Clutch at the moments as I may, they elude my grasp: each is my enemy, rejects me, signifying a refusal to become involved. Unapproachable all, they proclaim, one after the next, my isolation and my defeat.

We can act only if we feel they convey and protect us. When they abandon us, we lack the resources indispensable to the production of an act, whether crucial or quotidian. Defenseless, with no hold on things, we then face a peculiar misfortune: that of not being entitled to time.

—E. M. Cioran[1]

In his 1964 book *The Fall into Time,* E. M. Cioran offered a bleak prognosis for the condition of time in late modernity, a time understood as at once desperate and fatal. Describing moments that endlessly elude one's grasp—of being abandoned by the safe haven that history once represented—Cioran gave voice to the acutely contemporary phenomenon of noncontemporaneity, of "not being entitled to time." To fall in and out of time and to lose one's bearings in the process: this would seem to be one of the great tropes of literary modernism, that the ever-rushing pace of contemporary life had outstripped one's attempts to make sense of the present. And yet Cioran's pronouncements, poetic and existential as they are, are also historically specific to the 1960s. Countless writers, philosophers, and social critics confronted the question of time back then. The Counterculture, popular music, and other forms of mass entertainment likewise grappled with the subject.

The figure of revolution—of radically changing times—is critical to the image of that decade.

Indeed to survey the art and art criticism of the sixties is to encounter a pervasive anxiety that I describe as *chronophobic:* as registering an almost obsessional uneasiness with time and its measure. Cutting across movements, mediums, and genres, the chronophobic impulse suggests an insistent struggle with time, the will of both artists and critics either to master its passage, to still its acceleration, or to give form to its changing conditions. In charting the consistency as well as diversity of such efforts, this book restitutes the question of time to the history of sixties art. But, just as important, this preoccupation illuminates the emergence of new communications and information technologies in the postwar era, offering a historical prelude to our contemporary fixations on time within digital culture. The philosopher of history Reinhart Koselleck characterized late modernity as being a "peculiar form of acceleration,"[2] and the computer technology of the sixties, with its rhetoric of speed and seemingly instantaneous information processing, represents a radical attenuation of this model. This book reads the chronophobic tendency in much of that decade's work as projecting a liminal historical moment, for which there was no clear perspective on the social and technological horizon yet to come. And time, I argue throughout, becomes the figure of this uncertainty for many artists and critics.

Michael Fried's injunction against time in the reception of minimalist sculpture; Robert Smithson's obsession with entropy and futurity; video art's politics of presence; conceptual art's preoccupation with seriality and "real time" aesthetics; Andy Warhol's musings on the fleeting character of modern celebrity, on the one hand, and his cinematic endurance tests, on the other; kinetic art's literalization of movement; John Cage's soundings in time; the discourse of performance art and the lived and timely body: all of these examples, covering a wide range of sixties art making, are informed by a marked grappling with temporality. Paradoxically, however, this engagement with time on the part of artists and critics is so foundational, so basic to any narrative about sixties art, that it remains largely untreated in the decade's general histories.[3]

This book traces the ubiquity of the chronophobic impulse, considering how artists implicitly, even inadvertently, wrestled with new

technologies in the United States and Europe in the sixties, of which time is both symptom and cure. I treat the obsession with time in 1960s art in tandem with two indissociable shifts in the culture following World War II: the alleged waning of the "Machine Age" on the one hand, and the concomitant advent of computer technologies, on the other. I suggest that the rise of the Information Age and its emphasis on speed and accelerated models of communication serve as the cultural index against which many artists and critics gestured.

