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The Date Paintings of On Kawara

ANNE RORIMER

Chicago


I have keenly experienced consciousness of myself today, at 81 years, exactly as I was conscious of myself at 5 or 6 years. Consciousness is motionless. And it is only because of its motionlessness that we are able to see the motion of that which we call time. If time passes, it is necessary that there should be something which remains static. And it is consciousness of self which is static. LEO TOLSTOI (1910)

Every life is many days, day after day. We walk through ourselves meeting robbers, ghosts, giants, old men, young men, wives, widows, brothers-in-love, but always meeting ourselves. JAMES JOYCE, *ULYSSES* (1922)

When On Kawara painted his first date painting on January 4, 1966, he inaugurated the *Today Series*, an ongoing, open-ended work now numbering more than 1,900 canvases. Many of these paintings have been exhibited in series as extensive as one year's production, and many have entered public and private collections either singly, in pairs, or in groups. In contrast to the other works that form part of Kawara's total oeuvre, the *Today Series* takes the form of traditional painting. While preserving the conventions of two-dimensionality, rectilinearity, and painted surface, *Oct. 31, 1978, Today Series ("Tuesday")* (fig. 1), acquired by the Art Institute in 1980, exemplifies the way in which Kawara has redefined traditional approaches to representational imagery.¹ Furthermore, it raises the question of its place within contemporary developments in painting and within the broader spectrum of the artist's aesthetic practice.

Each of Kawara's paintings represents a single day — the one designated by the actual date on which the work was made — and is considered by him to be a single component or detail of the *Today Series* as a whole. Letters, numerals, and punctuation marks, scaled to the size of the canvas, are placed laterally across its center. Although they give the impression of having been stenciled, the letters of the month, rendered in capitals and abbreviated when necessary, along with the numbers of the day and year, are skillfully drawn by hand in white upon a dark background. The typeface, subjectively chosen by the artist, subtly varies among paintings but is not determined by an objectively definable rationale or system. The earliest works in the series are a

FIGURE 1. On Kawara (Japanese, born 1933). *Oct. 31, 1978, Today Series ("Tuesday")*, 1978. Liquitex on canvas; 155.8 x 227.3 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago, Twentieth-Century Purchase Fund (1980.2). For the last twenty-five years, the Japanese conceptual artist On Kawara has undertaken a series of paintings, each of which records the date of its creation. Almost every day, Kawara embarks on a new painting, large or small in format, which he may or may not finish by the end of the day. If he does not finish the canvas in that day, it is destroyed.

A black square with the date "OCT.31.1978" in white, sans-serif capital letters is mounted on a light gray wall. The square is centered horizontally and vertically in the upper half of the frame. Below the square, a horizontal line of wood trim separates the wall from a wooden floor with a herringbone pattern. The lighting is even, and the overall composition is minimalist.

OCT.31.1978

FIGURE 2. Installation view of eight paintings from a series of fifteen *Haystacks* that Claude Monet painted in 1890–91, shown in the exhibition “A Day in the Country: Impressionism and the French Landscape,” on display at The Art Institute of Chicago in 1984–85. In addition to haystacks, Monet used a number of subjects for his series paintings, including poplars, cliffs, water lilies, and Rouen Cathedral. Within each series, Monet explored the effect of time on a scene in nature.



cerulean blue, while others have been painted in red. For the most part, however, the background hues of the paintings tend to be dark gray-browns, gray-greens, or blues that verge on, but are never, black. Kawara applies four or five layers of paint to the background of each canvas and uses an additional six or seven layers of paint for the date. He obtains a rich matte surface but effaces all traces of the activity of brushwork.

Always horizontal in format, the *Today Series*, or so-called “date paintings,” may be one of eight predetermined sizes, the smallest being 8 x 10 inches (20.3 x 25.4 centimeters) and the largest 61 x 89 inches (155.8 x 227.3 centimeters), like the one belonging to the Art Institute. Aside from the fact that a work must be started and completed on the actual day of its date, the artist does not impose a preconceived system of production. When they are small, as many as three paintings may be created in a day; on other days, none may be painted at all. If not finished by the close of the day, the partially completed painting is destroyed. Kawara, whose work has been exhibited extensively in the United States, Europe, and his own native country, Japan, and who has been based in New York City since the mid-sixties, travels extensively. Thus, works of the easily manageable sizes are more likely to be executed when the artist is away from home.

The significance of these paintings lies in the fact that they depict not only a date, but also their *own* date. If, historically, paintings have been fixed in time by a date on the front or back of the canvas, the date itself for Kawara becomes the subject of the painting and the sole embodiment of the work’s figurative imagery. Each date painting, moreover, is unique if only by virtue of its particular date. Despite the fact that paintings of dates necessarily resemble each other, no combination of numerical or letter forms can ever be identical with another. Letters and numbers, which may be perceived as independent objects, allow an otherwise immaterial date to assume material form. The date paintings thus succeed in turning abstract, temporal measurement into the concrete reality of painting.

Because of their thematic involvement with temporality, the *Today Series* may tangentially be compared to the much earlier, nineteenth-century serial paintings of Claude Monet—to the fifteen *Haystacks* of 1890–91, for example



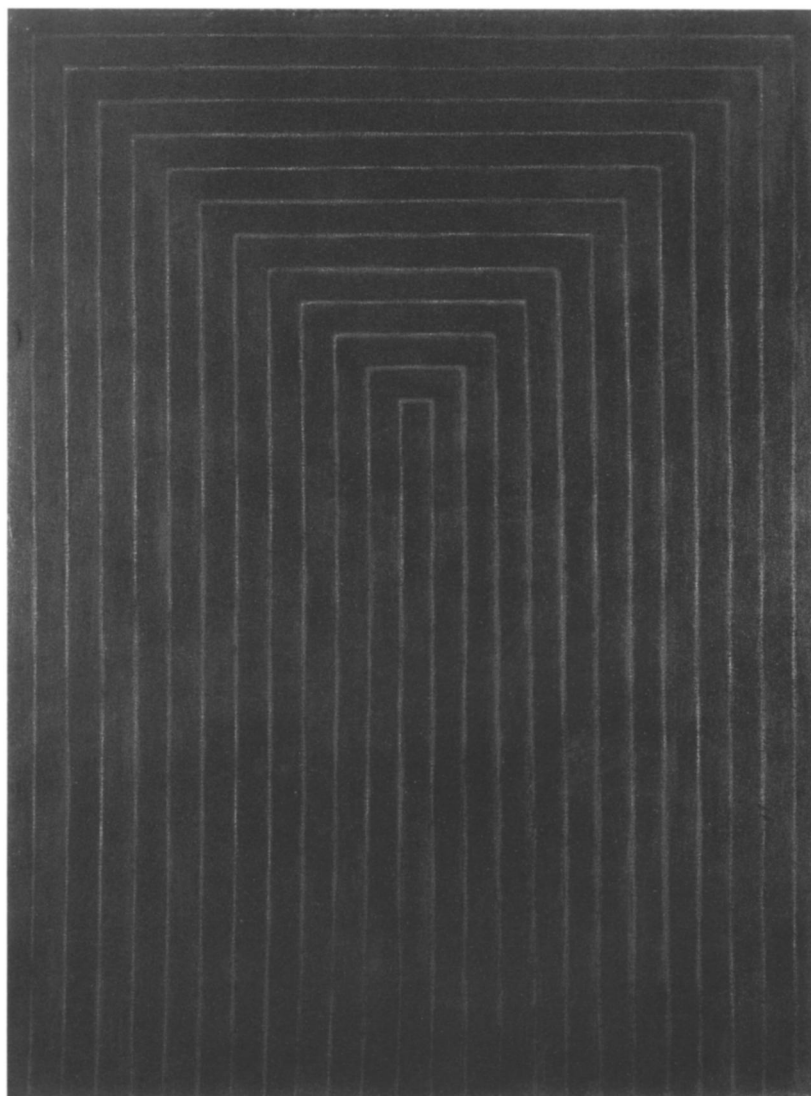
(see fig. 2). By working in series, Monet sought to capture the infinite, fleeting qualities of observed reality engendered by the ceaseless, but momentary, shifts in light—and, by extension, the passage of time—within the static format of multiple canvases. Kawara, quite differently, is not concerned with the specific effects of changing times on a given subject, as was Monet, but seeks instead to depict the notion of time itself.

The paintings of Kawara also may be viewed in comparison with the number and alphabet paintings of the mid to late 1950s by Jasper Johns (see fig. 3). For Johns, as for Kawara, the numeral or letter offered an already flat, abstract form as a subject for delineation, and, in the work of both artists, these symbols achieve a visual self-sufficiency. With regard to the work of Johns, as opposed to that of Kawara, the number or letter is absorbed into the dominant materiality of paint and brushwork. Johns subordinated numerical or lexical symbols to the demands of painterliness rather than to the demands of quantification or semantics. In canvases by Kawara, however, numbers and letters retain their informational purpose. If, for Johns, numbers and letters used as formal images primarily played a painterly role, for Kawara they maintain their symbolic function within the structure of a given date, as well as within the structure of the painted surface per se.

