

MARTHA ROSLER'S *BRINGING THE WAR HOME: HOUSE BEAUTIFUL*, 1967-
1972: AN INTERROGATION OF THE AMERICAN DREAM

by

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THESIS ABSTRACT

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Title: Martha Rosler's *Bringing the War Home: House Beautiful*, 1967-1972: An Interrogation of the American Dream

Rosler's 1967-1972 series, *Bringing the War Home: House Beautiful* conflates images of domestic interiors with images of combat related to the Vietnam War. This thesis places the series within the socio-political context of the Cold War examining the manner in which Rosler utilizes specific elements of governmental ideology and rhetoric to implicate the viewer in complicity with American involvement in Vietnam. The dissemination of governmental ideology through advertising, the effects of desire, and the critique of consumption conveyed by this series are investigated. The series is analyzed in terms of Sigmund Freud's theory of the Uncanny and in relation to historic use of photomontage. In the final chapter, Rosler's revival of the series, begun in 2004, is compared to the original in terms of its ability to effectively alter the viewer's perception of the war in Iraq in terms of politics, media, and institutional context.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Born in Brooklyn in 1943, Martha Rosler is a member of the “baby boom” generation. This generation came of age in the mid-1960s, during a period of social and political tumult in which Cold War American culture was attacked on multiple fronts. The civil rights movement, women’s movement, and antiwar movement challenged governmental ideology and policy in regard to segregation, gender inequality, and the spread of capitalist democracy through foreign military intervention. Rosler’s work as an artist includes film, installation, performance, photography, and critical writing, aligns with these social conditions, often expressing a desire to decenter or deconstruct normative social structures and to engage the viewer in a reconsideration of political issues. This intention is evident in her series of photomontages, *Bringing the War Home: House Beautiful*, created from 1967 to 1972, as well as in the continuation of this series begun in 2004.

The 1967-1972 series includes twenty works, each of which attempts to destabilize ideologies, contemporary to their creation, as related to the home, consumption, and perhaps most importantly to the need for American military intervention in the nation of Vietnam. The continuation of the series after 2004, again uses popular imagery and a nearly identical technique to focus on the Iraq War and has not been closed. Rosler uses a cut and paste technique to combine images, often of domestic interiors, drawn from popular magazines such as *House Beautiful*, with images of combat.¹ By inserting these images of violence into a domestic space, Rosler disallows a separation of friend and foe, and creates a confusion of location which destabilizes the

comfortable distance between the domestic sphere and that of military conflict. Rosler creates a new reality that the viewer can envision themselves inhabiting, which although strange and terrifying encourages a revision of received ideologies and a reconsideration of the necessity of combat and intervention in foreign nations.

Although many scholars have written about Rosler's work, this series has received relatively little critical examination, aside from brief descriptions in a variety of texts.² While it is clear from the multiple citations of these works that they are considered to be interesting and important examples of politically motivated artistic creation,³ their relation to the specific context of the Cold War period, usage of mass media sources, and a formal analysis of the visual content have not previously been the focus of a detailed scholarly analysis.⁴ As Alexander Alberro has argued, "Rosler's rather vigorous self-marginalization, which includes her continuing practice of critical writing and her widespread lecturing, along with her refusal to base a career on the development of a signature style or even to maintain allegiance to a medium, has rendered her perpetually somewhat invisible to the institutionalized art world and its collectors and critical apparatuses..."⁵ This "self-marginalization," may in part explain the relative lack of scholarly writing in regard to this well-known series.

Rosler created *Bringing the War Home: House Beautiful* while she was living in San Diego, where she moved in 1968. This coincided with a period of vociferous antiwar protest.⁶ The works from the series were not intended for a gallery context, but were disseminated during antiwar protests in the form of flyers and were published in underground journals.⁷ These included *Mayday*, a Canadian publication, and *Goodbye to All That*, a feminist journal published in San Diego (Fig. 1, Fig. 2).⁸ Other artists during

the late 1960s and early 1970s also sought to avoid the museum or gallery context, and this has also been a methodology which Rosler explores in other art projects.⁹ This can be seen particularly in her works with text including *From Our House to Your House* created between 1974 and 1978, and *McTowersMaid* from 1975. Both of these are text works in the form of a series of postcards sent through the mail which form a narrative.

Rosler has noted that during the creation of *Bringing the War Home: House Beautiful* she had recently moved away from creating abstracted paintings, although the series contains references to fine art painting. In an interview with Benjamin Buchloh in 1998, she stated that in part this was inspired by the rise of Pop Art, particularly the work of Andy Warhol, James Rosenquist, and John Baldessari. She also claimed that the insertion of popular culture into the realm of fine art and critique of the dictates of fine art, especially of the possibility of transcendence seemed both important and relevant. During this interview she also claimed that although ambiguous, she believes that Pop Art could operate as a cultural critique which attracted her to that type of art.¹⁰ However, she stated that in her own work she has sought to express a more obvious comment on cultural and political systems that is clearly legible to the viewer.¹¹ Rosler's interest in cultural critique can be clearly observed in the works included in *Bringing the War Home*.

Rosler's move away from abstract painting is also interesting in regard to an investigation of the Cold War context of these works. During the Cold War, Abstract Expressionist art was used as exemplar of American freedom by the United States government, and Rosler's denial of authorship and use of appropriated images may be seen to contradict such conservative use of artistic production.¹² Rosler's move away

from the medium of painting may also have been the result of her immersion in the art culture surrounding the University of California, San Diego, where she was involved with a group of visual artists, filmmakers and philosophers which included Eleanor Antin, David Antin, and Allan Kaprow among others, who were deeply interested in operating outside of the fine arts realm¹³

Bringing the War Home, was not Rosler's first use of the medium of photomontage, which she had begun exploring in the nearly contemporaneous series, *Body Beautiful, or Beauty Knows No Pain*, from 1966-1972 (fig. 3). This series also utilized imagery from popular sources onto which Rosler montaged elements that drew attention to the hidden subtext disseminated through images of women in the media. While the source material and technique used in *Body Beautiful* are reused in *Bringing the War Home* the visual style is different. In *Bringing the War Home* the images are drawn from sources that would traditionally be kept separate in the popular media. However, they are combined in such a way that they create a cohesive final image, which contrasts with the rough and clearly manipulated final images from *Body Beautiful*.

While in *Bringing the War Home* Rosler maintains an interest in the formulation of gender restrictions, the obvious critique of the use of female bodies in popular sources is absent from the majority of the works. The use of interior or domestic spaces in many of the works does relate to the rigid gender differentiation that was supported by governmental institutions and by the popular media during the Cold War period. However, these works rarely reference gender specifically. While the use of domesticity could be analyzed in relation to feminist art making, I will use them in an analysis of the political and social structure of the Cold War in regard to governmental ideology and the

dissemination of that ideology through advertising imagery, which includes, but is not limited to the construction of gender differentiation.

Although the photomontages contained within the series *Bringing the War Home* operate as works of activist art, they also maintain a strong connection to contemporaneous art practice. Prior to beginning work on this series Rosler had attained a bachelor's degree in painting from Brooklyn College, and would have been familiar with current trends in art making, including abstract painting, Pop Art, and Fluxus.¹⁴ She was also interested in film, documentary photography, and poetry.¹⁵ Many of the images utilized in this series convey an interest in high art. This can be seen in *Red Stripe Kitchen* in which the curvilinear line of red paint contoured with pale gray against a stark white wall recalls associations to Hard-edge painting (fig. 4). This may reference works similar to Ellsworth Kelly's *Blue Green Red I* from 1964-65 in the use of abstracted geometric shapes and bold use of color (fig. 5).

A more obvious reference to fine art can be seen in *House Beautiful (Giacometti)*, in which one of Alberto Giacometti's attenuated and textural bronze sculptures figures prominently in the interior space of the montage, which also displays paintings by Cézanne and Delaunay (fig. 6). This reference to high art practice could be interpreted as a critique of the commercialization of the art market, and of painterly art practice, especially given Rosler's own move away from gestural painting in her own artistic practice. This can also be understood to align with her avoidance of a high art context and to operate as a critique of consumerism.

Like much of Rosler's artistic production, *Bringing the War Home* is politically motivated, and is clearly critical of American intervention in Vietnam. Artistic critique of the Vietnam War was not unusual during the later 1960s and early 1970s.¹⁶ However the manner in which Rosler implicates the viewer in complicity with military action through the use of elements of popular culture associated with the ideology of Cold War Americanism is somewhat uncommon. Rather than merely illustrating the destruction caused by war, or attempting to instigate viewer participation in antiwar agitation through depiction of protest, Rosler implicates the very fabric of American culture in complicity with military intervention. Using elements of popular culture, advertising imagery related to commercial consumption and the technique of photomontage Rosler creates a cohesive and realistic image of a strange and terrifying reality in which the location of the viewer is uncertain.

The scope of this project is necessarily limited. In the interest of providing a detailed analysis of the works discussed, only a few examples from the set of series will be examined. The heterogeneity of the series enables multiple modes of analysis. Many aspects of this series could be productively examined, including the references to art making or the connection to feminist art practice. However, an examination of the Cold War context and Rosler's denial of the ideology of Americanism, as well as her use of mass media material, and the technique of photomontage will enable a greater understanding of the political and social ideologies related to the support of capitalist consumption, domestic containment, and the spread of American liberal democracy to foreign nations, which this series critiques. In terms of political context, this series was begun shortly before Lyndon B. Johnson's presidential announcement that he would not

run for a second term as president, leaving him free to pursue the Vietnam War as he saw fit. Although he had inherited United States' involvement from John F. Kennedy, Johnson radically increased that involvement after becoming president with Kennedy's assassination in 1963. An action he felt validated by an overwhelming electoral victory in 1964. Anti-war dissent grew during his first term, however, and continued through the first three years of Richard Nixon's presidency. The series concluded in 1972 during the year in which Washington Post reporters began to publish information relating to the now infamous Watergate scandal, and interestingly before the complete termination of mandatory conscription in 1973. The works specifically analyzed here are those which are particularly representative of the issues examined in this thesis. In the fourth and final chapter connections will be drawn between the methodologies and techniques utilized in the original series and the manner in which they diverge and correspond in the continuation of the series begun in 2004.

The original series was created during the later 1960s and early 1970s. During this period the United States experienced a marked shift in culture and politics in which the rigid social and political ideologies which had dominated the early Cold War period were challenged and combated. An examination of American Cold War culture, particularly in regard to political ideology and rhetoric related to the support of capitalist institutions through encouraging consumption will be the focus of chapter II, using *Red Stripe Kitchen* and *Balloons* (fig. 7) as examples.

Through a detailed examination of specific elements of Cold War governmental ideology the manner in which these works utilize elements of culture specifically related to the efficacy of Cold War ideology will be revealed. An analysis of the use of domestic

interiors and their meaning in the rubric of Cold War culture will reveal the deeper symbolic meaning of the insertion of combat into the domestic space. It will also illuminate the critique of the supposed aims of military engagement in Vietnam as strategy for encouraging the spread of democratic government to foreign nations, presumably for the benefit of those living under repressive governmental regimes.

An examination of the manner in which Cold War ideology was transmitted to the American people through the mass media is also instructive. This is particularly relevant to an examination of Rosler's series since several of the works from the series contain imagery related to advertising. Chapter III specifically examines the use of advertising imagery in *Cleaning the Drapes* (fig. 8) and *Beauty Rest* (fig. 9). An analysis of the approach utilized by advertisers is strongly related to the investigation of governmental ideology performed in chapter II, because of the collusion between governmental institutions and capitalism during this period. The specific methodologies utilized in the field of advertising, and the manner in which Cold War rhetoric was cemented in popular imagery particularly in relation to the interest in technological development, the importance of cleanliness, the security of the domestic space, and gender differentiation are examined.

The use of advertising imagery in *Cleaning the Drapes* and *Beauty Rest* is examined to reveal how these works allow the viewer to recognize their own desires, and the manner in which these desires were encouraged under the rubric of Cold War consumption. Also of interest is the manner in which they implicate the viewer in the collusion with military intervention. An examination of Rosler's use of advertising imagery illuminates her desire to associate consumption and military action, as well as to

create an image to which the viewer is immediately attracted because of the implied associations between advertising, attainment of consumer products, and the success of capitalist democracy during this period.

Through the use of the technique of photomontage Rosler creates cohesive images that relate to documentary photography, and form a possible reality. In chapter IV, *Tract House Soldier* (fig. 10) and *Patio View* (fig. 11) are examined in relation to their formal qualities. The use of photomontage to create a social or political critique is examined with particular attention paid to the origination of photomontage as a political weapon in the works of artists associated with Dada in Berlin.¹⁷ In addition to an examination of preceding uses of photomontage, this chapter also traces the use of elements of popular culture in high art during the early years of the Cold War. The photomontages created by the Independent Group during the 1950s are of particular interest in this regard. Although *Tract House Soldier* and *Patio View* bear evidence of similar technique and use of subject matter to preceding works of photomontage they diverge in terms of their visual style.

Rather than creating works which draw attention to the technique used to produce them, Rosler's images present a seamless and cohesive image which results in a perception of the final image as a realistic whole. The relationship that this cohesion creates between these images and documentary photography is examined. Through the creation of a seamless image that creates the illusion of reality these works evoke a sense of the uncanny, which is understood as the making strange of a familiar situation or object, which in this chapter is related to the denial of the safety and security of the domestic space through the insertion of images of violence.

In 2004 Rosler revived her series, again using the technique of photomontage through a low tech process of cutting and pasting images together to create politically motivated works. Rosler has stated that she revived the series because of the similarities, which she observed, between American military intervention in Vietnam and the current war in Iraq.¹⁸ The invasion of Iraq was conducted during the first of George W. Bush's two terms as United States President, and was carried out despite the sanctions of the United Nations, and lack of support from foreign nations.¹⁹ A comparison between *Roadside Ambush* (fig. 12) from the original series and *Gladiators* (fig. 13) from the new series is conducted in chapter V. This comparison assists in revealing both the similarities and differences between the two series.

The two series are examined in regard to the context in which they were created, the methods through which they were disseminated to the public, their formal qualities, and their possible efficacy as politically motivated works of art. Particular attention is paid to the manner in which art activism is considered in regard to the war in Iraq. The revival of this series as a work of politically motivated art is placed within the broader field of art activism, and is related to strategies for antiwar protest in relation to American military intervention in Iraq. The differing manner in which Rosler displayed the works from the two series is examined, as are the similarities and differences in visual style and technique that can be observed in these two works. *Roadside Ambush* and *Gladiators* are considered in regard to their efficacy as works of political activism using Jacques Rancière's theoretical work relating to the esthetics of politics. This examination of both the similarities and differences between these works reveals a shared interest in

decentering and destabilizing social and political ideologies, and a denial of the totalizing ideation of war in terms of the separation of good and evil or hero and enemy.

In *Bringing the War Home: House Beautiful* and in *Bringing the War Home: House Beautiful, new series* Rosler uses recognizable elements of popular culture combined with images of combat to critique American military intervention in foreign nations. Through the technique of photomontage Rosler creates a nearly cohesive and seamless image. This produces an uncanny sensibility in that those objects or locations understood as familiar, safe and secure, are disrupted and made strange and terrifying. In the works from the original series Rosler uses images drawn from advertising and from political ideologies disseminated during the Cold War. As she wrote in regard to this series, “I was trying to show that the ‘here’ and ‘there’ of our world picture, defined by our naturalized accounts as separate or even opposite, were one.”²⁰

Rosler uses the very elements that were understood to represent success and security in Cold War American culture, namely the nuclear family, the home, the security of gender differentiation, and the role of technology to demonstrate the connections between American consumption and the war in Vietnam. In addition through the placement of the American family home in the field of combat, Rosler also critiques the necessity of bringing capitalist democracy to foreign nations, she causes the viewer to question the rationale that supported this type of military intervention by causing a reconsideration of governmental rhetoric. She also interrogates the status of the image, and the truth or reality conveyed by mass media imagery. In *Bringing the War Home* Rosler does not seek to direct the viewer towards a single conclusion. As she has stated, “I’d like people to consider questions about their own power and ability to act on their

own judgment about social organization...as well as on larger political issues.”²¹

Through the destabilization of received ideologies, Rosler’s series necessitate a reconsideration of governmental dictates, and an increased scrutiny of the role and responsibility of the individual.

Notes

¹ The images were drawn directly from popular sources and were not modified in any way before being combined into a collage which is then photographed and reproduced. The original photomontages were distributed most often as photocopies. In 1991 the images were produced in a limited series of chromogenic prints, prior to their exhibition at the Simon Watson Gallery in October of 1991. Personal correspondence with the author, and Brian Wallis, “Living Room War,” *Art in America* (February 1992), 105.

² *Bringing the War Home* is discussed in sources as divergent as feminist investigations of the stability of identity, and art historical survey textbooks. *Red Stripe Kitchen* is included in, Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, “The Social History of Art: Models and Concepts,” in *Art Since 1900*, eds. Hal Roster, Rosalind Krauss, Yve-Alain Bois, and Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2004). It is the subject of a M. A. thesis, Jennifer M. Kruglinski *Bringing the War Home: Martha Rosler and the Emotional Politics of Photomontage* (New York: Stony Brook University, 2007). It is also addressed in a multitude of art historical essays, among the most interesting of which is the analysis of the instability of identity created by this series in Marsha Meskimmon, *Women Making Art: History, Subjectivity, Aesthetics*. London and New York: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, 2003), 56.

³ It has also been used as an example of politically motivated art in a variety of sources including, Beatriz Colomina, *Domesticity at War*(Cambridge, MIT Press, 2007), Catherine de Zegher, ed. *Persistent Vestiges* (New York: The Drawing Center, 2006), Jayne Wark, “Conceptual Art and Feminism,” *Woman’s Art Journal* vol. 22, no. 1 (Spring-Summer 2001) and in many of the essays which accompanied a retrospective exhibition of Rosler’s works, Catherine de Zegher, ed. *Martha Rosler: Positions in the Life World* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1998). These works have also been included in a variety of exhibitions including *At War* at the Center de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona in 2004, *Martha Rosler: Positions in the Life World* at the Ikon Gallery, and an exhibition dedicated to this series held at the Worcester Art Museum in 2007-2008.

⁴ As an artist Rosler is most often discussed as a feminist artist, and the main consideration of her artistic output has focused on work with the medium of film. However even in regard to her well known works in film, such as *Semiotics of the Kitchen* (1975), Rosler’s work is not discussed as much as might be expected.

⁵ Alexander Alberro, “The Dialectics of Everyday Life,” in *Martha Rosler: Positions in the Life World*, ed. Catherine de Zegher (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1998) 79.

⁶ Alberro, 77.

⁷ Martha Rosler, “Place, Position, Power, Politics,” in *Decoys and Disruptions* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2004.), 355. Rosler noted, “At the time it seemed imperative not to show these works – in particular the antiwar montages – in an art context. To show antiwar agitation in such a setting verged on the obscene, for its site seemed more appropriately ‘the street’ or the underground press...”

⁸ Personal correspondence with the artist. *Tron (Amputee)* and *Vacation Getaway* appear in *Goodbye to All That*, in both cases the images are published with no explanatory text. At the bottom of *Vacation Getaway*, “Martha” is included. However Rosler does not include any signature for *Tron*, and does not use her last name to demark either of the images.

⁹ However, her work does not always exclude the art world context, and many of her works are intended for exhibition in a gallery or museum setting, as is the continuation of *Bringing the War Home*. Other works that were intended for the gallery space include *The Bowery in Two Inadequate Descriptive Systems* (1974-1975) and *Traveling Garage Sale* (1977). While these works were intended for display in the museum setting, they utilize that setting as an integral part of the meaning of the work, as the gallery setting adds an additional layer of institutional and social critique.

¹⁰ Martha Rosler, in Benjamin Buchloh, “A Conversation with Martha Rosler,” in *Martha Rosler: Positions in the Life World* ed. Catherine de Zegher (Cambridge, MIT Press, 1998), 24.

¹¹ Benjamin Buchloh, “A Conversation with Martha Rosler,” in this interview, Martha Rosler speaks at length in regard to her interest in Pop art because of what she perceived as the critical dimension of the work in relation to popular or mass culture, although she claims that the critique of pop art was not intelligible enough. In this interview she also speaks about her move away from painterly abstraction and the connection between the denial of painting and the desire to destroy modernist paradigms of art making.

