

PICTURE

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Picturing: *An Introduction*

In the early 1880s, the American artist Winslow Homer (1836–1910) sketched a tragic scene: a capsized boat foundering near a rocky shore lined with trees. At least one figure appears to be floating in the water while others clutch at the overturned boat or take refuge on a rock. The hand of a drowning man claws the air, straining against the ocean's relentless heave and pull (fig. 1). The graphite sketch, a study for Homer's watercolor *The Ship's Boat* (1883), is rough and summary, supplying just enough detail to communicate the bare facts of the event.¹ The brusque, stuttering strokes of the pencil that delineate the swirl of the water and the broken snapping of sailcloth, along with the spiking slashes of graphite that designate the trees along the rocky ridge, broadcast the panic and chaos of the wreck. Sweeping pencil strokes in the sky that take the form of funnel clouds suggest the violence of the storm that overtook the boat; together with the wind-whipped trees, these cyclones evoke the destructive force of a hurricane.

Homer's sketch of a shipwreck reflects the sharp seaward turn his art took in the 1880s, after living nearly two years in Cullercoats, an English fishing village on the North Sea, and then settling for good in Prout's Neck, Maine, a peninsula about ten miles north of Portland. Fishermen bravely pursuing their catch, wives stoically mending nets and tending to the day's haul, calamitous storms, dramatic rescues, outside waves crashing against rocky shores and exploding skyward before making their retreat: Homer's pictures during this period celebrated the raw beauty and power of the ocean and the resolute

Winslow Homer,
The Fog Warning
(detail, see fig. 5).





¹
Winslow Homer,
*From the Retina of a
Drowned Man*, 1881–82.
Graphite on wove
paper, mounted in an
album, $3\frac{3}{8} \times 4\frac{7}{8}$ in.
(8.5 × 12.4 cm). Cooper-
Hewitt, National Design
Museum, New York.
Gift of Charles Savage
Homer Jr., 1912-12-253.

will of the men and women who made their lives by the sea. Yet in comparison with the most gripping of his major seascapes, including those that feature bodies in extremis, such as *The Life Line* (1884), *Undertow* (1886), and *After the Hurricane, Bahamas* (1899) (figs. 2–4), the shipwreck sketch feels unrestrained, even indulgent in its depiction of destruction and death. The clawing hand provides one tipping point, and Homer’s annotation of the sketch provides another. Horizontal lines separate the shipwreck scene from the rectangle of bare paper beneath it. Immediately beneath these lines Homer added a short, explanatory text: “From the retina of a drowned man.”

Presumably Homer meant with his caption to suggest that anyone looking at his sketch should first and foremost imagine occupying the point of view of a person in the water, a perspective compelled by other of Homer’s seascapes from the 1880s and 1890s, including *Undertow*. In *The Fog Warning* (1885) (fig. 5), Homer puts his viewer at sea, at the oars of another boat or set adrift, imperiled either way. Homer rendered the waves at the front of *The Fog Warning* with coarse strokes of white. Given their large scale, these rough marks register as close-up and brutally material, as if proximally graspable, thereby suggesting a viewpoint of watery immersion rather than one sited on

2
Winslow Homer,
The Life Line, 1884.
Oil on canvas, 28 $\frac{5}{8}$ ×
44 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. (72.7 × 113.7 cm).
Philadelphia Museum
of Art. The George
W. Elkins Collection,
1924, E1924-4-15.



3
Winslow Homer,
Undertow, 1886.
Oil on canvas,
29 $\frac{13}{16}$ × 47 $\frac{5}{8}$ in.
(75.7 × 121 cm).
Sterling and Francine
Clark Art Institute,
Williamstown,
Massachusetts, 1955.4.



4
Winslow Homer,
After the Hurricane,
Bahamas, 1899.
Watercolor and
graphite on ivory wove
paper, 15 × 21 in.
(38 × 54.3 cm).
The Art Institute of
Chicago. Mr. and
Mrs. Martin A. Ryerson
Collection, 1933.1235.



a boat. The complex weave among strokes of white, gray, black, and blue green in this area of the canvas calls to mind a section of excavated and cross-sectioned earth as much as it does the variegated hue and sheen of water moving in time and space. This effect of unearthed terrain underscores the sense that the viewer occupies a submerged, if not subterranean, point of view, a perspective induced even more emphatically by the two cliff-like swells encasing the fishermen in Homer's *Kissing the Moon* (1904).² The halibut stacked in the dory occupy a similar position, one counter to their natural state. Wedged at the bottom of the boat and partially obscured by the port side, the hauled-in halibut are out of their element, fatally buried in air. In this way, their submerged condition is conversely analogous to that of the water-bound viewer, whose fate is equivalently sealed by his watery confines. As a result, Homer in his painting offers up as the viewer's closest surrogate the fish, rather than the fisherman, who would be the more obvious or conventional choice. The tail fin of one of the fish breaches the boundary between boat and water—not unlike the clawing hand in Homer's shipwreck sketch—suggesting a straining effort to escape the death trap of the boat and plunge back safely into the sea.

5
Winslow Homer,
The Fog Warning, 1885.
Oil on canvas, 30 ¼ x
48 ½ in. (76.83 x
123.19 cm). Museum
of Fine Arts, Boston.
Anonymous gift with
credit to the Otis
Norcross Fund, 94.72.

Homer's shipwreck sketch mirrors the desperation of *The Fog Warning*, and then raises the stakes. The viewer of the sketch must





6
Winslow Homer,
The Fox Hunt, 1893.
Oil on canvas, 38 ×
68 ½ in. (96.5 × 174 cm).
Pennsylvania Academy
of the Fine Arts,
Philadelphia. Joseph E.
Temple Fund, 1894.4.

imagine seeing the summarily rendered scene while struggling in the water, but also as if dead. “From the retina of a drowned man,” Homer wrote, positing not just a stricken point of view, but also an impossible one, for of course a drowned man cannot see anything from any point of view. This, like the water-bound point of view, feels in keeping with many of Homer’s most striking pictures from this period, including those that compel the viewer to assume the perspective of an animal. In *The Fox Hunt* (1893) (fig. 6), a fox slinks through the snow, alert to potential danger but apparently oblivious to the crows circling behind him. His back turned toward the viewer, he adopts the classic pose of the *Rückenfigur*, a figure in a picture seen from behind and contemplating an expanse of terrain. Because his stance is analogous to that of a beholder contemplating the picture, such a figure serves as that beholder’s surrogate. Thigh-deep in snow, the partially submerged body of the fox recalls other of Homer’s surrogate figures, including both the drowning man of Homer’s sketch and the trapped halibut of *The Fog Warning*. Homer also links the snowbound fox to himself, by way of his signature, at left, which he rendered at an angle so that it echoes the diagonal slope of the body of the fox. He then buried the signature up to its midpoint—or waist—in snow, underscoring the correspondence between the picture’s snowbound animal protagonist and the human that painted him. This human-fox exchange exists alongside the many transpositions that occur within Homer’s pictures, either



7
Winslow Homer,
Right and Left, 1909.
Oil on canvas,
28 ¼ × 48 ⅜ in.
(71.8 × 122.9 cm).
National Gallery of
Art, Washington, DC.
Gift of the Avalon
Foundation, 1951.8.1.