Historically rooted in the military science of World War II, the information technology of the sixties found a much broader audience than the research covertly linked to the war effort. Now introduced into the spheres of both commerce and culture, its impact was startling and seemingly abrupt. By 1970, for example, the best-selling author Alvin Toffler famously bemoaned the condition of "Future Shock," a generalized social anomie caused by rapid transformations in technology: the book was an instant best-seller. This sense of historical unknowing and the cultural history that surrounds it crucially inform my study, not only at the level of Toffler's "pop" sociology, but in seemingly disparate communities of readers, spectators, and producers. Indeed the sixties mark the beginning of the "computer race"—a furious competition on the part of companies historically associated with bureaucratic technologies to develop the fastest and most efficient computers possible. Radical innovations such as IBM's first transistorized computer of 1959 and its development of "mainframe" systems in the sixties offered the potential of virtually instantaneous data processing. And in 1965, Gordon Moore, the research director of Fairchild Semiconductor, would prove lucky (or at the very least, prescient) in his speculations about the future of computer production and its accelerated information processing. His law ("Moore's Law" as it is now widely known), argued that engineers would be able to cram an ever-increasing number of electronic devices on microchips, and it estimated that the number would roughly double every year.

Developments of this sort seemed to extend the promise of technology associated by many with the historical Machine Age, however much that promise was itself radically contested by earlier critics. Yet for the many commentators and philosophers struggling with the catastrophe of the Second World War, they also raised pressing questions about technological progress and its effects on subjective

experience. Debates on the changing character of social life under the shifting modalities of time were central to discussions about the role of technology in the postwar era. The writings of Norbert Wiener, Jacques Ellul, Marshall McLuhan, and Theodore Roszak, among many others, attest to a deep ambivalence about time and the future, engendered by the information technologies at the crux of their respective accounts. Thus this book engages the question of technocratic rationality in the sixties, ranging from the dour social prognoses of the late Frankfurt School to the liberatory ethos of the Counterculture. By the same token, it confronts the way in which the technological optimism of the prewar era lingered in the public consciousness of the sixties. Throughout, I argue that the larger cultural ambivalence surrounding technology parallels the production of a diverse body of art and art criticism in the sixties, with time standing as its most compelling, if elusive, cipher.

PHOBIAS THEN AND NOW;
OR, LOST HORIZONS AND ENDLESS HIGHWAYS

But why *chronophobia,* one might reasonably ask? Why not *chronophilia* an almost erotic absorption with time? No doubt there is a fine line between a phobic obsession with time and an almost perverse fascination with its unfolding, as if the brute gravity of that unfolding demanded a respect of equal but opposite weightiness to the anxiety time might produce. Nonetheless, I have leaned toward the phobic side of this equation in what follows. For with the exception of the artists in the introductory chapter, the figures who are at the center of this book remain suspicious of the conjunction of time and technology in sixties culture, some denying altogether the application of technology in their work. Theirs is neither a matter of intention nor declaration; nor what might appear, at least on a superficial level, to be a wholesale embrace or even rejection of cybernetic culture. Not at all: the lip service artists and critics paid to the Information Age is a fundamentally different pursuit from the structural operations of works of art and their reception, or what is repressed within that moment's writing and criticism.

This book seeks other means to think about the relationship between art and technology beyond an explicit iconography of postwar

technics or even a discussion of "new media" as such. I take very seriously Fredric Jameson's account of the operations of technology and representation within postmodernism, which could well stand as the secret mantra for many of the artists working here. "It is immediately obvious that the technology of our own moment," he writes,

[n]o longer possesses the same capacity for representation: not the turbine nor even [Charles] Sheeler's grain elevators or smokestacks, not the baroque elaborations of pipes and conveyer belts, nor even the streamlined profile of the railroad train—all vehicles of speed still concentrated at rest—but rather the computer, whose outer shell has no emblematic, or visual power, or even the casings of the various media themselves, as with that home appliance called television which articulates nothing but rather implodes, carrying its flattened image surface within itself.

Such machines are indeed machines of reproduction rather than of production, and they make very different demands on our capacity for aesthetic representation than did the relatively mimetic idolatry of the older machinery of the futurist moment, of some older speed-and-energy sculpture.[4]

No statement more effectively dramatizes the pressure recent technology places on its representation. Even still, one might think the relationship was business as usual upon surveying the visual environment of today. Turn on the television, flick on the computer, and scan quickly those endless advertisements selling this new Website or that new digital technology. Far too often, one confronts a series of iconic 0s and 1s floating in a sea of ether, a pallid representation of the on/off flipping of the binary code.