The *Today Series* reflects Kawara's understanding of the critical issues associated with painting that, as of the late 1950s and early 1960s, confronted artists internationally. The date paintings acknowledge and elaborate upon the significant ideas of artists such as Frank Stella or Robert Ryman in America, or Piero Manzoni in Europe, while they introduce original and unprecedented considerations of their own. At the end of the 1950s, in the wake of Abstract Expressionism and the School of Paris, a number of artists sought to revitalize painting, having found that the gestural handling of paint characteristic of the decade had been drained of its original power and

FIGURE 3. Jasper Johns (American, born 1930). *o through 9*, 1959. Encaustic and collage on canvas; 52 x 89 cm. Aachen, Neue Galerie, Sammlung Ludwig. Photo courtesy of the Leo Castelli Gallery, New York. In his number and alphabet paintings of the 1950s, Johns used a painterly style to represent abstract symbols. Much of the interest in Johns's *o through 9* lies in its bold brushwork; in contrast, Kawara's date paintings disguise the artist's hand, thereby emphasizing the informational aspect of the subject matter.

FIGURE 4. Frank Stella (American, born 1936). *Clinton Plaza*, 1959. Black enamel on canvas; 251 x 189 cm. Chicago, private collection. Kawara's date paintings are not unlike Stella's black paintings of the late 1950s and Robert Ryman's post-1957 paintings (see fig. 5) in their preoccupation with issues of representation. *Clinton Plaza* makes no clear reference to a reality outside the work itself, leaving the viewer to wonder about the role of illusion in art.



meaning. Speaking in general terms, it may be said that a number of artists on both sides of the Atlantic during this period sought to define a pictorial surface as something totally separate from any reality external to it. For this reason, these artists aimed to negate forms of expression overtly possessing emotional or transcendental overtones.

The question of how to make a painting that might exist as its own, nonreferential reality may be seen as the most crucial consideration of the years just prior to Kawara's first date painting. An often quoted statement of Frank Stella's is that in his paintings "only what can be seen is there," and that there is nothing there "besides the paint on the canvas."² This statement succinctly summarizes the goals of those artists desiring to remove personal and illusionistic references from painting. Stella's black paintings of 1958–60 (see fig. 4), for example, display neither figurative representation nor hierarchical compositional arrangement. They seek to conceal signs of the artist's intervention into the process of creation by eliminating the brushstroke with its tell-tale evidence of the artist's hand. Foreground and background merge in works that attempt to abolish illusionism of any kind.

Similarly, Robert Ryman took issue with earlier concepts of painting, maintaining as well that “what painting is, is exactly what people see.”³ Since 1957, he has devoted himself to paintings whose “image” is the paint surface itself once it has been applied to its support (see fig. 5). “There is never a question of what to paint,” according to Ryman, “but only how to paint. The how of painting has always been the image—the end product.”⁴ Paintings by Ryman are purely self-referential in as much as they reflect only upon the activity behind their own painting. Canvases covered in white acrylic suggest the endless variation of surface texture brought about by the application of paint. In works by Ryman, this application is observed as being the visual end itself.

Before his death in 1963 at the age of thirty, Piero Manzoni had come to certain far-reaching conclusions, as his “Achrome” (meaning “no color”) paintings attest. With the advent of his first Achrome in 1957, Manzoni began to realize the principles of his painting, later expressed in his 1960 text, “Free Dimension”:

It is not a question of shaping things, nor of articulating messages . . . For are not fantasising, abstraction and self-expression empty fictions? There is nothing to be said: there is only to be, to live.⁵

Rather than being painted, each Achrome simply came “to be.” The first Achromes were made from canvas squares, which were soaked in the white, water-absorbant clay known as kaolin and then glued together side by side. When dry, the kaolin-soaked canvas became an earthy presence. Manzoni embraced a range of different materials—from cloth to fur to kaolin-covered bread rolls—in his quest for a “white surface that is simply a white surface

FIGURE 5. Robert Ryman (American, born 1930). *The Elliott Room: Charter V*, 1987. Acrylic on fiberglass with aluminum; 243 x 243 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago, Gift of Gerald S. Elliott (1990.132.5). Since the early 1960s, Robert Ryman has painted exclusively in white, exploring the subtlety of its hues and creating works that invite contemplative attention to the nature and texture of their painted surface.



and nothing else.”⁶ Although their means are as disparate as their results, artists like Stella, Ryman, and Manzoni have in common the basic motive of endowing painting with its own reality, exempt from any figurative, compositional, or psychological references.

Works in Kawara’s *Today Series* dispense with illusionistic reference in a manner parallel to the paintings of these three artists. The letters and numbers of the day’s date replace traditional imagery and composition. Instead, the placement and resulting “configuration” of abstract symbols lead naturally to “figuration,” while the conventions of composition yield to the demands of “composing” the date. Kawara’s paintings, like those of Stella, Ryman, or Manzoni, are self-sufficient and self-reflexive statements. The elements of each date serve as the curvilinear and linear parts of a coherent visual whole. In the sense that one cannot actually “see” a date, the paintings offer no information about their relationship to external reality, but within the confines of the painted canvas, the date—otherwise a mere abstraction—assumes a concrete form and shape. Within the very content of the work, therefore, the *Today Series* demonstrates how a painting can be a self-reliant presence, independent of (yet not disregarding) external points of reference. By virtue of existing as a date, each painting by Kawara asserts that it is “present,” although paradoxically its date, perforce, refers to a time already past (see fig. 6).

The solid background hue of each date painting varies slightly from day to day and may change from gray to blue or, occasionally, to red so that the

FIGURE 6. Installation view of a date painting from the *Today Series* by On Kawara. Cincinnati Art Museum, RSM Company Collection. Photo: John Vinci. While Kawara’s date paintings are self-referential in the sense that Stella’s and Ryman’s works are, they nevertheless do refer to an outside reality with their dates. The relation of the date paintings to the measurement and representation of time is powerfully suggested by this installation view from a business office, where Kawara’s *Mar. 21, 1975* is surrounded by a calendar, a message pad, and other paraphernalia that are no doubt dated.



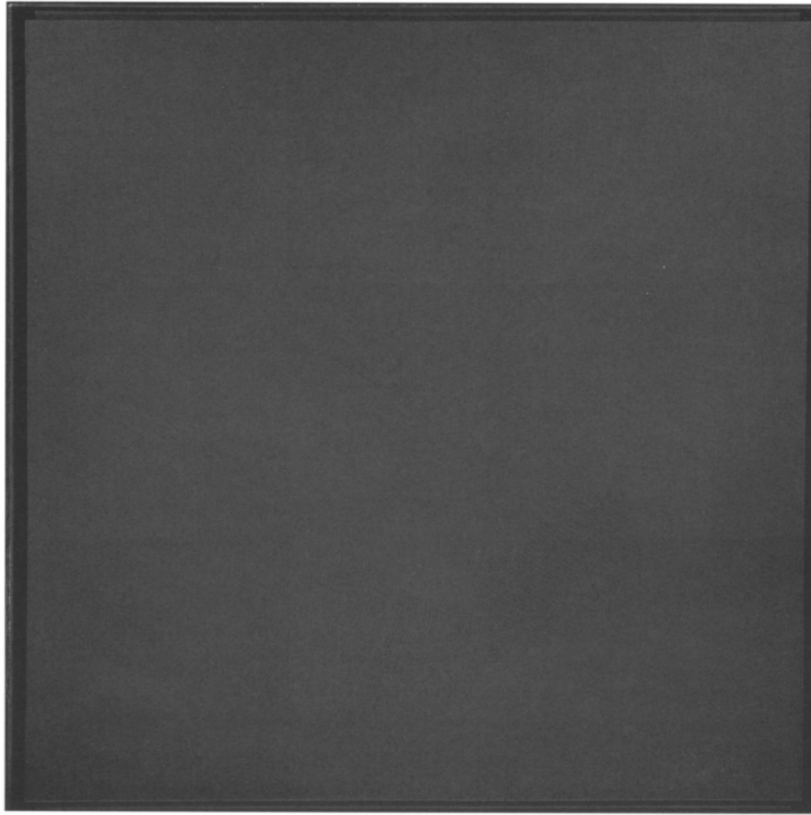


FIGURE 7. Ad Reinhardt (American, 1913–1967). *Abstract Painting #11*, 1961–66. Oil on canvas; 152.4 x 152.4 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago, Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Irving Forman (1985.1067). For the last thirteen years of his life, Ad Reinhardt pushed his abstract art to new limits in black paintings that examined the means of distilling painting to its own essence within a field of monochromatic color. Reinhardt's approach to color has much in common with that of Kawara, who uses a uniform tone in each painting as he varies the color from work to work.

question arises as to what role color performs in these works. Stella's early black paintings, Ryman's white paintings, and Manzoni's "colorless" works similarly aim to avoid the representational, symbolic, or emotional associations that color can create. In the late 1950s, the issue of color was explicitly dealt with in contrasting manners by Ad Reinhardt in America and by Yves Klein in Europe. Their similar use of one hue bears comparison with the single background color of Kawara's date paintings, although in each instance their ultimate intentions differ.