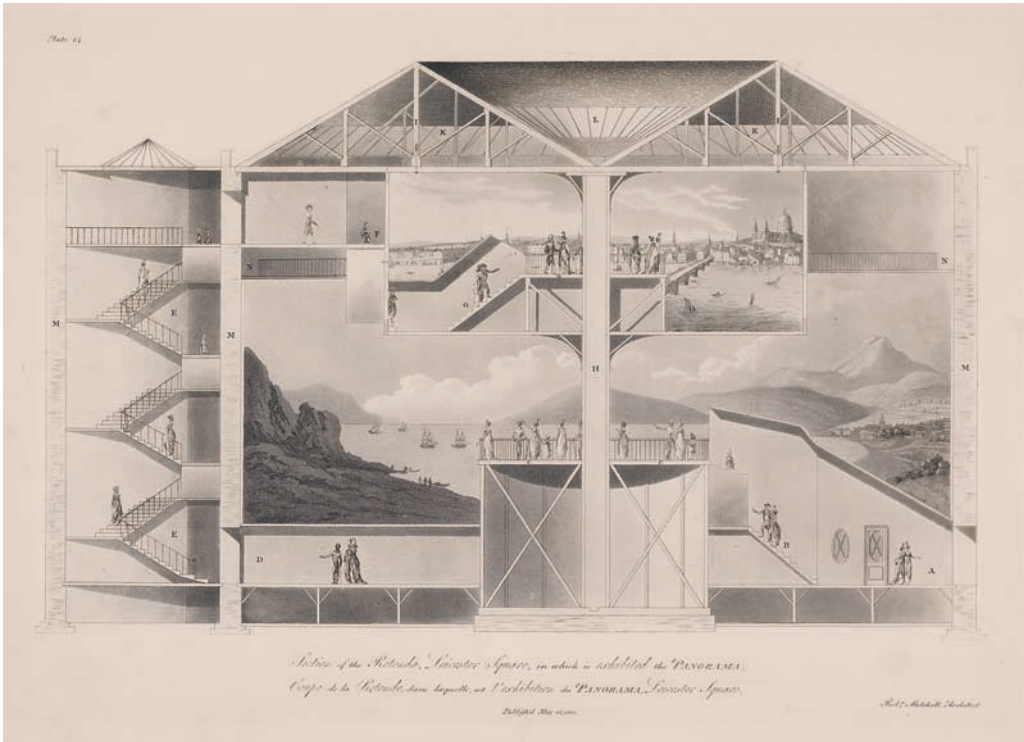
within a single painting or across several works: between, for instance, the smothering sea in *The Fog Warning* and the obdurate snow in *The Fox Hunt*, or the drowning man in the shipwreck sketch and the imperiled fox. Homer's transpositions among entities and between paintings serve as emblems for surrogacy's substitutions more generally, and in combination with the visual analogy drawn between Homer and the fox, they drive home the idea that *The Fox Hunt* compels the viewer to adopt a fox's-eye-view. That viewer, then, both sees and does not see with the fox, seeing the landscape but not spying the birds. And of course that viewer does neither of these things, having no capacity at all to see as an animal does, especially one that consists merely of paint.

I would not dwell on these characteristics if *The Fox Hunt* represented an anomaly in Homer's body of work, but it does not. More than a few of his pictures ask their viewers to exchange subject positions with an animal, and to identify with animal protagonists. *Right and Left* (1909) (fig. 7), one of Homer's last major works before his death in 1910, is exemplary. Similar to Homer's watercolors depicting hooked fish at close range, such as *A Good Pool*, *Saguenay River* (1895) (fig. 8), *Right and Left* depicts two ducks as they are shot midair by a hunter armed with a double-barreled shotgun. Hence the painting's title, which refers to the two barrels of the gun and the two shots they fire in quick succession, first one barrel and then the other. Homer registers the effect of the gunfire in several ways: through the water pulled along with the bird as it is blasted out of the sea,



8
 Winslow Homer,
*A Good Pool, Saguenay
 River*, 1895. Watercolor
 over graphite, with
 scraping on cream wove
 paper, 9 ¾ × 18 ⅞ in.
 (24.7 × 47.9 cm).
 Sterling and Francine
 Clark Art Institute,
 Williamstown, Massa-
 chusetts, 1955.1492.

flapping its wings in distress; through an errant, drifting feather at right; and through the frozen-like quality of the birds that communicates their demise but perhaps also their destiny as stuffed specimens on display in the hunter's trophy room. Homer renders the left-hand bird midkill, its orange eye widening in violent surprise, but the bird on the right has already expired, as evidenced by its limp neck and downward trajectory, with the drifting feather toward the canvas's right edge proffering a poignant visual eulogy. As does *The Fog Warning*, Homer's *Right and Left* positions the viewer in the water, alongside the animal protagonists, from whose point of view he or she is meant to experience the scene. Homer underscores this animal surrogacy by adjusting his signature, at lower right, so that it parallels the downward slant of the dead, falling bird, much as he established the interchangeable identity among the fox, himself, and the human viewer in *The Fox Hunt*. Of course in *Right and Left*, the viewer may choose between two surrogates—between the two ducks—but the link between Homer's signature and the right-hand duck suggests that it is the dead one whose point of view the viewer should imagine embodying and through whose eyes he or she should see. This puts the beholder in a position analogous to that compelled by the shipwreck sketch, of seeing through the eyes of a corpse, a correspondence reinforced by the tip of the dead bird's uppermost wing, which breaches the boundary between a distant bank of thickening fog and the sunset-streaked sky, much like the reaching tailfin of the slain halibut in *The Fog Warning* and the hand that breaks the surface of the water in the sketch marking



9
Robert Mitchell,
 “Section of the Rotunda,
 Leicester Square, in
 Which Is Exhibited
 the Panorama,” from
**Robert Mitchell, Plans,
 and Views in Perspective,
 with Descriptions of
 Buildings, Erected in
 England and Scotland**
 (London: Wilson & Co.,
 1801), plate 14. Etching,
 aquatint, 12 ½ × 18 in.
 (32.2 × 46.7 cm).
 British Museum, London,
 1875.0710.4485.

the futile clutching at air of a drowning man struggling to save himself. So, once again, in *Right and Left*, Homer asks his viewer to see in an impossible manner, from the point of view of a body bereft of life.

Homer’s insistence on a death’s-eye-view in this and other pictures becomes especially interesting when considered in relation to his caption for the shipwreck sketch: “From the retina of a drowned man.” Homer’s use of the term “retina,” not a particularly obvious choice of words, conjures the morbid perspective from which the scene was putatively viewed or recorded. Yet what I described as the lack of restraint or the macabre indulgence of this scene comes in part by way of Homer’s invocation through his caption of something worse than a drowned man, more like a corpse coming apart at the seams, its outer layers peeling away so that its innards are revealed. “Retina” conjures just such an image of a body no longer intact, one the inside surfaces of which can be seen. More specifically, “retina” as a term calls to mind medical science in addition to graveyard rot, thus invoking the perspective of the anatomist and summoning thoughts of dissection to the viewer’s experience of the scene. This is the case because of course one way to see this particular anatomical part, lodged as it is

within the organ of the eye, is to disassemble a body through a series of cuts. The emphatic line Homer drew beneath the scene that slices the page in two evokes such cutting. It also transforms the bottom portion of the page into a platform for viewing, calling to mind something like the elevated platform on which a nineteenth-century viewer would have stood in order to view a panorama painting installed in a rotunda (fig. 9) or, more broadly, the space of the audience situated before any entity made or meant to be seen, be it painted, performed, or otherwise. Such a conspicuously theatrical positioning of the beholder in the sketch, right at the foot of the stage, in combination with that same beholder's breach of the fourth wall—as dead or drowning alongside the shipwrecked crew—reinforces Homer's intent to make viewing itself manifestly at issue in this work. The blank rectangle of the bottom half of the page that supports the wrecked boat and floating bodies also emphasizes the status of the sketch as a scene of imagined dissection, complete with a dissection table in the form of the line that cuts across the page and the trappings of an anatomical theater as evoked through the picture's stagelike configuration. Of course by the time Homer made his sketch, an anatomist or physician did not have to cut in order to see a person's retina, for the ophthalmoscope, invented by Hermann von Helmholtz in 1851, allowed for the examination of the internal structures of the eye without dissecting the head. Yet the force of Homer's sketch suggests that even with the idea of the ophthalmoscope in mind, the viewer, obliged through Homer's invocation of the retina to visualize an internal tissue in the raw, wound up confronting the idea of a body turned inside out.