But time (and attitudes toward technology along with it) is a far more slippery proposition than any image or thematic that would seek to encode it. For at the edges of the art critical discourse that concerns us in the 1960s (and at the edges of the art itself), there remains a thinking about time that is *undecidable* as both theory and representation. How to theorize process at this historical juncture? How to figure temporal presence in the work of art? How to retain a model of artistic subjectivity that at once acknowledges the historicity of its maker while deferring to the dramatically changed time of artistic production under

postwar technology? These are the kinds of questions posed by artists and critics of the 1960s, whether implicitly or explicitly; and their responses do not necessarily cohere around the image of technology or any ostensible narrative of new media.

As for other "whys" behind this study: I'll show my hand in sharing a personal phobia. It reveals that what might seem a "sixties" problem is embedded in the web of our own present. It's an open secret among friends of mine that I have long harbored a certain discomfort around the most patently banal "technological" activity: driving. This is not something to be proud of; admittedly, it's an absurd fear for some- one who grew up in Los Angeles. Then again, perhaps this is to the point. But even more to the point is what this activity suggests about its temporal orientation to the world, and how its implications get played back—like a tape-loop—between our contemporary moment and that of the recent past.

Consider the experience of driving, mundane as it is. Behind the wheel, the world speeds by like an image over which one is alleged to have some agency. The body connects to the machine it occupies; the body coordinates the movement of that machine through space; the horizon assumes the status of moving picture as framed by the machine in turn. The car is its own medium: vistas accelerate and decelerate with the pressure of the foot on the pedal, flash into view and disappear with the turn of a head. In *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the 19th Century,* Wolfgang Schivelbusch histor- icized a parallel phenomenon to driving in relation to the rise of the railroad in the nineteenth century. For him, the evolution of train travel produced a new modality of embodied spectatorship—a spectatorship conditioned by a new temporality.[5] With the car, however, control is ceded to but one driver and the sense of the body moving in time places new stress on that driver as well. In fact, I would argue that the driv- ing body does not necessarily square with Marshall McLuhan's fa- mous narrative of technology and prosthetic subjectivity, the idea that technologies are but seamless "extensions" of man. What McLuhan downplayed in his treatment of new media is the negatively inverse relationship between technological prosthetics and the subject who would seek to control them. No seamless body/machine meld here. It is one's relationship to time that announces this very condition: it throws the question of technology into high relief.

Now the modernist in me acknowledges the ridiculousness of these remarks at the same time as I can see them in terms of a much grander theoretical tradition: Siegfried Kracauer on distraction, for example, or Walter Benjamin on shock, or, much more recently, Paul Virilio on the pressures of a dromological culture. And there is no doubt that these psychic tics in my technological imaginary find their analogue in the literature on sixties art. Take, for instance, Tony Smith's famous interview with Samuel Wagstaff, in which the minimalist sculptor described the reception of art in terms of a thematic of end-lessness, notably depicted as an open road. Persuasively treated as an allegory for the new sculpture, the passage demands to be revisited through the logic of temporalization. As Smith said:

When I was teaching at Cooper Union in the first year or two of the fifties, someone told me how I could get onto the unfinished New Jersey Turnpike. I took three students and drove them somewhere in the Meadows to New Brunswick. It was a dark night and there were no lights or shoulder markers, lines, railings, or anything at all except the dark pavement moving through the landscape of flats. . . . This drive was a revealing experience. The road and much of the landscape was artificial, and yet it couldn't be called a work of art. On the other hand, it did something for me that art had never done. At first, I didn't know what it was, but its effect was to liberate me from many of the views I had had about art. . . .

