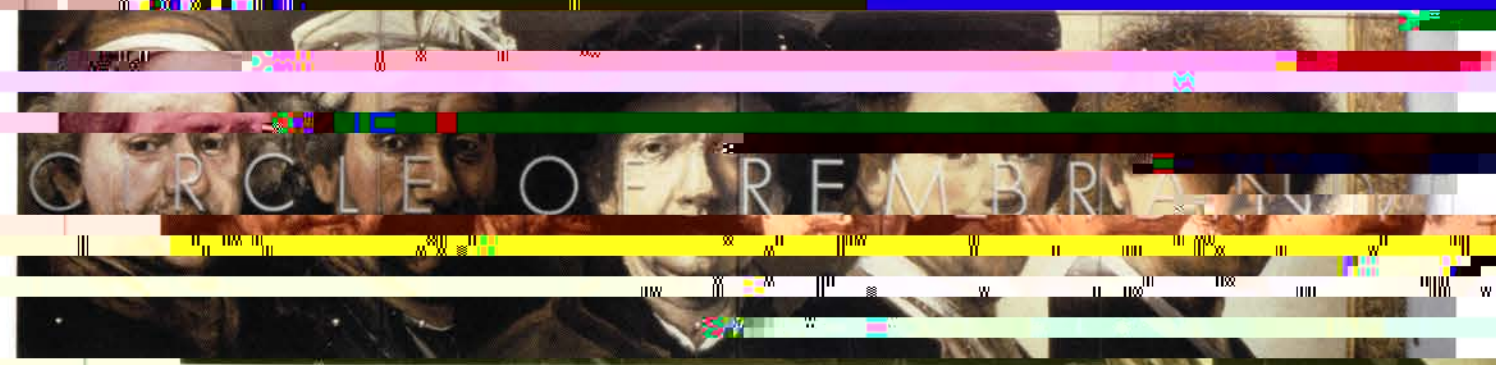
When someone asks me what I do. I say I'm an artist who "uses the ambiguity of art and bolt glass with words over it. The text is one piece of a puzzle; the painting between the lines is a clue. At the moment, I'm considering the image of angels in the mind of a Jew."



People All Over Are Starving, 1998, diptych, oil on wood, sandblasted glass, bolt
 Courtesy of Robert and Maxine Peckar, Alps

After Pieter Claesz. (1597/8–1660), *Still Life with Wine Glass and Silver*

"People all over are starving," my parents report. Africa, China, some naked child in the Congo will drop dead
 of brisket on my plate, a solitary green bean



Circle of Rembrandt, 1002, four panels, oil on wood, salt
 Courtesy of A. O. ...

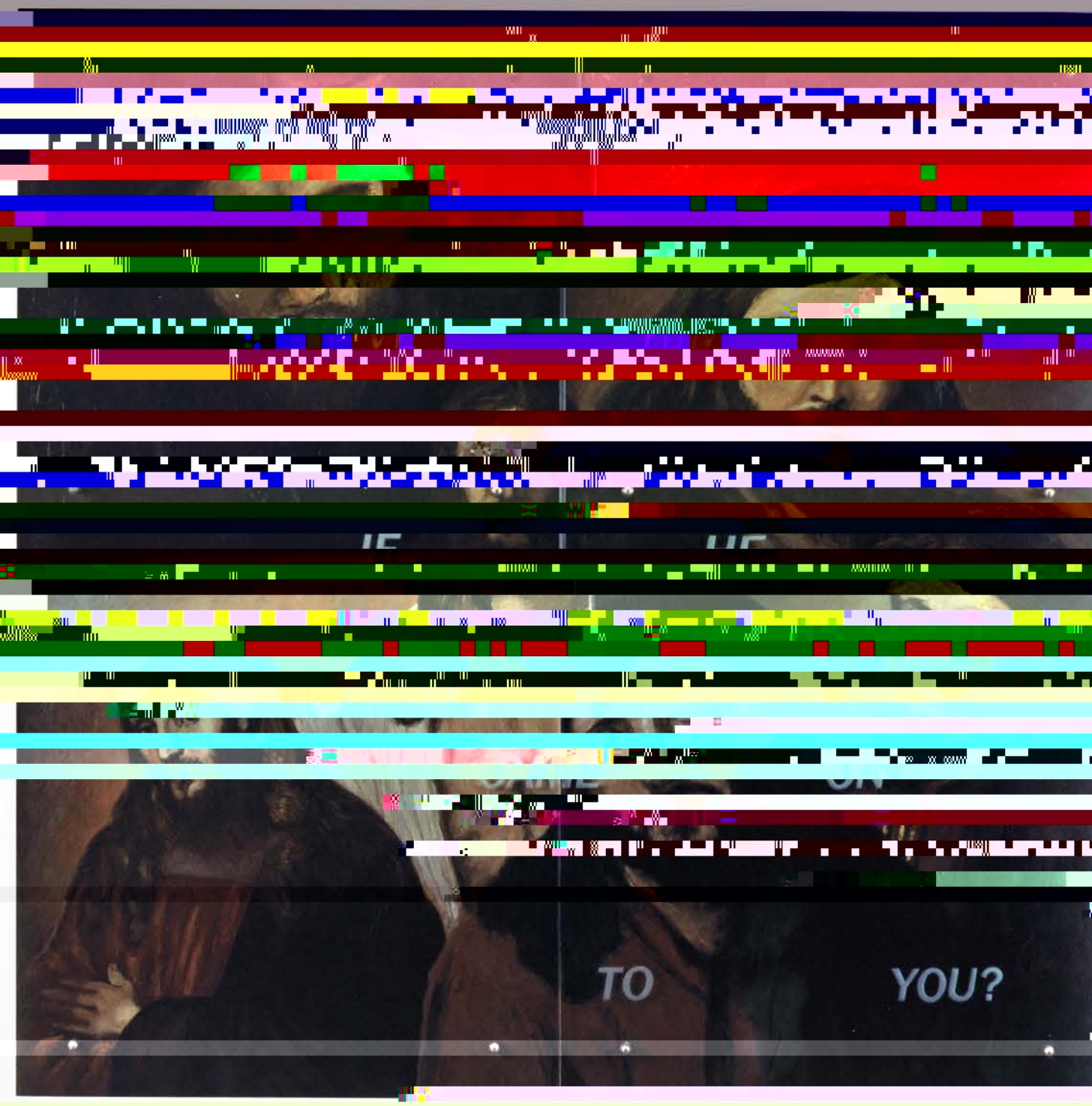
After Rembrandt van Rijn (1606–1669; all authenticated words by Rembrandt) l-r: *Self-portrait*
 accepted to be Rembrandt's first self-portrait.)