Whereas Reinhardt after 1953 began to paint only with black in order to employ, like Manzoni, a "noncolor," Klein after 1957 turned to the almost exclusive use of the deep, electric cobalt blue now known as "International Klein Blue." With the desire to eradicate all extraneous and distracting visual elements from painting, Reinhardt sought the reduction of color to noncolor by pushing it to the edge of perception (see fig. 7). Klein operated in quite the opposite spirit, attempting to elevate color to mythical proportions while claiming that "through color, I experience a complete identification with space, I am truly free."⁷ Reinhardt wrote that "there is something wrong, irresponsible and mindless about color, something impossible to control."⁸ Klein, however, declared that "before the colored surface one finds oneself directly before the matter of the soul."⁹ From opposite vantage points, both artists defined painting as a reality unto itself, with Reinhardt wishing to distill it to its own essence¹⁰ and Klein believing that "paintings are living, autonomous presences."¹¹ Reinhardt viewed color as an interference in the expression of purity, while Klein considered it the means of envisioning an infinite and immaterial reality outside of "the psychological world of our inherited optics."¹²

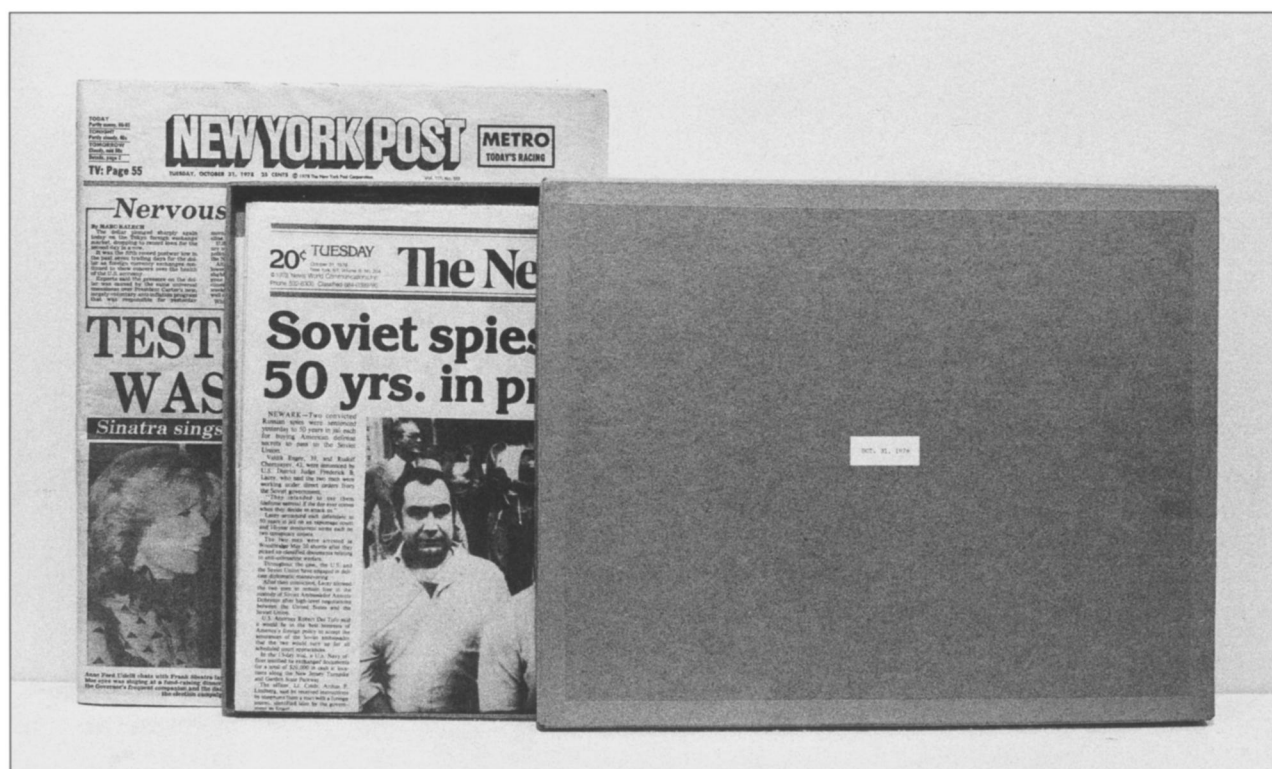


FIGURE 8. On Kawara. Cardboard box and newspapers for Oct. 31, 1978, *Today Series* ("Tuesday") (see fig. 1). Photo: Anne Rorimer. In this figure and the next, we can see an expression of the particularity of each date on which Kawara paints. Each of the date paintings is accompanied by a newspaper (or, as in the case of fig. 9, a portion of a newspaper) from the day and place that Kawara painted the work.

Kawara's attitude toward color falls in between the opposing aesthetic positions of Reinhardt and Klein. In contrast to both, Kawara makes no claim for color in either a positive or negative way. He neither attempts to suppress it nor does he espouse a belief in its power to surpass mundane reality. Color, for Kawara, indicates the subtraction of light. The white lettering and colored background of the date paintings, alludes, in essence, to the contrast between the light of day and the dark of night.¹³ While color lends definition to objects, it may also carry with it symbolic or emotional associations; but in Kawara's work, color does not carry such associations, and can be analyzed, finally, only in terms of saturation, value, or hue. Within its painted context, the color of each work is as unequivocal as its date, and no two paintings are exactly alike.

The question of how color might relate to the events of the day or to Kawara's state of mind—the question, that is, of why the artist chooses a certain color for a date painting—cannot be definitively answered. Whether a date painting is bright red or dark blue or one of many dark grays makes no thematic difference except for the fact of difference itself. Slight changes from one gray to another, as well as greater shifts from gray to blue or red, spare these works from any dogmatism. Rather, the background color of the date paintings, unspecified with regard to particular associations, allows for infinite diversity. A red or blue is as meaningful as one of the many varied tones of gray found in the majority of date paintings.

By imposing limits but not restrictions on his choice of color, Kawara establishes an endless potential for nuance. The unlimited variation of color means that the artist's choice of shade or hue loses its explicit meaning. Subjectivity and objectivity of selection cancel out each other, for the subtle differentiation in color leads to the appearance of sameness while simulta-

neously disproving it. Because pigmentation is an element of perception that “colors” whatever is seen in an inexplicable but multifaceted manner, the color of each date painting, like its date, may elicit certain thoughts but remains a quality unto itself without referring to particular ideas or feelings. The indeterminable degree to which physiological and psychological factors play a part in human vision thus enhances the dual sense of factual immediacy and impenetrable mystery manifested by these works.

Kawara’s date paintings are based on a reality experienced as the temporal segments that record the continuous change from night to day and vice versa. Each work possesses a subtitle and, also, is accompanied either by a hand-made cardboard box that contains a newspaper of that day from the city where the work was painted (see fig. 8), or by a portion of a newspaper page that is glued to the inside lid of the box (see fig. 9). The subtitles range in content from long quotations to short phrases, from a notation of a personal thought to an international event. In recent years, they merely have stated the day of the week. The box affirms the painting’s definition as an object in its own right, while the subtitles and newspaper anchor the work of art to — while juxtaposing it with — the existing, daily reality.

The inclusion of a newspaper or section of a newspaper in the box belonging to each painting accentuates the dichotomy between art and everyday actuality while simultaneously linking them together. The fact that the

FIGURE 9. On Kawara. *Dec. 17, 1979, Today Series (“Monday”)* (with cardboard box and newspaper), 1979. Liquitex on canvas; 46.2 x 61.7 cm. New York, The Museum of Modern Art, Blanchette Rockefeller Fund. As this figure shows, a date painting may be displayed in conjunction with its accompanying newspaper and box.