The experience of the road was something mapped out but not socially recognized. I thought to myself, it ought to be clear that's the end of art. Most painting looks pretty pictorial after that.[6]

In Smith's postwar retelling of the classical travel narrative, the sense of the Great Unknown is held at a distance, metaphorized by the dimness of the road and its lack of legible street architecture: open-ended interpretation is analogized to the business of incomplete road construction. But it would be a mistake to stop here. For Smith's discourse on a literal passage analogizes the question of a *temporal* passage, of duration, before and around the work of art, providing an object lesson for our own deeply mediated relationship to visual art and the environment as inflected by time. Indeed this study finds its origins at the heart of the Silicon Valley, where I teach and have lived; and one

conceptual horizon of my project, like Smith's narrative, might be played out as an endless highway. Nothing quite like the spectacle that confronts the commuter as he or she makes her way up and down Highway 101, the main artery connecting San Francisco to the Silicon Valley. A parade of billboards lines the road, each screaming for attention. But what do they advertise? Dot.com start-ups; net connections and service providers; cyberspaces for cyberevents. It's hard to ignore the paradox, a beautiful paradox. It's an odd encounter between hard, primitive communications media and the soft, virtual, new media those signs would attempt to sell.

In the wake of more recent economic realities, those signs don't blare as loudly as they used to, their arrogance muted by the censorious realpolitik of failed initial public offerings and mountains of pink slips. But the peculiar contrast they stage between then and now is just so; and it underscores one of the central issues of this book, the endless temporal switching that occurs between past, present, and future. The recursiveness between old and new media in the sixties is something we can better see, with hindsight, from our millennial (or rather, post-millennial) perch. How do we figure or conceive of our own horizon of contemporaneity; and how is that contemporaneity at once augured and shadowed by the faith we place in our technology? This book attempts to address some of these questions by means of a historical horizon only recently past.

TERMS

Some prefatory remarks on the terms that comprise the subtitle of this book—*time, art,* and *the 1960s*—as well as the term *technology,* which figures prominently—are in order. These terms seem transparent enough. As this book will make clear, however, both the language and the historical conditions that shape them are far from transparent, are far more ambiguous than they might seem; and it is precisely this lack of consensus around their meanings and implications that endows the history that follows with its acutely anxious charge. This is a study whose objects of criticism, whether works of art or texts or the matter of time itself, have blurred edges at best. In the name of politics,

culture, and ideology, they will be mobilized to radically different ends by equally different constituencies.

I'll start with the seemingly self-evident coupling of the concepts *art* and *technology*. I say "seemingly self-evident" because the linking of the two has been a cornerstone of modern art history, but one, I think, that demands to be nuanced within the context of postwar art making. Mention the pairing of "art" and "technology" and the art historical roll call begins: think the futurists, the constructivists, experimental film and photography, video. Or think "new" media: telematics, portables, motion graphics, biotechnology all pressed into the service of advanced art making. Examples of this sort occupy a central role—easily the most privileged role—in the archive of art and technology. And that's certainly right: we could hardly do justice to considering new imaging technologies today, for example, without parsing the historical and scientific rhetoric that informs the invention of photography.

Yet to treat the art and technology relationship as *exclusively* the encounter between artist and technical "thing," whether medium or tool, or in the will to represent technology, is to conceive of technology as merely the stuff of objects, things whose materiality or ontological security is self-contained and self-evident. When Herbert Marcuse, Theodore Roszak, and so many others decried technological rationality and the ascendant technocracy in the 1960s, however, they were little concerned with mere things. They were not, it bears saying, just referring to computers, missiles, and television sets. They were referring, in the bluntest of terms, to an attitude peculiar to that moment, an attitude internalized socially, culturally, and politically, whose consequences stood in dramatic excess of technology's literal representation. I address this attitude—what Marcuse called a logic of domination or administration—in the introduction of this book.