I'd Just Look Around, 1997, oil on wood, sand
 Courtesy of the artist

After Walter Gay (1856–1937), *Salon in the Musée Jacquemart-André*, 1908

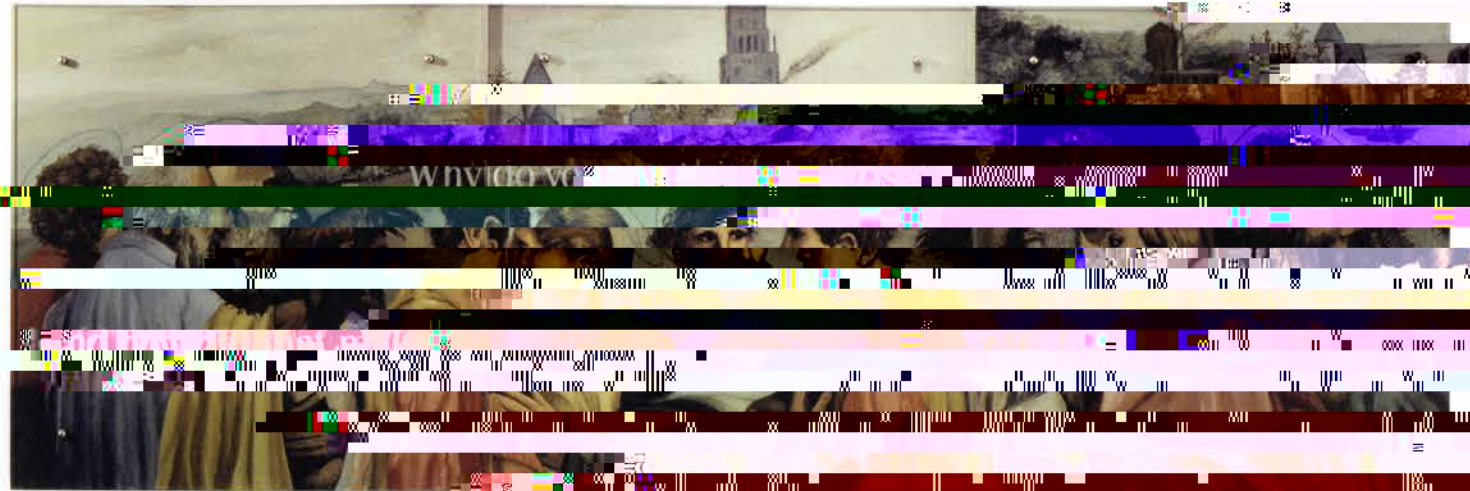
"I'd just look around and be a guard at the Corcoran Gallery of Art."
 "I wouldn't sit in any of the chairs in the painting because they look too pretty to sit in. No, I wouldn't touch anything," she says. "I'd just observe."