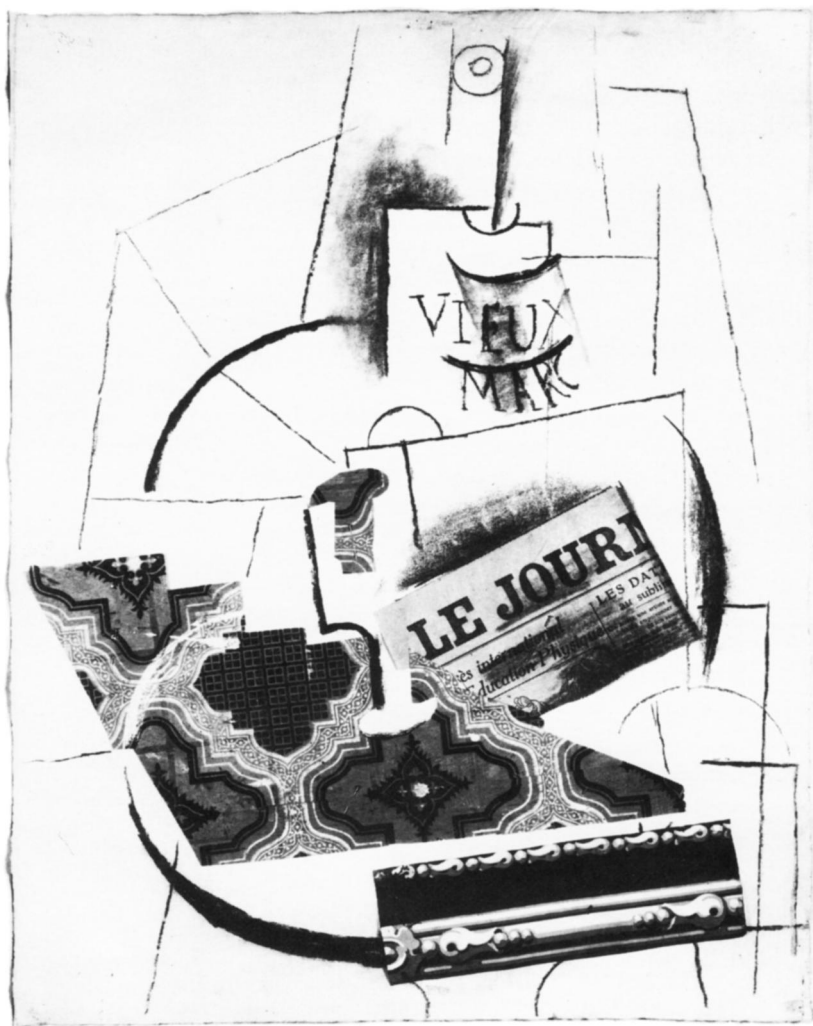


FIGURE 10. Pablo Picasso (Spanish, 1881–1973). *Bottle of Vieux Marc, Glass, Newspaper*, 1913. Charcoal and pasted papers; 62.6 x 46.9 cm. Paris, Le Musée national d'art moderne. Kawara's use of newspapers has a distinguished lineage: Picasso drew inspiration from them during the early part of the century, and Andy Warhol (see fig. 11) used them in the 1960s to comment ironically on the pervasiveness of mass-produced images.

boxed newspaper may or may not be exhibited with its painting emphasizes the independence and interdependence of the two. Since the early part of this century, when Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso introduced newsprint into their collages (*papiers collés*), the daily newspaper has acted as a representative from the nonart, material world, as distinct from the fictional world of the painted canvas or drawing. In *Bottle of Vieux Marc, Glass, Newspaper* of 1913 (fig. 10), Picasso, interestingly enough, curtailed the word “Journal” (newspaper) to “Jour” (day), perhaps as an “in” joke within the work, since the penciled bottle of marc is “vieux” (old) while the newsprint pertains to that day. In contradistinction to the artists of Cubist collage, who integrated newspaper fragments into an overall pictorial fabric, Kawara deliberately keeps the newspaper physically separate from the painting. Metaphorically drawing a distinct line between the reality of art and nonart, Kawara nonetheless refers to their “real,” if intangible, connection. Painting and newspaper are thus cross-referenced by Kawara without being literally grafted together.

The newspaper accompanying the date paintings grounds them in the world of constant flux and continuing events (as opposed to the supposed “timeless” context of art). In this regard, one is reminded of paintings by Andy Warhol of the early 1960s that depict front-page headlines from tab-

loids or newspapers (see fig. 11). In Warhol's case, the newspaper provided already existing mass-produced, gripping, nonart imagery with an emphasis on shock-value. For Kawara, the newspaper is not subject matter for direct translation into painting as it is for Warhol, but rather is a temporal gauge of ongoing, *daily* reality. The newspaper is part of a date painting in its entirety, but remains in its own nonart domain at the same time, thereby providing a link to those phenomena—however down-to-earth yet ungraspable they may be—that, available to all, transpire from day to day. In addition, the conjunction of newspaper and date painting substitutes for the artist's handwritten signature an "authoritative" mark of validation based on real, if sensational, occurrences.

Transitional works by Kawara of the early 1960s suggest artistic interests that would culminate in the date paintings. A work entitled *Nothing, Something, Everything* (fig. 12), for example—one of hundreds of drawings of this period—anticipates the *Today Series* in various ways. Black, Letraset, capital letters form the word "something." A pencil line encloses the letters within a rectangular perimeter that follows the shape of the paper. The word "some-



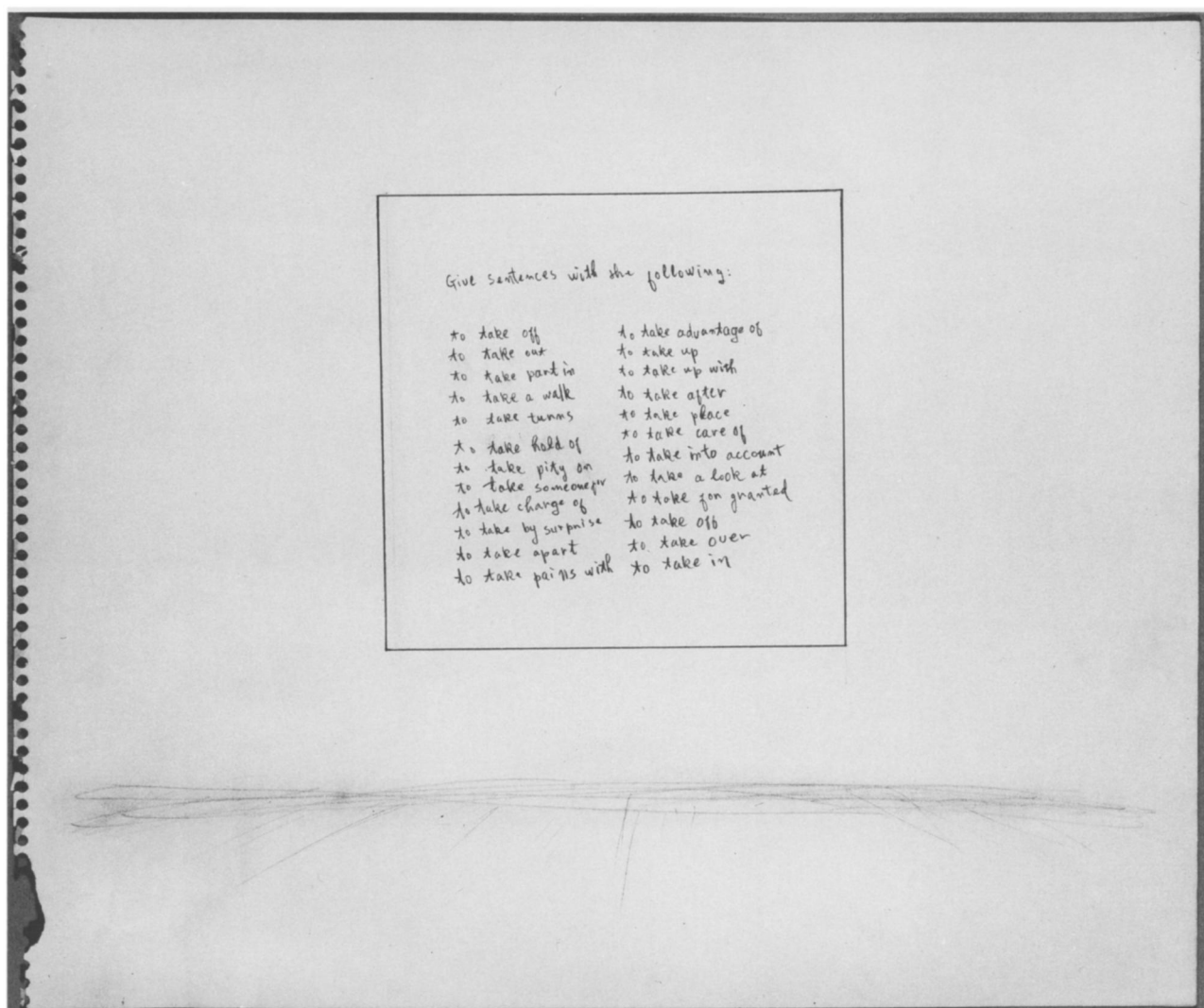
FIGURE 11. Andy Warhol (American, 1928–1987). *A Boy for Meg*, 1962. Synthetic polymer on canvas; 182.9 x 132 cm. Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art (1971.87.11). Photo courtesy of the Leo Castelli Gallery, New York.

thing” is singled out, isolated, aggrandized. As the subject of pictorial representation, it stands alone and demands consideration as to exactly what it might stand for: a quantity or an object? For how much or what? Literally out of context and therefore providing no supporting verbal information, the letters of *Nothing*, *Something*, *Everything* assume a visual form. Set within the outline of the traditional rectangular format, they come to be “read” as shapes. The word, therefore, becomes the subject of the picture as both a two-dimensional object and as an abstract signifier.