Such issues are brought to bear on the works of art I have chosen to discuss as well. Inevitably, questions (perhaps objections) will be raised as to the exclusions of certain works of art and artists, not to mention the short shrift given to entire genres. Let me be clear that this is neither a survey of time in the art of the sixties, nor a history of "tech art" or "new media" in that decade, although the historical exi-

gencies surrounding such developments are critical to what follows. This project, rather, is at once more narrow *and* ambitious in thinking through the art and technology nexus with respect to time. In

considering time as a trope for the increasingly fraught confrontation
with technology in the 1960s, I want to appeal to the deep structure of
technological change taking place then. More often than not, this
structure is registered at the level of reception rather than production,
consumption rather than intention, and organization, rather than
representation.

Thus when I speak of the relationship between art and tech-
nology, I broadly acknowledge the original formulation of technology
in *techne*—that is, its grounding in an Aristotelian tradition of applied
cognition. It is in the *Nicomachean Ethics* that the word *techne* finds its
philosophical articulation, by which is meant "the skill, art or craft and
general know-how, the possession of which enables a person to produce
a certain product."[7] Techne, then, as opposed to the understanding of
technology as a "tool," grants us a far more expansive perspective into
the historical problem of art and time in the 1960s.[8] Indeed, techne
defines art and technology as contiguous, whether the art of the laborer
or craftsperson. "There is no art," Aristotle observed, "that is not a char-
acteristic or trained ability of rationally producing, nor it there a
characteristic of rationally producing that not an art."[9] What follows
from this conceit, which acknowledges the epistemic, calculational, or
rational dimensions that inhere in any formulation of technics (because
of the maker's "know-how") is a base understanding that technology—
as practice and thinking all at once—is not neutral but necessarily
subjective. "Technology is (therefore) no mere means," Martin
Heidegger wrote in his "Question Concerning Technology," an essay that
would describe the Western technological narrative as progressively and
therefore dangerously instrumental.[10] This warning will ring true for
much art of the 1960s, which I argue at once registers *and* produces the
sense that a peculiar contest over the technological is taking place, a
sense of both defense and revolt. And that contest, we shall see, gets
played over and over through time.

Time, then, is up for grabs here. With the revolutions in quantum
physics that mark the first half of the twentieth century, it can't be
anything but. And although Albert Einstein and Werner Heisenberg
stand as irreproachable figures in any discussion of time and change in
late modernity, it is not the new science that concerns me—less the
business of imaginary time and relativity—as much as the larger issue
of time, history, and periodization with respect to technology.[11] Any

study that takes up such a proposal needs to be concerned with the methodological risks of technological determinism, the belief that all forms of culture get swept up in technology's inexorable wake.[12] In laying stress on the notion that technology is *not* neutral—"no mere means"—one emphasizes the deeply "relative" character of this determinism. It is relative to the ideologies that manage, support, and underwrite technology's production and distribution; and relative in terms of those communities who would subscribe to such ideologies as well. In pointing to the radical *unknowing* that attends questions of time in the art of this period, I also stress the degree to which notions of determinism are themselves progressively compromised. To be sure, it is one of the paradoxes of both science and technology in the postwar era that this phenomenon is thematized as uncertainty and contingency, its methods described as a certain anarchy.[13] If this is determinism of a sort, it begs liberal qualification, hardly the kind of determinism that accompanies old-school historicism.

 In this sense, much of what follows suggests—but does not completely square with—Thomas Kuhn's profoundly influential reading of change in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962) and his conception of the "paradigm shift." "Normal Science often suppresses fundamental novelties because they are necessarily subversive of its basic commitments," Kuhn wrote.[14]

When the profession can no longer evade anomalies that subvert the existing tradition of scientific practice—then begin the extraordinary investigations that lead the profession at last to a new set of commitments, a new basis for the practice of science. The extraordinary episodes in which that shift of the professional commitments occur are the ones known in this essay as scientific revolutions.[15]

These revolutions, to follow Kuhn, are ruptures in the existing order of scientific knowledge and practice. And as their "new set of commitments" wear on, they become more institutionally entrenched, only to be displaced by yet another revolution.