"Retina" also suggests that Homer may have been familiar with an idea circulating among scientists and popular audiences in Europe and the United States in the second half of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth: that an image of the last thing seen before death remained on the dead person's retina, available for scrutiny by others.³ The notion, which had originated in the first half of the nineteenth century, gained traction with the discovery in the 1850s of a reddish purple pigment, later named rhodopsin and often referred to as "retinal violet," in the photoreceptor cells of the retina known as "rods." By the 1870s, it was observed that this pigment turned a much lighter hue, or bleached, in response to light, and stayed bleached for an extended period before regenerating. Because this discovery posited the retina as a screen rather than a window, a material receptacle for light rather than something through which light simply passed, almost immediately the effect was likened to photography.⁴ Scientists

hypothesized the retina as a biological camera that registered light as would a photographic plate and that ultimately yielded through a chemical developing process an image on the retinal surface of the thing that had been seen by the eye. Dubbed “optography,” the phenomenon generated a culture of scientific experimentation, mostly involving the beheading and dissection of animals for the purpose of identifying and verifying the existence of a retinal picture. Optography also captivated the imagination of the public, chiefly through journal and newspaper accounts as well as encyclopedias meant for general audiences. Optograms found their way into the plots of both popular and literary fiction; among others, Rudyard Kipling, Jules Verne, and James Joyce featured optograms in their narratives (Joyce did so ironically), and the notion persisted in the popular imagination long after it was discredited in the scientific community. In keeping with the emerging evidentiary paradigm in the period, criminal investigators in some police departments took up the practice of photographing at close range the eyes of murder victims in order to identify the person or persons who had done the deed; this included the murdered Annie Chapman, believed to be one of Jack the Ripper’s victims, whose eyes were examined for traces of her killer’s visage.⁵ Some murderers, in turn, wised up, and either covered their targets’ eyes before striking or pitted the eye sockets of the deceased so no retinal evidence could be gathered.

It would be incorrect to count Homer’s shipwreck sketch among the experimental and anecdotal evidence offered up in the 1870s and 1880s to support the validity of the optogram hypothesis. His picture shares next to nothing with the sensational newspaper reports of killers identified and caught by dint of their retinal headshots. But having a sense of the larger discursive context of Homer’s directive to imagine seeing from the point of view of a drowned man’s retina helps illuminate the dynamic complexity of his image, in particular the fluid and elusive identity and status of the “picture” itself within the network of seeing and not seeing he constructs through it. For what is the status of the picture we see here? What exactly, as a visual expression, *is* it, given the complexity of the fiction of its creation as well as the conditions of its existence and its availability to us as viewers as bequeathed by Homer through his caption? Homer prevents an easy answer by putatively obscuring both the origin of the drawing and the means by which it comes to be perceived after its creation: he drew it, and we see it, but according to the fiction of his caption, neither he nor the viewer could have envisioned the scene, either as a waterborne

dead person or through an image etched in light on that person's retina. Of course one could imagine the sketch as meant to be that very retinal picture, extracted from the corpse by way of dissection, or through the speedy employ of an ophthalmoscope—a retinal image that rendered the interior of the eye visible to an external observer who then transferred the view to paper. But such a scenario has its own problems, for it stipulates an improbable chain of reproduction, from retinal picture to pencil sketch, one that necessarily brings photography into the mix as a possible source for what we see in Homer's picture, which could be the image "photographed" by the retina and observed on that tissue or, just as easily, a photograph of the retinal image, translated from anatomical membrane to photographic plate and then to photographic print. Of course Homer's sketch is not literally a retinal picture. This goes without saying, as does the futility of any attempt to figure out what the picture "really" is or what it "really" shows. That effort would involve falling headlong under the sway of the fiction of realism and a consequent search in vain for the external cause responsible for producing the pictorial effect.⁶ But the caption does introduce, if hypothetically, the possibility that Homer's sketch *could* be just such a retinal image. And this would mean that what we are seeing is something that we did not view, that we never could, and that never existed in the first place—or, alternately, that what we see is visual data available only to something we are not: a corpse, an animal, an optical or reproductive technology, and so forth. What *is* a picture, after all, the sketch ultimately asks, a boldfaced but urgent question for those who earn their keep by making pictures or by assaying their meaning. That Homer posed such a question across a diverse array of his work, and pinned it to another query—along the lines of *who* or *what* generates the appearance and operations of a picture—suggests an abiding concern on his part for the nature and capacity of visual form, pictures in particular, and for the problems and possibilities and also the pleasures and potential dangers that attend any act of pictorial representation.



Art history as a discipline is conventionally if not exclusively preoccupied with what pictures mean: with the process of decoding a work of art's iconography and formal vocabulary and identifying the socio-historical sources and intended recipients for the meanings conveyed through form and subject matter. *Picturing* considers the very ground

for such inquiry, the fact of a picture itself: as a thing that exists in the world as the result of a series of manual and imaginative operations and to which is attributed certain and various properties and conditions, actual, desired, or otherwise. “Picturing” as the organizing term for this collection of essays thus refers to the particular exigencies of the production and consumption of visual representation. The term understood in such a manner also and more pointedly refers to picturing as a concept: as a cohort of ideas and hypotheses that collectively generate visualization *as* an available act, a thing that people can and choose to do. This idea is key to the volume’s intentions and its contribution to the scholarly discourse: that is, that a picture is first and foremost an idea, rather than a thing that simply exists in the world *a priori*, and is made available *as* an idea and extant option through material, cultural, and social contingencies. This hypothetical availability goes hand in hand with hypothetical productivity, that is, with the sense that a picture might be made with an outcome in mind. For this reason, “picturing” as a term also refers to how a given culturally and chronologically contingent cohort of ideas and hypotheses theorizes the conditions of the production of a visual representation both locally, for an individual maker, and more generally, for a particular historical moment. *Picturing* considers such conditions alongside a range of thinking by artists, writers, and others about the production of visual form brought to bear on the making, viewing, and analysis of pictures in the United States. The result is an account of salient episodes in America’s rich history of thinking and theorizing about the nature of pictorial existence (to borrow a phrase from one of the contributors to this volume) that attends to a series of seemingly basic yet essentially complex historical and conceptual questions: What is a picture? Why make a picture? What do pictures do? How do pictures communicate? When do pictures fail? How is picturing like or unlike bringing something into sight through the operations of vision? These questions, similar to those formulated in paint by Winslow Homer in the 1880s, have been raised persistently by makers and viewers in the past and into the present, and they are this volume’s chief queries as well. It is hoped that by putting such queries front and center, *Picturing* will serve as a foundation for further research and writing in art history and other disciplines concerned with the history and theory of visual representation as both a phenomenon and an idea in the United States and beyond.

Picturing of course shares certain concerns formulated in scholarly writing about the arts across the humanities and the social sciences

that highlight fundamental questions about visual art. A rough sketch of this body of literature would yield three primary terms essential to such inquiry and, also, to the project of *Picturing*: (1) “ontology,” the nature of being of a work of art, (2) “epistemology,” the grounds for knowing that subtend visual production, and (3) “modality,” what a work of art does or demands. Other terms would of course rise to the surface, including *Bildwissenschaft*, “visual studies,” “visual culture,” and “material culture.” Indebted as this volume is to the methodological breakthroughs of these areas, it is worth elucidating how these realms of inquiry and the concerns of *Picturing* compare — not to position *Picturing* as counter to the study of the visual writ large as it has been articulated theoretically and institutionally in Europe and the United States, but in order to articulate precisely from the outset the specific intentions and predilections of *Picturing* as outlined above.