Would You Love Him?, 1992, four panels, oil on wood, sand
 Courtesy of the artist

After Rembrandt (1639–1689), *Portrait of a Man*, 1669

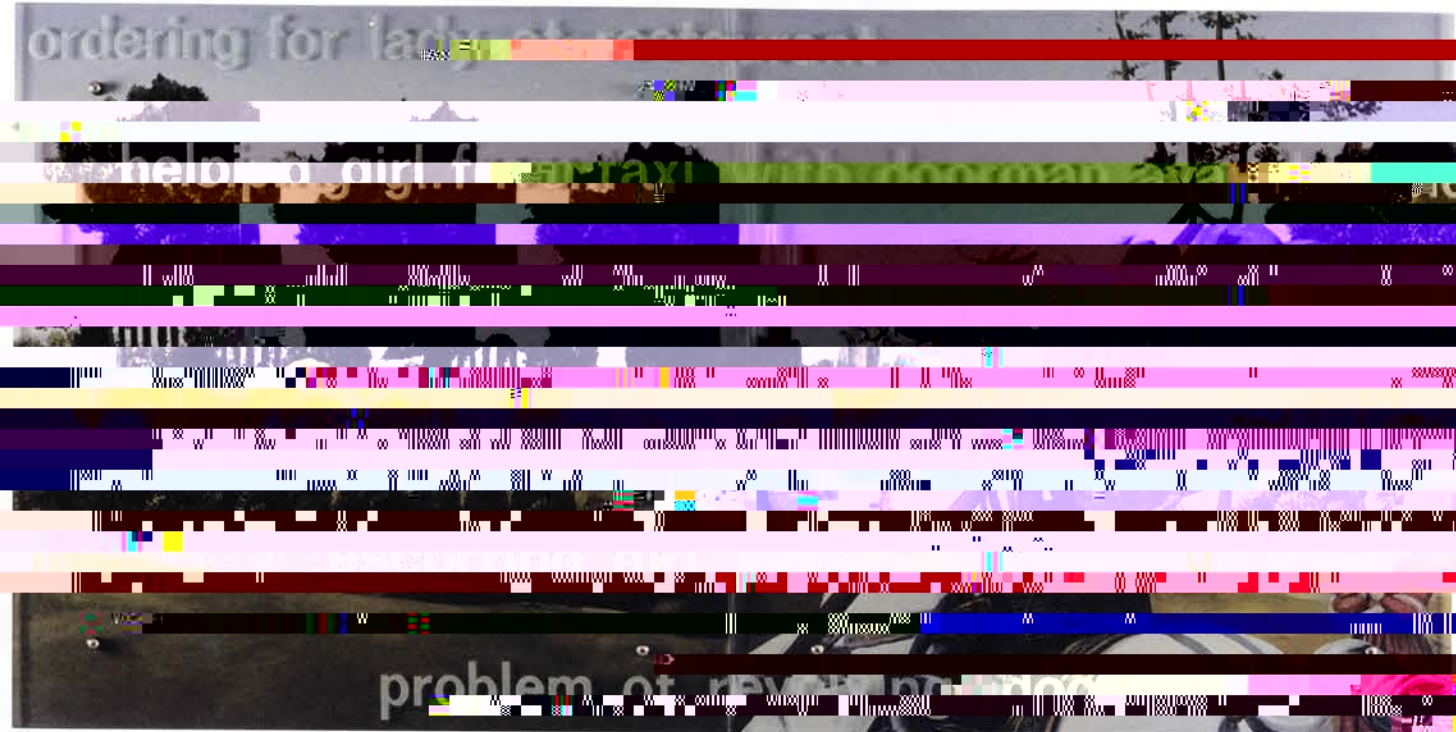
"I'd just look around and be a guard at the Corcoran Gallery of Art."
 "I wouldn't sit in any of the chairs in the painting because they look too pretty to sit in. No, I wouldn't touch anything," she says. "I'd just observe."



And How Did That Make You Feel?, 1992, triptych, oil on wood, sandblasted glass, bolts, 30 x 90 in.
 Courtesy of A. Ostojic, Forest Hills, NY

Why do you think he's after you? And now did that make you feel...