A drawing entitled *Egg* (1964), whose capital letters, outlined in pencil, nearly fill a rectangular penciled boundary, and a 1964 drawing called *Rulers*, depicting two suspended yardsticks, similarly set the stage for Kawara’s major work to come. The three letters spelling “egg” proclaim their independence as visual elements that still partake in the creation of verbal meaning. *Rulers* subtly confronts the question of perspective and illusion. The yardsticks, drawn in pencil, appear to hang at different distances from the spectator, in the space of a sketchily implied room, because the left-hand ruler, appearing closer, is longer than the right-hand one. By having drawn tools, which in practical life convey precise information about reality, Kawara points to the paradoxical nature of two-dimensional representation. In this drawing the two rulers have significance solely as pictorial elements, and not as useful implements that register distance factually. As such, they “rule out,” so to speak, the false rendition of three-dimensional space by revealing its fictitious nature. In these early works, image and language merge as “something” or “egg” on the pictorial plane, which, as *Rulers* reminds us, remains

FIGURE 12. On Kawara. *Nothing, Something, Everything*, 1963. Letraset and pencil on paper; 20.5 x 30.5 cm. Photo courtesy of the artist. Early in his career, Kawara began to use language as a subject for his drawings and other works. The word “something” here exists outside a clear verbal context, and therefore assumes a compelling visual dimension.





flat despite its potential ability to deceive. Having rejected the use of illusionistic devices, these drawings foreshadow the literal and factual quality of the ensuing date paintings.

Other works preceding the date paintings, such as *Questions: "Give Sentences..."* (fig. 13) and *Code* (1965), lend further insight into Kawara's artistic method. The former work presents two columns of different idioms, handwritten within a square, using the verb "to take" as a point of departure for phrases such as to take off, to take out, to take part in, etc. Written above the two columns is the directive, "Give sentences with the following." Provided with the building blocks for producing endless sentences, the viewer nonetheless has access only to what is visibly there, to the pattern made by the handwritten words. The latter work, *Code*, translates the text of a narrative into horizontal lines comprised of colored markings. Resembling a kind of generic script, they forfeit their original verbal content. Even if a computer were to break the code by translating the colors determined by the artist into words, the answer to the question, inherent in this piece, as to what distinguishes one form of meaning from another—the verbal or the visual—would not ultimately be answered. Evolving from works such as these, the date

FIGURE 13. On Kawara. *Questions: "Give Sentences..."*, 1964. Pencil on paper; 35.5 x 43 cm. Photo courtesy of the artist. Kawara's understanding of the visual patterning of words is evident in this early work, where the myriad possibilities for sentences with the verb "to take" are listed matter-of-factly.

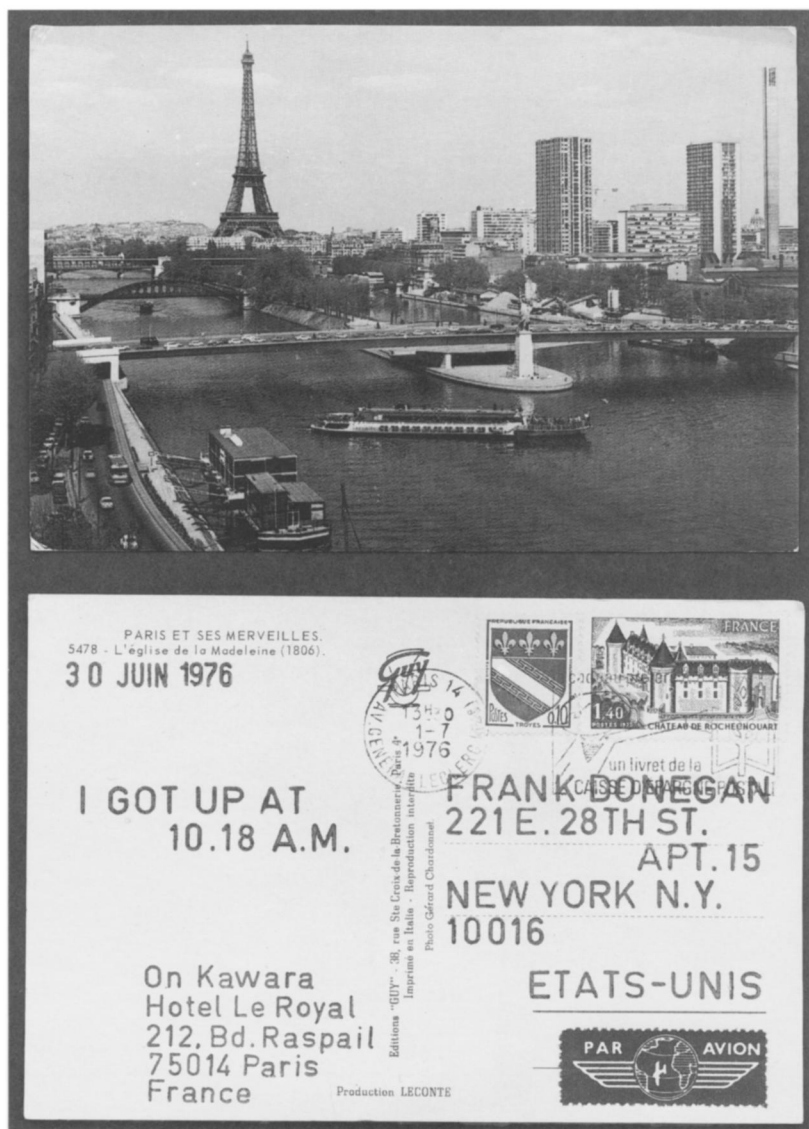


FIGURE 14. On Kawara. *I Got Up at 10.18 A.M.*, 1976. Rubber-stamped ink on postcard. Photo courtesy of the artist. For eleven years, Kawara sent a series of postcards to selected people announcing when he began each day. Each of Kawara's postcards and telegrams (see fig. 15) marked clearly the date and place of its origin, and functioned as part of an ongoing series.

paintings rely on the components of written communication in order to make their particular visual statement.

Paintings by Kawara, with their stark and striking presentation of the date on which each was created, point to the moment of their genesis and thus demarcate their own place within the span of history. If, on one level, a date is mute as an image, on another level it stands for the infinite number of events—from the most personal to the most universal—that “take place” on specific dates. Like temporal signposts, the date paintings emblematically punctuate their environment, whether they are inserted into the midst of other works of art or isolated on a wall by themselves.

By means of his art, Kawara brings time—which may be thought of as the major organizational force behind human experience and consciousness—into tangible, representational view. In addition to the *Today Series*, Kawara's activity as an artist encompasses a number of other significant, ongoing works that similarly seek to position themselves—and by extension, the viewer—with reference to his own, ultimately finite lifespan, invisibly set

against the background of spatial and temporal infinity. Since 1966, in tandem with the introduction of the date paintings, Kawara has maintained a series of loose-leaf notebooks that comprise a work entitled *I Read*. Sequential pages, correlated with each day of the year on which he has made a painting, contain clippings from the daily press, which Kawara glues on a single, standard sheet of ordinary graph paper stamped with the day, month, and year. The early clippings for *I Read* provided Kawara with the subtitles for the paintings of that particular day and, in this way, initially inspired the idea for this work. Additionally, the clippings are taken from newspapers published in the place where the date painting was done.

Furthermore, each day since 1968 Kawara has kept a similar series of notebooks to form the work *I Went*, as well as a work in the same notebook format called *I Met*. The former group of notebook volumes contains a record of the artist's itinerary that he marks in red ink on a xeroxed map of the city where he happens to be. Documenting his daily course along city streets, Kawara translates his movement from one destination to another (necessitated by errands, sightseeing, or the normal demands of life in general) into the planar linearity of drawing. The latter set of volumes consist of individual pages, also stamped with the date, on which Kawara has typed the name(s) of anyone known to him whom he might have encountered throughout the twenty-four hour period. In this work, language, in place of line, reveals those points of interpersonal contact that connect over time to form a social framework for individual existence. Kept together by the artist, these three works (*I Read*, *I Went*, and *I Met*) bring abstract time into view vis-à-vis the concrete reality of people, places, or events by utilizing available systems of representation—the news media, maps, or proper names—to formally convey their content.