Rooted in part in the study of the history and theory of culture associated with the work of the German art historian Aby Warburg (1866–1929), in particular Warburg’s expansion of the purview of art history to include nonart imagery, *Bildwissenschaft*, roughly translated as “image theory” or “image science,” encompasses a diversity of methodologies and scrutinizes a wide range of material. The scholar Horst Bredekamp, who published a seminal account of *Bildwissenschaft* in 2003, highlighted two key characteristics: an embrace of “the whole field of images beyond the visual arts,” including photography, film, video, scientific illustration, and mass media images, and an insistence on taking “all of these objects seriously.”⁷ Importantly for Bredekamp, *Bildwissenschaft* does not exclude or exist as distinct from the study of fine art. As he points out, this mode of inquiry originated from within the discipline of academic art history, with figures such as Erwin Panofsky, Hermann Grimm, and Heinrich Wölfflin whose study of visual art included consideration of reproduction technologies like photography and slide projection; it follows that art history, for a figure like Bredekamp, is always *Bildwissenschaft*. His version of it involves elucidating the structures of images so as to characterize how they, rather than simply recording visual experience or data, construct the visual and how images generate and disseminate knowledge through this construction.⁸ This differs somewhat from the *Bildwissenschaft* of two other key figures in Germany, Gottfried Boehm and Hans Belting, who each represent a distinct approach. Yet all three concern themselves with the question “What is an image?” and thus with the matter of ontology, and all three conceive of visual expression as operating and acting according to a logic distinct from the systems that

govern other forms of representation, such as language and text. Essential to this formulation is the anthropologically inflected understanding that images possess forms of agency, and also a sense that images, given the thickness of their presence and their potential to act or operate in the world, may not be reduced to the catchall rubric “representation.”⁹

As Bredekamp points out, the distinction between the English-speaking world’s version of visual studies, properly termed “visual culture,” and the historic trajectory of *Bildwissenschaft* in Germany and Austria hinges on the fact that visual culture is not an iteration of art history but an approach formulated partly in opposition to it.¹⁰ Arising in part from cultural studies, the study of visual culture took shape in the United States and Britain primarily if not exclusively as a mode of ideology critique that treats the visual sphere as a social and ideological formation and aims to articulate the political stakes and effects of the circulation of images in the public sphere. So while *Bildwissenschaft* commonly asks questions about the fundamental nature of visual expression and attends to the divergent properties and capacities among different types of visual artifacts, visual culture in the Anglo-American tradition tends to focus, if not exclusively or uncomplicatedly, more on the visual as a medium for the production and circulation of sociopolitical meaning, endeavoring to document what happens *after* an image finds its way into the realm of culture. The term “image,” which predominates in writing about visual culture, signals a major intervention, one shared with *Bildwissenschaft*, namely, the insistence that categories of visual expression other than fine art demand and deserve scholarly attention and analysis, alongside and commensurate with the study of “high” culture. For visual culture, this includes, in addition to photography and film, other visual forms based in media and information technology such as television, the Internet, social media, fashion, popular entertainments, the built environment, and advertising.¹¹ “Image” as an organizing term also serves to differentiate visual culture studies from *Bildwissenschaft*. Although scholars and critics of visual culture recognize that images occur within multimedia contexts, opticality fundamentally drives inquiry. That is, the forms and modes of address and consumption that receive the lion’s share of scrutiny within analysis are those that address the visual sense.¹² Accordingly, the concept of visuality provides a fundamental paradigm for understanding the status of visual expression within society, meaning that scholars of visual culture attend to images but also to how they are seen: specifically, to the

social construction and cultural constraints of vision, what Hal Foster has termed a “scopic regime,” that is, not “how we see” but “how we are able, allowed, or made to see.”¹³ Consequently, visual forms of widely diverse types are subject to a common set of methodologies as well as to the assumptions about identity, meaning, and power that come along with and underpin those methodologies. Additionally, objects of analysis remain within the register of the visual for the duration of interpretation, persisting from start to finish as “image” largely apart from their physical existence and the matter of their material production, aspects of an object that *Bildwissenschaft* subjects to rigorous scrutiny. Each object considered by visual culture thus contributes alongside a multitude of other images under examination to the formulation of a sense of the world and one’s experience of it as insistently spectacular and optically mediated.

“Picture” as the default descriptor for this volume registers the expanded historical, material, and methodological terrain of *Bildwissenschaft* and visual culture while responding in particular to the structuralism of the latter. Matthew C. Hunter describes in his essay a tussle over terminology in late eighteenth-century England marked by worry that the French word *peintre*, when translated into English as “painter,” lost its specificity and wound up referring equally to artists and to other slingers of paint, including men who painted houses to earn their keep. The loss occurred because the English word “painter” collapsed into a single term two French words distinct in their meaning, *peintre* and *couleurs* (the latter, a noun, is French for “paint”), resulting in the elimination of the all-important distinction between an artist and the artist’s materials, the creative act and dumb matter. But of course any work of art, as with any image, exists as a material object in three dimensions within a larger network or matrix of other objects and forms of matter. What is conventionally taken to be the gist of a painting, for example, is simply and only the visible and privileged uppermost surface or skin. Even a digital image subsists within a complex of material parts and occupies three dimensions by virtue of the screen or physical surface through which it must manifest in order to be seen. The perceived threat of the banal connotations of “painter” to fine art in eighteenth-century England hinged on the same unsustainable fantasy of visual form’s pure exteriority implicit in more recent studies of visual culture that suppress distinctions among materials and transform diverse visual artifacts into so many equivalent and interchangeable scrims. As evidenced by the subjects and objects considered by the contributors to this volume, *Picturing*

embraces the study of visual culture as vital and necessary, urgently so. But it insists on the material, social, sensorial, and epistemological specificity of visual expression within history and resists the idea that all images everywhere may be collectively theorized such that their nature and operations may be collectively understood: not picture theory, but picture *theories*, one could say, or even picture *biographies*. Put another way, a “picture” is thick in a way that an “image” is not, and it is that thickness, physical as well as intellectual and historical, that “picturing” as the governing concept of this collection of essays intends to mark and explore.

“Picturing” also reflects the manner in which thinking about pictures transpired in the historical period under discussion, from the eighteenth century forward. Grammatically speaking, as both a transitive verb (indicating an action that has a direct object) and the present participle of “to picture” (a verb form that fashions a continuous tense, as in “I am thinking” or “I am picturing the scene”), the word “picturing” produces a threefold effect most useful for the purposes of this volume: it implies action, it refers to something other than itself, and it embodies temporality. Svetlana Alpers in her seminal *The Art of Describing: Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century* provides a precedent for such a formulation. According to Alpers, “picturing” as a verb better suits the task of dealing with the nature of northern European images than the noun “picture” for three reasons: “it calls attention to the *making* of images rather than to the finished product; it emphasizes the inseparability of maker, picture, and what is pictured; and it allows us to broaden the scope of what we study since mirrors, maps, and . . . eyes also can take their place alongside of art as forms of picturing so understood.”¹⁴ Alpers’s consideration of a line of thinking about vision descending from Johannes Kepler, which posits seeing itself as a form of picturing and the processes of finding and making as inseparable within art, also provides a useful model for this volume’s expanded view of what it was “to picture” in America.¹⁵ Thus *Picturing* considers things that are pictures in a conventional sense, visual representations such as paintings, photographs, drawings, and prints (“picture” as a noun), as well as the materials, processes, and procedures that led to their creation, that is, to their picturing (taking the verb “to picture” as implying time as well as the network of entities activated and produced within the time of an object’s creation). But the five essays gathered herein also make clear that other modalities and mediums of picturing—such as verbal description, the formation of a mental image or impression, the arraying of data, the idea of

likeness, or natural and physical operations such as atmospheric phenomena, sedimentation, and chemical reaction — are equally if divergently part of period discourse on the nature and limits of visual production. Consequently, while nouns are not banished from the core terminology or the conceptual scheme of this collection of essays — “picturing,” after all, can also be a gerund, the noun form of the verb “to picture” — the volume puts pressure on the manner in which terms like “image” but also “object,” “artifact,” or “thing” condition interpretation by unduly restricting or localizing analysis. The essays, then, collectively offer “picturing” as a more flexible and historically adequate category of inquiry, one that in encompassing multiple possible forms of visual matter or phenomena understands those forms as produced and consumed in duration. The volume also argues against the explicit or implicit privileging of any categorical term or explanatory idea, opticality included, and insists that any account of picturing in America must resist the impulse to identify theoretical or structural continuities across myriad practices as a means by which to offer a theory or taxonomy of the image in America as such. In other words, *Picturing* makes a methodological intervention not by saying how pictures in America should be conceptualized and thus approached within interpretation (as images, as agents, as social matrices, and so forth), but by marking historical manifestations of picturing and thinking about picturing as demanding serious and sustained scholarly attention commensurate with the attention directed at picturing by cultural producers in the past. By necessity, then, each contributor draws on the material and ideas of multiple disciplines in pursuing his or her analysis, while the connections and comparisons each makes across various media illuminate the sheer richness and range of visual expression and the ideas that shaped visual expression in the American context.