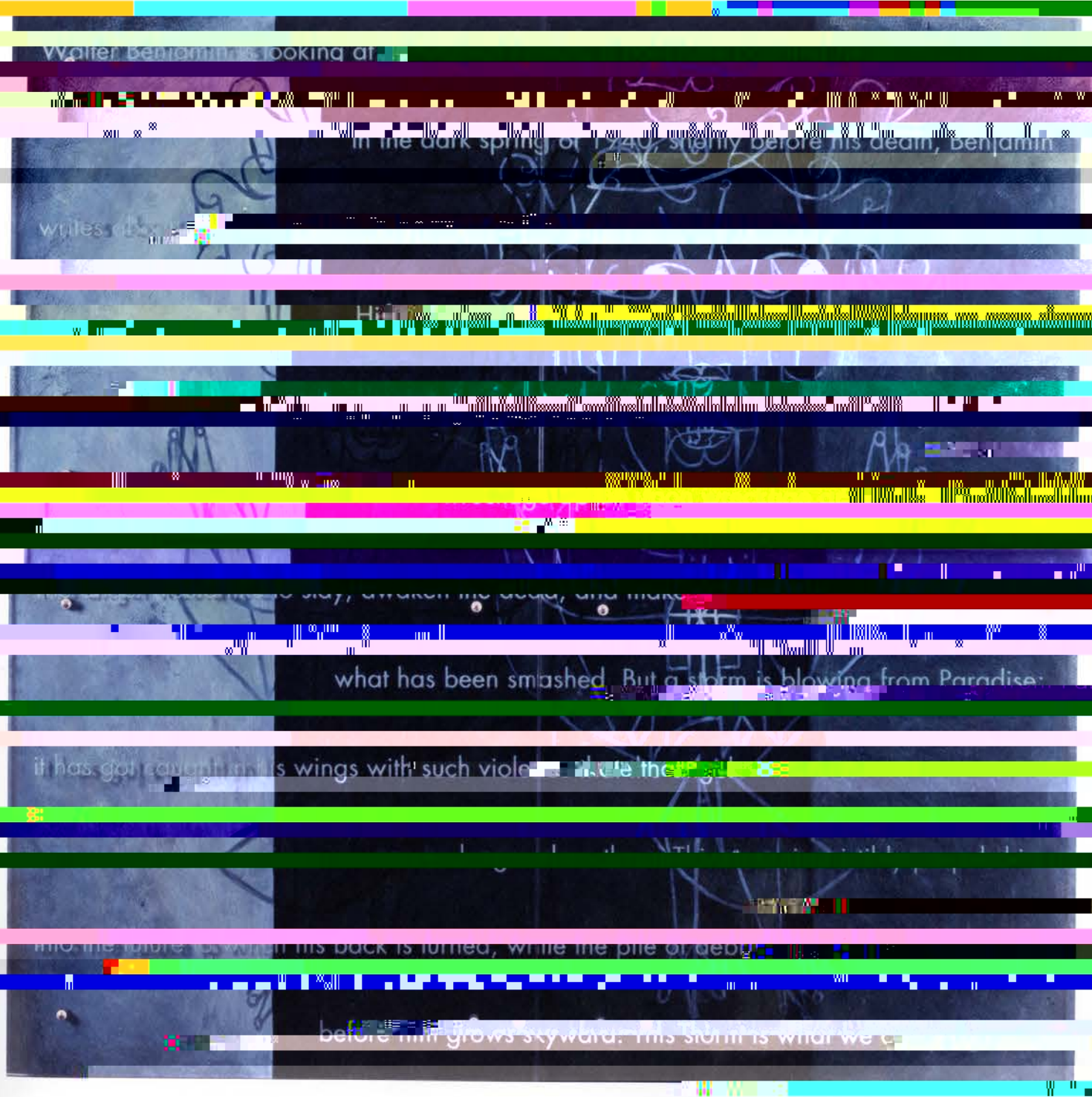
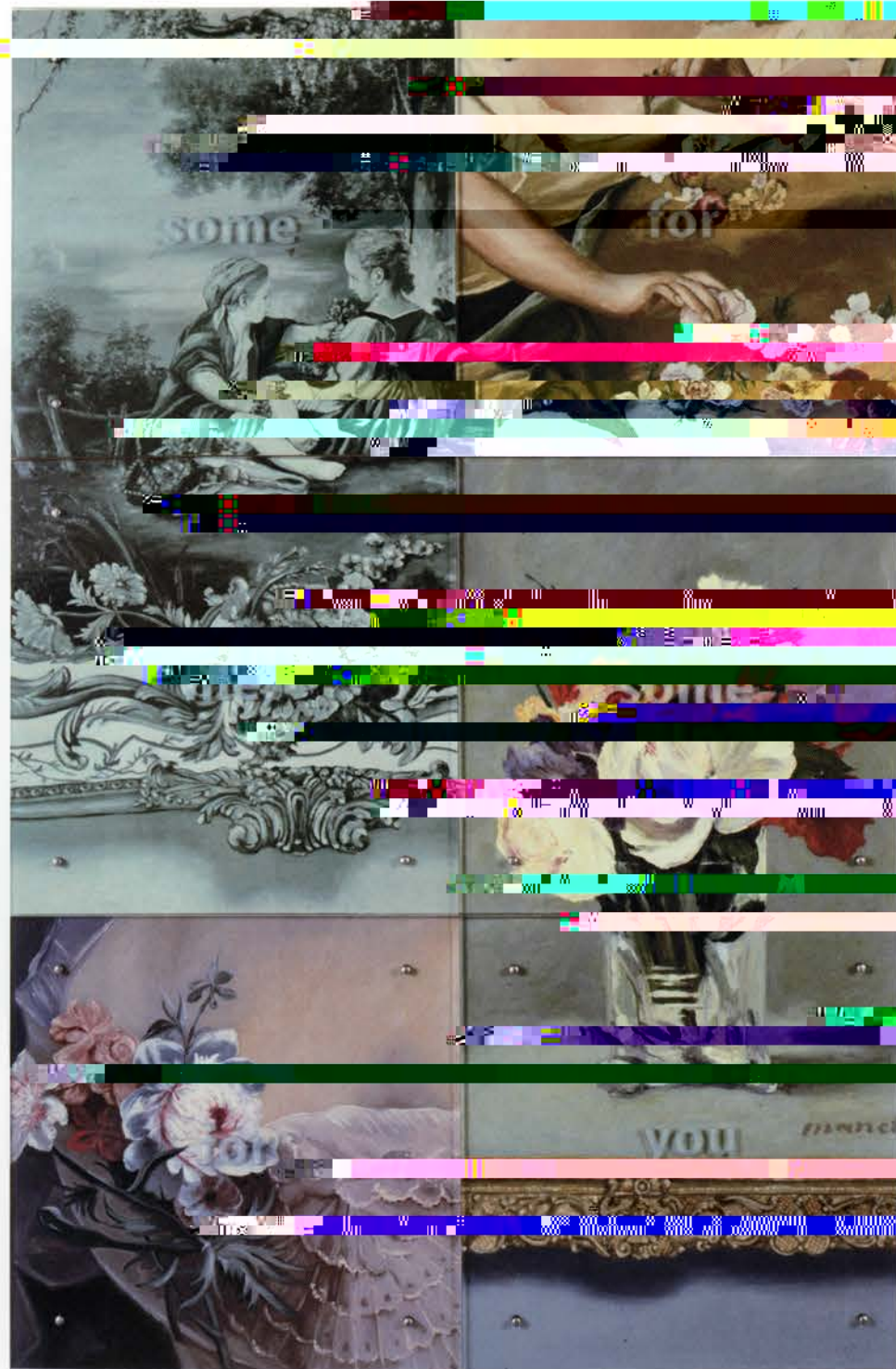
Why do you think he's after you? And now did that make you feel...