Kawara also takes advantage of existing modes of communication to deliver, quite literally, his aesthetic message. From 1968 until 1979, he consistently mailed a series of postcards, one per day, to two selected people. In

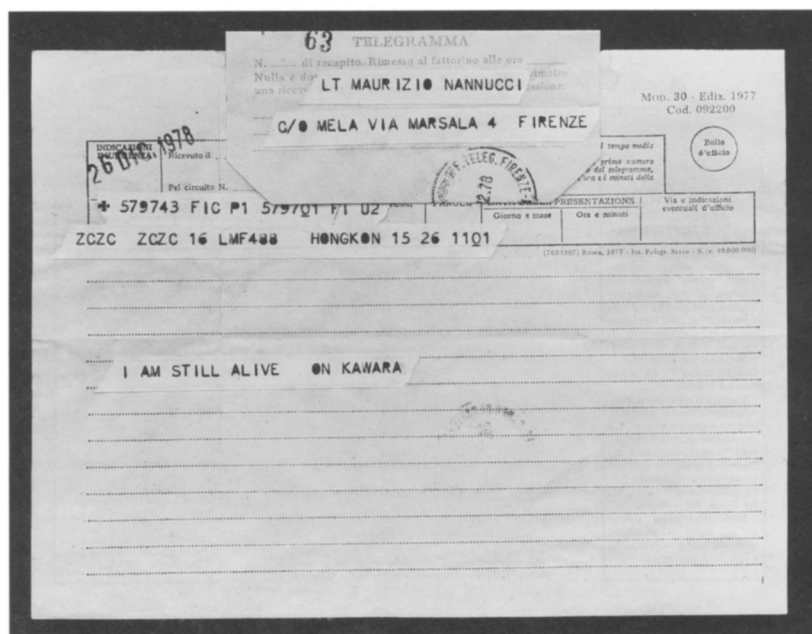
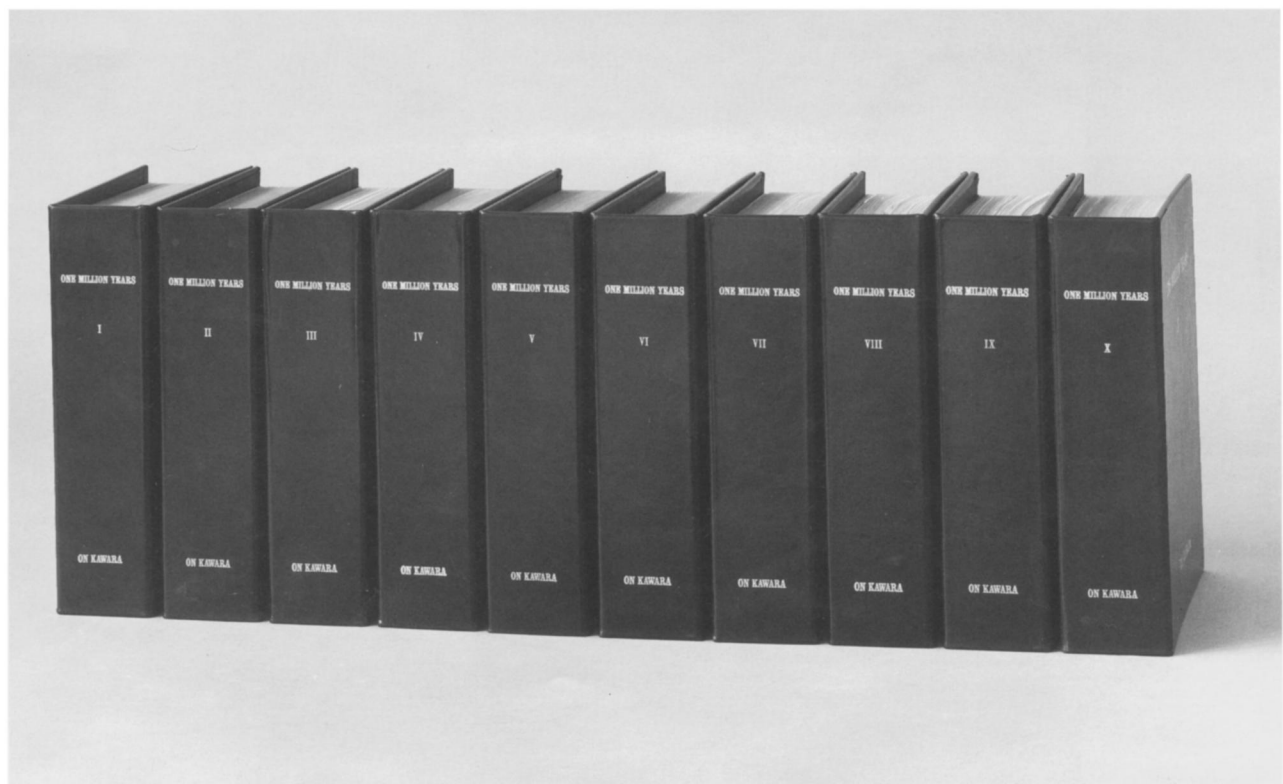
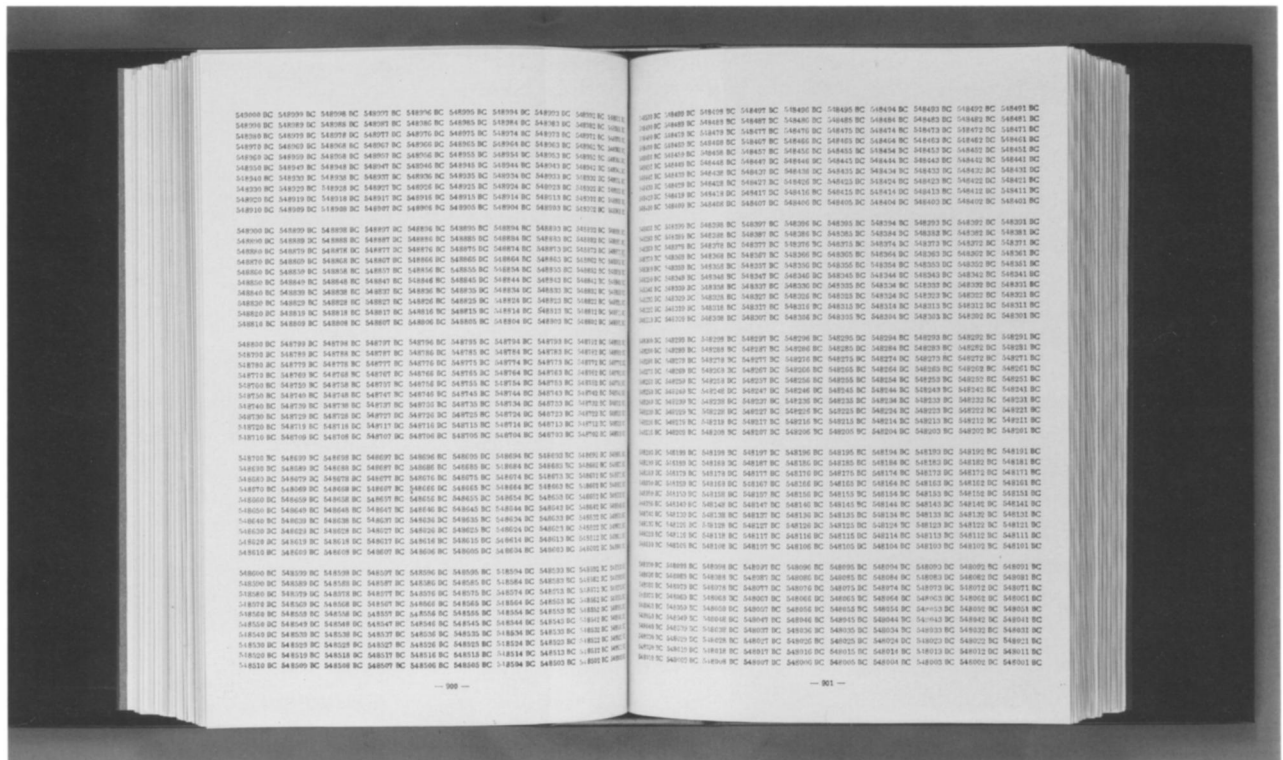


FIGURE 15. On Kawara. *I Am Still Alive*, 1978. Telegram. Photo courtesy of the artist.



every case, the cards present a typical, horizontal scene from, or overview of, the place where Kawara was living or visiting at the time (see fig. 14). The recipient of a card would thus be informed as to the artist's geographical whereabouts by means of a pictorial short-hand image from a particular location. On the other side of the card, Kawara stamped the time, to the exact minute, at which he started the day, prefaced by "I got up at." The custom of sending postcards, in essence, provided him with a method for questioning the "timelessness" of art, allowing him instead to emphasize its potential as a vehicle for communication and representation over its (market) value as a permanent, precious object.¹⁴

Telegrams (and, more recently, Mailgrams), which Kawara has sent intermittently since 1970 to selected recipients, likewise rely on modern-day modes of communication (see fig. 15). The urgent message from the artist reads, "I am still alive," reminding the receiver of the brevity of individual existence. Kawara demonstrates, as well, the fact that a work of art need not be restricted to traditional representational forms, or exist as a singular and unique object, or be acquired through the commercial channels of buying and selling.