Picturing thus makes clear that the questions raised by Winslow Homer’s paintings and sketches with which I began this introduction — What is a picture? What is being pictured? How do we know? — were serious ones for historical practitioners and thus should be taken just as seriously by present-day scholars. By formulating the idea of picturing broadly and eccentrically, this volume demonstrates how deliberation about pictures and picture making in America included but also extended beyond institution-based or art-critical writing, manifesting in expressions as diverse as scientific writing, survey photography, crime reporting, travel narratives, popular fiction, and experimental literature. But even more importantly and insistently, *Picturing* marks

just how particular and specialized thinking about pictures was at different historical moments, in varying conditions, and for a diversity of makers and viewers. Accordingly, the essays included in this volume consider a diverse range of material, from eighteenth-century Anglo-American portraiture and pictures of Pacific coast fog to the poetry of Gertrude Stein and the photography of Jeff Wall. But they converge in illuminating the centrality and significance of the problematic of picturing within American visual practice and in arguing for the historicity of picturing as a concept and an operation. And they proceed always with the understanding that works of art and other kinds of pictures actively theorize their own nature and limits, at times in excess of their makers and viewers or in ways not fully explicable solely through recourse to contemporaneous discourse or sociopolitical context.

In this way, *Picturing* in its approach draws on the methods and insights of the field commonly called material culture or material culture studies. As defined by the historian of American art Jules Prown, material culture undertakes to study through artifacts “the beliefs—values, ideas, attitudes, and assumptions—of a particular community or society at a given time.”¹⁶ As a mode of inquiry, material culture treats such artifacts as a unique form of evidence for use in historical analysis, distinct from the written word and from other types of historical documents. All five contributors to *Picturing* situate their objects of study prominently in their analyses and offer thick descriptions of these objects; they also recognize that objects, no matter how privileged they are within historical investigation, never transparently reflect or embody history and ideology. The essays also challenge the prevailing assumption that thinking about pictures in the United States always hewed closely to the precepts of European art treatises, the derivativeness of art theory in America thus not warranting close or sustained analysis. This volume pays particular attention to the transit of ideas across the Atlantic while also revealing the unexpected complexity and, in some instances, the sheer strangeness of thinking about picturing in the American context. And for the purposes of *Picturing*, that context necessarily encompasses the geographic area now known as the United States as well as the international fabric of which “America” and American pictures have always been a part. In this way, the concept of picturing as explored by this collection of essays might be understood as equally pictorial or theoretical and *transactional*, as both the process and product of exchange among different cultures and geographies.



Picturing is the first installation in a series of volumes published by the Terra Foundation for American Art that identify and explore ideas, categories, and concepts that have been particularly salient and generative within the history of American art and visual culture. Other volumes in the series address scale, circulation, experience, color, and intermedia. While not arbitrarily selected, these concepts of course exist among many other possible points of focus, and future installations might consider concepts such as violence, evidence, abstraction, models, blindness, or prophecy. Specially commissioned for the series, the essays in each volume attend rigorously to specific objects, as much of the best scholarship on American art always has, but they also zoom out onto a range of historically significant and presiding conceptual and theoretical concerns so as to integrate thinking about visual expression in the American context more substantially into a larger and richer history of ideas. Consequently, the material under discussion in each essay serves as a portal to the bigger picture of art making in the United States. Prospective in orientation, rather than retrospective, the series aims to support the field of American art history by mapping new historical and interpretive terrain and by doing so in relation to but not *as* a review of methodology or historiography. In this way, the series aims to entice non-Americanists to engage with American art by offering comparative models and conceptual tools relevant to all scholars of art and visual culture from a variety of art-historical subfields as well as disciplines other than art history. By including a diverse roster of authors whose essays consider material from multiple continents, the series also facilitates much-needed connections in print among the work of scholars in the United States and those based elsewhere, thereby providing a model of intellectual exchange and collaboration for future work and situating American art and visual culture in a more rigorously transnational discourse. The essays in *Picturing* embody this impulse, for they consider American art in certain of its transatlantic and transpacific contexts, with particular attention to England, France, and China. In this way, *Picturing*, framed as it is by scholars and methodologies hailing primarily from France, Britain, Germany, and North America, also signals just how much work there is left to be done, and just how rich future scholarship on the international conditions of American art and visual culture can be.¹⁷

All of this of course begs the question: Why American art? The concepts considered by *Picturing* and the other volumes in the series

are relevant across multiple areas of art-historical expertise, after all, and in some cases they already have a well-developed scholarly literature (for example, writing about the history and theory of color on the part of scholars of early modern and modern European art). It should be stated outright, then, and with especial emphasis, that these volumes are not at all interested in narratives bound up with claims for the exceptional nature or distinctiveness of American art and culture. This series treats with healthy suspicion all versions of the question “What is American about American art?” save for instances when such a question might have been raised within historical discourse. Instead, the series treats American art as one category of artistic production among many and possesses relatively little patience for the idea that art must be understood as constitutively linked to nation and, consequently, that considerations of American art must necessarily address matters of national identity or the question of Americanness. This does not mean that “America” winds up a hollowed-out term of analysis, a mere placeholder for art-historical inquiry that could easily and without complication direct its attention to and adjudicate just about any object, American or otherwise. It is simply that American art, as a category of artistic production, and, yes, as the product of specific (if not wholly exceptional) histories and experiences, *invites* attention to certain themes and concepts that the art of other nations and regions may not, or not as urgently, and, also, that certain questions, when asked of American art, give us impressively interesting and compelling answers that illuminate history and contribute to art-historical discourse in significant and distinctive ways. The fact that artistic production was largely decentralized in the American context, at least in comparison to art making in Europe, might serve as one example of a difference that proves intellectually generative for scholarly inquiry. The lack of a dominant, institution-based discourse on art and the consequent proliferation of multiple and multidisciplinary discourses, from the idiosyncratic to the outright strange, might be another. And the fact of being bounded by vast oceans on the east and west and terra incognita to the extreme north and south, creating, for instance, conditions of existence and spaces of transaction that have been termed the transatlantic and transpacific, could be yet another still—as long as such qualities do not predetermine scholarly outcomes by pitching inquiry from the outset in the direction of exceptionalism. The line that this series walks between exceptionalism and generality is consequently a very fine one, but it walks that line with conviction. And such conviction comes from the belief that neither an insistence

on the characteristically American nor the superficial and too-easy application of the terms and approaches of other areas of inquiry will yield substantial historical insight or new grounds for approaching and understanding American art and visual culture.

