

*Norman Daly, Artist and Curator (1911-2003): Creating Both  
Object and Installation*<sup>57</sup>

In 1971 the Andrew Dickson White Museum of Art at Cornell University opened a new exhibition by Cornell Professor Norman Daly entitled, “An Exhibition of Artifacts from the Recent Excavations of Vanibo, Houndee, Draikum, and other sites.”<sup>58</sup> This exhibition is the first known showing of work recognized as archaeological fiction, a subcategory of a greater movement known as fictive art. Fictive art is a genre of art that creates a new artifact whose understanding is contingent on engaging a historical past.<sup>59</sup> Comprised of over 150 multimedia objects, this exhibition presented an invented culture in its entirety, featuring a vast range of objects from those of everyday use to ritualistic. The exhibition presented the culture in a manner so believable that even some of Daly’s own colleagues were shocked to discover that it was in fact, a fake.<sup>60</sup>

Daly makes a good case study for the new type of artists that emerged during this period. He was both a professor and practicing studio artist who joined the Cornell

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<sup>57</sup> Portions from this section of Chapter Three were presented at the 2010 ICMAH Annual International Conference “Original-Copy-Fake: On the Significance of the Object in History and Archaeology Museums” in Shanghai, China in October 2010. The paper, “The Potential of Museum *ARTifacts*: Meta-Historical Art in the Museum World,” will be included in the proceedings publication from this conference.

<sup>58</sup> These putative archaeological sites were inventions of the artist; Norman Daly and the Andrew Dickson White Museum of Art, *The Civilization of Llhuros* (Ithaca: Office of University Publications, 1971).

<sup>59</sup> Norman Daly and Beauvais Lyons, “The Civilization of Llhuros”: The First Multimedia Exhibition in the Genre of Archaeological Fiction.” *Leonardo* 24, no. 3 (1991), 265; “It is the first conceptualization of an entire civilization presented as an archaeological discovery and installed as an anthropological study.”

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 265-266.

University faculty in 1942 after completing a M.F.A. at Ohio State University.<sup>61</sup> While Daly falls just prior to the post-World War II enrollment boom, his tenure at Cornell University aligns with it.<sup>62</sup> In addition, Daly had experience outside of the university as a lecturer in French and Italian museums for the Parsons School of Design from 1950-1951, as well as serving as a museum consultant for the Roberson Art Center in Binghamton, New York from 1966-1967. These two experiences affected Daly greatly, and he noted specifically about his experience at the Roberson Art Center, “I had previously studied museum training and was reminded of how the factors of placement, position, partial or full enclosure, flow and barriers, lighting, color, and texture determine the vitality and intrigue of a museum installation.”<sup>63</sup>

Daly’s awareness of the curatorial role was also strengthened through his experience as a museum consultant with responsibilities for writing label copy and preparing the instructional material for the installation of traveling exhibitions, as well as the exhibitions themselves. Most insightful as to Daly’s awareness of the curatorial role, which was entering a state of flux during this period, is his interest in incorporating interpretive narrative, comparative viewing, mental reconstruction, and planned interference into the exhibition of *The Civilization of Llhuros*—techniques commonly utilized in the museum profession.

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<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 266; It is also worth noting that as an undergraduate Daly’s works were influenced by New Mexico’s Indian Culture and that he completed graduate work in Art History as well.

<sup>62</sup> Howard Singerman, *Art Subjects: Making Artists in the American University* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999), 158, 163-64.

<sup>63</sup> Norman Daly and Beauvais Lyons, “‘The Civilization of Llhuros’: The First Multimedia Exhibition in the Genre of Archaeological Fiction,” 266.

Daly undoubtedly grew familiar with the use of interpretive narrative and comparative viewing (asking audiences to compare and contrast two or more images) through his familiarity and various museum employments. Mental reconstruction was an imaginative practice encouraged by Daly that would allow the audience to visualize objects on new scales. An instance from the exhibition that illustrates this technique was the incorporation of an image of a mural accompanied by a fragmentary piece of said mural. The image of the mural was relatively small in scale when compared to the large fragment from the mural, the juxtaposition of which Daly hoped invited the audience to envision the mural on a much larger scale. Perhaps the technique most indicative of the changes to come in the museum profession, however, was the use of what Daly termed “planned interference.”<sup>64</sup>

“In the exhibition, planned interference is a deliberate attempt to delay, block, and even challenge the credulity of the audience. The intention is to make the audience more conscious of its willingness to accept the imaginary or the improbable.”<sup>65</sup> Daly conceptualized planned interference during attendance at an orchestral concert while on faculty at Cornell University. Fascinated by the ability for a sound or movement to distract his attention from the concert, Daly began to conceive ways of incorporating the technique intentionally and eventually developed his theory of planned interference. In *The Civilization of Llhuros*, planned interference manifests in oversights of artifacts such

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<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 266 – 269.