 Much of the work discussed in what follows would seem to anticipate such shifts, as if forecasting the radical change on the horizon. But I also stress that the scientific and technological ruptures that usher in the Information Age are at this point, historically ambiguous, their

implications ambivalent and their consequences still far afield. This remark begs another question: if not a paradigm shift, then what? How, in other words, do we periodize work that seemingly resists the logic of periodization?

The answer, in part, is to take that as a sign for the period itself. For when historians and critics write about periodizing the sixties, they mean, first of all, to reject the crude historicizing that sees that time as beginning on January 1, 1960, and ending at midnight, December 31, ten years later. They mean to see something more expansive about that moment, irreducible to marks on a calendar or dates on a page, a "common objective situation" that is at once deeply historical but does not essentialize an "omnipresent and uniform shared style or way of thinking and acting."[16] A stark way to address this issue takes the form of a question: When did the sixties end? The sixties, I argue in the conclusion, are endless in peculiar ways: endless in that we are still dealing with its political and temporal legacy. But there's also no shortage of answers to that question if by *the sixties* one refers to a specific postwar/Cold War ethos, in which an acute faith in political agency found its systematic manifestations in the antiwar, civil rights, and national liberation movements. If that's a working definition for the period, or at least an impressionistic one, then one might make claims for a number of "ends," ranging from a post–May 1968 moment to a slew of events moving into the early seventies. Such a list might include the violence at the 1969 Stones concert at Altamont, the Tate/LaBianca murders committed by Charles Manson followers, the growing splits within Students for a Democratic Society, the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam in 1973, Watergate even. It goes on and on, this list, and that seems fitting as well. How history gets made, how it gets written, finds a peculiar orientation specific to the period. It is specific to a matter of time anxiously felt back then.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

The first part of the study, "Presentness Is Grace" establishes the terms of this history. The introduction, "Eros and Technics and Civilization," attends to the problematic nature of art and technology collaborations in the sixties, characterized by an unbridled love of the new technology.

The centerpiece of the chapter is the history surrounding the Art and Technology Program of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), begun in 1966 and culminating with an infamous exhibition in 1971. The program was highly controversial not only for the quality of the work produced (dismal by most accounts) but also for its partnership with corporations whose links to the Vietnam War were indisputable. I read LACMA's program against the grain of another local history, that surrounding Herbert Marcuse's analysis of art and technology in sixties culture. The comparison frames the terms for the debate on art and technology in the decade and opens up the possibility of considering this relationship through noniconographic means.

Accordingly, the first chapter, "Presentness Is Grace" introduces the thesis of "chronophobia" by revisiting Michael Fried's famous essay "Art and Objecthood" (1967). A canonical text of high modernist art criticism, the essay's centrality for the sixties, I argue, has as much to do with its peculiar, even phobic, thematization of time as it does with a modernist account of visuality. Fried does not address technology explicitly in this essay, but his hostility toward the temporal dimensions of minimalist sculpture—its experience of endlessness, duration, and repetition—can be read against a generalized movement in sixties art to work based on nonlinear paradigms of seriality, systems-based (as opposed to medium-specific) production and its attendant models of recursion and *autopoiesis.* As such, the chapter puts pressure on the art historical readings by which medium is conventionally understood, and it provides a means to think critically about the relationship between medium and "new media" in postwar art.

The second part of the book is entitled "Allegories of Kinesis." It contends with issues of movement and time in sixties art as they relate to the ascendance of what has come to be known as media culture, the "global media," and "global technocracy." Chapter 2, "Study for an End of the World" treats the explosion of kinetic art in the early sixties. The proliferation of this work suggested a revival of avant-garde practices and has correspondingly suffered a historiographic reputation as derivative and regressive. Regardless, I take seriously the question of what this "return" to a Machine Age aesthetic might represent through the rhetoric of overlapping technological worlds, particularly, the emergence of automation and communications media and the question of temporality in an expanding global context. I compare the