For these reasons, a great deal of thought went into the commissioning of the essays for *Picturing*. Each author invited to write for the volume has in previous scholarship substantially addressed historical and conceptual concerns regarding the nature and limits of pictorial and visual expression, from the capacity of pictures to capture the otherness of new terrain and populations (the New World, the West, the “native”) to the ways of seeing and knowing that adhere in diverse visual practices and the cognitive properties attributed to media such as printmaking, painting, drawing, and writing.¹⁸ Responding to my formulation of *Picturing* as a new research project rather than a showcasing of extant work, each author agreed to write something new for the volume. Diversity served as a criterion for the subject matter and scope of the essays, which address various media, time periods, audiences, practitioners, disciplines, and modes of display. But history necessarily trumped diversity, for each author selected his or her subject because it demanded to be understood in terms of the idea of picturing, and those demands in turn established the preoccupations of the volume as a whole. Thus all five essays purposefully constellate and respond to a set of common concerns generated by the concept of picturing as I have articulated it here, beginning with the very existence of “picture” as a term of period discourse, one generated by and subject to multiple and at times contradictory demands and desires. And each author follows period cues in refusing take the idea of a “picture” for granted, making instead that idea the very subject of his or her analysis. Following this, each author insists on what Robin Kelsey in his contribution to the volume characterizes as the plasticity of the term “picture” for period practitioners, and each argues for what the essays collectively articulate as the need to account for picturing as it unfolds in an expanded field of actions, agents, and entities. There thus exist common threads—the materiality of pictures, nonhuman interventions in the process of picturing, the nonopposition of painting and photography, the electrochemical as a template for picture making, substitution as the key operation of picturing, picturing as experiment, picturing as failure—as well as striking divergences in content and approach among the five essays written for *Picturing*.

In the first essay, Matthew C. Hunter discusses a May 1773 open letter to London’s *Morning Chronicle* that lodged a striking complaint

with Sir Joshua Reynolds, then president of Britain's recently opened Royal Academy of Arts. This anonymous critic charged that by dint of an excessively literal translation of certain French words, among them *peintre*, pigmented ooze, or paint as such, had come to disfigure and corrupt conceptions of pictorial art current among English-language speakers. By taking the *Morning Chronicle*'s peculiar critique seriously and using it alongside Reynolds's notorious chemical experiments with materials as an entry point into a discussion about period conceptualizations of pictures and, also, period theorizations of just what *makes* a picture, Hunter recasts conventional scholarly accounts of picture theory in the Anglo-American world. Namely, he considers how Reynolds and contemporaries in Britain and early America understood the interface between paint and image, between unstable work on canvas and its multimedia replication, and through his account, he shows how ideas about picturing in the eighteenth century were in significant ways continuous with those of the modern period, especially as regards the question of making pictures by mechanical or otherwise nonhuman means.

The second essay, Michael Gaudio's, lingers in the eighteenth century and in the domain of scientific experimentation. Gaudio looks closely at a portrait of Benjamin Franklin, created in 1762 by the London portraitist Mason Chamberlin, in order to consider painting in the eighteenth-century Atlantic world as a practice that happens at the limits of rational understanding. While Chamberlin pictures Franklin as a sober scholar in his study, Gaudio's essay focuses on how the thunderstorm raging outside the scientist's window offers a commentary on the excessive potential of Enlightenment picturing. In his account, Gaudio draws on Franklin's own picture theory, or the closest thing to such a theory: Franklin's description of his experiment that involved an electrified portrait of the king of England, a performance he called the "magical picture."

The third essay, Elizabeth Hutchinson's, also considers the limits of picturing as a form of knowing. As Hutchinson points out, scholars have long recognized the Western habit of representing unfamiliar landscapes using conventions developed for other locales. This practice traces across mediums: maps insert the iconography of exoticism developed for East Asia into representations of South America; topographical renderings of Australia depict local scenery in a picturesque style developed for the British countryside; and so forth. The habit dates even to early photographers who, while they could not distort the contours of the landscape, used strategies of composition and framing

to make what was depicted match their viewers' expectations. Through a focus on the work of Eadweard Muybridge, Hutchinson's essay explores what happens when the limits of such practices are reached. When Muybridge photographed the Pacific coast of North America, he confronted a geographic region whose geological history resulted in a topography that was difficult to fit into pictorial conventions, not only because of the shape and height of the coastal mountains that trace down the continent, but also because of their meteorological effects. In particular, the fog trapped by this mountainous ridge challenged any artist hoping to make an accurate rendering. Interrogating Muybridge's responses to this challenge and comparing his work to that of other artists who sought to negotiate the novel and the familiar, Hutchinson illuminates the challenges confronted in giving both pictorial form and cultural meaning to newly encountered landscapes and, like Hunter in his essay on Reynolds, offers an account of picturing as a network among human and nonhuman entities and agents.

The fourth essay, contributed by Ulla Haselstein, discusses Gertrude Stein and Paul Cézanne, focusing on certain of Stein's remarks on Cézanne in her lecture "Pictures" and in her verbal portrait of the painter. Haselstein explores how Stein's encounter with Cézanne's paintings changed her idea of writing and paved the way for her modernist innovation. Stein's portrait of Cézanne, Haselstein demonstrates, is particularly interesting as a *paragone*, for Stein clearly wished to demonstrate the superiority of writing over painting, the limits of which could be surpassed by literary portraiture. Yet, as Haselstein shows, Stein also through the specific form of her writing acknowledged Cézanne's profound impact on her work. For Haselstein, Stein thus offers a way into considering period conceptualizations of the relationship between writing and painting at a moment of experimentation across multiple representational registers. Stein also serves as a case study of a theory of picturing that unfolds within literature and fiction, much as picture theory arises from the discursive and experimental contexts of science as described by Gaudio and Hutchinson.

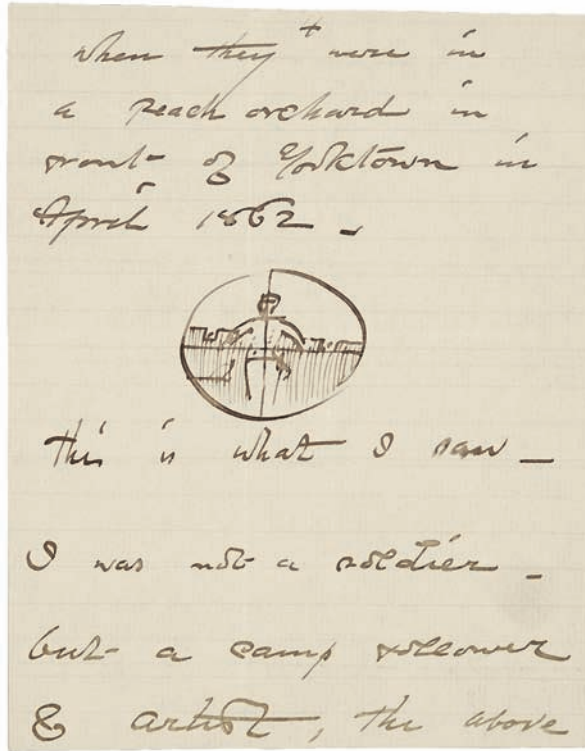
The fifth and final essay, by Robin Kelsey, returns to the history of photography. Kelsey examines the dynamic moment around 1900 when American photographers of aesthetic ambition staked their claim to photography as art on the basis of a new concept of the *picture*. In an effort to shoehorn photography into the fine arts, these practitioners construed the picture as a vital aesthetic category independent of medium or genre. This effort required a subtle negotiation of the line separating photographs that qualified as *pictures* from those that did

not, and the resulting criteria bore a latent theory for what distinguished pictorial art in other media. In his essay, Kelsey considers the dialogue between writing and photography through which Alfred Stieglitz and others associated with pictorialism fashioned this assertive new concept of aesthetic validity. He also makes clear that, in light of Jeff Wall's influential postmodern use of the term "picture" to introduce large-format photography into the place of painting, now is a propitious time for recalling this crucial but neglected aspect of pictorialist practice as one among numerous examples of formulations of the term "picture" that have been overlooked or marginalized in scholarly accounts of the history and use of the term. Calling on figures as diverse as Stieglitz, Wall, Frederick Douglass, and Jacques Lacan, Kelsey demonstrates how photography's radical redefinition of "picture" as a concept disrupts conventional narratives of its constancy from the eighteenth century through the 1930s. In so doing, he returns to a line of inquiry introduced by Hunter's essay concerning the fraught migration of theories of picturing from the past to the present.