Ordering for Lady at Restaurant, 1992, diptych, oil on wood, sandblasted glass, bolts, 30 x 60 in.
 Courtesy of A. Ostojic, Forest Hills, NY

After Dinner... St. Catherine's...

speaking to strange women when traveling... problem of revolving door



Some for Me, Some for You, 1998, oil on wood
 Courtesy of the artist

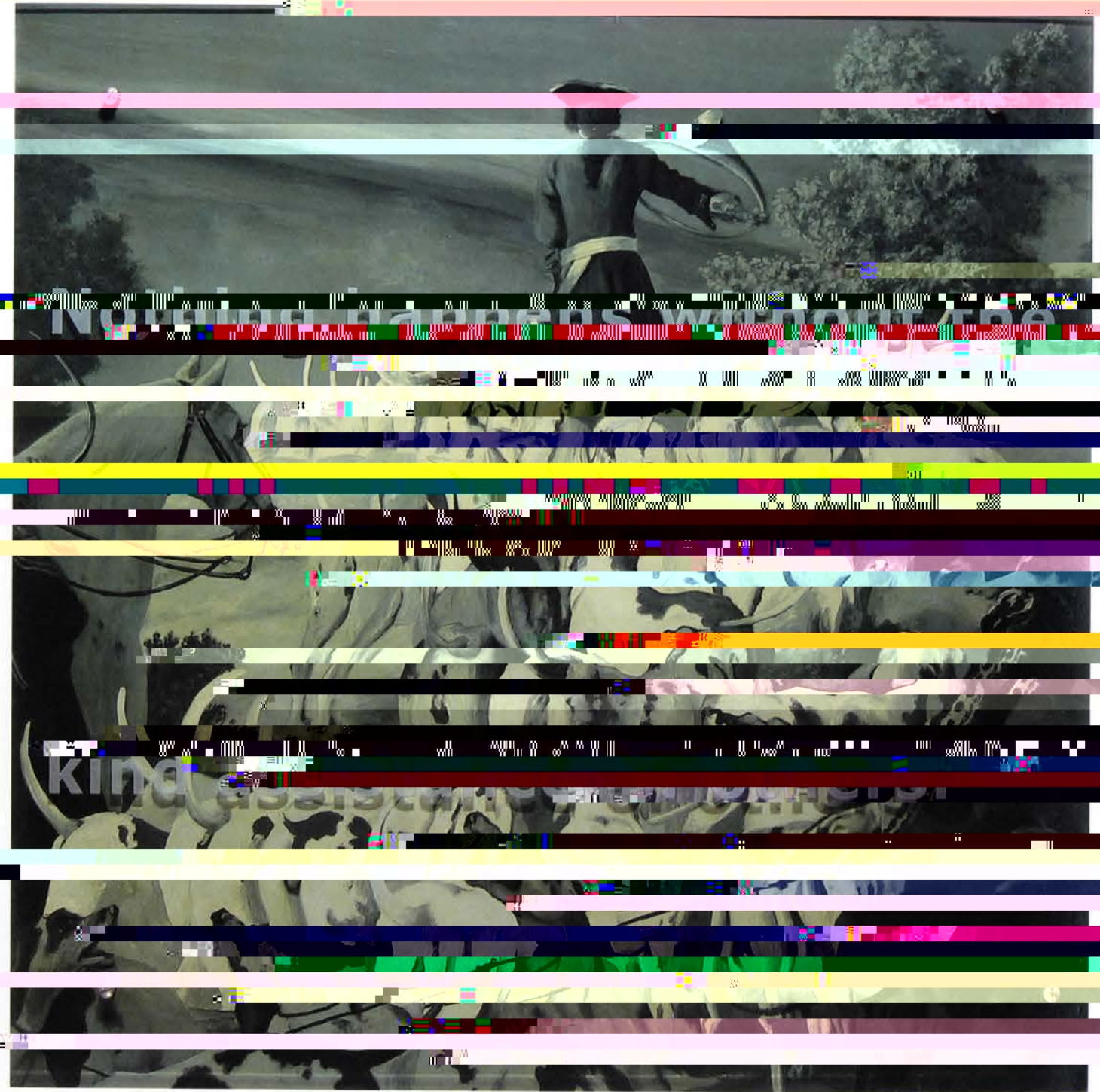
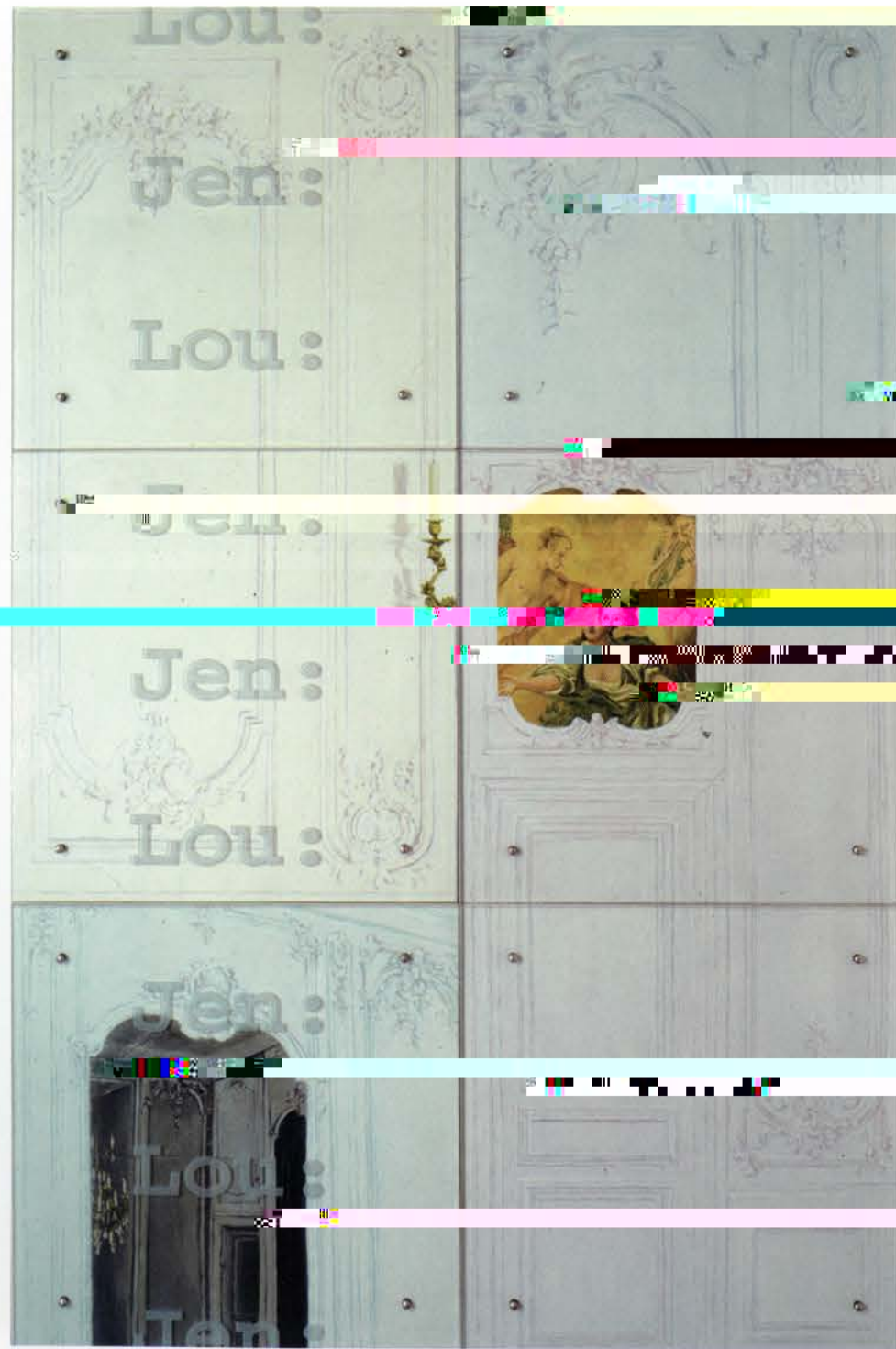
After Paul Klee, *Walter Benjamin Is Looking at Angelus Novus*, a Paul Klee painting from 1925, shortly before his death. The face is
 awaken the delusion
 propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward.
 This storm is what we call progress."

some for me some for you

Walter Benjamin Is Looking, 2000, four panels, oil on wood, sandblasted glass, bolts, 60 x 60 in.
 Courtesy of Andrew and Helen Sacks, Human, New York, NY

After Paul Klee

Walter Benjamin Is Looking at Angelus Novus, a Paul Klee painting from 1925, shortly before his death. The face is
 awaken the delusion
 propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward.
 This storm is what we call progress."