Two works, *One Million Years—Past* (fig. 16) and *One Million Years—Future* (fig. 17), convey the vast, yet measurable, expanse of time from 998031 B.C. through A.D. 1969 and from A.D. 1981 through 1001980.¹⁵ Nine rows of sequentially typed columns of individual years, separated by decade, cover the white, 8½ x 11-inch pages that are contained within the two sets of notebooks, numbering ten volumes apiece. By representing the last one million years and the next million to follow within the real space of a book or, more precisely, within a "volume," in the double sense of the word, Kawara imbues the otherwise immaterial concept of time with concrete materiality. As in all of his works, numbers and letters fuse their symbolic, representational purpose with their function as visual shapes. In this way, Kawara integrates physical form with thematic content in the realization of works that illustrate the human capacity to grasp time and space in abstract, visible terms.

FIGURE 16. On Kawara. Pages from *One Million Years—Past*, 1969. Photo courtesy of the artist. This work and its companion piece, *One Million Years—Future* (fig. 17), visualize a vast expanse of time in the concrete terms of numerical representation, here contained within these massive volumes.

FIGURE 17. On Kawara. *One Million Years—Future*, 1981. Photo courtesy of the artist.

Notes

WARDROPPER, "A New Attribution to Francesco Mochi," pp. 102–119.

1. The bust measures 40.5 cm high, 33 cm wide, and 29 cm deep; with its socle it is 69 cm high. It is not clear whether the socle is original to the bust. It was not used to display the bust when photographed in 1917 (see note 15), when it appeared on a stand covered with brocade velvet. The silhouette, however, is compatible with period socles (see fig. 13), and Mochi is known to have used black marble socles (see fig. 11). Anthony Roth first proposed identifying this bust as Mochi's, and he contributed many ideas in support of this attribution. A number of scholars have generously offered observations on the bust, and I would particularly like to thank Jennifer Montagu, Anthony Radcliffe, and Diane David.

2. Rudolf Wittkower, *Art and Architecture in Italy: 1600–1750*, 3rd ed. (Harmondsworth and Baltimore, 1973), p. 85.

3. Howard Hibbard, *Bernini* (Harmondsworth and Baltimore, 1971), p. 84.

4. In response to the fundamental study by Rudolf Wittkower, *Gian Lorenzo Bernini: The Sculptor of the Roman Baroque*, 2nd ed. (London, 1966), Irving Lavin has made revolutionary contributions ranging from the redating of early works in "Five New Youthful Sculptures by Gian Lorenzo Bernini and a Revised Chronology," *Art Bulletin* 50, 3 (1970), pp. 223–48, to a synthetic analysis of the works' meaning in *Bernini and the Unity of the Visual Arts* (New York and London, 1980). Recent studies of Algardi have been crowned by Jennifer Montagu's *Alessandro Algardi* (New Haven, Conn., and London, 1985). While Mochi still lacks a major monograph, the catalogues published around the anniversary of his birth in 1980 advanced knowledge of his career, particularly *Francesco Mochi, 1580–1654*, exh. cat. (Florence, 1981).

5. See Jack Spalding, *Santi di Tito* (New York, 1982). An excellent recent overview is Anthony Radcliffe and Charles Avery, *Giambologna. 1529–1608: Sculptor to the Medici*, exh. cat. (London, 1978).

6. In addition to G. Fiocco's basic study on Mariani in *Le Arti* 3 (1940–41), M. C. Donati examined Mariani, Maderno, and Mochi in "Gli scultori delle Cappella Paolina in S. M. Maggiore," *Commentari* 2–3 (1967), pp. 231–60. See also A. Nava Cellini, "Stefano Maderno, Francesco Vanni e Guido Reni a S. Cecilia in Trastevere," *Paragone* 20 (1969), no. 227, p. 18f; and Roger Craig Burns, "Camillo Mariani: Catalyst of the Sculpture of the Roman Baroque" (Ph.D. diss., Johns Hopkins University, 1980).

7. These observations were made by Maddalena DeLuca Savelli in *Francesco Mochi* (note 4), p. 40, no. 3.

8. For a discussion of the equestrian monuments, particularly with regard to their recent conservation, see Bologna, Museo Civico Archeologico, *I bronzi di Piacenza: Rilievi e figure di Francesco Mochi dai monumenti equestri farnesiani*, exh. cat. (1986). See also Gaetano Pantaleoni, *Il Barocco del Mochi nei Cavalli Farnesiani* (Piacenza, 1975).

9. See Irving Lavin, *Bernini and the Crossing of St. Peter's* (New York, 1968). Together with Bernini's and Mochi's sculptures, Duquesnoy's *Saint Andrew* and Andrea Bolgi's *Saint Helena* completed the plan for four statues. See also Jennifer Montagu, "A Model by Francesco Mochi for the 'Saint Veronica,'" *Burlington Magazine* 124 (July 1982), pp. 432–36.

10. Irving Lavin, "Duquesnoy's 'Nano di Crequi' and Two Busts by Francesco Mochi," *Art Bulletin* 52 (1970), p. 144.

11. See, for example, C. Gnudi and Denis Mahon, *Il Guercino* (Bologna, 1968), p. 163f; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, *Guido Reni, 1575–1642*, exh. cat. (1988).

12. The *Bust of Cardinal Antonio Barberini* was first identified by Lavin (note 10), pp. 138–39.

13. For the bust, which is in the Museo di Roma, see *Francesco Mochi* (note 4), p. 71, no. 18.

14. Lavin (note 10), pp. 137–38. V. Martinelli, "Alcune opere inedite di Francesco Mochi," *Arti Figurative* 2 (1946), pp. 72–79, proposed a later dating.

15. Charles Oulmont, "Collection M. F. Gentili di Giuseppe," *Les Arts* 162 (1917), p. 18.

16. See Lavin (note 10).

17. See Wittkower (note 4), p. 199, no. 31.

18. See, for example, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, *The Art of Caravaggio*, exh. cat. (1985), no. 66; or Maurizio Fagulo dell'Arco, *Bernini: Una introduzione al gran teatro del barocco* (Rome, 1967), nos. 40, 248.

19. Ulrich Middeldorf, *Sculptures from the Samuel H. Kress Collection: European Schools, Fourteenth to Nineteenth Centuries* (London and New York, 1976), pp. 23–24, figs. 43–44; John Pope-Hennessy, *Catalogue of Italian Sculpture in the Victoria and Albert Museum* (London, 1964), no. 176, fig. 187.

20. See Mariette L. Fransolet, *François Duquesnoy, sculpteur d'Urbain VIII, 1597–1643* (Brussels, 1942).

21. G. Fiori, "Notizie biografiche di Gian Antonio e Eugenio Bianchi, Francesco Mochi e Giulio Mazzoni," *Bolletino Storico Piacentino* (Jan.–June 1980), pp. 63–75.

22. See Lavin (note 10).

23. Giovanni Battista Passeri, *Vite de' pittori, scultori ed architetti che hanno lavorato in Roma*. . . (1772; reprint, Leipzig and Vienna, 1934), p. 133.

24. C. D'Onofrio, *Roma vista da Roma* (Rome, 1967), pp. 150–53, 415–16. This possibility was suggested by Diane David in a letter to the author.

25. Marilyn Aronberg-Lavin, *Barberini Documents and Inventories of Art* (New York, 1975).

26. Italian by birth, Gentile di Giuseppe lived in Paris early in the twentieth century. He wrote occasional articles on art, such as "A proposito della 'Morte della Vergine' attribuita a Giotto," *Rassegna d'arte* 15 (1915), pp. 187–88. His collection was primarily Italian paintings of the Renaissance and Baroque, but also included northern painting (by Peter Paul Rubens and others), as well as some sculpture, such as a terracotta study attributed to Bernini. Some of his works now in important collections include El Greco's *Holy Family* in the Cleveland Museum of Art, Gentile da Fabriano's *Madonna* in the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and two Canaletto *vedutas* in The Art Institute of Chicago (which entered the collection much earlier than the *Bust of a Youth*).

RORIMER, "The Date Paintings of On Kawara," pp. 120–137.

This article is based on an earlier essay published in Le Consortium Dijon, *On Kawara*, exh. cat. (1985).