The closest Homer ever came to rendering a retinal picture of the sort postulated in late nineteenth-century popular and scientific literature came in a letter he wrote in 1896 to his friend George C. Briggs, which recalled the time Homer spent at the siege of Yorktown, Virginia, during the Civil War. Homer went to war at the behest of *Harper's Weekly*, charged with providing illustrations of life on the front lines for the journal's readership. He was in Yorktown for about two months in 1862, embedded with Lieutenant Colonel Francis Channing Barlow and his troops.¹⁹ In his letter to Briggs, he described an encounter with Union sharpshooters and illustrated his recollection with a sketch (fig. 10). "I looked through one of their rifles once when they were in a peach orchard in front of Yorktown in April 1862," Homer wrote, penning the sketch before continuing his account. "This is what I saw. I was not a soldier but a camp follower and artist. The above impression struck me as being as near murder as anything I ever could think of in connection with the Army and I always had a horror of that branch of the service." One of Homer's earliest paintings of the front, *Sharpshooter* (1863) (fig. 11), depicted a sharpshooter from the Union side. The cropped composition, tilted perspective, and tense poise of the gunman, here perpetually on the verge of taking a shot, together create a scene thick with the anticipation of violence and death.

10
Winslow Homer, letter
to George C. Briggs,
1896. Winslow Homer
collection, 1863,
1877–1945, Archives
of American Art,
Smithsonian Institution,
Washington, DC.
Box 1, Folder 1, Image #3,
page 4 of letter.



Homer obscures the sharpshooter's features in order to underscore the anonymity of this type of warfare, commonly characterized by soldiers on both sides as cold-blooded and inhuman.²⁰ Homer's sketch in his letter to Briggs succinctly and efficiently registers the murderousness of sharpshooting. It brings the soldier's body into close range for the reader, pinning the target between the crosshairs of the scope and the flatness of the page. The crosshairs slice the body into quarters, figuratively anticipating the zip of a bullet through air and into flesh and calling to mind more generally the disfigured bodies and missing limbs of soldiers wounded in battle, which Homer also illustrated for *Harper's* (fig. 12).

But Homer's riflescope sketch offers more than a document of his response to the incident at Yorktown, a record of what happened and how it made him feel. I say this because of the pictorial amputation Homer stages through slicing effects in his drawing for Briggs: a splitting off of limbs that resonates with the dissection underway in his shipwreck sketch and, like his injunction to see by way of a dead man's retina, infuses a scene of seeing with danger and dread. The riflescope sketch also conjures Homer's invocation in the shipwreck scene of



11
Winslow Homer,
Sharpshooter, 1863.
Oil on canvas, 12 ¼ x
16 ½ in. (31.1 x 41.9 cm).
Portland Museum
of Art, Maine. Gift of
Barbro and Bernard
Osher, 1992.41.

a pictorially captured retinal image: the riflescope picture presents a record of Homer, who has been lent a rifle by a sharpshooter, seeing as would another man — not just stepping into his shoes and adopting his point of view, but seeing and registering an image of that man's victim before the trigger is pulled, a scenario identical in reverse to that of a victim of murder seeing and then retinally photographing his killer, with the resulting image available for scrutiny by others as the riflescope sketch was for Briggs. The riflescope sketch mirrors the conventional circular shape of the images passed off in the nineteenth century as optograms, but only by coincidence does this reinforce the idea that Homer's riflescope drawing, like his shipwreck sketch, has something to say about the insistent and tense exigencies of picturing. It is the urgency with which Homer rendered a picture of picturing in the Briggs letter that makes plain how pressing such concerns were for him. Prompted by Homer's caption, a viewer can imagine the shipwreck sketch as an image generated by a mechanical process such as photography (as in a photograph-like retinal image or the photograph of a retinal image) or a mechanical device such an ophthalmoscope. The riflescope sketch, however, *insists* on its status as an image

of picturing, and not simply its existence as a picture, because it depicts not only a view seen but a view produced by a machine, in particular, a telescopic lens, an image translated from the real through selection, cropping, and distortions of distance and scale, like a photograph. “This is what I saw,” Homer wrote immediately beneath his sketch, in the form of a caption — “this” being at once the imperiled soldier and the picturing generated by the riflescope as depicted in Homer’s sketch.

When taken together as a cohort, Homer’s animal pictures, his shipwreck sketch, his riflescope view, and his paintings of the sea offer up a portrait of an artist intensely curious about the nature and limits of pictures and picturing, one whose remarkable interlacing of picturing and acts of violence demands further scrutiny, both within Homer’s oeuvre and alongside other pictorial practices and theorizations of the period. This body of work also proffers itself as a collection of concepts and questions for use in fathoming not just the impulses of Homer’s art but also the grounds for picturing more generally in the period: what it was understood to be, what it strove to do, and why it happened at all. Mining Homer not just for meaning, but for methodology — for a sense of the questions one might ask of his work or for direction in charting new approaches to visual expression in the period — illuminates just how much might be gained by approaching the history of American art as a history of picturing as well as just how much Americans have had to say about the pictures they theorized, created, and consumed.

12
Winslow Homer,
*Our Watering Places—
The Empty Sleeve at
Newport*, from *Harper’s
Weekly*, vol. 9, August
26, 1865, p. 532.
Wood engraving on
newsprint, 9 $\frac{3}{16}$ × 13 $\frac{1}{16}$ in.
(23.4 × 34.7 cm).
Sterling and Francine
Clark Art Institute,
Williamstown, Massa-
chusetts, 1955.4447.



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1 Kathleen A. Foster, *Shipwreck! Winslow Homer and "The Life Line"* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2012), 60–63. Both Foster and Nicolai Cikovsky Jr. identify Homer's sketch as a study for *The Ship's Boat*, which depicts five fishermen struggling in the water near their capsized dory. Nicolai Cikovsky Jr., "Good Pictures," in *Winslow Homer*, ed. Nicolai Cikovsky Jr. and Franklin Kelly (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 1995), 372. Foster's book, which accompanied an exhibition of the same name, offers the most thorough account to date of Homer's shipwreck and rescue scenes, including those I discuss in this essay. See also Sophie Lévy, ed., *Winslow Homer: Poet of the Sea* (Giverny: Musée d'art américain/Terra Foundation for American Art; London: Dulwich Picture Gallery, 2006). For further discussion of *The Ship's Boat*, see Charles Colbert, "Winslow Homer, Reluctant Modern," *Winterthur Portfolio* 38, 1 (Spring 2003): 37–55. *The Ship's Boat* is in the collection of the New Britain Museum of American Art, New Britain, Connecticut.

2 *Kissing the Moon* is in the collection of the Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, in Andover, Massachusetts.

3 The account that follows relies on the following sources: Arthur B. Evans, "Optograms and Fiction: Photo in a Dead Man's Eye," *Science Fiction Studies* 20, 3 (Nov. 1993): 341–61; Véronique Champion-Vincent, "The Tell-Tale Eye," *Folklore* 110, 1–2 (1999): 13–24; Andrea Goulet, "Retinal Fictions: Villiers, Leroux, and Optics at the Fin-de-siècle," *Nineteenth-Century French Studies* 34, 1–2 (Fall–Winter 2005–2006): 107–20; Craig Monk, "Optograms, Autobiography, and the Image of Jack the Ripper," *Interdisciplinary Literary Studies* 12, 1 (Fall 2010): 91–104; Douglas J. Lanska, "Optograms and Criminology: Science, News Reporting, and Fanciful Novels," in *Progress in Brain Research*, vol. 205 of *Literature, Neurology, and Neuroscience: Historical and Literary Connections*, ed. Anne Stiles, Stanley Finger, and François Boller

(Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2013), 55–84. See also Neal J. Osborn, "Optograms, George Moore, and Crane's 'Silver Pageant,'" *American Notes and Queries* 4 (Nov. 1965): 39–40; and, from the period under discussion, "Photographing the Eyes of Murdered Persons," *Humphrey's Journal of Photography*, May 1, 1864, 11–12; "German Correspondence," *Philadelphia Photographer* 14, 161 (May 1877): 149–51; "Permanent Pictures on the Retina," *Philadelphia Medical Times*, Apr. 23, 1881, 479; and R., "Brain Pictures: A Photo-Physiological Discovery," *New York Tribune*, Jan. 15, 1888, 6. Thanks go to Tanya Sheehan for her assistance with period sources. In "Winslow Homer, Reluctant Modern," Colbert discusses the connection between Homer's caption and period discussion of retinal images (41–44). Yet as Foster points out in *Shipwreck!* (108n177), Colbert mistakenly attributes the caption to another study for *The Ship's Boat*, a pen and ink sketch in the collection of the New Britain Museum of American Art.