¹² Jane A. Sharp, “Abstract Expressionism as a Model of ‘Contemporary Art’ in the Soviet Union,” in *Abstract Expressionism: The International Context*, ed. Joan M. Marter, (New York: Rutgers University Press, 2007) Sharp describes the dissemination of American Abstract Expressionism to citizens of the Soviet Union at the National Exhibition of American Art, held in Moscow in 1959 and the connection between the work of artists such as Jackson Pollock, and Willem de Kooning and concepts such as, “individualism, freedom of expression, and entrepreneurship...” 84.

¹³ Cornelia Butler, *Wack!: Art and the Feminist Revolution*. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2007), 290.

¹⁴ Butler, 290.

¹⁵ Buchloh, "A Conversation with Martha Rosler." 26-32.

¹⁶ See Lucy Lippard, *A Different War: Art Vietnam in Art*. (Bellingham, WA: Real Comet Press, 1990).

¹⁷ David Evans and Sylvia Gohl, *Photomontage: A Political Weapon*. (London: Gordon Fraser, 1986), 10.

¹⁸ Martha Rosler, "A Discussion Between Martha Rosler and Maria Hlavajova: Deconstructing the Allegories," in *Concerning War: A Critical Reader in Contemporary Art*, eds. Maria Hlavajova and Jill Winder (Rotterdam: BAK, 2010), 170-171, 174.

¹⁹ W. Lance Bennett, Regina G. Lawrence, and Steven Livingston, *When the Press Fails*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), ix.

²⁰ Martha Rosler, "Place, Position, Power, Politics," 355.

²¹ Martha Rosler interviewed by Robert Fichter and Paul Rutkovsky in *Interventions and Provocations*. (New York: State University of New York Press, 1998), 11.

CHAPTER II

AMERICANISM AT HOME

During the Cold War the ability of American citizens to purchase both necessities and luxury items became quintessentially associated with the defense of capitalist systems. The necessity of supporting capitalism translated into an ideology of Americanism in which the viability of the nuclear family, the ability of citizens to own their own home, gender differentiation, and consumption attained a primary level of importance. This ideology is specifically relevant in examining *Red Stripe Kitchen* and *Balloons*. Both of these works utilize images of sleek and orderly high modern interiors as a backdrop for the insertion of imagery related to the war in Vietnam. They interrogate domesticity as an emblem of successful capitalism, and question the values that uphold military engagement as a defense of capitalist systems. Additionally through the technique of montage these works question the validity of the image itself, and draw attention to the manner in which knowledge and truth are mediated through imagery. The domestic interiors connote order, security, affluence, and freedom in the realm of consumer choice, which is disrupted and destroyed by the insertion of combat imagery.

In *Red Stripe Kitchen* the primary image is of a bright and cheerful kitchen. The image is tightly framed, focusing on the workspace of the kitchen enclosed by a counter on the right and at the front of the image. Beneath the counter which encircles the right side of the image stools are invitingly positioned, which seems to speak to a communal gathering place. The counter excludes the viewer from the work space of the kitchen. However the placement of the stools seems to invite participation in the enjoyment of the

food produced therein. This sense of gathering evokes an understanding of the kitchen as the heart, and hearth of the home.

The image utilizes a limited color palette of red and white, with accents of gray seen in the stripe along the rear wall, and wood grain on the counter at the front of the image and in the wooden stools which are drawn beneath the counter. This crisp use of color speaks to modernity and cleanliness. Objects displayed on the counter include bright red dishware and cutlery, an open book, and a partially filled coffee maker. The open book may well be a cookbook given the objects that surround it which speak to the preparation of meals, and to the nourishment of the presumed inhabitants of the space. A vase of flowers is displayed on the back counter, beneath a row of closed cabinets painted in crisp white, bringing the outdoors into the home, and also relating to the decorative quality of the kitchen arrangement.

Invading this cheerful and pristine domestic space are two soldiers dressed in full combat gear who seem to be examining the floorboards of a hallway visible at the back of room. This insertion of imagery related to combat disrupts and destroys the harmony and safety of the domestic space. The inclusion of military personnel in the domestic space of the kitchen clearly relates to war and to then current American involvement in the nation of Vietnam. It is also clear that this image is critical of that involvement. However, it does more than critique American involvement in Vietnam. It speaks to specific elements of American Cold War ideology as related to the domestic sphere.

In combination, home ownership, consumer culture, gender difference, and domestic containment, contributed to an ideology of Americanism in postwar culture. This ideology led to American military intervention in Vietnam as well as to a myriad of

civil and social protest movements including antiwar protest.²² An investigation of the elements that helped to formulate the Cold War ideology of Americanism and of the manner in which it was used to support American military intervention in Vietnam will enable a more comprehensive understanding of the critique produced by these works.

Rosler's use of the domestic space as the primary image in many of the works from *Bringing the War Home* necessitates an examination of the role of housing in American ideology. The United States government's role in supporting the production of housing during the postwar period was a contentious issue.²³ However the problem remained imperative, as troops returning from World War II faced extreme shortages in housing. One solution was found in the creation of the G.I. Bill, which allowed the government to subsidize the production of new homes in the postwar period, without appearing to regulate commercial construction practices.²⁴ As Rosalyn Baxandall and Elizabeth Ewen argue, "In the climate of postwar rhetoric, which equated home owning with apple pie and government intervention with the evils of communism, it made sense to be discrete about the government's role in providing shelter."²⁵ Through the funding that was provided to individuals by the G.I. Bill, and through subsidies to developers, the government was able to support postwar building, without that support being visible.

The housing that was constructed as a result of the funding provided through the G.I. Bill and government subsidies, most often took the form of suburban developments of the type famously constructed by William Levitt, and others like him. These housing development were created using technologies and materials developed during World War II. In *Domesticity at War*, Beatriz Colomina argued,

modern architecture borrowed – or perhaps “recycled” is a more accurate word – the techniques, materials, and ways of doing that were developed for the military. Postwar architecture was not simply the bright architecture that came after the darkness of the war. It was the aggressively happy architecture that came out of the war, a war that anyway was ongoing as the cold war. The new form of domesticity turned out to be a powerful weapon. Expertly designed images of domestic bliss were launched to the entire world as part of a carefully orchestrated propaganda campaign.²⁶

While perhaps not an example of shining and happy postwar housing which Colomina describes, suburban housing developments became an image quintessentially associated with the 1950s and with the early years of the Cold War.

Little originality or personality was possible under the techniques of mass production that enabled these developers to construct inexpensive homes at such an accelerated rate, and these new homes were in fact small and uniform in style (fig. 14).²⁷ However while the homes themselves seem to fall short of the promise of the “American dream home” the importance of home ownership in the post-war period should not be underestimated. During this period homeownership itself was equated with the defense of democracy.²⁸ The ability of middle and working class families to become homeowners was a new development in the postwar period that was made possible through the construction methods used by post-war builders, and through the availability of funds made possible through government subsidies.²⁹ The availability of these relatively affordable homes was upheld as proof of the efficacy of capitalism, and was thought to have all but eliminated class difference.³⁰

The interior image that is used in *Red Stripe Kitchen* does not correlate to the experience of the average homeowner, in that it is clearly not an example of a typical suburban home. Although governmental ideology equated homeownership with freedom the image of home ownership presented as seen in this work, was far from the reality of the cramped, quickly built, and homogeneous homes which filled suburban developments. The image utilized in *Red Stripe Kitchen* depicts the ideal of homeownership rather than the reality experienced by the majority of Americans. However, Rosler's use of the domestic interior, clearly a part of a single family dwelling, derives from this understanding of the homeownership as a model of success. The use of interior images that clearly relate to affluence also disallows the idea that capitalism could erase class differentiation through consumption.³¹ The contrast between the interiors that she depicts and the reality experienced even by those who were economically secure enough to purchase a home would have been apparent to viewers.

Through the use of the domestic space of the American home as the locus for placing images of military action in *Red Stripe Kitchen*, Rosler critiques the ideology of Americanism by revealing the inadequacy of homeownership for safeguarding the American people from instability, and as a corollary of the inadequacy of the promise of liberal capitalism. Rather than protecting the family from the insecurity of the outside world, the domestic space has literally been invaded by military personnel.

More broadly, Rosler's work can also be understood as a critique of the process of consumption. Concomitant with the rise of suburban developments came that of increasingly rampant consumerism. This increase in consumption resulted, in part, from the repurposing of technologies developed during World War II for domestic production

as products like saran wrap, aluminum foil, and canned food stuffs, as well as for the development and production of time saving appliances such as washing machines and dishwashers, and technological devices like the television set.³² Although American governmental institutions were not directly responsible for the massive increase in consumption, they were quick to grasp the ideology of consumption as emblematic of American freedom. Consumption as freedom became an integral component in marketing the efficacy of capitalism to the domestic population and was exported to the world stage.

An obvious examples of the conflation of consumerism with the freedom as promised by democratic liberal capitalism is the 1959 “kitchen debate” which took place at the American National Exhibition in Moscow. This Exhibition was intended to educate Soviet citizens about American culture. However, while high-culture and art made up a portion of the Exhibition, the majority of the displays focused on consumer products, many of which were donated by the corporations which created and sold them.³³ These included Birds Eye, General Foods, and RCA. Various model environments were created to document American life including a model kitchen, supermarket display, and a model apartment home.³⁴ Perhaps most important was the “typical” American home (fig. 15). It was a prefabricated tract home designed by All-State properties, a development firm based in New York.³⁵

The interior of this home served as the stage for a debate between Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev and then Vice-President Richard Nixon (fig. 16). The debate itself was highly publicized, and although it appeared to develop naturally in the midst of canned foods and modern kitchen appliances, it was in fact carefully planned by the American delegation.³⁶ Here Khrushchev and Nixon debated the relative merits of the

warring systems of capitalism and communism. Tellingly, Nixon focused on the increased ease promised to the American housewife through the availability and use of newly marketed appliances and the importance of the ability of the consumer to choose between a variety of products as emblematic of American freedom, stating,

To us, diversity, the right to choose...is the most important thing. We don't have one decision made at the top by one government official... we have many different manufacturers and many different kinds of washing machines so that the housewives have a choice...would it not be better to compete in the relative merits of washing machines than in the strength of rockets?"³⁷

Thus, rather than framing the debate in terms of ideological paradigms, technology, or in terms of employment, Nixon supported the success of capitalism through consumption, and framed the idea of freedom as directly related to consumerism.³⁸

The use of images from popular media sources in Rosler's series directly relates to the importance of consumption in the ideology of Americanism. The images utilized in *Red Stripe Kitchen* and *Balloons* can be understood to critique the importance of consumption through the very source of the imagery. Lifestyle publications like *House Beautiful* magazine, from which many of the images are drawn, sought to illustrate a manner of living which was framed as a physical manifestation of success through consumption in the postwar period. The objects that are included in the image of the domestic kitchen speak to consumption both literally in the consumption of food that would take place within the space of the kitchen, and to a consumer culture in the presence of new appliances. The image of the domestic interior in *Red Stripe Kitchen* is

modern and populated with appliances, including a refrigerator and coffee maker, and with other objects of consumption including the decorative dishware.

This also speaks to the political ideology which framed the availability of products for the home as emblematic of the freedom of citizens under capitalism, and Rosler's use of a luxurious interior not only critiques the ideological bent which proclaims this right as necessary, but draws attention to the lack of correspondence between the visual manifestation of that ideology in popular sources and the reality of the suburban tract home. This ideology was well known to American citizens, as is exemplified by the rubric of the Kitchen Debates. Rosler's use of imagery related to the domestic space clearly critiques the viability of this ideological imperative.

By illuminating the connections between consumption and combat Rosler also forces the viewer to reconsider their own position and behavior in connection to this ideology. As Susan L. Stoops has noted, "Rosler's visual collisions of domestic life and the war ... challenges us to consider the economic and social connections between disparate realities...."³⁹ Rosler uses images related to consumption as a methodology through which to reveal the weaknesses of the ideology of consumption as freedom. In addition to her connection of war and consumption, her use of the domestic space as the locus for the intrusion of military imagery also challenges support of gender differentiation popularized and cemented during the Cold War.

The rigidity of gender differentiation and containment within the domestic sphere is inherent in the Cold War image of the housewife. The return of women to the home, and particularly their role as consumers was necessary to the success of American

capitalism. In addition, the ideological warfare of the Cold War necessitated that capitalism differentiate itself from communism, which it did in part by emphasizing gender differentiation. In 1960, James O'Connell the Undersecretary of Labor, noting the high proportion of Soviet women in professions requiring higher education stated, "Perhaps we ought to applaud the USSR and emulate their accomplishment. I don't think so ... when a woman comes to be viewed first as a source of manpower, second as a mother, then I think we are losing much that supposedly separates us from the Communist world."⁴⁰ The housewife as recipient of benefits of technological devices and luxury items was a compelling figure in the ideological battle separating capitalist and communist systems.

Contemporary social systems also supported gender differentiation. Psychiatrists and other experts theorized the fundamental differences between the sexes and envisioned the necessity of differing spheres of capability and fulfillment.⁴¹ The conformist and constrictive social structure of the Cold War period in the United States threatened deviation from proscribed roles with the moniker of communist sympathy. As Susan M. Hartmann notes, "the insecurity and anxiety generated by the presumed Soviet threat put a premium on family stability and linked women's traditional domestic roles to the nation's security."⁴² Thus, even for those who did not fully proscribe to the rigid gender roles encouraged during this period, the cost of acting in opposition was high. The result was the cementing of the position of women within the sphere of the home and family, and a generally conservative social system which in part gave rise to the multiplicity of social movements which exploded in the mid-1960s.

Rosler's use of gendered domestic space as the locus for the intrusion of imagery related to combat disrupts the security that rigid gender differentiation was understood to provide. In addition it disrupts the presumed protection of the domestic space, both in regard to the safeguarding the role of American women in their role as wives and mothers and as a space of safety in a time of political insecurity.⁴³ In the case of *Red Stripe Kitchen* this can be seen in the intrusion of the masculine, in the form of male soldiers, which disrupts the feminine domestic space. Rosler has noted that her intention in creating this series was in part to contrast, "women's domestic labor with the 'work' of soldiers."⁴⁴ This disrupts the presumption of safety and security implied by the separation of feminized domestic space from the external masculine realm.

As well as encouraging a reconsideration of the problematic nature of the rigid separation of masculine and feminine realms. The inclusion of combat imagery in this gendered space additionally disrupts the implied security of the domestic space of the nuclear family home. In disrupting this security Rosler disrupts not only the security of the domestic encouraged by governmental ideology but also denies the presumed efficacy of extending American social and political systems to foreign nations.

The necessity of supporting liberal capitalism and democracy during the Cold War led the United States to conduct military interventions in several foreign nations.⁴⁵ This was expressed through the Domino Theory, which held that any country which fell under the sphere of communist control would lead to the fall of other countries.⁴⁶ This theory was one of the primary motivations for American military intervention, the most contentious and costly of which was American involvement in Vietnam.⁴⁷ American capitalist democracy, as exemplified by the nuclear family with ready access to material

possessions, was held as the ideal form of society which must be disseminated to foreign nations. In fact Laura A. Belmonte argues that, “U.S. policy makers dedicated themselves to explaining the U. S. economic system to foreign audiences...American propagandists linked the defense of liberal capitalism to the preservation of world peace and freedom.”⁴⁸

The war in Vietnam was framed as necessary both to protect the American way of life elucidated above, and to support the supposed desire of the Vietnamese people to share in this system of government. Leslie H. Gelb notes that, the ultimate goal of American military intervention was portrayed as enabling, “the South Vietnamese to determine their own future without external interference.”⁴⁹ Thus, the war was framed as supporting indigenous struggle in Vietnam for capitalist democracy, verbalized as a struggle for freedom, against the machinations of communist insurgents.

This construction created a stark and easily identifiable dichotomy of us versus them and hero versus enemy. Edward P. Morgan argues that the construction of this type of comforting dichotomy can be understood as the construction of a “mythic reality,” which exists in opposition to, “sensory reality, (which) by contrast, is the world as we normally experience it.”⁵⁰ Morgan claims that the mythic reality created to defend ever increasing military involvement in Vietnam, “evolved from Cold War propaganda proclaiming the United States as ‘defender of the free world’ against a powerful enemy ruthlessly bent on world domination....”⁵¹ Thus military intervention was framed in terms of America’s protective role as defender of the free world, with the stakes of failure promoted as the collapse of international freedom. In this mythic reality American

military intervention was necessary in defending the “good” democratic South Vietnamese against the “evil” North Vietnamese invaders controlled by the USSR.

Rosler’s images work to destabilize this proclaimed impetus for military engagement, which can be clearly seen in *Balloons*. In this image a modernist home serves as the background for an image of a Vietnamese woman holding a bleeding baby in her arms as she ascends a staircase. Her position at the center foreground of the image draws the viewer’s attention. The obvious emotional and physical trauma of this figure denies the American government’s proclamation that intervention in Vietnam served to benefit Vietnamese citizens. Clearly in this image the female figure is not experiencing any form of benefit from the supposed spread of liberal capitalism.

The woman is positioned within a sleek modern interior, in which many of the trappings of freedom through consumption are visible. These include the single family home, expensive furnishings, and even aspects of the nuclear family’s focus on the importance of childrearing can be seen in the placement of the bunch of balloons in the corner of the room visible at the bottom of the stairs. However her expression of agony and the wounded child in her arms deny the espoused altruistic intentions of the American government in the spread of liberal capitalism through military engagement.

This image also destabilizes the alternate support for military combat through the creation of a totalized political subject which is either all good or all bad. In placing this female figure within a sleek domestic space, the availability of which is possible, according to Cold War rhetoric because of the system of liberal capitalist democracy, the necessity of protecting that system against a dehumanized enemy is destroyed. The

woman cannot be relegated to the position of sub-human enemy and is related undeniably to the viewer, both through her role as caregiver, and through her position within recognizable domestic space. By depicting the supposed enemy in a manner that connects her intrinsically to the viewer, Rosler fundamentally disrupts the purported necessity of American military intervention in Vietnam and also conflates the rigidly separated domestic and foreign spheres.

The dichotomous rhetoric separating good and evil was also commonly used in framing governmental opposition to anti-war protest movements which grew in both numbers and frequency during the late 1960s and early 1970s.⁵² Anti-war activists were maligned with charges of both communist sympathy and with prolonging the war in Vietnam, by supporting the communist guerilla forces, and confusing the issues. By the end of 1965 American ground troops in Vietnam numbered 184,000, draft calls had increased dramatically, and antiwar protest intensified. In 1966 a draft resistance movement appeared. At the same time public opinion began to shift away from supporting military engagement in Vietnam.⁵³ However, as Edwin P. Morgan notes, “the anti-war movement’s arguments about the war’s purpose and morality remained ‘unworthy of being heard.’ ...There remained no place in...public discourse for the evidence and explanation that formed the core arguments of the antiwar movement.”⁵⁴

In combining images that would were kept separate in legitimate media discourse in such a way that they form a cohesive image Rosler interrogates the status of the image, and the validity of official communication. In so doing Rosler creates what Alexander Alberro describes as, “a dialectical synthesis where new meaning could be produced – one imbued with sharp political critique.”⁵⁵ Rosler circumvents the separation of

domestic sphere and warzone in public discourse through the combination of images drawn from mass media sources in such a way that a new reality is revealed. The illumination of previously hidden meaning corresponds to the project of antiwar activists, and indeed the photomontages that are contained within this series were first distributed at rallies and protests in opposition to the war, and in antiwar journals.⁵⁶

Rosler's critique of political and social ideology can be readily observed in both *Red Stripe Kitchen* and *Balloons*. Upon first glance the interiors reveal the pinnacle of the American dream, as expressed in the ideology of Cold War Americanism. The interiors which Rosler displays reflect the desired domestic space as encouraged by dominant discourse. The works display modern, pristine domestic interiors which viewers could envision inhabiting. They illustrate the ideation of success and fulfillment of the American dream under the rubric of capitalist democracy, the pursuit of which was upheld as the right of the American citizen.

The focus on the interior or living space of these domestic structures relates to gender differentiation and to the protection of women and children understood to operate within this domain. These images speak to the attainment of the American dream and to the promise of success and affluence implied by Cold War rhetoric, however into this dream of domestic bliss and affluence disconcerting images of war and violence are forcefully interjected. These alterations necessitate a fundamental questioning of the feasibility and efficacy of American liberal capitalism and Cold War containment policy. This ideological interrogation was necessitated by the strength of the beliefs espoused by this ideology. As Laura A. Belmonte stated, "we cannot dismiss the propagandists' defense of the family as mere rhetoric... they articulated deeply held beliefs and political

values...they provide important insights into why U.S. policymakers took the fight against communism so seriously – and so personally.”⁵⁷ The images are readily recognizable and meaningful to the intended viewer. However the inclusion of imagery related to combat destabilized the legitimacy of that ideology and necessitates a reconsideration of the beliefs and values connected to the images the domestic sphere.