1. This painting was exhibited in the museum's 73rd *American Exhibition*, June 9–August 5, 1979, organized by A. James Speyer and Anne Rorimer, along with other works by Kawara. It was installed next to another painting of the same size, *July 16, 1969, Today Series* ("Neil Armstrong, Edwin E. Aldrin, Jr., Michael Collins"), which was painted on the day of the launching of the Apollo 11 to the moon, as its subtitle (which names the astronauts of that voyage) suggests.

2. Quoted in Gregory Battcock, ed., *Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology* (New York, 1968), p. 157.

3. Quoted in Phyllis Tuchman, "An Interview with Robert Ryman," *Artforum* (May 1971), p. 53.
4. Quoted in Christel Sauer, "Robert Ryman: Introduction," in Zurich, InK. Halle für internationale neue Kunst, *Robert Ryman*, exh. cat. (1980), p. 15.
5. Quoted in London, Tate Gallery, *Piero Manzoni: Paintings, Reliefs and Objects*, exh. cat. (1974), p. 47.
6. Ibid.
7. Quoted in Yves Klein, "The Monochrome Adventure," in Houston, Institute for the Arts, Rice University, *Yves Klein, 1928–1962, A Retrospective*, exh. cat. (1982–83), p. 220.
8. Quoted in Margit Rowell, "Ad Reinhardt: Style as Recurrence," in New York, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, *Ad Reinhardt and Color*, exh. cat. (1980), p. 23.
9. Yves Klein, "The War: A Little Personal Mythology of the Monochrome," in Houston, Institute for the Arts, Rice University (note 7), p. 218.
10. See New York, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (note 8), p. 26.
11. Klein quoted in Houston, Institute for the Arts, Rice University (note 7), p. 221.
12. Ibid., p. 224.
13. Suggested by the artist in conversation with the author, January 1985.
14. The series stopped in 1979, when the rubber stamp Kawara used on the postcards was stolen from his briefcase in Stockholm. This work may be resumed someday. See Stockholm, Moderna Museet, *On Kawara: continuity/discontinuity, 1963–1979*, exh. cat. (1980–81), p. 105.
15. The beginning/concluding dates vary according to the year in which Kawara started the volumes. *One Million Years—Past* exists in twelve editions, while editions of *One Million Years—Future* are still in progress, eight or nine having been completed.

AMISHAI-MAISELS, "Chagall's *White Crucifixion*," pp. 138–153.

1. See, for example, Fr. A.-M., "Tu ne feras pas d'images," *L'Art sacré* (July–Aug. 1961), pp. 7–8; Jean Cassou, *Chagall* (London, 1965), pp. 240–48; Jean-Paul Crespelle, *Chagall* (New York, 1970), p. 214; Walter Erben, *Marc Chagall* (London, 1966), pp. 112–16; Raïssa Maritain, "Chagall," *L'Art sacré* (July–Aug. 1950), pp. 26–30; Cornelia Süssman and Irving Süssman, "Marc Chagall, Painter of the Crucified," *The Bridge* 1 (1955), pp. 96–117; Hans-Martin Roter-mund, "Die Gekreuzigte in Werk Chagalls," *Museion: Studien aus Kunst und Geschichte für Otto H. Förster* (Cologne, 1960), pp. 265–75; and Allyn Weinstein, "Iconography of Chagall," *Kenyon Review* 16 (1954), pp. 41–45.
2. For comparisons with Russian icons, see Mira Friedman, "Icon Painting and Russian Popular Art as Sources of Some Works by Chagall," *Journal of Jewish Art* 5 (1978), p. 96. For compositions with compartmentalized descriptive scenes around a main image, see Tamara Talbot-Rice, *A Concise History of Russian Art* (London, 1963), p. 73. This tradition would also have been known to Chagall from Byzantine and Western medieval sources: see Kurt Weitzmann, Manolis Chatzidakis, Krsto Miatev, and Svetozar Radojčić, *Icons from South Eastern Europe and Sinai* (London, 1968), pl. 76; and Paolo d'Ancona, *Les Primitifs italiens du XIe au XIIIe siècles* (Paris, 1935), figs. 12, 14, 31, 54.
3. *Cahiers d'art* 14, 5–10 (1939), p. 152; and Paris, Galerie Mai, *Chagall*, exh. cat. (1940), no. 1. On Chagall's system of dating, see Raymond Cogniat, *Chagall* (Paris, 1965), p. 6; and Franz Meyer, *Marc Chagall* (New York, 1963), pp. 10–11, 599 n. 3.
4. *Cahiers d'art* (note 3); and Paris, Centre Georges Pompidou, *Marc Chagall*,

Oeuvres sur papier, exh. cat. (1984), no. 106. The drawing bears a strange inscription on the bottom, "Esquisse 1937," labeling it as a sketch on the drawing itself, a unique occurrence in Chagall's work. Such information is usually written later on the back of a mount (e.g., no. 104), either when a work is catalogued or when it is sent off for exhibition. The drawing also contains all of the details of the original work, in contradistinction to Chagall's usual sketching method (e.g., nos. 12, 30–32, 35, 37, 105, 129), even when the sketch is a blocked-out cartoon for a painting (e.g., nos. 76–77). It thus seems logical to conclude that the sketch was drawn *after* rather than for the painting. Chagall's practice of making sketches *after* his paintings is amply documented, although this is not always acknowledged (e.g., nos. 38, 100). If the sketch was done at the time Chagall changed the painting, it would also explain his mistake in dating, as though he were trying to remember afterward when it had been painted.

5. Meyer (note 3), p. 414, and p. 609 n. 9.
6. *Cahiers d'art* 15, 1–2 (1940), p. 34. There is no photograph of the painting in the catalogue for this show at the Galerie Mai in Paris (Jan. 26–Feb. 26, 1940). However, Alexandre Benois's review, which accompanied the exhibition photographs in *Cahiers d'art*, suggests (but does not state) that the original details were still visible (see quotation on page 143, cited in note 16).
7. This could have been either before Chagall moved to Gordes in Easter 1940 or during the year he remained there, while the Germans occupied France. During this time, the painting was in his hands.
8. Meyer (note 3), pp. 431–32; and Sidney Alexander, *Marc Chagall* (New York, 1978), pp. 327, 332–33.
9. *Liturgical Arts* 12 (May 1944), p. 65. Although the painting seems to have been exhibited in the United States between 1941 and 1946 (Marc Chagall, "Chronology," p. 3, typescript, Museum of Modern Art Library, New York), I have been unable to find a catalogue listing, a description, or photograph of it preceding 1944. However, it seems unlikely that the changes were made at that date or, in fact, in New York. A pre-New York dating is also suggested by the fact that similar "smudged" "Ich bin Jude" signs appear in other works executed in New York—such as *The Yellow Crucifixion* of 1943 (lower right) and *The Crucified* of 1944 (main figure) (see Meyer [note 3], pp. 456–57; and Lionello Venturi, *Chagall* [New York, 1945], pl. 59)—but there are no photographs to indicate that these signs were altered rather than painted that way from the start.
10. Chagall, "Chronology" (note 9), p. 3; and James Johnson Sweeney, *Marc Chagall* (New York, 1946), p. 62.
11. See, for example, Gerhard Schoenberner, *The Yellow Star* (London, 1969), pp. 18–19; and Fr. Reichental, "Arbeit Macht Frei" (Bratislava, 1946), pl. 1.
12. *Encyclopedia Judaica*, vol. 8 (Jerusalem, 1971), p. 839.
13. Abraham Walt, "Al Tira Avdi Ya'akov" ("Fear not my servant Jacob"), *Lieder un Poemen* (in Yiddish), vol. 2 (New York, 1938), pp. 284–86.
14. Chagall had just finished his major painting, *Revolution* of 1937, celebrating the Russian Revolution and its aftermath, in which he had taken part as Commissar for Art in Vitebsk. See Meyer (note 3), pp. 392, 412–14.
15. David G. Roskies, *Against the Apocalypse* (Cambridge, Mass., 1984), pp. 32–33; and *Midrash Rabbah: Lamentations*, trans. A. Cohen (London, 1939), pp. 42–43.
16. Alexandre Benois, "Les Expositions: Chagall, Oeuvres récentes," *Cahiers d'art* 15, 1–2 (1940), p. 33. All translations in the text are by the author.
17. L. Leneman, "Marc Chagall wegen zeine Christus-figuren als Symbol fun Yidishe Martyrertum," *Unzer Wort* (in Yiddish) (Jan. 22, 1977), p. 4.
18. Hugh Thomas, *Goya: The Third of May 1808* (New York, 1973), pp. 12–14; and George Grosz, *Hintergrund* (Berlin, 1928), pl. 10. See also Boardman Robinson's 1916 cartoon in which Jesus, the man of peace, is shot as a deserter; and Bohdan Nowak's *Unknown Soldier* of 1930 in D. J. R. Bruckner, Seymour Chwast, and Steven Heller, *Art against War* (New York, 1984), pp. 50–51, 76.