4 Goulet, "Retinal Fictions," 109–10.

5 Alan Sekula, "The Body and the Archive: The Use and Classification of Portrait Photography by the Police and Social Scientists in the Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries," *October*, no. 39 (Winter 1986): 3–64; Evans, "Optograms," 343; Monk, "Optograms," 91; Lanska, "Optograms," 76–78.

6 For a succinct and lucid critique of this realist fiction, see Michael Fried, *Realism, Writing, Disfiguration: On Thomas Eakins and Stephen Crane* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 10–11.

7 Horst Bredekamp, "A Neglected Tradition? Art History as *Bildwissenschaft*," *Critical Inquiry* 29, 3 (Spring 2003): 418.

8 See, for example, Horst Bredekamp, *The Lure of Antiquity and the Cult of the Machine: The Kunstammer and the Evolution of Nature, Art, and Technology*, trans. Allison Brown (Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1995); Horst Bredekamp and John Michael Krois, eds., *Sehen und Handeln* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2011); Horst Bredekamp, *Theorie des Bildakts* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2010); and Horst Bredekamp, *Darwins Korallen: Frühe Evolutionsmodelle und die Tradition der Naturgeschichte* (Berlin: Klaus Wagenbach, 2005).

9 For Belting, Boehm, and Bredekamp, see, for example, Hans Belting, *An Anthropology of Images:*

Picture, Medium, Body, trans. Thomas Dunlap (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011); Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997); and Gottfried Boehm, ed., *Was ist ein Bild?* (Munich: W. Fink, 1995). Because these scholars claim visual expression's own, particularized logic, their work may be understood in part as a response to the pervasive analogizing of the visual and the textual inspired by semiotics and exemplified by Roland Barthes's influential essay "Rhetoric of the Image," in *Image, Music, Text*, ed. and trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 32–51. Other major contributions to the scholarly conversation on the nature and capacity of visual form, which has generated a bibliography far too extensive to render fully here, include David Freedberg, *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989); Norman Bryson, Michael Ann Holly, and Keith Moxey, eds., *Visual Theory: Painting and Interpretation* (New York: HarperCollins, 1991); Michael Podro, *Depiction* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998); James Elkins, *The Domain of Images* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999), the first of several book-length studies by Elkins on the subject; Joseph Leo Koerner, *The Reformation of the Image* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004); Georges Didi-Huberman, *Confronting Images: Questioning the Ends of a Certain History of Art*, trans. John Goodman (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2005); W. J. T. Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want? The Lives and Loves of Images* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), which followed his equally relevant *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994); and Barbara M. Stafford, *Echo Objects: The Cognitive Work of Images* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007). The classic text from anthropology is Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998). My own consideration of art and agency appears in "Dreadful Beauty and the Undoing of Adulation in the Work of Kara Walker and Michael Ray Charles," in *Idol Anxiety*, ed. Josh Ellenbogen and Aaron Tugendhaft (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011), 74–96; and *Arthur Dove: Always Connect* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016).

10 Bredekamp, "A Neglected Tradition?," 419–22.

11 For the foundational study of mass media, see Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York: Signet Books, 1964).

12 W. J. T. Mitchell considers the privileging of the visual in the study of visual media in "There Are No Visual Media," *Journal of Visual Culture* 4, 2 (2005): 257–66. It goes without saying that such an optical bias has roots in the art criticism of Clement Greenberg, a subject addressed in Caroline Jones, *Eyesight Alone: Clement Greenberg's Modernism and the Bureaucratization of the Senses* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

13 Hal Foster, ed., *Vision and Visibility*, Dia Art Foundation Discussions in Contemporary Culture, no. 2 (New York: New Press, 1999), ix; Nicholas Mirzoeff, "On Visibility," *Journal of Visual Culture* 5, 1 (2006): 53–79. See also Jonathan Crary's seminal *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990), and Whitney Davis's important *A General Theory of Visual Culture* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011).

14 Svetlana Alpers, *The Art of Describing: Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 26.

15 Alpers, "Ut pictura, ita visio: Kepler's Model of the Eye and the Nature of Picturing in the North," ch. 2 in *The Art of Describing*.

16 Jules David Prown, "Mind in Matter: An Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method," *Winterthur Portfolio* 17, 1 (Spring 1982): 1. For recent examples of writing about American visual and material culture relevant to *Picturing*, among many other examples that could be cited (including recent cultural histories of materials such as cotton and mahogany), see Jules David Prown and Kenneth Haltman, eds., *American Artifacts: Essays in Material Culture* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2000); David Morgan and Sally Promey, eds., *The Visual Culture of American Religions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Bernard L. Herman, *Town House: Architecture and Material Life in the Early American City, 1780–1830* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); Sandy Isenstadt, *The Modern American House: Spaciousness and Middle Class Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Wendy Bellion, *Citizen Spectator: Art, Illusion, and Visual Perception in Early National America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011); and Sally Promey, ed., *Sensational Religion: Sensory Cultures in Material Practice* (New

Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014). See also Ian Hodder, *Reading the Past: Current Approaches to Interpretation in Archaeology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), for a relevant account of the role of material artifacts in historical interpretation.

17 For recent writing about American art and the transnational (with emphasis on transatlantic exchange between Europe and America), see, for example, Barbara Groseclose and Jochen Wierich, eds., *Internationalizing the History of American Art: Views* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2009); David Peters Corbett and Sarah Monks, eds., "Anglo-American: Artistic Exchange between Britain and the USA," special issue, *Art History* 34, 4 (Sept. 2011); and Andrew Hemingway and Alan Wallach, eds., *Transatlantic Romanticism: British and American Art and Literature, 1790–1860* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2015).

18 Ulla Haselstein, "Gertrude Stein's Portraits of Matisse and Picasso," *New Literary History* 34, 4 (Autumn 2003): 723–43; Robin Kelsey, *Archive Style: Photographs and Illustrations for U.S. Surveys, 1850–1890* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007); Klaus Benesch and Ulla Haselstein, eds., *The Power and Politics of the Aesthetic in American Culture* (Heidelberg: Winter, 2007); Michael Gaudio, *Engraving the Savage: The New World and Techniques of Civilization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008); Elizabeth Hutchinson, *The Indian Craze: Primitivism, Modernism, and Transculturation in American Art, 1890–1915* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009); Michael Gaudio, "At the Mouth of the Cave: Listening to Thomas Cole's *Kaaterskill Falls*," *Art History* 33, 3 (June 2010): 448–65; Roman Frigg and Matthew C. Hunter, eds., *Beyond Mimesis and Convention: Representation in Art and Science* (New York: Springer, 2010); Matthew C. Hunter, *Wicked Intelligence: Visual Art and the Science of Experiment in Restoration London* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013); Elizabeth Hutchinson, "A 'Narrow Escape': Albert Bierstadt's *Wreck of the 'Ancon*," *American Art* 27, 1 (Spring 2013): 50–69; Robin Kelsey, *Photography and the Art of Chance* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2015).

19 Nicolai Cikovsky Jr., "The School of War," in Cikovsky and Kelly, *Winslow Homer*, 20.

20 *Ibid.*, 39–40.