Rather than merely portraying the emotional effect of war or the devastating effect of military action on the nation of Vietnam, Rosler cuts to the very heart of the ideology that served to justify military action in Vietnam. She destabilizes the ideology which upheld the necessity of military action as a defense of the American capitalist system, by intercutting images of domestic interiors with those of military action, which relate to American liberal capitalism and Cold War ideology. Rosler transplants the warfront to the American home, and conversely places these domestic interiors in a foreign and violent realm. She disallows a comfortable separation between friend and foe, and simultaneously asks the viewer to consider the intended result of this military engagement.

The rational and even terse qualities of Rosler’s montages create a possible, or mythic reality in antithesis to that disseminated by the American government during the Cold War period leading up to the war in Vietnam. This reality is one with which the viewer is in fact already familiar yet is impossibly strange, and subverts the prevailing ideology of Americanism through associations with homeownership, consumerism, and domestic containment. The domestic space that is depicted in these works can be understood as an object of desire, particularly within the realm of Cold War ideology.

Through their attachment to this ideology the viewer is implicated in the systemic pursuit of these elements of the American dream.

The viewer is complicit with American military intervention, and is led to question both the Cold War ideology and the feasibility and even desirability of exporting American liberal capitalism to Vietnam. As Sylvia Eiblmayr has noted in regard to Rosler's work, "she... takes their (and her own) desires seriously. This enables her to expose the ideological norms internalized by the individual and exerted by a controlling bureaucracy, by industrial production, or by the media."⁵⁸ By using images with which the viewer is familiar, and which are emblematic of desire Rosler draws the viewer into the image while at the same time illustrating the limits of the very desires she conveys. The relationship between these images and desire can be seen even more clearly in *Beauty Rest* and *Cleaning the Drapes* in which advertising imagery is included in the photomontages. These works and the implications of Rosler's use of advertising imagery will be discussed in the following chapter.

Notes

²²See Laura A. Belmonte, *Selling the American Way* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008) for a discussion of the connection between domesticity and Cold War ideology in detail with specific attention to the manner in which the domestic ideal was used as an element of Cold War propaganda.

²³ Rosalyn Baxandall and Elizabeth Ewen, *Picture Windows: How the Suburbs Happened*, (New York: Basic Books, 2000) In fact charges of socialism were directed at governmental attempts to support the development of new low cost housing, 90-91.

²⁴ Baxandall and Ewen, 88. The authors provide a detailed analysis of the progression of suburban developments leading up to World War II and proceeding through the Cold War period.

²⁵ Baxandall and Ewen, 115.

²⁶ Colomina, *Domesticity at War*, 12.

²⁷ See Baxandall and Ewen for a detailed discussion of the development of suburban developments in the postwar period as well as of the criticism that they faced in regard to conformity in chapter ten, 117-142.

²⁸ Baxandall and Ewen discuss the connection between democracy and home ownership in chapter nine. See particularly 106-108.

²⁹ See Baxandall and Ewen.

³⁰ Greg Castillo, *Cold War on the Home Front: The Soft Power of Midcentury Design*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 125.

³¹ Baxandall and Ewen, 145. The authors note that the availability of housing and ubiquity of suburban developments was thought to erase class difference in American society.

³² Beatriz Colomina, Annmarie Brennan, and Jeannie Kim, eds. *Cold War Hot Houses* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2004), 10-22. Colomina discusses the repurposing of technologies developed during World War II for the production of consumer products in her introduction.

³³ Castillo, 151.

³⁴ Castillo, 148-157.

³⁵ Greg Castillo, *Cold War at Home*, ix.

³⁶ Castillo, x.

³⁷ Richard Nixon quoted in Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound* (New York: Basic Books, 1988), 17

³⁸ May, 16. May provides a more detailed description of the content of the “kitchen debate” between Khrushchev and Nixon in chapter 1.

³⁹ Susan L. Stoops, Worcester Museum of Art, 5.

⁴⁰ Susan Hartmann, “Women’s Employment and the Domestic Ideal in the Early Cold War Years,” in *Not June Cleaver*, ed. Joanne Meyerowitz (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 86

⁴¹ See Ferdinand Lundberg and Marynia F. Farnham, *Modern Woman: The Lost Sex* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1947).

⁴² Hartmann, 85

⁴³ Belmonte notes the connection between the domestic space and the possibility of nuclear war. 137.

⁴⁴ Rosler, "Place, Position, Power, Politics," 355.

⁴⁵ Belmonte, 117.

⁴⁶ Leslie H. Gelb, "Vietnam: The System Worked," in *Beyond Containment*, eds. Robert W. Tucker and William Watts (Washington, DC: Potomac Associates, 1973) 29-30.

⁴⁷ Gelb, 29-30.

⁴⁸ Belmonte, 117

⁴⁹ Gelb, 48.

⁵⁰ Edward P. Morgan, *What Really Happened to the 1960s* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2010), 93.

⁵¹ Morgan, 93.

⁵² Morgan, 105.

⁵³ Morgan, 110.

⁵⁴ Morgan, 106.

⁵⁵ Alberro, 80.

⁵⁶ These works were published in *Mayday* a Canadian journal and in *Goodbye to All That* published in San Diego, CA. *Goodbye to All That* was dedicated to feminist concerns. Much of the content of this journal was strongly concerned with political movements and with forming a community of solidarity which included individuals from the nation of Vietnam, in addition to containing information related to consciousness raising, childcare and local events related to feminist concerns.

⁵⁷ Belmonte, 158.

⁵⁸ Sylvia Eiblmayr, "Martha Rosler's Characters," in *Martha Rosler: Positions in the Life World*, ed. Catherine de Zegher (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1998), 160. While Eiblmayr is not writing in regard to *Bringing the War Home*, her argument can be understood seen to apply to these works.

CHAPTER III

ADVERTISING IDEOLOGY IN *BRINGING THE WAR HOME*

Rosler's invocation of advertising imagery and its connections to Cold War governmental ideology are integral to the implication of the viewer's collusion with military engagement in foreign nations. In addition advertising imagery reaches the viewer through the use of familiar and attractive representations. An examination of the specific messages relating to consumption, the role of the housewife, and the importance of the nuclear family as expressed in the images that Rosler selected for these photomontages, as well as an investigation of the content of *House Beautiful* during the years 1967-1972 will engender a greater understanding of the manner in which Rosler's series interrogates not only the political ideologies of the Cold War, but also implicates the viewer's connection to consumption stimulated by the popular media in responsibility for American military intervention in Vietnam.

Rosler's use of advertising imagery, as a methodology intended to implicate the desires and aspirations of the viewer in complicity with military intervention, can be seen in several works from her series. This is particularly obvious in *Cleaning the Drapes* and *Beauty Rest* in which each photomontage contains a clear reference to advertising. In *Cleaning the Drapes* the young woman holds the nozzle of a small vacuum cleaner against an ornate damask drapery. The desire of the viewer that is aroused by this image of technological innovation and by the depiction of an object of consumption is disrupted by the presence of a group of soldiers positioned outside of the window, apparently only a few feet from the female figure. Similarly, in *Beauty Rest* Rosler places an image

intended to advertise a Simmons Beauty Rest mattress in the center of a destroyed domestic space.

The ideology of Americanism which served to support and disseminate liberal capitalist democracy during the Cold War, and which eventually led to American military intervention in the nation of Vietnam, was in large part distributed to American audiences through instruments of the mass media. The connection between governmental support of capitalist institutions and American military intervention may not be immediately apparent, nor would it be wise to state that one directly led to the other. However, Edward P. Morgan has convincingly argued that both consumption and military action were framed as necessary to support or spread the ideals of liberal capitalist democracy.⁵⁹ While capitalist consumption did not necessitate military intervention in Vietnam, the ideological imperatives which supported consumption were also influential in the perceived requirement of combating communism in the nation of Vietnam.

To avoid economic depression, the system of capitalism necessitated a constant increase in consumption. In *The Hidden Persuaders*, Vance Packard, in the process of elucidating the innovative technique of motivational research beginning to be used in advertising, argued that ever increasing production resulted in greater profitability. However, he also noted that the very process of increased production through mechanization also necessitated ever increasing consumption from the population in order to avoid surplus and a flooding of the market.⁶⁰ During the Cold War, support of commercial enterprise was of extreme importance to governmental agencies in supporting the efficacy of democratic liberal capitalism as a system. Because of this need, increased consumption was framed as a both necessary and patriotic activity, and as

representative of the “good life” promised by capitalist government. Constantly increasing consumption of commercial products was framed as both the right and the responsibility of the average American. This was advocated by institutions of the government and enthusiastically supported by advertisers.⁶¹

The use of advertising as a method of increasing the sale of consumer products was certainly not a new concept in the Cold War period. What was relatively unique, however, was the complicity between governmental ideology and capitalist concerns as well as the increased stakes of encouraging consumption.⁶² Also new was the development of interest in subconscious motivations and their effect on purchasing patterns, called motivational research, which sought to cultivate and trigger desire as a methodology for increasing consumption of a particular product. Vance Packard detailed the process of motivational research, and manner in which it was utilized by both advertisers and political figures in *The Hidden Persuaders*. Packard argued that this type of research targeted unconscious desires and needs to increase the attraction of the consumer to a given products, with little interest in the actual qualities of the product or their ability to fulfill the desire to which the consumer responded.

This was intended to increase the sale of a specific product, and to frame that product as being able and even vital to the fulfillment of the desires of its primary consumer. The focus on the American housewife as primary consumer was found to be the most efficacious for the majority of the products analyzed because of the role of female homemaker as the primary purchaser of goods on a daily basis.⁶³ While Packard appropriately questions the morality of this strategy, he does not adequately account for the societal concerns which created the needs or desires that motivational research sought

exploit, which seem intimately tied to Cold War culture. Indeed it is this very connection between desirable consumption and ideological rhetoric which Rosler implicates in her series.

The images, which Rosler uses in *Bringing the War Home: House Beautiful*, are primarily, although not exclusively, drawn from the pages of the popular magazine *House Beautiful*.⁶⁴ An examination of *House Beautiful* during the years 1967-1972, will serve as a case study that exemplifies the manner in which advertising imagery was disseminated to the public. During these years *House Beautiful* displayed both examples of high culture architecture and advice for home improvements and decorating, as well as information relating to culture and entertaining. Although buildings designed by eminent modernist architects including Le Corbusier, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, and Frank Lloyd Wright are sometimes featured, the publication is clearly an example of popular media.

The segments are written in a colloquial and familiar manner, making the innovation of high-culture comfortable for an audience that was not part of intellectual or artistic circles. Photographs of such architecturally designed houses focus primarily on the interior or the garden and patio area, with the focus directed toward decorative style more than toward architectural style. The publication conveys the impression that it should be viewed as a source of culture and education related to modernist domestic architecture, but it also includes current fashions in interior decorating, gardening, and entertaining.

This publication introduced its reader to architectural structures that are emblematic of affluence, luxury, and a lifestyle enjoyed by the upper classes, a fact particularly evident from the many issues that deal with vacation or weekend homes. This relates to Marshal McLuhan's analysis of popular culture, and the manner in which it is

disseminated to the public in *The Mechanical Bride*. In this volume McLuhan examines a variety of popular culture sources endeavoring to discover both the effect of media imagery on viewers and the manner in which popular media reflects entrenched societal views. In regard to the intended effect of lifestyle magazines, like *House Beautiful*, McLuhan stated, “These magazines, carefully geared to pull on both the purses and heartstrings of their respective reader groups, feature houses and rooms in which almost nobody ever lives – certainly not the readers. These magazines would be useless commercially if they portrayed any scenes or homes that were already possessed by the income group to which they appeal.”⁶⁵ In *House Beautiful* these segments image both the interior and the exterior of the structures, and in many cases, provide actual floor plans. Discussions of such upper-end homes are often followed by a segment that makes suggestions for budget friendly home improvements, under the heading “Here and Now,” which advises the reader not to wait to begin home improvements. Gardening information often juxtaposed against the gardens of grand estates, or historical locations, is also provided.

While the cover of *House Beautiful* promised the cultural enlightenment of its reader, its primary function was to deliver the reader to its advertisers. The publication is quite long for a monthly magazine, the number of pages routinely exceeding two hundred. Most of these are full- and partial-page color advertisements, which are scattered throughout the publication. The majority were for products to beautify the home including advertisements for paint, wall coverings, carpeting, and furniture. They often contain subtext that celebrates technology, the importance of the nuclear family, and of the need for the housewife to cultivate a glamorous image. Although the products being

advertised are often for large purchases, such as furniture or carpeting, they are clearly intended for a female audience.

According to Elaine Tyler May, the focus on selling products for the home was a wise choice, since surplus income for discretionary spending consistently increased following World War II. May stated “Instead of rampant spending for personal luxury items, Americans were likely to spend their money at home. In the five years after World War II, consumer spending increased 60 percent, but the amount spent on household furnishings and appliances rose 240 percent.”⁶⁶ The focus on selling products to female consumers was also an informed decision since, as Vance Packard notes, women controlled 80 percent of the spending for the middle classes, which, according to Packard, comprised 65 percent of the total population.⁶⁷ Many of the advertisements suggest that through the purchase of a specific product, a woman would be considered as a savvy and accomplished homemaker, and others imply or state outright that the particular product will make a home more comfortable and welcoming for a man or for children.

In addition to the large proportion of space taken by actual advertisements, many of the articles related to home maintenance and entertaining, reference specific commercial products, as well as where these particular products might be purchased. The advertising images, which dominate this publication during the years 1967-1972, convey through repetition the ideology of Americanism discussed in Chapter II, particularly as related to gender difference, domestic containment, the importance of the single family home, and the pleasure of mass consumption. Although, the advertisements do not overtly relate the political importance of this ideology, its infiltration of mass media sources is clear.

House Beautiful contains no mention of the socio-political world beyond the fence-line. Although the years during which its readership grew were those that witnessed the greatest influx of American troops into Vietnam, and also saw a rise in opposition to the war, as well various social justice movements, none of these instances of civil or social unrest are mentioned within the publication's pages. This relate to a willful blindness toward antiwar agitation and to the atrocities of the Vietnam War on the part of the mainstream media that only changed gradually over the course of the 1960s.⁶⁸ Alternatively it may indicate the belief, which Betty Friedan argues was held by editors of women's magazines in the 1960s, that women were uninterested in politics unless the issues could be translated to relate directly to the domestic sphere of home and family.⁶⁹ . Consumption was not merely an activity for the American housewife, as Elaine Tyler May notes, but actually became a source of identity for women in the Cold War period.⁷⁰

In *Cleaning the Drapes*, a vaguely exotic looking young woman holds the nozzle of a hand-held vacuum cleaner against a heavy damask drapery which covers a large picture window. The original advertisement was for General Electric's Portable Cleaner, however Rosler used only the figure of the model from the original advertisement in her photomontage (fig. 17). The model is clothed in a slim fitting mod-style dress, popular in the 1960s, and her hairstyle is a contemporary bouffant pixie cut, reminiscent of the style popularized by Twiggy in the early 1960s. The fashionable quality of the model's hair and dress speak to the interest in personal appearance that is a primary focus in much of the imagery related to advertising. Everything must be consistently refashioned to keep the capitalist economy moving, here through the "revolution" of style in relation to the mode of women's dress, which changed from a full-skirted often mid-calf length style of

dress in the 1950s to a more streamlined, form fitting, and abbreviated length in the 1960s. This new style was a response to the growing youth culture of the time, a new market to be tapped.⁷¹ Because the woman is attired in current fashion, with impeccable hair and makeup, while cleaning the drapes, presumably in her own home, the emphasis on personal appearance is placed within the domestic sphere. Thus the importance of appearance is intended to impress close acquaintances that might visit the home, but is primarily intended to be seen by members of the figure's nuclear family. In addition, the stylish and fashion forward appearance of the model makes the act of vacuuming appear glamorous, rather than a tedious and unpleasant chore. Rosler enhances this glamor by taking the drape up-market, replacing the cheap open-weave of a suburban tract home with the heavy damask of a mansion.

The portrayal of the housewife as a glamorous figure, particularly in relation to her use of cleaning products or appliances, is a common trope of advertising during this period, and is strongly related to the importance of female domesticity, meaning the separation of spheres of influence in which the masculine realm is that of the professional world, and the feminine realm is that of the home, each with specific tasks separated by gender.⁷² In a 1966 advertisement for an RCA Whirlpool central vacuum system, for example, the female model demonstrating the use of this technological system, intended to lessen the manual labor of housecleaning and maintenance, is impeccably and femininely dressed (fig. 18). In each of the focused images, a large wedding band is also visible, clearly indicating the marital status of the figure and speaking to the importance of marriage and of traditional gender roles. However it is also important to note that this woman does not present an image of utterly unattainable beauty or glamor. The image

that she presents is at once attainable and also slightly intimidating. Her ability to look fresh and feminine while also caring for her home is an expression of the domestic ideal intimating that women who did not or could not replicate this image were lacking in some regard and failing to fulfill their societal role.

In addition to the portrayal of the housewife as a glamorous figure, and the act of cleaning as something more than mere drudgery, Rosler's image in *Cleaning the Drapes* speaks to two other important themes in advertising imagery during this period. The first involves the importance of technological development, and the second is the conception of the housewife as expert. Technological development, as has been examined previously in Chapter II, was an area of concern during the Cold War period as a result of the repurposing of the industrial equipment, labor force, and technological advances used for producing weapons and military supplies during the World War II. This repurposing involved not only domestic consumption, but also the military-industrial complex which was constantly modernizing in preparation for the next war.

In *Cold War Hot Houses*, Beatriz Colomina argued, "The housewife seemed to be always in a hurry with a barrage of conveniences, push button devices, and appliances, designed to save her time...this new kind of mobility and efficiency had to do with the war. Not only was her "push button" equipment from the same factories that made guided missiles, but the house was defending the nation."⁷³ In the advertisement utilized in *Cleaning the Drapes*, advanced vacuum cleaner technology, developed using technological advances developed for weaponry and repurposed for domestic use following World War II, can be seen, and purchased by consumers. Not only is this product useful, but it is also revolutionary in its compact size and easily maneuverable

design. Its boxy form signaled the new fashion of the 1960s that took its lead from the modular and cost-effective packaging of electronics, the dominant icon becoming the main-frame computer. Producers intended the use of technology in creating new home appliances to alleviate the toil and effort associated with housework, as well as to create a need for continued consumption.⁷⁴

As new products were developed, they necessitated the creation of a consumer market based on desire rather than on the necessity of purchasing a product merely to replace an old and worn out item. As Ernest Dichter, a motivational researcher, argued in 1956, “One of the basic problems of prosperity...is to demonstrate that the hedonistic approach to life is a moral, not an immoral one.”⁷⁵ The system of capitalism required continuous consumption in order to maintain profitability, which was a primary concern of advertisers, and because of the importance of demonstrating the success of capitalism as a system was also of primary importance to governmental institutions. Advertisers aimed to produce images that would not only relate to the right and duty of consumers to support capitalist institutions through rampant consumption, but also sought to imply that a particular product or device would satisfy, “latent human needs,” as Edward P. Morgan phrased it.⁷⁶ Advertisers sought to not only create a cogent need for new products, but to imply that through the purchase of a specific object an emotional need could be fulfilled.

Cleaning the Drapes also speaks to the importance of portraying the housewife as an expert. This was meant to encourage women, who were primarily relegated to the home, to find fulfillment in their role as the housewife, which involved evaluating a range of possible goods, selecting the best, and purchasing it for the lowest price. This experience would then elevate their ability to perform the task of home maintenance and

sanitation to the highest possible level. In this respect, the dress of the model is again significant. Her immaculate and stylish dress indicates the professional nature of the occupation of home cleaning, and her intent expression corresponds to the importance of careful attention to her task. Marshall McLuhan, who, in his 1951 text *The Mechanical Bride*, was among the first to note the influence of hidden ideological messages in advertising imagery, as well as in other popular sources, noted the importance of technology and “know-how” in selling appliances. He argued that the implication of expertise can be understood as an exemplar of the conflation of technical and moral spheres in advertising.⁷⁷

An advertisement in the January, 1972 issue of *House Beautiful* also exemplifies the strategy of positioning the role of housewife as an expert in home maintenance as an important issue for advertisers (fig. 19). Here the advertisement seeks to test the reader’s “I.Q. on home furnishing brand names,” claiming, “if you don’t recognize at least half of these names, you might not be ready to buy furnishings for your home.”⁷⁸ Not only is fulfilling the role of homemaker through consumption praised because it enables the purchaser to adeptly fulfill her role as wife and mother, but lack of knowledge about consumer products indicates that she is incapable of making an informed choice of consumption as related to her home, and thus failing in her role.