<sup>65</sup> Norman Daly and Beauvais Lyons, “‘The Civilization of Llhuros’: The First Multimedia Exhibition in the Genre of Archaeological Fiction,” 269.



Figure 4. Norman Daly. *Votive*. 1971. Metal. Photo. Image from *The Civilization of Llhuros* catalogue.

as an exposed serial number or visible product labeling on objects said to have been from the ancient culture (Figure 4 and Figure 5).<sup>66</sup>

Was Daly questioning the credulity of the museum as had the institutional critique artists who emerged before him? Perhaps, but he was also utilizing a technique that would be recognized for its use by a nationally recognized institution seven years later in the publication of *The Art Museum As Educator* (University of California Press, 1978).

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<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 267-269.

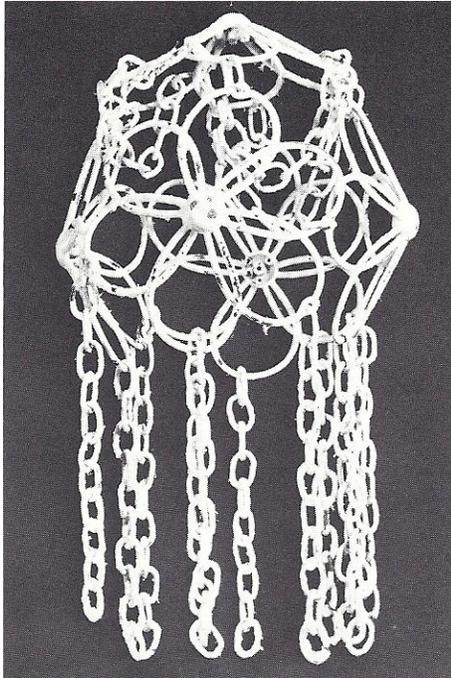


Figure 5: Norman Daly. *Helmet Worn by Temple Virgins* 1971. Metal. Photo. Image from *The Civilization of Llhuros* catalogue.

In “The Minneapolis Institute of Arts: ‘Fakes, Forgeries, and Other Deceptions,’ an Exhibition,” a case study is presented of an exhibition simultaneously featuring original works and skillfully completed replicas as an opportunity to promote connoisseurship in museum visitors. While there were no visual signs or consistent placement indicating which of the works were in fact replicas, there was narrative labeling to cue visitors as to the actuality of the works. Howard Gardner, a renowned American developmental psychologist and published museum education advocate, visited the exhibition and supported this manner of intellectual stimulation.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> John A. Hagerty, “The Minneapolis Institute of Arts: ‘Fakes, Forgeries, and Other Deceptions,’ an Exhibition,” in *The Art Museum as Educator: a Collection of Studies as Guides to Practice and Policy*. Edited by Barbara Y. Newsom and Adele Z. Silver (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 86-88.

Daly's desire for audience interaction echoes a retort made by Andy Warhol during his "Raid the Icebox I" installation. When questioned about his decision to include the storage units, Warhol responded to this line of questions by suggesting that the opening and closing of the unit would provide a vehicle for audience participation.<sup>68</sup> While Warhol suggested a more literal participation, Daly aspired to challenge his audience to participate mentally as well through the incorporation of mental reconstruction and planned interference. Both Daly and Warhol's techniques showed general awareness of museum exhibition practice, an awareness at the time attributed to museum curators.

Although the inclusion of Andy Warhol and "Raid the Icebox I" will come as no surprise of scholars interested in the museum as medium or artist as curator, the inclusion of artist Norman Daly and the genre of fictive art might. This chapter has attempted to define the role of curator and outline the events which led to the emersion of the artist as curator. It has illustrated the various curatorial responsibilities these two artists engaged themselves in while creating their respective exhibitions. The question remains whether these artists can be considered curators, but before this question can be answered, further analysis of developments of concerning the artist / curator must be examined.

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<sup>68</sup> Schaffner, "Deep Storage," 16; Ingrid Schaffner references David Bourdon's account of Warhol's visit to the RISD Museum of Art where he tours the collections in preparation for the exhibition, and when questioned about his intention to include the storage cabinet holding the objects he selected, Warhol responds proactively to the idea of the visitor being allowed to investigate the exhibition on his or her own.