self-destructive work of one of its most famous practitioners, the Swiss artist Jean Tinguely, to the excruciatingly slow sculpture of the Belgian Pol Bury and the global propositions offered by the London-based Signals group. The third chapter, "Bridget Riley's Eye/Body Problem," considers Op art, another mid-decade "movement" typically discussed in terms of technology and time. I focus on the work of the British painter Bridget Riley and Op's peculiar fetishization of visuality. I read the visual "tempi" internalized by her work in terms of the phenomenological response of its viewer. This virtual disembodiment of the spectator's eye from its corporeal subject occasions a reading of the temporalized body under the conditions of a shifting technological culture and its potentially liberatory or repressive implications. As a comparative foil to Riley's practice and reception, I take up the kinetic, intermedia, and performance-based art of Carolee Schneemann.

The last part of the book is called "Endless Sixties." The book's fourth chapter, "Ultramoderne: Or, How George Kubler Stole the Time in Sixties Art" concerns a peculiar episode in the art and art criticism in the sixties: the reception of George Kubler's *The Shape of Time: Remarks on the History of Things* (1962). Hailed in art historical circles for its rejection of stylistic historicism, Kubler's book also found an enthusiastic if unlikely audience of contemporary artists, as demonstrated by Robert Smithson's essays "Quasi-Infinities and the Waning of Space" (1966) and "Ultramoderne" (1967). Although Kubler's account of an intermittent, nonlinear history of art converged seamlessly with Smithson's distaste for the modernism of Clement Greenberg, I speculate that, more significantly, it allowed Smithson to think through questions of seriality, technics, and *futurity* in his own artistic production, as well as to reflect on a critical discourse that had only recently emerged within popular consciousness in the fifties and sixties: namely, cybernetics. Smithson made occasional reference to Norbert Wiener and cybernetics in his writing, but paradoxically, he seemed to have found the most apposite spokesperson for these interests in the figure of Kubler.

In the concluding chapter, "The Bad Infinity/The *Longue Durée*," I discuss the almost compulsive desire to register time in numerous examples of sixties art, ranging from Warhol's *Empire* to the work of the Japanese-born, New York–based artist On Kawara. Such practices are considered in light of theories of postmodernism and the rise of technological forecasting in the 1960s, as well as two seemingly

incompatible models of history: G. W. F.'s Hegel's "Bad Infinity" and Fernand Braudel's "*Longue Durée.*" I argue that both *Empire* and Kawara's practice endlessly belabor the present as a particular comment on the status of "futurity" articulated in that historical moment.

UNSTUCK IN TIME

Billy Pilgrim, the antihero of Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse Five* (1969), is a time traveler. Throughout the book, he claims to have come unstuck in time. In a series of increasingly vertiginous narratives, Billy Pilgrim moves with blinding speed through time and space. In a flash he is at the Dresden slaughterhouse, where he was kept as a prisoner during the Second World War. Next he is in Ilium, Ohio, a suburban optometrist stuck in a loveless marriage. Then again, he is whisked to the planet of Tramalfagore, held captive by aliens. One approach to the book might read Billy's time traveling as a function of madness—of a mental breakdown brought on by the traumas of war. It is no doubt that, as much as it is a meditation on the war that Billy's own son now supports—Vietnam. Vonnegut's book, then, is a dizzying comparison of two military events split along a temporal trajectory: World War II and the war in Southeast Asia act as chronological bookends to one of the most critical periods in world history.[17] But Pilgrim's madness, or schizophrenic relation to time, also betrays something of the temporal crisis that is a signal feature of postmodernism.[18] And like all good crises, this one calls for a certain degree of decision making.[19] How is one to act in the face of it?

Artists and critics of the 1960s needed to make such decisions. Often enough, their response came in the form of a disavowal, an uncertainty in their approach to the question of time. Perhaps some recognized that it had become one of the great clichés of our time, the subject of time. But that very recognition also announces a reckoning, a historical reckoning, that theirs was a moment endlessly recasting its own version of timeliness. The task of this book is to bear witness to that version, however transient it might seem to be.