In addition to the focus on the expertise of the housewife in the interest of home maintenance, the focus on cleanliness can also be understood to relate to the importance of creating a domestic space that is safe and secure. One that is free of germs and other dangerous particles which may compromise the health and safety of the home’s inhabitants.⁷⁹ The emphasis on the safety and security of the home was another primary

concern during the Cold War, when international conflict and fear related to the impending threat of nuclear war was ever present.⁸⁰ This connection added to the importance of the home's ability to act as a bastion of security, presided over by the professional housewife. "The Housewife," according to Beatriz Colomina, "had become a soldier on the home front; the kitchen, the command post from which she not only controlled the domain of her living space but was purported to defend the nation."⁸¹ Colomina, an architectural historian, studies the effect socio-cultural context on architecture and design in the postwar period. She is particularly interested in connecting postwar domestic architecture to the cultural context of the Cold War, and in analyzing the esthetic effect of material and design connected to advances made by the military-industrial complex. In regard to the role of the housewife during the Cold War, she illuminates the implication that through competent and careful home maintenance, use the newest technologies and familiarity with brand-name merchandise, the housewife was understood to be equipped to defend her family within the home from the insidious dangers of both bacteria and communism.

In Rosler's photomontage *Cleaning the Drapes*, the presumed intention of the advertising image to sell a product which will increase the safety of the home is contradicted by the image that is visible between the heavy damask drapes. The model's gaze seems to be directed toward the center of the open space between the two curtains, which are drawn apart as though framing a stage or revealing a desirable view. Rather than a suburban vista of safe and orderly homes or a scene of nature worthy of being framed by these opulent window dressings, the image which accosts the viewer is that of military conflict. Massive boulders and sandbag barricades surround a group of men in

combat uniforms. Although the enclosure around the soldiers creates some sense of safety and security, their very presence indicates intense instability.

The scene of disorder and danger, cannot be vacuumed away by technological advance, and fundamentally compromises the intended security of the domestic space. The ability of this technologically advanced appliance to make the domestic space secure by ridding it of dangerous dirt and debris is made absurd in the face of an image of imminent bodily harm. The montaged elements critique the very fabric of Cold War consumption. Although the soldiers appear to be conferring or strategizing rather than engaging in active combat, the safety promised by the domestic space is destroyed by their presence. The image of soldiers at rest is interesting in this context. Seen from the domestic space, they take on a performative aspect, as though the tableau formed by their figures can be equated to the view of the backyard or suburban neighborhood in which social gatherings could be observed. In addition to the denial of the presumed extension of the domestic space into the yard or neighborhood, the use of the window implies that in seeing, the viewer can also be seen. The concept of domesticity on display through the windows of the suburban home is made explicitly hazardous and threatening because of the presence of the soldiers.⁸²

The denial of the promise of consumer products, through the montaging of advertising imagery with images of the destruction of war can also be seen in *Beauty Rest*. In *Beauty Rest*, the title refers to the rejuvenating properties of sleep, but also to a particular commercial product, the Beautyrest mattress. In this photomontage, the central image depicts a man, woman, and young boy lounging on a bare mattress. The presence of these three figures on the same bed speaks to an idea of “togetherness.” According to

Betty Friedan, this term was, “Coined by the publishers of *McCall’s* in 1954 (and)...seized upon avidly as a movement of spiritual significance by advertisers, ministers, newspaper editors. For a time it was elevated into virtually a national purpose.”⁸³

All three figures are carefully attired in their pajamas. The man and boy wear long sleeved buttoned tops and loose pants, while the woman wears a white nightgown with cap sleeves, which is pulled down to her modestly crossed ankles. Her golden hair is brushed smoothly away from her face. However, in opposition to the expected role of mother as primary caregiver to children, this woman has her face and attention directed to a large format magazine which is placed open on the mattress between her and the male figure. The presence of a magazine in this advertisement speaks to the prevalence and importance of mass media during this period both for entertainment, and for the dissemination of advertising images.

The man and the boy form the active portion of this tableau. The man holds his hand high above the boy’s head, in it is a toy airplane. Although the boy’s face is not visible, he appears to be gazing intently at his father’s face as he “boyishly” flies the plane and models preoccupation with both technology and the military. This could relate to the importance of fatherhood, as a method of attaining fulfillment, and also the fear that, because of women’s primary focus on motherhood, over-mothering would result in a generation of “sissies.”⁸⁴ Although it is certainly possible that this image does not relate to this worry, the concern that the constant attention of mothers, through the exclusivity of their focus on parenting, and the absence of masculine attention would

result in the feminization of male children was widespread in the United States during the 1950s.⁸⁵

The positioning of the three figures on the bed in this image clearly speaks to the importance of the nuclear family, and perhaps most importantly to the elevated status of child rearing. This is perhaps an unexpected association in an advertisement for a mattress. The image is of a double bed in which both the man and woman would presumably sleep together rather than the two twin beds which were common during the 1950s. This chaste arrangement can be seen in an advertisement for a Beautyrest Mattress from 1950, in which a man and woman are shown in two beds separated by a small bedside table (fig. 20). The presence of the child in an advertisement for a mattress intended for the parents, may seek to decrease the possible sexual overtones of the double bed in which both man and woman are present, however it also speaks to procreation as the result of sexual relations, which may be presumed to take place in the bedroom.

Although the connotation of sexual activity may be drawn from any advertisement for mattresses, the image which Rosler has chosen for this photomontage is certainly not the most provocative one available. One example of the more overtly sexual material used to sell mattresses is an advertisement for a Restonic mattress from 1972 (fig. 21). In this image, the mattress, again without linens, fills the entire frame of this full page advertisement. At the top a woman with heavy make-up and red hair, reminiscent of Anne Margaret, lies on her stomach with her gaze directed toward the viewer. Her full body is not visible but her bare arm, shoulder, and part of her back can be seen. The implication seems to be that the woman is in fact nude. Here the connotations of sexuality and sexual activity are far more obvious. Rather than choosing

an advertisement that speaks directly to sexual activity, the image that Rosler utilizes refers instead to the importance of the nuclear family, which is consistent with her critique of the ideology of Americanism.

The bedroom may also be understood to symbolize safety and security, which was thought to be protected and supported by the nuclear family and by the single family home. Although this is a print advertisement, it can be understood to provide an image of family security and happiness in a similar manner to that which Edward P. Morgan argues was expressed in television programming during the Cold War period. He states:

During the late 1950s television drew the viewing public into a world of happy suburban life: white, middle class, free of threatening conflict, blessed by comfort and household conveniences, held together by clearly defined gender roles and stereotypes, and ultimately reassured that the United States stood alone as the preeminent force for good in the world.⁸⁶

In *Beauty Rest*, the image of the nuclear family and of togetherness is framed as the possible result of consumer purchase. The clear implication of the image is that by buying the advertised mattress the consumer can achieve the American dream of the happy, healthy, attractive, and safe nuclear home and family.

In *Beauty Rest*, however, Rosler violently transports the American family to a war zone. They are blissfully unaware of the devastated and destroyed dwelling to which they have been conveyed. Rather than the peaceful and picturesque space in which this image might be expected to exist, it is positioned in a small room devastated by war. The photograph looks directly into the room's darkened corner. Two small windows, with

torn and charred window dressings admit light and frame the family. The floor is flooded and strewn with debris, while the walls and ceiling are blackened and scorched. To the viewer's right, on the wall next to the window, hangs a small crucifix. The view into the room is somewhat obstructed by two dark planes, which angle from the upper corners to the image's bottom edge. Since a doorway would not be placed in a corner, they must have been added by Rosler to enclose the bed in a claustrophobic and slightly imbalanced space.

Unlike *Cleaning the Drapes*, here the domestic space is completely destroyed. However the inhabitants of this space are completely oblivious. This may relate to the obliviousness of the American consumer to the ramifications of consumption and its relationship to the impetus for war.⁸⁷ Even when antiwar sentiment entered the sphere of legitimate discourse, the Vietnam War was framed as a well-intentioned mistake rather than as Edward P. Morgan has argued an instance, "of the United States consciously pursuing an American dominated global system designed to provide stable and ready access to the economic resources of the underdeveloped world."⁸⁸ In addition, the interaction between the father and son speaks to the support for military action by the family itself, and by extension the support of the war by the American people.

It could also be understood to relate to the manner in which American involvement in the Vietnam War was treated by purveyors of the mass media. As Morgan notes, "Within the mass media, support for American policy was simply unquestioned, framed by Cold War perceptions... Sensory realities in Vietnam... were essentially invisible in mainstream news reporting."⁸⁹ The invisibility of war atrocities, which were ongoing in Vietnam, is mirrored by the family's insensibility in this photomontage to

their surroundings. As an example of activist art, this photomontage can be seen to illuminate the sensory realities of the devastation caused by war as well as reveal the complicity of consumption, and the instability of the perceived safety and security of nuclear family and the idea of “togetherness.”

The advertising images which Rosler chose are not those which seek to sell luxury products, nor are they the most inflammatory or unusual depictions of the products that they represent. Instead she chose images which portray the transformation of the political ideology of Americanism into a selling strategy for everyday household products which could be consumed by the majority. In so doing Rosler displays a certain level of sympathy to the desires of those who are entranced by the consumer products and mass market advertising being utilized. By choosing images that communicate realistic and attainable consumption, Rosler implicates the average American consumer, and does so in such a way that allows the viewer to recognize themselves, their own dreams, desires, and aspirations, in the images that are used. The choice of relatively mainstream and uncontroversial imagery, does not allow the viewer to disassociate from the implication that the all consumers are active participant in supporting the war in Vietnam. Rosler places the process of consumption, as supported by the ideology of Americanism during the Cold War period, at the heart of military action. She conflates these two realms not through the extremes of advertising inducements, but with the products of everyday life.

Notes

⁵⁹ Morgan, 25, 100.

⁶⁰ Vance Packard, *The Hidden Persuaders*, (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1957), 19-20.

⁶¹ Morgan, 33

⁶² Morgan explores the collusion between governmental ideology and consumption in *What Really Happened to the 1960s*. See chapter 2, "Roots of the Sixties: Contradictions between Capitalism and Democracy," 20-39.

⁶³ See Packard for a detailed analysis of the development and use of motivational research in advertising during the 1950s.

⁶⁴ In personal correspondence with the author Rosler stated that while all of the images were not taken from *House Beautiful* she made a point of not documenting the sources of the imagery that she utilized.

⁶⁵ Marshall McLuhan, *The Mechanical Bride* (New York: Vanguard Press, 1951), 112.

⁶⁶ May, 165.

⁶⁷ Packard, 115-116.

⁶⁸ Morgan, provides a detailed analysis of media coverage of both the War in Vietnam and domestic resistance in chapter five, 91-116.

⁶⁹ Betty Friedan, (New York: W. W. Norton, 1963), 51.

⁷⁰ May, 180.

⁷¹ Carolyn Kitch, *The Girl on the Magazine Cover* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 185.

⁷² Baxandall and Ewen, 150-51.

⁷³ Colomina, *Cold War Hot Houses*, 14.

⁷⁴ Packard discusses the need to alleviate the sense of drudgery associated with home maintenance from the perspective of advertisers in *The Hidden Persuaders*, this idea is also discussed in Elaine Tyler May's *Homeward Bound* in regard to the manner in which domestic containment was made more attractive to women during the Cold War.

⁷⁵ Ernest Dichter, quoted in Morgan, 33.

⁷⁶ Morgan, 34.

⁷⁷ McLuhan, 32.

⁷⁸ House Beautiful January 1972, advertisement placed by Consumer Confidence Brand Names Satisfaction.

⁷⁹ Adrian Forty, *Objects of Desire* (London: Thames and Hudson Limited, 1986), 174-178. The importance of domestic hygiene and cleanliness was not new during the Cold War. The trajectory of hygiene and the developments of consumer products intended to increase cleanliness is developed by In relation to the vacuum cleaner specifically.

⁸⁰ Colomina convincingly connects cleanliness and the ability to protect the nuclear family from contagion to the need to gain a sense of security from the impending threat of nuclear warfare in *Domesticity at War*.

⁸¹ Colomina, *Cold War Hot Houses*, 14-16.

⁸² The role of visibility from both within the domestic space, and perhaps more importantly from the exterior into the domestic space through the prevalence of large picture windows in suburban homes, and through the interest in using large amounts of glass in the work of architects in the postwar period is discussed at length in Beatriz Colomina's *Domesticity at War*.

⁸³ Friedan, 48.

⁸⁴ May, 146-47.

⁸⁵ This idea is discussed at length in Elaine Tyler May's *Homeward Bound*, primarily in Chapter 6, 135-161, entitled, Baby Boom and Birth Control: The Reproductive Consensus. May investigates the fear within the United States of over mothering that developed in conjunction with pressure for women to focus exclusively on the home, and claims that it also related to the idea that all aspects of fulfillment for both men and women being focused on the domestic space, in this way May's analysis of the fear that too much female attention would result in the feminization of male children can also be understood to relate the concept of togetherness examined by Betty Friedan in *The Feminine Mystique*.

⁸⁶ Morgan, 33.

⁸⁷ Morgan discusses the willful separation of the concerns of American culture from the reality of military action in Vietnam in *What Really Happened to the 1960s* in particular see Chapter 5, "Vietnam and the Spheres of Media Discourse," 91-116, for a close analysis of this phenomenon.

⁸⁸ Morgan, 98.

⁸⁹ Morgan, 99.

CHAPTER IV

THE DOMESTIC WARZONE

In addition to an examination of the influence and critique of the ideology of Americanism advocated by both governmental institutions and by purveyors of the mass media, it is also instructive to examine the formal strategies which Rosler utilized. These formal strategies create a sense of instability of location and viewing through the carefully juxtaposed imagery. In *Tract House Soldier* a soldier sitting in front of a tract style suburban home is depicted. The soldier sits on a grey-green duffle bag with both arms resting on his bent knees. He looks directly towards the viewer, and his expression is difficult to decode. The image of the soldier excludes his feet, which may of course merely have been outside of the frame of the source image. However, it seems possible that the may also have been cut off, giving the image a sense of arrested mobility.

While the figure of the soldier draws the viewer's focus he is somewhat dwarfed by the image of a lush green lawn leading to a small, and yet somewhat luxurious home. Although the soldier is positioned in the extreme foreground of this photomontage, his size is diminutive in comparison to the house on its expanse of land, making him appear powerless and isolated. It is clear upon close examination that the soldier and the home in front of which he is positioned are not taken from the same source, and are instead connected through the technique of photomontage. However, the similarity in orientation and coloration give the image a sense of cohesion as though it is in fact a single image.

The suburban house behind the soldier is not luxurious or particularly large, but in the approximately three bedroom size on an expanse of land, it seems to be the domestic environment to which the American middle-class aspired during the 1950s

and 1960s. Its walls are made from a rich red brick, while the trim and roof are a crisp white. A large picture window with leaded panes provides a glimpse of the interior in which a lamp and the backs of two chairs are visible. On the left a substantially sized sunroom is attached to the house. The leaded panes of glass are completely transparent and allow a view of the deserted interior. This enables the viewer to see through the home to a field of green grass surrounded by trees at the back of the home. Small trees and shrubs lead across the front façade of the home, and the spreading branches of a large tree enter the frame of the image from the left. The sky is depicted as cloudless and blue, however it seems somewhat dingy and drained of color.

In this work, as in others from *Bringing the War Home: House Beautiful*, Rosler transforms the perception of the Vietnam War as remote and separate from daily American life impossible by transplanting a small human fragment of that war into the most conventional image of that life. In this way, Rosler's series disallows the comforting distance between combat and domesticity. These works, which were disseminated primarily at anti-war protests, sought to raise awareness of, and to combat American participation in the Vietnam War. Rosler utilizes the technique of photomontage to draw together aspects of popular culture to create a political weapon working in opposition to the war. In so doing she counteracts the practice in popular media of separating images of the domestic from those of military conflict. In the seamless and cohesive quality of the final images the compositions from *Bringing the War Home: House Beautiful* bear greater formal similarity to documentary or vernacular photography than to historic iterations of photomontage. A sense of disorientation and uncertainty is created through this seamlessness. This sense of confusion and disorientation exemplifies Freud's theory

of the uncanny, in which what should be familiar and safe is made frightening and strange.

Arguably, the technique of photomontage was developed in Berlin by artists working to critique the political situation during the period following World War I. Although the exact origination of the technique is subject to debate, its earliest documented use in art was an intentional criticism of Weimar politics used by artists associated with the Dada movement, including Hannah Höch and John Heartfield.⁹⁰ Dada, according to David Evans and Sylvia Gohl, “was the first anti-art movement in history. Using tactics of shock, irony, protest absurdity and violence, it aimed at demolishing a culture discredited by the Great War.”⁹¹ Although photomontage was by no means the only formal strategy employed by Dada artists, they used the technique of montage frequently to draw attention to the fragmentation and distortion of popular media, politics, and culture, often by violently combining images related to divergent aspects of Weimar society.

While Rosler’s aim in creating the photomontages contained within *Bringing the War Home: House Beautiful* can be compared to those of Dada artists in the way that they seek to combat, critique, and destroy contemporary ideologies, the composition of these early Dada photomontages stands in strict opposition to the works which Rosler creates. Rosler critiques Cold War culture and American involvement in Vietnam through the technique of photomontage in a manner that creates a unified rather than a fragmented image. Dada photomontages were created with dizzying and disjointed compositions that spoke directly to their re-combination of images from contradictory popular sources, and which were intended to illustrate the complexity of contemporary society and also to

critique current political and social movements through bizarre and violently conflated imagery. This can be seen in Höch's *Cut with the Kitchen Knife Dada through the Last Weimar Beer Belly Cultural Epoch of Germany* (1919-1920) (fig. 22), where Höch explored political ideas that were central to the concerns of the Berlin Dada group. These included the hypocrisy of the new Weimar government, the role of mass media in the formation of identity, and interest in revolutionary communist ideas. Höch's photomontage is a dizzying conglomeration of images drawn from magazines and newspapers combined in a whirling and energetic manner. This work is can be examined roughly in quarters which relate to the Weimar government, the liberal left, the role of mass action, and of the Dadaists themselves, but within each the process of combining images is readily visible.⁹²

John Heartfield's *Adolf- the Superman. Swallows Gold and Spouts Junk*, from 1932, exhibits a similarly obvious political critique. While this work displays a less energetic sensibility than Höch's work, this work makes the process of photomontage an important and apparent part of the work. Here Adolf Hitler is shown with his mouth partially open as though issuing a command or in the midst of giving an impassioned speech. He is dressed in a Nazi uniform, and the swastika insignia is visible on his chest and left arm. However his chest has become transparent. Rather than being clothed and solid it has been altered to display an x-ray of Hitler's chest in which the spinal cord is comprised of a stack of gold coins, which also lie in a pile in his stomach. This critiques Nazi political ideology in a manner that expresses ironic and mocking humor, and clearly conveys the manipulation of imagery.⁹³

In contrast to these works and others by Dada artists, Rosler's montages are constructed in such a way that they create a mythic reality. Rather than cross cutting images that are clearly montaged, they are positioned to create a single cohesive image. Rosler's compositions seem stationary and immobile. If figures are present their actions appear frozen in time. This relates to the controlled and regimented conception of society during the Cold War Period which Rosler critiques.⁹⁴ It also creates a dialogue in which Cold War ideology and the rigidity of society are illuminated, causing the viewer to question their own role in continuing and supporting this dominant ideology. Although the works that Rosler creates are clearly critical they do not provide for a single correct reaction.

While the viewer is implicated through their participation in Cold War culture, there is no simple or finite directive presented in these works; rather they create a context for investigation. This could be understood to combat Marxist critic Georg Lukács's rejection of photomontage as a political instrument, because "photomontage," according to Lukács, "was generally incapable of making any significant statement about the world because its basic element, the photograph, could only record surface appearance and reveal nothing of society's hidden mechanisms."⁹⁵ By combining images in a realistic manner, one that does not draw attention to the medium of photomontage, Rosler creates a location and situation that appears visually authentic, but which is strange and horrifying. Thus Rosler leads the viewer to question the circumstances that could have led to this reality. In addition to drawing attention to various aspects of popular culture, she asks the viewer to consider the fabric of reality itself.