Scenario
 Courtesy of the artist

Scenario is composed of images of the secret staircase built during Louis XV's private apartment below. The painted image on the wall (not the mirror) is a detail of a Boucher (1703-1770) mythological painting, *Issa and Issa* (1759), in which he used Issa's face for the character of Issa. Jen refers to Jean-Louis, short for Louis. "Scenario" is "screenplay" in French.

Lou: Jen: Lou: Jen: Jen: Lou: Jen: Lou: Jen:

Nothing Happens Without the Kind Assistance of Others, 2005, oil on wood, sandblasted glass, bolts, 27 x 27 in.
 Courtesy of Brian Roberts, New York, NY

Antoine-Jean-Baptiste Oudry (1688-1755), *Mérite de chiens courants qui se font de l'Embassade, Forêt de Compiègne*, 1753

Nothing happens without the kind assistance of others.



Not Here, 2004

Guillemet, Guy L'enc du Bois (1904-1950), Les rues de Montmartre, 1916, 1930, and Guy L'enc du Bois, 1916
Montmartre, c.1928-29 (painting destroyed by fire)

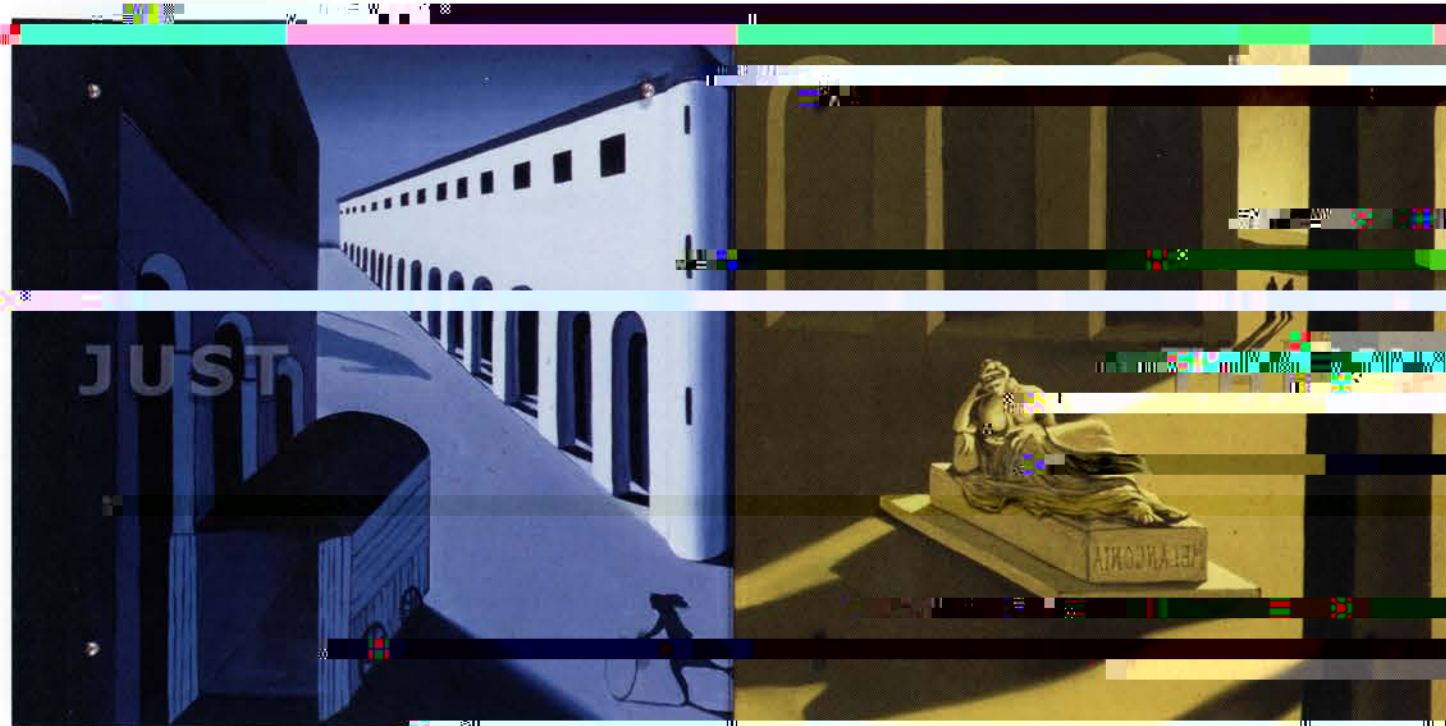
NOT HERE



Wrong Wrong

Alter

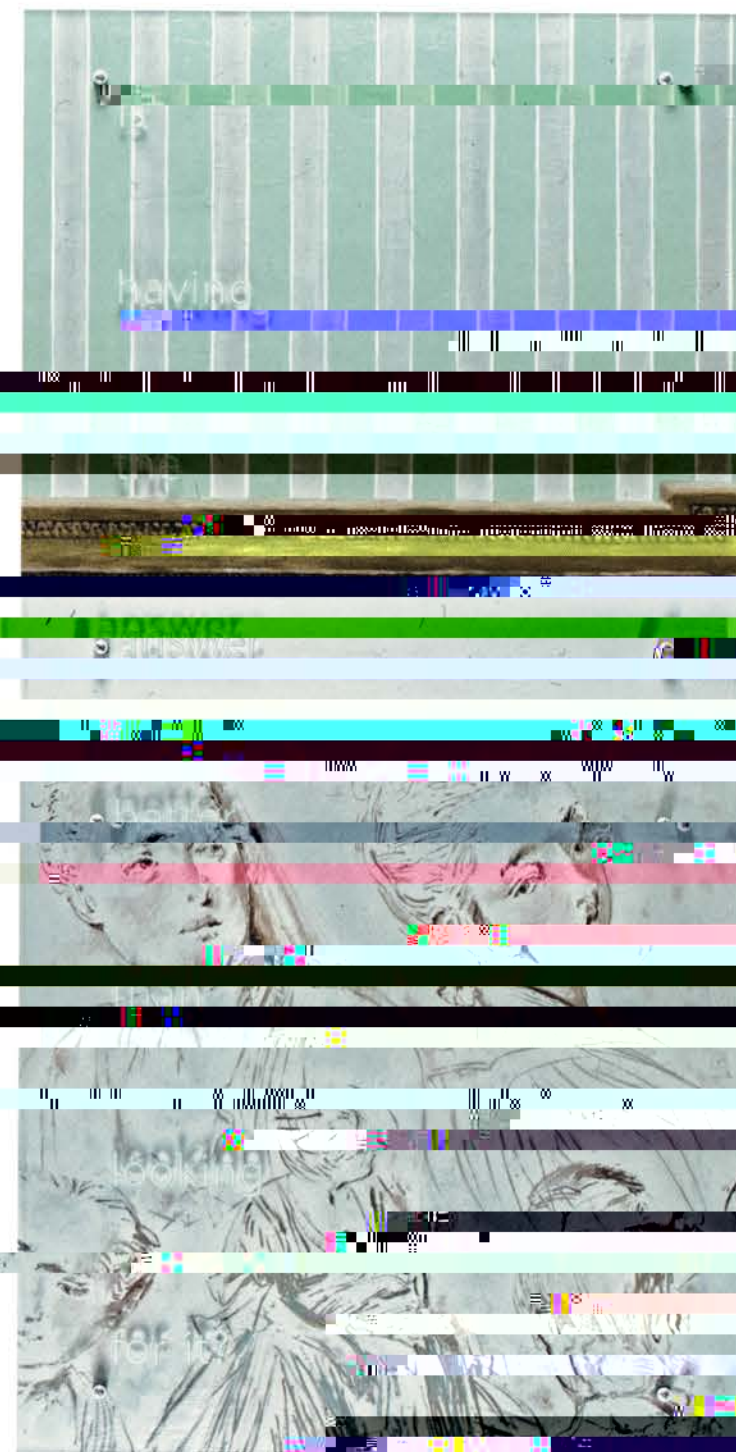
WRONG WRONG



Just Then, 2006, diptych, oil on wood, sandblasted glass, bolts, 30 × 60 in.
Courtesy of the artist

After Giorgio di Chirico (1898–1978), *Mystery and Melancholy of a Street*, 1914, and Giorgio

JUST THEN



Is Having the Answer Better Than Looking for It?, 2005, oil on wood, sandblasted glass, bolts, 60 × 30 inches
Courtesy of Allison Holtzman-Garcia, Boca Raton, Florida

Is having the answer better than looking for it?

Exhibition on the Writers

at the Scranton Art Center
M... Bank
Andrew J. Sordani, III

This project was supported by the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts

State... funding partnership, Pennsylvania...
annual appropriation by Pennsylvania's General...
National Endowment for the Arts...
this region by the Scranton Area Foundation

Advisory Committee

- Marion M. Cunningham
- Virginia...
- Darin Fields
- Joseph E. (Tom) Shannon, Ph.D.
- Robert J. Heaman
- Keith A. Hunter, Esq.
- Mel...
- Theo Lumia
- Kenneth Marau...
- Als...
- H...
- Arnold R. Jasin
- Charles Shanley
- St...
- William...
- Helen...
- Andre...
- Sanford B. Stern
- M...
- Joel Zitefelus Chair

Ronald K. B... Ph.D., Director
Brittany Kramer Debako
B...