The technique of photomontage was also utilized by several members of the Independent Group, who began to using imagery related to popular culture in post-World War II Britain.⁹⁶ This technique is most notably associated with the works created by Richard Hamilton and Eduardo Paolozzi. These artists utilized the technique of photomontage as a means of expressing the changes in society that they observed following World War II, particularly in relation to the conflation of high and low, or popular culture. They often used iconic and recognizable imagery to create photomontages that referenced burgeoning consumer culture, and used elements of popular culture in a high culture context, rejecting the concept of good or bad taste.⁹⁷ As David E. Brauer argues, “Members (of the Independent Group) felt that the images from American advertising were more than a match for the images of the fine art of the time, even though everyone know that to like commercial art was heresy and that the mass media were the enemies of culture.”⁹⁸ In embracing imagery from popular media, artists of the Independent Group both glorified, and subtly critiqued the flattening of culture, and importance of consumption.⁹⁹

William R. Kaizen, writing in 2000, investigated Richard Hamilton’s use of popular imagery in his work associated with the Independent Group. Kaizen argued that Hamilton’s photomontages should be understood as “tabular” as well as narrative. He analyzes the tabular quality of several of Hamilton’s works including his iconic, *Just what is it that Makes Today’s Homes so Different so Appealing* (fig. 24). In examining this work Kaizen stated, “It is both a picture of the modern man and woman at home in a house of tomorrow, surrounded by (the) latest consumer goods and scientific gadgets and, at the same time, it is the separate units chosen from the mass media and used to create

the image.”¹⁰⁰ This interpretation is guided by Hamilton’s stated method in choosing the images included in this work, which delineated a list of specific objects that should be included in the final image.¹⁰¹ In examining Hamilton’s work in this way, *Just what is it...* is understood as both a figural depiction and an indexical composition displaying elements of commodity culture. As Kaizen stated, “with the tabular image Hamilton created a taxonomy of commodity culture.”¹⁰²

Kaizen uses this conception of the taxonomy of culture to investigate Hamilton’s work in terms of Lacan’s theory of the trauma that occurs when the subject touches the real.¹⁰³ Hamilton’s construction of a tabular image, which not only creates a narrative but serves as a taxonomic depiction of commodity culture is quite different than Rosler’s construction of a cohesive image that illustrates a possible though imagined reality. However, the concept of trauma created through the subjects experience of reality in the visual field, could be understood to apply to Rosler’s work. Rosler’s use of images that while not iconic are recognizable to the viewer could be understood to create a traumatic association to lived experience. This is similar to Kaizen’s interpretation of Hamilton’s work, although in regard to Hamilton this reality is associated to the familiar encounter with popular media while in Rosler’s it is the alteration of lived experience.

Rosler’s work in *Bringing the War Home: House Beautiful* displays similarities to the works of photomontages created by the artists associated with the Independent Group. This is most apparent in her use of popular culture imagery which demonstrates a similar interest in the collapsing of high and low culture. The Independent Group’s rejection of the importance of the hand of the artist, and the idea of genius that accompanied the move away from Abstract Expressionism during the later 1950s can also be seen in

Rosler's works.¹⁰⁴ However, her laconic and static compositions contrast with the crowded and somewhat joyous compositions that Hamilton and Paolozzi created. Her avoidance of a fine arts context in the method of disseminating the final images previous to the 1990s also differentiates this series from the works of photomontage created by the members of the Independent Group who largely embraced participation in the art world.

In the works from *Bringing the War Home: House Beautiful* Rosler takes the rejection of the hand of the artist a step further. Upon first glance these montages do not seem to be photomontages at all, but rather to be formed of a single image associating them to works of photography rather than of photomontage. The images that Rosler chooses to include are not individually iconic, but rather seem to reference an ideology and a way of being. Brand names are not evident in the images from the original series, and so focus is placed on Cold War society rather than on specific elements of popular culture. In addition, while the reference to consumption is clear, Rosler's images lack the exuberant energy of the photomontages associated with the Independent Group.

In addition to the removal of the hand of the artist, the succinct and seamless quality of the photomontages that Rosler creates all but deny the technique used in their construction.¹⁰⁵ Because of this they do not at first glance seem to be photomontages at all, but instead take on the characteristics of documentary photography. The medium of photography carries an implication of truth and of reality, "that spark has," in the words of Walter Benjamin, "as it were, burned through the person in the image with reality...."¹⁰⁶ Beneath the image presented is a temporal reality that is understood to have existed. Similarly Roland Barthes argued that the photographic process, which is, "not one of 'transformation' but of 'recording' ... clearly reinforces the myth of photographic

‘naturalness’: the scene *is there*, captured mechanically, not humanly (the mechanical is here a guarantee of objectivity).”¹⁰⁷ Although the photographic image is necessarily framed by the photographer, and is thereby not in fact an objective reflection of reality the implication of truth and validity is implied by the process of recording or re-presenting.

In Rosler’s photomontages this implication is discernable. The removal of obvious changes to the images which make up the individual montages, and the elimination of visible edges serve to create a smooth and coherent image. In addition, the low color contrast between the domestic or advertising imagery and the images of combat also serve to bind the images in a realistic manner. This lack of color contrast would have been emphasized in the original dissemination of the images at war protests and rallies, where the images were distributed as low cost, black and white photocopies.¹⁰⁸ This method of printing would have made the works appear even more similar to documentary photography of the type reproduced in newspapers. Even in the images as they are now seen, in the fine arts realm, most of the works from this series are constructed with images that are muted in color, moving towards gray scale even if they are in fact color images.

There are exceptions to this use of muted coloration, one of which is *Red Stripe Kitchen* where the brightly colored curving stripe on the wall, and the red counter tops add dynamism to the composition. However, even in this image, the contrast in color between the interior domestic space and the soldier positioned near the back wall is slight, increasing the possibility of belief in the truth presented by the image. The similar color value between the images of the interior and those of combat is clearly intentional.

In examining pages of *House Beautiful* magazine there is a wealth of available images that are highly and even garishly coloristic, yet the images which Rosler utilized appear somewhat dull and drained of color associating them to the combat images.

By creating photomontages which appear similar to documentary photographs, Rosler creates a liminal mythic reality in which the domestic space and the field of combat are melded together creating a destabilization of location. The viewer is forced to confront the reality of war, and is unsure of the location being depicted. It is unclear whether the domestic space, which is familiar to the viewer, has become the field of armed combat, or if the domestic spaces are in fact located in the field of combat in the nation of Vietnam. In addition to the confusion of location that results, the role of viewer is also subverted. The viewer's position in relation to the images is unclear, and thus the ability to either create a knowing and sympathetic distance, or to experience an empathetic recognition is disabled. Since the viewer cannot place the location of the image, they are unable to place themselves in relation to it. Like the instability of location, these works to create a volatile relationship between the image and the viewer in which a single interpretation or reaction is insufficient, and which necessitates a reconsideration of the positionality of the subject in relation to the images presented.

In addition to the conflation of spaces and the creation of a destabilized location, these images interrogate the truth of the photographic image itself. Images of combat during the Vietnam War were widely disseminated in the United States, both in print media and for the first time through the medium of television.¹⁰⁹ However, as Susan Sontag has argued, the photographic image itself typically creates a certain separation between the viewer and those being observed.¹¹⁰ Although the images of combat were

carefully framed to create a desired reality by purveyors of news media and by governmental organizations, the perception of the photographic image is one often associated with transparency and truth. Since the photograph as a medium must present a moment that in fact occurred, there is an expectation of reality and legibility implicit in the medium of photography, which is especially true of documentary photography.¹¹¹

The war in Vietnam was framed as distant and separate from the American domestic sphere by institutions of the mass media. Although Cold War ideology dictated the importance of military strength abroad and of liberal capitalist democracy both at home and abroad, the manner in which combat imagery was disseminated to the public placed a rigid distance between the realm of combat and the American domestic space.¹¹² In *Bringing the War Home: House Beautiful*, Rosler both interrogates and denies that separation. As Rosler states in regard to the impetus for creating the series, “I felt that people did not identify with the violence inflicted on others, so I needed to try to make people see what they already knew: that the "other" world over there, in Vietnam, is as real as 'our' world, over here... I felt that it was important to dispense with the imaginary split between our rights to life and comfort and the Vietnamese's lack of rights to anything, just because we had designated them as the enemy.”¹¹³

In addition, through the creation of images that are visually similar to documentary photographs, Rosler further destabilizes the implied truth of documentary images themselves. In creating photomontages that create a possible reality, she reveals the manipulation inherent in documentary photography as a medium.¹¹⁴ In so doing she exposes the possibility mediation, which is inherent in photography, while at the same time confronting the inadequacy of Cold War ideology. She also attacks the workings of

the news media. Additionally she denies the implied truth of images of the war in Vietnam as disseminated to the American people, here through images primarily found in *Life* magazine.

Works from the series which include human inhabitants, like *Cleaning the Drapes* and *Beauty Rest*, present the individuals as unconcerned with the change of location that results from the recombination of imagery. While this is expected given the source of the images, it also adds to the sense of cohesiveness expressed by the style of photomontage that Rosler employs. The lack of reaction from the subjects and the sensation of suspended movement, in combination with the removal of obvious edges between the various images, create a new and terrifying reality. Rather than drawing explicit attention to the material sources from which the images are drawn, a new actuality is created. By suspending the animation of the participants Rosler increases the visual similarity to vernacular photography. The relationship between the images is solidified, although the reality presented is strange and impossible.

This creation of a mythic or possible, yet strange and disconcerting reality, relates to the theory of the uncanny as described by Sigmund Freud as, “that species of the frightening that goes back to what was once well known and had long been familiar.”¹¹⁵ This theory particularly relates to the home, wherein expectations of safety and security are destroyed, and the space is made *unheimlich*, translated as uncanny or unhomely. Freud works to define the process by which an object or experience becomes uncanny by analyzing the etymological source of the word, as well as its opposite.¹¹⁶ This ideation has been explored in relationship to literature, and Anthony Vidler has compellingly applied it to the medium of architecture.¹¹⁷ One of the issues that has been expressed

within the rubric of the uncanny is the collision between expectations of the domestic sphere and reality.¹¹⁸ In relation to this collision, Vidler argues that the uncanny in architecture can be understood as, “a fundamental insecurity brought about by a lack of orientation...a sense of something new, foreign, and hostile invading an old, familiar, customary world.”¹¹⁹

While other works of photomontage reveal the mediation of culture, the cohesiveness of Rosler’s images lends itself to the experience of the uncanny in a unique manner. Something must be added,” Freud argues, “to the novel and the unfamiliar if it is to become uncanny.”¹²⁰ The intrusion of images of carnage and war into the space of the domestic represented in the works from Rosler’s series makes the familiar strange which is a crucial element of the experience of the uncanny. Rosler’s images encourage and experience of the uncanny because of their creation of a possible reality through the use of familiar imagery. “The uncanny,” according to Freud, “is in some way a species of the familiar.”¹²¹ The sense of the uncanny which seems to relate to the unease of insecure identification as well as to the invasion of strangeness into a familiar space is the result of the cohesive quality of the photomontages.

The clash of war and home in a manner that denies the act of their combination creates an uncanny, disconcerting and strange environment which subverts the viewer’s expectations. The photomontages from this series also relate to another aspect of the unhomely, which is the conflict in perceptions of interior domestic space, where the safety and security that is expected in the domestic sphere is altered in such a way that the home becomes a locus of sinister secrecy.¹²² This seems particularly relevant because of the frequent use of windows in the images that Rosler presents. This can be seen in

both images from the exterior of the domestic space which feature windows, and from the interior providing a view through windows.

The images from this series challenge the expectation of the interior, but also speak to the interior as secret, and interrogate the process of vision by complicating the view from, or into, the domestic space. Rosler's interrogation of Cold War ideology combats the security and safety promised by the domestic sphere, as a protection against the fear of nuclear war, and as a location where political instability is alleviated by secure gender roles, and the importance of the family as an emblem of safety. These ideas relating to the home are resolutely denied by the collision between the domestic space and combat imagery. Working in opposition to the safe, secure, and expected domestic space, a sinister and terrifying reality is created.

Rosler's use of photomontage in a manner which references vernacular or documentary photography, like that of Lewis Hine or like the amateur snapshot creates a destabilized image of the home. This destabilization can be understood to relate to the theorization of the uncanny and can be observed in many of the works from Rosler's series. The themes of disorientation, collapsing of spatial boundaries, and collision of ideology and reality are present in the majority of these photomontages. However, a detailed examination of *Tract House Soldier* and *Patio View* will assist in applying these ideas in a concrete manner to the works. Both of these works clearly exemplify this process, and serve as pertinent models for understanding the process of distance and disorientation created by the conflation of images of domesticity and combat in this series.

In *Tract House Soldier* the domestic space of the home, which carries an expectation of safety and security, is conflicted. The deserted quality of this dwelling gives it an eerie and discomfoting aspect. The location in which the house is depicted is unclear. While it appears to be a suburban tract house, it is represented as utterly isolated. Not only can no other homes be seen to the right or left, but the ability to view the space behind the home through the glass wall of the sunroom reveals that this is the only man-made structure within view. The closed doors, and lack of evidence of human occupation also conflicts with the expectation of apparent homecoming. The soldier appears to be returning to domestic life, however his back is turned to the dwelling and instead he gazes away from the domestic space and towards the viewer.

The location of the home itself is unclear. The lack of recognizable landmarks leaves the viewer unsure of the location in which this home is situated. While it seems perhaps more likely that this home is located in an American suburb, the lack of surrounding homes problematizes this designation. The presence of the soldier as the only human figure in work allows for a reading in which this work is in fact located in the field of combat. Perhaps instead of a peaceful American suburban neighborhood, this home is located in the field of combat, which in reference to Vietnam may also be supported by the lush landscape. Perhaps what is being depicted is in fact the moment of calm before armed conflict breaks through to surround this home with violence and chaos. The unhomely aspect of this work is clear in that it subverts the expectations of the domestic space, and in the manner in which what seems at first to be familiar is made foreign, strange, and menacing.

A similar reading can be conducted in regard to *Patio View*. In this work a black and white image of a patio frames a view of destruction and armed combat. Two metal chairs, with decorative curling metalwork below the arm rests, are situated as though inviting a prospective occupant. They are oriented so that they angle slightly towards each other, creating a sense of intimacy and of possible dialogue, but they also direct the users gaze outward toward the view visible between and in front of them. Curtains are drawn apart to frame the central image, towards which the orientation of the chairs directs the viewer's gaze. At the top of this framing and enclosing space scalloped decorations are visible reminiscent of a beach umbrella, or of the decoration often attached to circus tents. This decoration creates a festive sensibility, and also gives the view presented outside of this frame a carnival like quality.

Immediately in front of this partially enclosed patio is a brief stretch of trimmed shrubs and carefully manicured lawn. The position of the viewer, looking out from the interior of an enclosed, and presumably domestic space, gives a framed image a voyeuristic sensibility. The position of the viewer is unclear in this image, as they may be watching from within the interior space. However if this is the case then they themselves are positioned in the field of combat as viewers if not as participants. The lack of inhabitants in the foreground necessitates that the viewer position themselves in the place of the inhabitant, however there is no interaction between the active and horrifying external image and the calm and even festive patio area. This creates a sense of voyeurism which may seek to contest the act of observation of carnage in the United States during the Cold War period, both through print imagery and through the medium

of television, in which the viewing of military atrocity was conducted from within the safety of the domestic space.

In addition to the sense that the viewer is engaging in the act of vision unobserved, there is a sense of security that results from the pristine placement of furnishings, and the enclosing patio shade protecting the inhabitants from the heat and glare of the sun and from exposure to the elements. However that is completely repudiated by the image that confronts the viewer at the center of the work. An embattled scene is presented between the decorative patio curtains. Bodies, presumably of deceased victims of military aggression, lie almost centered in the foreground of the view created through the framing of the patio drapes. Two tanks roll down a wide tree lined boulevard on the left, and figures in combat attire crouch behind indicating that the conflict is ongoing. Although the coloration of this image is low contrast, it seems much more alive and real than the black and white image of the patio in the foreground.

Similar to the disjunction created in *Tract House Soldier* this work destabilizes both the expectation of the viewer, and fundamentally disrupts the security of a comfortable separation between here and there. Instead of the expected security and even beauty of the framed view from a patio, here the interior is placed so that the view from the patio intersects directly with the field of combat. The manner in which these disjunctive images are placed in dialogue creates a sense of the uncanny in regard to the confrontation between the familiar and the foreign. In addition to the manner in which what should be familiar is made strange, this work also corresponds to the alternate meaning of the uncanny in which something that is secret or private is revealed.¹²³ Freud stated, “the term ‘uncanny’ applies to everything that was intended to remain secret,

hidden away, and has come into the open.”¹²⁴ This image relates to the theory of the uncanny in its transformation of the familiar into something terrifying, but also in that it reveals the artificiality of the separation between war zone and domestic space that was supported by governmental institutions and maintained by the mass media.¹²⁵ This is even more disturbing because of the manner in which these images are composed within the photomontage. The images are combined in such a way that instead of appearing as fragments drawn from conflicting sources they create a liminal and yet frighteningly realistic space which the viewer is forced to confront, a dynamic which is repeated in the majority of the works from this series.

In both *Tract House Soldier* and *Patio View* the dislocation between the viewer’s expectations and the presented image is evident, associating these works to the theorization of the uncanny. These works exemplify a fundamental fragmentation of space and location expressed in many of the works from this series. In these images, the location of the homes, and of the viewer in relation to the images, is conflicted. The architecture suggests that these are American homes; however the inclusion of military imagery negates their secure identification within suburban America. In addition, the act of observation itself is disrupted. Certainly the viewer looks out of the window, or gazes toward the small tract home, but in observing, the viewer must also be observed. This relates to both components of Freud’s theorization of the uncanny. The familiar is made terrifying and strange through the conflation of domestic space and scenes of military combat, and the separation between hero and enemy is revealed as artificial revealing the connections between the two. Rosler’s images work to destabilize secure placement and

deny the viewer a comfortable separation between their own recognizable domestic space, and the combat of the Vietnam War.

However, the very quality of simplicity and reality in Rosler's use of photomontage also allows a space for the viewer to feel desire for the objects or images of the domestic space that are being presented. This quality of recognition draws the viewer into the works, which upon closer inspection reveal the disruptive and strange quality of the images. This insertion of familiar elements of popular culture allows the viewer to recognize themselves and their desires and experiences in Cold War culture within these images. This makes the discovery of the disjunctive quality of the photomontages far more powerful, since the viewer has already recognized and accepted the attraction to the domestic sphere, representative of the pinnacle of achievement under the rubric of Cold War ideology. Thus the viewer is receptive to the conflation of imagery, and the critique of that very society that results from closer inspection of the works. Through the technique of photomontage, Rosler draws together popular imagery, which pertains to recognizable elements of Cold War American ideology, in a manner conveying the appearance of photography to critique the very ideology that it presents.

Notes

⁹⁰Evans and Gohl, 10.

⁹¹Evans and Gohl, 10.

⁹² Maude Lavin, *Cut with the Kitchen Knife*, 23.

⁹³ This work was not created for the fine arts context, but was utilized in the context of political opposition to the policies of the Nazi Party.

⁹⁴ During this period German artists including Klaus Staeck and Jürgen Holtfreter were also creating photomontages which critiqued current political issues, often these related American politics particularly critical of involvement in Vietnam. However these bear greater similarity to the photomontages created by Dada artists than to Rosler's work. They often create an image that ironic conflates recognizable images, and often include text captions related to the images.

⁹⁵ Georg Lukács, quoted in Evans and Gohl, 33.

⁹⁶ Anne Massey, *The Independent Group: Modernism and Mass Culture in Britain, 1945-1959*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995) 51. In addition to the interest in popular culture, Massey also delineates the close relationship between the Independent Group and the Institute of Contemporary Arts, and their "uncritical appreciation of new technology..." 49.

⁹⁷ Massey, 88.

⁹⁸ David E. Brauer, "British Pop Art: 1956-1966, a Documentary Essay," in *Pop Art: U.S./U.K. Connections, 1956-1966* eds. David E. Brauer, Jim Edwards, Christopher Finch, Walter Hopps (Ostfildern-Ruit, Germany: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2001.), 60.

⁹⁹ Massey, 105.

¹⁰⁰ William R. Kaizen, "Richard Hamilton's Tabular Image," *October* vol. 94 The Independent Group (Autumn 2000), 116.

¹⁰¹ Kaizen, 116.

¹⁰² Kaizen, 118.

¹⁰³ Kaizen, 125.

¹⁰⁴ Benjamin Buchloh, "A Conversation with Martha Rosler," in *Positions in the Life World* ed. de Zegher. The issue of moving away from Abstract Expressionism in artistic practice arises during a discussion of Rosler's early work.

¹⁰⁵ Rosler's photomontages are created through a combining of images that are unaltered from their original sources. These montages were then photographed and reproduced. In their original dissemination the images were printed as black and white photocopies, while the images that are now available within the fine arts realm are chromogenic prints. Both the New Series and the original were printed in editions of 10+2 for their dissemination in the fine arts realm. Information gained from correspondence with the artist as well as from the Museum of Contemporary Photography in Chicago.

¹⁰⁶ Walter Benjamin, "A Short History of Photography," in *Classic Essays in Photography*. ed. Alan Trachtenberg. (New Haven: Leete's Island Books, 1980.), 202.

¹⁰⁷ Roland Barthes, “Rhetoric of the Image,” in *Classic Essays in Photography*. ed. Alan Trachtenberg. (New Haven: Leete’s Island Books, 1980.), 278.

¹⁰⁸ Personal correspondence with the artist.

¹⁰⁹ Edward P. Morgan addresses the increasing importance of visual representations in journalism, and the manner in which the new medium of television increased the journalistic drive to use images to communicate in Chapter Two, and the specific use of images of Vietnam in Chapter Five.

¹¹⁰ Susan Sontag, *On Photography*, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1973.),6

¹¹¹ Sontag, 106.

¹¹² See Edward P. Morgan’s analysis of the spheres of media discourse, 91-116.

¹¹³ Personal correspondence with the artist.

¹¹⁴ André Bazin, “The Ontology of the Photographic Image,” in *Classic Essays in Photography*. ed. Alan Trachtenberg. (New Haven: Leete’s Island Books, 1980.)Bazin notes the effect of the photographic image in revealing an image of the natural world, “that we neither know nor can know...” although this statement is made with the intention of revealing the possibilities of photography, it also exposes the manner in which the photographic image alters the process of viewing, creating a frame for understanding that while taking on the appearance of reality is in fact distorted. 242.

¹¹⁵ Sigmund Freud, “The Uncanny,” in *The Uncanny*, trans. David McLintock, (Penguin Classics: London, 2003. “Das Unheimlich” first published in *Imago*, 1919). 124.

¹¹⁶ Freud notes that the opposite term to unheimlich is heimlich or homey. Freud analyzes the use of this word in various sources with the resulting conception of the term as being used most often to describe the domestic space with the connotation of warmth or security, but also of privacy and secrecy. 125-132.

¹¹⁷ Anthony Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny*(Cambridge: MIT University Press, 1992).

¹¹⁸ Vidler, 17.

¹¹⁹Vidler, 23.

¹²⁰ Freud, 125.

¹²¹ Freud, 134-135.

¹²²Vidler, 24.

¹²³ Freud, “The Uncanny,” 132.

¹²⁴ Freud, 132.

¹²⁵ Edward P. Morgan's analysis of the spheres of media discourse emphasizes this separation, see Chapter 5, 91-116.

CHAPTER V

NEW SERIES, ORIGINAL METHODS

In 2004, Martha Rosler began work on a continuation of *Bringing the War Home* using mass media imagery related to the war in Iraq. In seeking to illuminate the relationship between commercial consumption and the impetus for American military intervention she utilized a similar methodology as in the original series. In the continuation, images of interiors, or advertising images, often related to either technology or fashion, are joined to imagery of combat in Iraq, of maimed veterans, or of victims of the military conflict. The images are combined using the same cut-and-paste technique as used in the original series, and the content and design of the photomontages related to the Iraq war are similar to those created for the original series. Rosler has stated that this reuse of the techniques from the original series was intentional, and was meant to highlight the striking similarities between American military action in Iraq and American involvement in Vietnam.¹²⁶ An examination of the technique used to create the works contained within the two parts of the series, methods through which they were disseminated, and socio-political context in which they were produced will reveal the relationship between the original series from 1967-1972 and its continuation begun in 2004.

While the photomontages created for these two series bear many similarities, a careful formal analysis also reveals subtle differences. In *Roadside Ambush* from the original series the main image is a largely unaltered domestic interior. This image was originally displayed in *House Beautiful* on two separate pages; here the two separate images are carefully positioned so that the break between the two is nearly invisible (fig.

25). This relates to Rosler's practice in many works from the original series of disguising the process of photomontage to create a cohesive image, reminiscent of documentary photography. The domestic interior that is presented to the viewer seems to be of a modern ski lodge. One of the most prominent objects in the image is a large, pure white, sculpture of a hunting trophy, in the form of the disembodied head of a stag. This invasion of sanctified violence into the domestic space of recreation is a highly effective image of the taming of violence in the media and recalls associations to war. A woven basket beside the crisp white sofa filled with glossy magazines, recalls both the source of the image, but also the act of consumption itself.

A prone figure is inserted into this domestic space, lying curled on her side with knees drawn up and one arm covering her face. The figure's attire indicates that she is a civilian casualty rather than a combatant. Her presence confounds the peace and comfort of the space. The figure is positioned to align with the floor plane of the domestic interior, giving the impression again of a single image. She is positioned directly over the line at which the images are joined. This works to further disguise the joining of the images upon first glance, and also draws attention to their manipulation upon careful consideration. The alignment of the figure with the ground plane of the domestic space, and the carefully disguised seam between the two images speaks to the importance of creating a cohesive image, as discussed at length in the previous chapter, and works to create a sense of reality seen in the majority of the photomontages included in the original series.

Similarly in *Gladiators* from the new series, the main image depicts a domestic interior. A strictly frontal image of a living area with a modern taupe colored sofa at the

center. A thick-piled cream colored carpet spreads across the floor, beneath which tile of a nearly identical color is visible. Prints of combatants are inserted into this image of domestic affluence, again in a manner very similar to that employed in *Roadside Ambush*, disrupting the desirable effect of the space. However, unlike *Roadside Ambush*, and the majority of the works from the original series, the images of war are far more numerous and their effect is more blatant. Three images are montaged onto the wall at the back of the image, which is itself an image that bears clear signs of manipulation both in terms of its coloration and as the result of a broad stripe of cream at the top of the image with a ragged edge, which Rosler has made intentionally apparent. These images take on the role of artwork decorating the interior space.

The largest image, which is also the most central, placed directly behind the sofa, depicts soldiers dressed in attire reminiscent of Roman gladiators. Presumably this image is the source of the work's title. This central image of the war conveys a festival atmosphere with the soldiers displaying a celebratory sensibility. This image is one taken of the First Division, United States Marines staging a chariot race with confiscated Iraqi horses outside of their base near Fallujah, on November 6, 2004 (fig. 26).¹²⁷ The battle which followed this display resulted in the deaths of 51 United States soldiers and 425 soldiers injured, but the chariot race which preceded it was not widely publicized in the news media.¹²⁸ The image is positioned within the composition in such a way that its role is unclear. Perhaps it represents a window through which the viewer is able to see the marines' performance. Conversely it is entirely possible that this is a still image placed upon the wall as a decorative addition.

Two other images are also placed on the wall of the space. The smaller of the two depicts a huddled group of people with their hands bound, which is one of the widely publicized images of the treatment of insurgents at Abu Ghraib (fig. 27). The placement of these images on the wall of the domestic space may speak to the entertainment value of the war. Conversely, given the relatively sanctified role of art in contemporary society, their placement may be an indictment of current social values. The edges of the images display clear evidence of manipulation. They have a feathered appearance reminiscent of gestural brushwork, increasing the consideration of these images as objects of interior decoration. This again speaks to the presentation of the montaged images as works of art, but also serves as a clear indication of the alteration of the image, unlike the seamless quality of cohesion that is apparent in the works from the original series.

In addition to the images that decorate the walls of the domestic space, two tableaux disrupt the foreground of the image. At the left side of the image a police officer restrains a male figure with plastic handcuffs. Several more sets of these plastic handcuffs hang at his belt, seeming to indicate that more individuals will be, or should be, subdued. At the extreme front of the image, are two soldiers in combat dress including helmets, fatigues, and sunglasses. Each holds a sleek black rifle as though poised to begin firing at any moment. The figure nearest the front of the image faces and points his weapon out of the image directly towards the viewer. This is both threatening and works to eliminate the protective distance that has been established between domestic safety and foreign conflict. To some extent it also causes the viewer to question their assumptions about those living in the nation of Iraq, and necessitates a moment of empathy in which the viewer might imagine themselves in the field of combat, threatened by military force.

Much of this is similar to the technique and visual effect of *Roadside Ambush* and other works from the original series. However, in *Gladiators* Rosler uses more brightly coloristic images and the manner in which they are combined reflect their manipulation more directly. This is common in works from the continuation of the series. Many of these images are more visually dynamic than those of the original, and seem to convey a greater sense of both action and energy. While this may merely reflect a change in print media over the three decades which separate the two parts of the series it also seems likely to relate to the changing context of the works.

The differences in visual style between the two series, while slight, are significant, and the role of the added images in the composition is less precise. The more obvious appearance of manipulation and higher tone coloration gives the works greater aesthetic impact and also draws greater attention to the manipulation of images, but reduces the sense of the creation of an uncanny reality seen in the original series. Although Rosler uses a low tech process to combine these images, the clear visual reference to manipulation draws attention to the mediated quality of the source images. This seems to relate to Rosler's stated intentions as an artist to, "provide some kind of critical distance, some kind of critical consciousness, so that when people come away from whatever it is I've done, they have some sense of a new apprehension of our own context, the possibility of a new view, or the wherewithal to make a judgment about meaning and value, and social responsibility."¹²⁹ Both iterations of *Bringing the War Home: House Beautiful* promote this type of reaction however there are clear differences, which, although slight, change the meaning of the works.

While the change in visual style and technique is relatively minor, the mode of dissemination used for the two sets of works is sharply divergent. Images from the original series were distributed outside of the museum and gallery context, while those created as part of the new series were always intended to be displayed in the realm of the fine arts. In fact, the photomontages from the original series did not enter the fine art context until nearly two decades after their creation.¹³⁰ This difference contributes to a consideration of the original series as a type of artistic activism, rather than as politically conscious art work. The original series was positioned within the sphere of antiwar protests, while the images from the new series are experienced within the already sanctified context of the museum or gallery space.

As mentioned in Chapter II, the original series was distributed to the public primarily in the form of anti-war flyers and in underground journals. Rosler herself has addressed her interest in circumventing the context of museum in her written work, and many of the works of art that she has created seek to operate outside of the fine arts context.¹³¹ Rosler has argued that museums and gallery spaces are often implicated in limiting the ability of artists to show innovative and, particularly, politically radical work.¹³² She critiques these institutions for being conservative in relation to both the political climate and being tied to popular trends in art making, at least in part as a result of their reliance on governmental funding and public opinion.¹³³ The distribution of the original series outside of the fine art context fits with the general trend in artistic activism at the time in which the series was created and also aligns with Rosler's stated suspicion of the museum and gallery context, seeking instead a direct intervention in the public sphere.

In contrast to the avoidance of the fine art context that Rosler displayed in disseminating the works from the original series, the new series was immediately displayed in gallery and museum spaces.¹³⁴ While Rosler has stated that this was intended to enable the images to be seen by a wider audience, her creation of works for a gallery context also corresponds to her statement, “It’s no secret that the art world is currently market driven...there’s no question that the art world is the major receiving ground of my work, and I’d be foolish to pretend otherwise. I don’t intend to “abandon” the art world. I don’t want to jump ship. But I don’t want to be rocked by every swell and undertow, and I don’t intend to follow the fads.”¹³⁵ This change in context reveals disillusionment with the possibility of truly operating exclusively in the public sphere.

Rosler has stated, “There are so many more possibilities within the art world now and so many fewer in any alternative mode, except the internet, where the new works are in fact available.”¹³⁶ It may also relate to the relatively limited public protest associated with the war in Iraq, as opposed to the vociferous and active antiwar protests associated with the Vietnam War. The decision to place the new series directly within the realm of the gallery, seems to operate as a methodology through which the new series can work to reach audiences which are not currently active in protesting the war in Iraq, and because of the limited sphere of public activism associated with the Iraq war, it might also be understood as the only forum remaining for artistic protest of governmental activity. However in placing the works within the fine art context, Rosler’s series is more likely to be seen by a more affluent audience, and the intended message of social engagement is less active in this context

While the method which was originally used to disseminate the two parts of the series were significantly different, the materials and technique, as well as the resulting images, are remarkably similar, which Rosler claims is completely intentional.¹³⁷ Her stated impetus for beginning the new series is in fact her perception of the similarities between the two American military interventions.¹³⁸ Her intention in creating the continuation of the series was the desire to expose, once again the mythic separation of hero and villain, and of here and there. She also, again, indicts the public in complicity with the war, and confronts the viewer with the similarities between the two conflicts, however given the change in setting the reception of that message is certainly divergent.

Rosler is certainly not alone in her observation of these similarities, in fact the entirety of the winter 2008 issue of the journal *October*, was dedicated to a questionnaire distributed to artists and academics asking them to explore the manner in which artistic response to the Iraq War differed from the manner in which artists responded to the war in Vietnam. As Benjamin Buchloh stated in his introduction to the questionnaire, “The general assumption is that the rallies and protests in 2003, global in scope, were modeled in large part on those of the Vietnam era. Yet, as public opinion has become more and more opposed to the war, the demonstrations of that opinion seem to have stalled; no longer just timid, they have become tepid.”¹³⁹ While this is interesting in regard to the perceived need of politically engaged artistic response, it is also important to note the late date of this issue, nearly five years after the United States’ invasion of Iraq.

Through the responses to this questionnaire Buchloh hoped to investigate the differences between the two strategies of antiwar protest, and to illuminate the manner in which differences in culture, society, and activism have created a less engaged public in

regard to protesting the war in Iraq. The implication of this type of investigation is that through an understanding of the methodology of protest utilized during the Vietnam War, and in understanding the differences in context, a more effective solution can be found. This idea of the reuse of successful strategies for antiwar activism resonates strongly with Rosler's revival of technique and subject in the continuation of *Bringing the War Home*. However this reutilization is somewhat problematic.

Rosler herself was one of the respondents to this questionnaire, and her responses emphasize both the connections between the two conflicts and the importance of public protest.¹⁴⁰ In regard to the importance of public demonstration, Rosler stated, "The most effective action, to my mind, is always the street demonstration and march ...As in the 1960s, people these days are regularly informed that street protests are ancient business, old hat, and useless but as usual these actions are exactly what command the attention of governments...."¹⁴¹ Rosler also delineates her involvement with various activist groups opposed to the war in Iraq including Artists Against the War.¹⁴² While Rosler response demonstrates her own continued commitment to activism and to protest she also notes the lack of mass action and demonstration in reaction to American military intervention in Iraq.¹⁴³ She argues that the limited active response is in part the result of the lower total number of soldiers serving in Iraq than in Vietnam, as well as the result of the increasing use of electronic communication.¹⁴⁴ While Rosler claims that the most effective activism is that which is conducted in the public sphere, her understanding the decreased participation in that sphere may in part explain her dissemination of the new series in the realm of the gallery and museum.

Other respondents to this questionnaire included Claire Bishop, Rosalyn Deutsch, Hans Haacke, Lucy Lippard, Raymond Pettibon, and Catherine de Zegher, among others. In all fifty artists and scholars responded to Buchloh's questionnaire. Many of the respondents reflected on the lack of public activism in response to the war in Iraq, and considered the possibility of mobilizing the techniques of the 1960s and 1970s to protest current governmental positions. However, many others point to the vast changes in context and socio-political situation. They note the increased control of imagery by governmental agencies and the complexity of global engagement in contemporary society. Many argued that because of these transformations a simple resuscitation of former activist strategies is neither possible nor desirable in response to the current situation.

The manner in which the war in Iraq has been framed by institutions of the government does reveal some similarities to the war in Vietnam. Perhaps most importantly the war in Iraq has been framed as both necessitating military intervention for strategic purposes and to safeguard a way of life. This manner of framing military intervention can be seen in Charlotte Beers, George Bush II's first appointee as Undersecretary of State, description of the 9/11 attacks, which led to the War on Terror and eventually the Iraq War. She states, "We need to become better at communicating the intangibles, the behavior, the emotions that reside in lofty words like democracy... this is a war about a way of life and fundamental beliefs and values ..."¹⁴⁵ The stakes that are framed in this statement go far beyond the need for military intervention in a foreign nation, but cut to the heart of the "American way of life". This level of importance attached to military intervention seems eerily similar to the rhetoric that was used to

justify continued military interventions during the Cold Period, including the one in Vietnam.

The two military interventions are also similar in that they each represent a single location of active combat within a larger conflict. Vietnam was not the sole site of American military intervention related to the Cold War, just as the war in Iraq is only one locus of the use of military force in the war on terror which has been used to justify other zones of combat. In addition, visual imagery of both the war in Vietnam and the War in Iraq were disseminated to the American people through the medium of television creating the perception of transparency. At the same time, both military operations were communicated to the American people through tightly controlled spheres of legitimate media discourse. Additionally both purportedly sought to spread liberal capitalist democracy to supposedly oppressed nations.

However, while similarities may be drawn between these two military interventions they differ significantly. Perhaps most meaningful is the exponential increase in the use of mass media to disseminate information, particularly visual information. While this might seem likely to increase the public's perception and understanding of the actuality of combat, it has rather worked to obscure the reality of the war. Instead of illustrating an actually occurring reality, the presentation of the war in the media forms an illusory representation that has little connection to the reality of combat. Working from the framework of Marxist theory, Jean Baudrillard has argued that in contemporary society the image has been completely divorced from reality. He continues by stating that rather than external reality being masked or altered through media

depiction, in the current state of culture there is in fact no objective or tangible reality. He refers to this state of media reality as the simulacra.

Media depictions of the war in Iraq could be related to this conception of the simulacra in which, “it is no longer a question of imitation, nor duplication, nor even parody. It is a question of substituting the signs of the real for the real, that is to say an operation of deterring every real process via its operational double.”¹⁴⁶ Operating as a simulation of war, the media’s use of imagery creates a counterfeit reality that, while appearing authentic, has little relationship to any external experience. Although Baudrillard’s argument that there is in fact no external reality is somewhat problematic, his theory is helpful in understanding the disconnect between the conception of the war that is conveyed through media depictions within the United States and the reality of combat within Iraq.

While there is no doubt that combat did in fact occur, the reality of the war as presented to the American public through live news feed or the observations of embedded journalists, although carrying an implication truth or transparency has little if any relationship to this reality. The imaged reality of the war, presented through the mass media, is a simulacra rather than a representation of an actual situation existing outside of this depiction. This creation of a counterfeit or artificial imaginary of the military conflict in Iraq may also in part explain the nostalgic understanding of activism employed during the Vietnam War and its possible application towards effective opposition to the war in Iraq. As Baudrillard has noted, “When the real is no longer what it was, nostalgia assumes its full meaning.”¹⁴⁷

In addition, the vicissitudes in reasoning for the invasion and subsequent occupation of Iraq problematize any clear understanding of the war in Iraq. The impetus for war in Iraq was alternately framed as the result of an ostensible connection to terrorists in the wake of 9/11, as a pre-emptive strike against Saddam Hussein's possession of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), and finally as a mission intended to free Iraqi citizens from the repression of a despotic government.¹⁴⁸ This obfuscation by government officials can easily be associated to Baudrillard's analysis of the Gulf War of the 1990s where his statement, "See them become confused in explanations, outdo themselves in justifications, and lose themselves in technical details," could easily have been made in response to governmental rhetoric describing the war in Iraq.¹⁴⁹

Indeed much of Baudrillard's analysis of the Gulf War can be convincingly applied to the war in Iraq. Particularly relevant is his analysis of war as an expression of deterrence, and of the war as symbolic or non-war, "which can no longer devour the enemy because it is incapable of conceiving enemy as worth being challenged or annihilated."¹⁵⁰ When examined in this way the reasoning for the war becomes less important than the symbolic or simulated effect of the expression of governmental power. In contrast, the Vietnam War, the reasoning for which may have been misguided and which certainly was not effective in achieving its expressly intended result, did maintain a consistent ideological position. In addition although the actual combat was conducted against Vietnamese guerilla fighters, the Vietnam War was conceived as being conducted in opposition to the corrosive influence of the Soviet Union under the rubric of the Cold War, certainly a worthy opponent during this period. Buchloh, while drawing a direct comparison between the two campaigns is also careful to note, "Comparing the protest

strategies of the Vietnam era to those of today is not to insist upon a comparability between the wars, nor is it to propose that we can apply the lessons of the prior indiscriminately to the later one. It is, however, to insist that we acknowledge the continuing importance of the Vietnam War.”¹⁵¹ While, Buchloh would like to understand the correlations and divergence between artistic responses to the two military interventions, he is careful to note that while similarities in both impetus and response are evident, a conflation of the two events is unwise.

The attempt to understand artistic response, specifically in relation to activism after the period of social and political activism in the 1960s and early 1970s, is called by Rosalind Deutsch, “left melancholy.”¹⁵² A term she borrows from Walter Benjamin. In looking at the idealized view that many seem to express in regard to protest movements associated with the Vietnam War, she sees a desire to return to that period of artistic activism. However, she cautions that such idealization is dangerous. She has argued that, “Antiwar cultural criticism... often uses the urgency of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars to legitimize a return to totalizing political analysis ... (that ignores) the role played by totalizing images in producing and maintaining heroic, which is to say, warlike subjects.”¹⁵³ Martha Rosler’s reuse of visual style and subject matter, as well as in the text of her own response to the questionnaire published in *October*, may be understood to correlate to this idea of “left melancholy.”

Given the ideological instability of governmental reasoning for military intervention in Iraq, and the heavily mediated quality of the visual material disseminated to the public, the feasibility of conducting a critique of the current situation through the combination of disparate images must be questioned. Rosler’s photomontages do

continue to speak to the separation of spheres of legitimate discourse in mainstream media. However, it is possible that the current situation has become too complex to be revealed through such a simple procedure. The separation of hero and enemy and domestic and warzone, while still valid, does not seem to adequately address the complexity of the situation. It no longer seems possible that revealing these connections is enough to effectively combat the confusion of reality and of intention that accompanied the war in Iraq, which may also have contributed to the lack of vociferous opposition in the public sphere.

Although perhaps not equally effective both iterations of *Bringing the War Home* are clearly politically motivated or at least politically engaged. However the differences between the two in their dissemination and context, necessitate that they be considered in regard to their operation as political art or artistic activism. While these two terms are often conflated, Lucy Lippard has argued that, “although ‘political’ and ‘activist’ artists are often the same people, ‘political’ art tends to socially *concerned* and ‘activist’ art tends to be socially *involved*”¹⁵⁴ Working from Lippard’s designation, Amy Mullin has argued that political art should be understood to designate, “art that explores political subject matter, but is not made in a way that involves political action. ‘Activist art’ also explores political topics but is distinguished from political art in its greater concern with the politics involved in both the creation and the reception of the art.”¹⁵⁵ In thinking about the two series in this way, the original is clearly an example of activist art while the continuation is more closely connected to Mullin’s definition of political art. While this distinction is important in understanding the operation of these works, both sets continue to engage viewers in a dialogue denying the separation of domesticity and war,

and seek to engage the viewer, “on both emotional and cognitive levels, a response to both forms and ideas,” which Mullin argues defines the operation of either activist or political art.¹⁵⁶

Rosler’s resuscitation of the series as a critical response to the war in Iraq must also be evaluated in terms of its effect on the viewer and of its ability to change political perceptions. In terms of the effectiveness of the two series in their role as antiwar art, it is probable that the new series does not have the same powerful influence as the original series. In part, this is likely to be the result of the placement of the works within the fine art context. Theoretician Jacques Rancière has investigated the aesthetic quality of politics as well as the political influence of artistic creation in several essays. In his writing, Rancière relates the political efficacy of art to its ability to disrupt the idea of consensus in terms of a cohesive political subject. He has argued, “art has to leave the art world in order to be effective in ‘real life’”¹⁵⁷ He claims that in part this is necessitated by the framing effect created by the fine arts institution itself, in the form of either the gallery or of the museum. The frame that is created by the art world creates what he terms an “aesthetic distance,” which enables a consideration of the visual or aesthetic properties of a specific work of art, but also limits the extent to which the meaning of a work of art can directly affect the viewer, especially in a political or activist context.¹⁵⁸

The placement of the new series within the art world context disables the direct and immediate relationship that would have been possible in the experience of the original series. In addition, Rancière also claims that, “Art and politics each define a form of dissensus, a dissensual re-configuration of the common experience of the sensible...if there is a politics of aesthetics, it lies in the practices and modes of visibility

of art that re-configures the fabric of sensory experience.”¹⁵⁹ Thus the politics of aesthetics would operate by fundamentally challenging received notions of visibility, and make visible a new understanding of political or social contexts.

In thinking about political art in this manner, Rosler’s original series can be understood to operate within the paradigm of politically effective art which Rancière elucidates. This is true not only because of the strict avoidance of the context of the art world, and thereby the aesthetic distance from the object that this space creates, but perhaps more importantly because the series conveyed a rupture with received ideologies in regard to the reasons for combat, and role of the observer in relation to Cold War society. However, using Rancière’s theoretical lens, the new series must be understood as less effective as a work of artistic activism. Not only is the new series immersed in the art world context, and thus subject to the aesthetic distance that this forum requires, but it must also be understood as less effective in rupturing widely held beliefs in regard to society and culture.

The war in Vietnam existed within the paradigm of Cold War culture, which although restrictive and rigid also corresponded to a period of economic affluence within the United States. This served to eliminate economic instability as an immediate critique, and in fact made support for governmental ideologies more attractive. Additionally the Vietnam War was framed by American governmental institutions and the mass media in such a way that it disguised the economic concerns which connected the foreign war to consumer culture. In contrast, the connections between consumption and military intervention are much more transparent in regard to the war in Iraq. Disillusionment with governmental institutions, and the connection between military intervention in the Middle

East and the needs of capitalist institutions, namely the availability of oil reserves, is much more broadly comprehended in regard to the war in Iraq, as is the awareness of media manipulation.¹⁶⁰

In addition, while the war in Vietnam was televised giving a perception of transparency and while that depiction was also subject to governmental control and manipulation it was not nearly as comprehensive as the current use of images to communicate seemingly accurate information, nor was access to dissenting information as readily available.. Edward P. Morgan notes, that media and governmental narrative regarding the position of the United States, as related to military intervention in Iraq, is strikingly similar to that which shaped Cold War discourse.¹⁶¹ However he claims that, “although mass media culture continues to be dominated by the same combination of boundaried discourse and commercially driven imagery ... the Internet provides its users with access to information and interpretation from outside the boundaries of mass media discourse.”¹⁶²

The ability to access information via the internet does enable a forum for the communication of dissent. At the same time access to such a wide variety of conflicting narratives create a sense of confusion and doubt as to the veracity of disseminated information. In addition public awareness of the prevalence of image manipulation leads to a greater level of skepticism in regard to visual imagery at the same time as access to images is increased. As a result Rosler’s combination of images of domesticity and of consumption with images of combat in Iraq, are less disruptive and shocking than the combination of similar images in the original series. In addition, as previously discussed, the tenuous relationship between disseminated imagery related to the War in Iraq and

external reality gives the creation of yet another mythic reality less visual or cognitive impact.

However, while less effective in altering the viewer's perceptions of the war in Iraq, the works from the new series do illuminate the connections between the wars in Iraq and Vietnam. They also deny the acceptance of a totalizing view of war that according to Rosalyn Deutsch, "gives full play to grandiose fantasies of invincibility...understood as an orientation toward ideals of wholeness that disavow vulnerability."¹⁶³ On a very basic level the fragmentation of imagery in the medium of photomontage denies this type of totalizing view of war. More importantly is the combination of images of combat, or of celebratory masculinity with images of torture or of suppressed dissent, placed within a domestic context that reveals a multiplicity of perspectives and the subjective nature of experience.

The new series also works to reveal the effect of what Benjamin Buchloh describes as "a reliance on role models of conformity...that precludes even the awareness that contesting and challenging given political and socio-economic conditions was once an integral element of subjecthood."¹⁶⁴ Thus, while the works from the new series may not have acted to shift or disrupt entrenched ideologies to the same extent as did the works from the original series, they do work to remind the viewer of the problematic nature of war as a totalizing force, and of the importance and necessity of dissent in the political sphere. Both the original and the new series effectively demonstrate the fracturing of the political subject, and deny the totalizing ideation of war through the conflation of the domestic space and images of war which deny the comfortable separation of here and there, and work to create rupture with accepted rhetoric.

Notes

- ¹²⁶ Martha Rosler, "A Conversation Between Martha Rosler and Maria Hlavajova: Deconstructing the Allegories," in *Concerning War*, eds. Maria Hlavajova and Jill Winder (Rotterdam: BAK, 2006), 174.
- ¹²⁷ Edward Harris, November 7, 2004, "Marines Break Pre-Battle Tension with chariot race" originally published at http://www2.ljworld.com/news/2004/nov/07/marines_break_prebattle.
- ¹²⁸ Information found at, http://www.military.com/NewContent/0,13190,NI_0105_Fallujah-P2,00.html, accessed March 27, 2012.
- ¹²⁹ Rosler, *Interventions and Provocations*, 11.
- ¹³⁰ Susan L. Stoops, *Worcester Museum Catalogue*. 3.
- ¹³¹ Martha Rosler, "Lookers, Buyers, Dealers, and Makers," in *Decoys and Disruptions*, 28-30.
- ¹³² Martha Rosler, "Video: Shedding the Utopian Moment," in *Decoys and Disruptions*, 55.
- ¹³³ Rosler, "Video: Shedding the Utopian Moment," in *Decoys and Disruptions*, 55.
- ¹³⁴ Among other locations these works were displayed in the Worcester Museum of Art in 2007 in an exhibition of both the original series and the continuation, *The New Museum* in 2008 in *Collage: the Unmonumental Picture*, at the Emory Visual Arts Gallery in 2008, and in an exhibition entitled *Great Power* at the Mitchell-Innes gallery in New York, by whom Rosler is represented.
- ¹³⁵ Rosler, *Interventions and Provocations*, 17.
- ¹³⁶ Martha Rosler, "A Conversation Between Martha Rosler and Maria Hlavajova," 176.
- ¹³⁷ Rosler, "A Conversation Between Martha Rosler and Maria Hlavajova," 174.
- ¹³⁸ Stoops, 7.
- ¹³⁹ Benjamin Buchloh, "Questionnaire: In What Ways Have Artists, Academics, and Cultural Institutions Responded to the U.S.- Led Invasion and Occupation of Iraq?" *October* vol.123 (Winter 2008), 6.
- ¹⁴⁰ Martha Rosler, "Questionnaire: In What Ways Have Artists, Academics, and Cultural Institutions Responded to the U.S.- Led Invasion and Occupation of Iraq?" *October* vol.123 (Winter 2008), 127-130.

¹⁴¹ Rosler, *October*, 127.

¹⁴² Rosler, *October*, 127.

¹⁴³ Rosler has also delineated her opinion in regard to the importance of direct political action in terms of protest in other interviews including her participation in a conversation with other artists published in *Who Cares*, Anne Pasternak and Doug Ashford, et al. (New York: Creativetime, 2006), 29.

¹⁴⁴ Rosler, *October*, 127,130.

¹⁴⁵ Charlotte Beers quoted in Belmonte, 181.

¹⁴⁶ Jean Baudrillard, "The Precession of Simulacra," in *Simulacra and Simulation* trans. Sheila Faria Glaser (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1994), 2.

¹⁴⁷ Baudrillard, "The Precession of Simulacra," 6.

¹⁴⁸ W. Lance Bennett, Regina Lawrence, and Sterling Livingston, *When the Press Fails* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), ix, 13, 19.

¹⁴⁹ Jean Baudrillard, "The Gulf War Did Not Take Place," in Mark Poster, 238.

¹⁵⁰ Baudrillard, "The Gulf War Did Not Happen," 233.

¹⁵¹ Buchloh, *October*, 7.

¹⁵² Rosalyn Deutsch, *Hiroshima After Iraq* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 2.

¹⁵³ Deutsch, 4.

¹⁵⁴ Lucy Lippard, "Trojan Horses: Activist Art and Power," in *Art Theory and Criticism: An Anthology of Formalist Avant-Garde, Contextualist and Post-Modernist Thought*. ed. Sally Everett. (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 1991.), 193.

¹⁵⁵ Amy Mullin, "Feminist Art and the Political Imagination," *Hypatia* vol. 18, no. 4, (Fall/Winter 2003), 191.

¹⁵⁶ Mullin, 203. While not in reference to Rosler's work, Mullin's description of the operation of activist art through engaging in a dialogue rather than creating discrete message or slogan can be understood to apply to Rosler's work.

¹⁵⁷ Jacques Rancière, *Dissensus: on Politics and Aesthetics*, ed. and trans. Steven Corcoran (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2010), 137.

¹⁵⁸ Rancière, 139

¹⁵⁹ Rancière, 140.

¹⁶⁰ Belmonte, 184

¹⁶¹ Morgan, 305-311.

¹⁶² Morgan, 313.

¹⁶³ Deutsch, 4.

¹⁶⁴ Buchloh, *October*, 4.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

It has been the project of this thesis to situate Martha Rosler *Bringing the War Home: House Beautiful*, 1967-1972 in relation to the social and political atmosphere of Cold War America, mass media advertising, and the formal qualities of the images, and to compare the original series to the continuation begun in 2004. Through her use of visual technique and subject matter Rosler illustrates the connection between American military action in Vietnam and in Iraq to deny the totalizing political subject and to create a flexible and ambiguous relationship between friend and foe, and domesticity and war zone. However, in addition to adding to our understanding of the context and effect of this set of works, the research performed in this thesis also opens avenues for future scholarship.

Of particular interest is the effect of art world institutions in framing and even altering meaning. This set of series raises interesting questions in regard to display, viewing and the role of the institution in creating aesthetic distance. The original series, as has been discussed, was originally disseminated in the public sphere, but was brought into realm of fine arts in the 1990s. An analysis of the effect that this transition from public sphere to art world had on the original series in terms of the effect on the viewer and in reception would be intriguing. This could be expanded to an examination of the manner in which the meaning of specific works change through inclusion in art world institutions. Certainly, this would apply to performance and ephemeral art making, but in regard to the research performed here, is specifically meaningful in examining politically

motivated or activist art work. As discussed in chapter V, the 1967-1972 series in its original context can be understood as activist art, but that designation may not be maintained once the works have entered the gallery space. Many works of activist art which originate outside of, or even in antitheses to the art world context of museums and galleries are eventually displayed in this context.

The tension inherent in the display of politically motivated or activist art is an interesting topic and one which bears further scrutiny. In order for a work of art to enter the art historical narrative it must be documented or conserved in some manner, however that very process of conservation may change the meaning of the original work. Conversely, works that exist solely outside of the art world are often considered under the rubric of visual propaganda and are infrequently analyzed in terms of their esthetic properties or indeed as works of artistic praxis. Many artists resist associations with the realm of fine art in conducting works of social and political critique, however Rosler's work is certainly not the only example of activist art that has been brought into the museum space. An analysis of the specific manner in which art world display alters meaning would be beneficial particularly in regard to works which originate outside of the art world.

A related topic of possible future research would be an investigation of artistic activism in the current political and social climate. As has been argued in this thesis Martha Rosler's original series addressed specific elements of political and social circumstances operating during the Cold War period in the United States. By addressing specific ideological imperatives that were relatively unquestioned and by bringing together images that were kept separate in legitimate discourse Rosler sought to effect a

change in the perceptions of the viewer. Indeed I have argued that in part her reuse of the methodology from the original series in the continuation is less effective in part because it seeks to recycle her original process without adequately considering the very real changes in context. While I have argued that Rosler new series is less effective in provoking a change in the perceptions of the viewer, the creation of activist art remains relevant. A number of artists have sought to respond to the invasion of Iraq and to the ongoing war on terror through artistic means including *9 Scripts From a Nation at War* a performance piece created by Sharon Hays in collaboration with David Thorne, Katya Sander, Ashley Hunt, and Andrea Geyer, (2007) and Sylvia Kolbowski's film *After Hiroshima mon amour* (2005-2008). These works and those by other contemporary artists seek to address the problems of clarity and communication while also dealing with the multiplicity of possible perspectives in addressing the war in Iraq. An examination of the relationship between contemporary art activism and the current socio-political situation would be useful and interesting.

The prevalence of mediated imagery and the confusion of reality itself that results from the simulation of reality caused in part by that mediation, as discussed in Chapter V, makes the simple combination of images from diverging sources less compelling. This awareness of the mediated quality of imagery and concomitant distrust of photographic images problematizes a straightforward indictment of culture. This leads to questions regarding the form that effective artistic activism may take in the future. In order for a work of political art to have an effect on the viewer the message or at least content of the work must be relatively intelligible. However, overly obvious statements flatten the complexity of issues and result in sloganeering is not particularly effective in creating an

engaged citizenry. Since overtly pointed messages result in yet another directive rather than working to engage critical thinking in regard to political realities.

Given the connection between geographic locations via the internet and the increasing globalization of communities, an analysis of the internet as a place in which engaged political action, including artistic activism could be productively conducted would undoubtedly add to the field of scholarship. An analysis of artists who create politically motivated and engaged works of art in this medium would perhaps lead to a greater understanding of the future role of politically active art making.

Conversely recent public protests, the of occupy movement serving as an example, have gained relatively broad based support, perhaps signaling an increase in public grass-roots activism in which artistic creation could be understood to operate effectively. However, once again this raises questions related to art historical memory and the conservation or documentation of this type of artistic praxis. An analysis of the connection between politically active art and art making and the socio-political context to which it responds, as well the mode of dissemination, display, and the visual means by which the message of the work is conveyed to the intended viewer would increase our understanding of the possible efficacy of politically active art. An analysis of contemporary art operating as artistic activism would enable a greater understanding of the manner in which art and artists can operate within the public and political realm in regard to the current political and social climate.

APPENDIX

FIGURES



Figure 1. Martha Rosler, *Tron (Amputee)* from *Bringing the War Home: House Beautiful*, 1967-1972. Published in *Goodbye to All That*, San Diego CA, 1971.



In a secluded vacation spot, privacy isn't a problem, so you go all out with glass, for view, light, and visual spaciousness. Simple or no-pattern coverings, soft colors, and small-scale furnishings add to illusion of size. Blue of the ceiling and brown of the beams extend through the glass walls to the eaves from living room to the outdoors

Martha

Figure 2. Martha Rosler, *Vacation Getaway* from *Bringing the War Home: House Beautiful*, 1967-1972. Published in *Goodbye to All That*, San Diego, CA, 1972.



Figure 3. Martha Rosler, *Transparent Box (Vanity Fair)* from *Body Beautiful, or Beauty Knows No Pain*, 1966-1972. Image taken from De Zegher, Catherine, ed. *Martha Rosler: Positions in the Life World*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989, 148.



Figure 4. Martha Rosler, *Red Stripe Kitchen* from *Bringing the War Home: House Beautiful*, 1967-1972. Photomontage printed as chromogenic print, edition of 10+2. Collection of the Art Institute of Chicago.

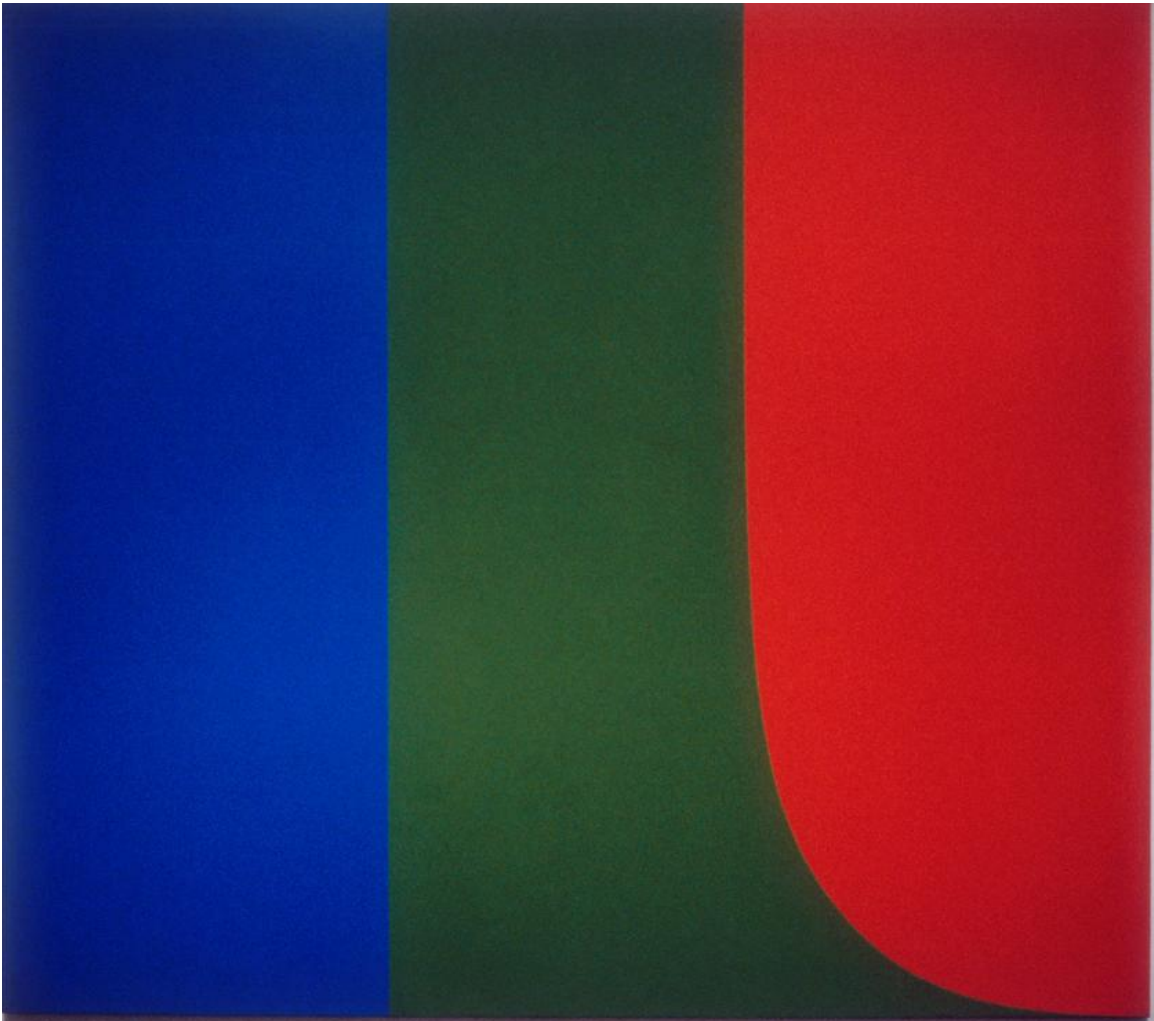


Figure 5. Ellsworth Kelly, *Blue Green Red I*, 1964-1965. Oil on canvas, 108 x 122 in. Collection of the Stedelijk Museum.



Figure 6. Martha Rosler, *House Beautiful (Giacometti)* from *Bringing the War Home: House Beautiful*, 1967-1972. Photomontage printed as chromogenic print, edition of 10+2. Collection of the Art Institute of Chicago.



Figure 7. Martha Rosler, *Balloons* from *Bringing the War Home: House Beautiful*, 1967-1972. Photomontage printed as chromogenic print, edition of 10+2. Collection of the Art Institute of Chicago.



Figure 8. Martha Rosler, *Cleaning the Drapes* from *Bringing the War Home: House Beautiful*, 1967-1972. Photomontage printed as chromogenic print, edition of 10+2. Collection of the Art Institute of Chicago.



Figure 9. Martha Rosler, *Beauty Rest* from *Bringing the War Home: House Beautiful*, 1967-1972. Photomontage printed as chromogenic print, edition of 10+2. Collection of the Art Institute of Chicago.

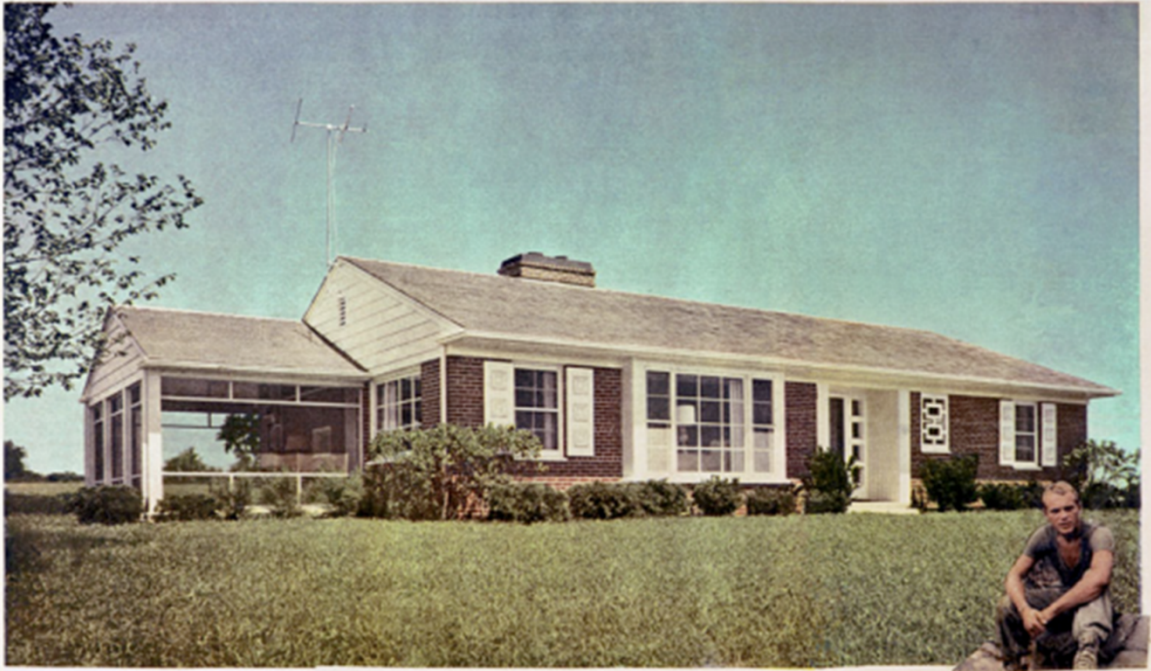


Figure 10. Martha Rosler, *Tract House Soldier* from *Bringing the War Home: House Beautiful*, 1967-1972. Photomontage printed as chromogenic print, edition of 10+2. Collection of the Art Institute of Chicago.

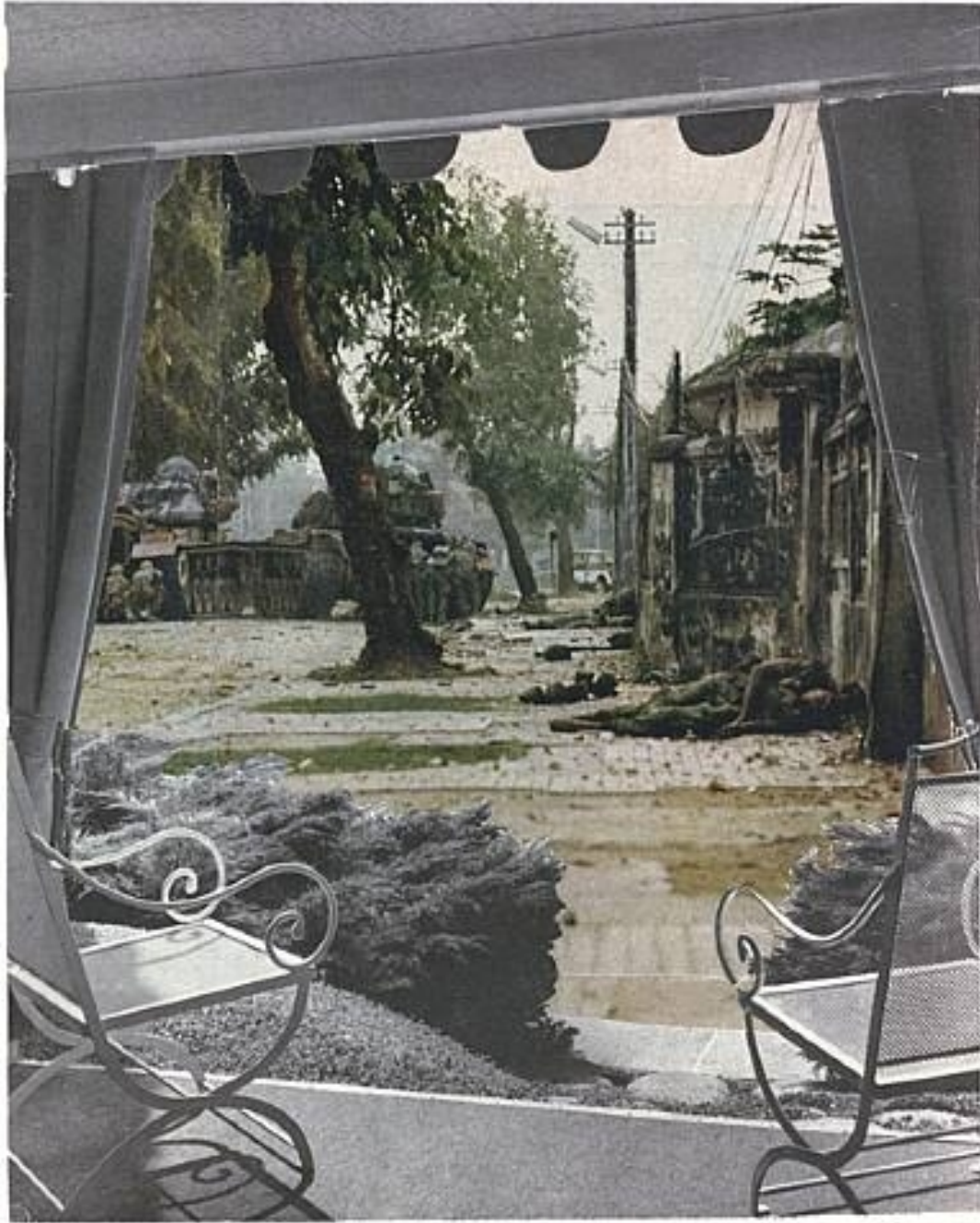


Figure 11. Martha Rosler, *Patio View* from *Bringing the War Home: House Beautiful*, 1967-1972. Photomontage printed as chromogenic print, edition of 10+2. Collection of the Art Institute of Chicago.



Figure 12. Martha Rosler, *Roadside Ambush* from *Bringing the War Home: House Beautiful*, 1967-1972. Photomontage printed as chromogenic print, edition of 10+2. Collection of the Museum of Contemporary, Chicago.



Figure 13. Martha Rosler, *Gladiators* from *Bringing the War Home: House Beautiful*, new series, 2004. Photomontage printed as chromogenic print, edition of 10+2. Collection of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago.



Figure 14. Burt Glinn, USA. New York. Levittown Housing. USA. Levittown, New York. 1957. Aerial view 1957.



Figure 15. Photograph of model suburban home at the American National Exhibition in Moscow, 1959. Image taken from, Castillo, Greg. *Cold War on the Home Front: The Soft Power of Midcentury Design*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010, viii.



Figure 16. Photograph of the “Kitchen Debate” between Nikita Khrushchev and Richard Nixon at the American National Exhibition in Moscow, July 24, 1959. Image taken from, Castillo, Greg. *Cold War on the Home Front: The Soft Power of Midcentury Design*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010, x.

Superb gift! General Electric's Versatile Portable Cleaner now 50% more power!

50% more power than a model. Weighs only a little more than 4 pounds yet works efficiently. Perfect for pickups... car, stairs, walls, above-the-floor and ceiling cleaning. Includes all attachments. Reusable and disposable bags. Compact storage (Model MV2)



General Electric Company, Household Division, Bridgeport, Conn. 06605



General Electric's Swivel-Top Canister. Two-Clean rug tool cleans on both forward and backward strokes. Suction regulator. Automatic cord reel. Attachment caddy, carrying handle. Disposable bags.



The General Electric Cord Reel Upright, unsurpassed for deep cleaning power. Has 2-speed motor, power-driven brush, toe-touch suction regulator, sweeping headlight. King-size disposable bags.

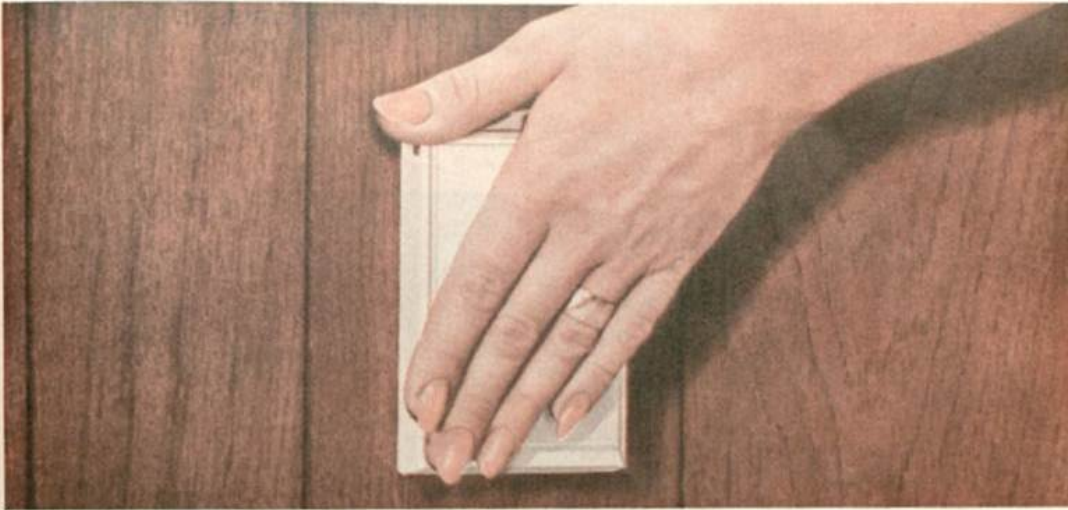


General Electric's exclusive Vacuum 87 power-driven brush and low silhouette, 11" high, glides under low tables. Ideal for Disposable bags. Great second cleaner!

Progress is our most important product

GENERAL ELECTRIC

Figure 17. General Electric advertisement. Image taken from *House Beautiful*, October 1968.



*Behind her hand is a built-in
you've probably never thought about.*

AN RCA WHIRLPOOL CENTRAL VACUUM SYSTEM. It can save you more work and add more value to your home than almost anything else you build in.

Here's how it works: Handy cleaning outlets are placed throughout your home so that you simply attach a lightweight hose and wand to the outlet, clean away, then unplug the hose and hang it up. No heavy machinery to haul around, no messy bags to empty.

A powerful vacuum system removes the dirt and funnels it through the outlets into a dirt receptacle in your basement, utility room, or garage. This system cleans with more suction

power than any home canister or upright vacuum. And it's a *cleaner* kind of vacuuming, because dusty air is vented outside the house rather than recirculated inside your home. There's practically no noise, either, because the motor is located outside of your living areas.

An RCA WHIRLPOOL central vacuum system is engineered for long-life durability and service. There is a full range of models to choose from, **EVEN A SELF-CLEANING MODEL.**

New home or old, you can install the system without expensive alterations.



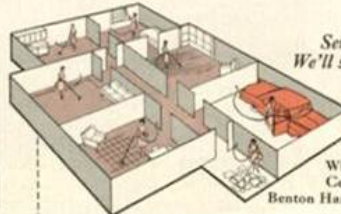
Plugs in like a lamp.



*No machinery to carry,
no cord to tangle.*



Silent as a breeze.



*Send us this coupon.
We'll send you all the facts.*

7208

Whirlpool Corporation
Central Vacuum Dept.
Benton Harbor, Michigan 49023

Enclosed is 25¢. Please rush me my 16-page copy of the Central Vacuum System Planning and Installation Guide.

(Your name—please print) _____

(Address) _____

(City) _____ (County) _____ (State) _____ (Zip) _____



SEE WHIRLPOOL APPLIANCES AND PRODUCTS OF WHIRLPOOL CORPORATION, BENTON HARBOR, MICHIGAN. TRADEMARKS AND REG. MARKS BY AUTHORITY OF TRADEMARK OFFICE, BUREAU OF PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE.

Figure 18. Whirlpool advertisement image taken from *House Beautiful*, August 1966.

What's your I.Q. on home furnishings brand names?

AMERICAN OF MANTHOVILLE
 BERKLINE
 A. BRANDT
 BRIDYHILL
 CUSHMAN
 DAYSTON
 DREXEL
 ECLIPSE
 ETHAN ALLEN
 FOX
 GILLO
 GENERAL FELT
 HERITAGE
 HOLLYWOOD WAKEFIELD
 JOHNSON CARPER
 KARASTAN
 KROENKER
 LA-Z-BOY
 MEGACRAFT
 QUARTZ CREATIVE
 RCA
 SEALY
 SERTA
 SIMMONS
 SPRING AIR
 STANLEY
 TYROOD
 TELL CITY
 THOMASVILLE
 TYDALS
 VIRTUE
 WESTWOOD
 WILLIAMS



How many of these famous names do you recognize?

If you don't recognize at least half of these names, you might not be ready to buy furnishings for your home.

Why? Because when you furnish your home, you are making an investment for the future. You want the assurance that you will be proud to live with the merchandise you select. When the maker puts his name on a product, he is giving you his personal assurance of quality in workmanship, satisfaction in performance. Brand names are your guide to easier, safer buying. You can be completely confident that you are getting the very best for your money with a brand name.

Be brand conscious. Remember, when you buy a brand name product— it costs no more.

We'd be delighted to send you our booklet "Know How To Buy Home Furnishings"— a buying guide for all categories of home furnishings. Just write to Brand Names Foundation, 477 Madison Avenue, New York, New York 10022, and enclose 25¢ for handling.



Figure 19. Brand Name I.Q. Advertising image taken from *House Beautiful*, January 1972.

Your friends have probably told you about the famous, "luxury-comfort" of Beautyrest.* . . .

Yet, would you believe you could own a Beautyrest mattress, for the price of two cigarettes a day? Sounds unbelievable—but here's how it works!

Beautyrest is guaranteed for at least 10 years (*lasts much longer!*) When you divide the \$59.50 Beautyrest price by 10 years, it comes to only \$5.95 a year, or about $1\frac{1}{2}$ ¢ a night!

What a value! Less than the price of two cigarettes a day for the world's most luxurious comfort.

Stop in at your dealer's today. Ask to see the X-Ray Mattress Demonstrator which shows you the *inside story* why Beautyrest gives you more comfort than any other mattress made.

BEAUTYREST luxury! It's yours!

Figure 20. Simmons Beautyrest mattress advertisement, 1950.



She adored it at \$89.95.
DELUXE QUALITY DAMASK COVER
FORMERLY FEATURED ON THE
ORTHOTONIC MATTRESS
BY RESTONIC

You'll love it now at \$59.95.
THIS SAME COVER NOW ON THE

R
RESTONIC

**SpringTonic
Supreme®**

Twin or full size, \$59.95 each piece.
Queen size, \$169.95 a set.
King size, \$249.95 a set.
(Suggested retail prices.)

FOR A LIMITED TIME ONLY

THIS OUTSTANDING MATTRESS VALUE AVAILABLE AT DEALERS LISTED ON OPPOSITE PAGE

© 1971 Restonic Corporation

Figure 21. Restonic mattress advertisement. Image taken from *House Beautiful*, March 1972



Figure 22. Hannah Höch, *Cut with the Kitchen Knife Dada Through the Last Weimar Beer-Belly Cultural Epoch of Germany*, 1919-1920. Photomontage, 45 x 34 ½ in. Image found on Artstor.



Figure 23. John Heartfield, *Adolph, The Superman, Swallows Gold & Spouts Junk*, 1932. Photomontage. Image found on Artstor.



Figure 24. Richard Hamilton, *Just what is it that makes today's homes so different, so appealing?*, 1956. Mixed media, 10 1/4 x 9 3/4 in. Image found on Artstor.



Figure 25. Source image for *Roadside Ambush*, taken from *House Beautiful*, April, 1969.



Figure 26. Photograph of the United States Marines, First Division near Fallujah. Image found at, <http://sabbah.biz/mt/archives/2004/11/22/gladiators-of-iraq/>.



Figure 27. Photograph of American soldier and Iraqi detainees at American controlled prison at Abu Ghraib. Image found at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A43785-2004May20.html>.

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