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Research Article

Big Bird's minor upset: Frank Bowling's prize-winning entry to the 1966 Premier Festival Mondial des Arts Nègres

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This essay examines *Big Bird* (1965) by Frank Bowling in the context of its first-prize victory in the category of painting at *Tendances et Confrontations*, the exhibition of contemporary work by African-descended artists at the 1966 Premier Festival Mondial des Arts Nègres in Dakar, Senegal. Prior literature has examined the content and style of *Big Bird*, like other works created during the artist's time in London, primarily with reference to the artist's biography. This article argues, however, that by re-contextualizing visual tropes associated with well-known American abstractionists, the painting reflects critically upon the ways in which relationships between artistic identity, form and power create meaning. Drawing upon Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's conceptualization of minority, I argue that *Big Bird* and *Tendances et Confrontations* play off of one another to upset the perceived stability of the social, racial and intellectual connotations of form and style.

Keywords: Frank Bowling; abstraction; colour field painting; FESMAN; Premier Festival Mondial des Arts Negres; Negritude

The white swan foregrounded in Frank Bowling's 1965 *Big Bird* might seem unlikely subject matter for the highest-awarded painting at the 1966 Premier Festival Mondial des Arts Nègres (FESMAN) (Figure 1). As is often cited, the express purpose that motivated Senegal's first president, Léopold Sédar Senghor, to realize the 1966 mega-event was, in his words, 'the defense and illustration of Négritude' (Senghor 1966). Over the twenty-four days of the festival, the capital city of Dakar was overtaken by works of dance, music, theatre, poetry, and literature, all by people of African descent: ample material through which the thousands in its international audience might consider Senghor's philosophical and ideological tenets. But perhaps no element of the festival offered such literal promise of Négritude's 'illustration' as its exhibition of contemporary art,

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Figure 1. Frank Bowling, *Big Bird*, 1964. Oil on canvas, 74 × 144 cm. Courtesy of Bridgeman Images, © 2017 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / DACS, London.

Tendances et Confrontations, where awards were distributed in the categories of painting, sculpture, tapestry, drawing, printmaking and the applied arts, in addition to a grand prize.[1]

Understood with reference to Senghor's remarks, one might imagine the exhibition as the negotiation site of the terms defining what Négritude looked like.[2] Ten years prior, Senghor (1956) had articulated elements of his position on the subject, ascribing a number of ideals to the work of black cultural producers. Like the ritual implements used by their ancestors, Senghor posits, the best work of black artists is purposeful and collective in spirit but personally engaged, drawing upon an innate aptitude towards rhythm and emotion that he attributes to African ancestry. He encourages the black artist not to hesitate, when useful, to take advantage of techniques developed on other continents – as peoples of non-African descent, as well, had particular gifts to offer to the broader realm of human expression. A number of art-historical accounts have worked to identify visual manifestations of Senghor's cultural philosophy; curator Ima Ebong (1999), for example, discusses the influence of Senghor on the arts through a tendency in Senegal to render semi-abstract signifiers of Africa, often in the form of allusions to traditional African arts.[3] This

method of creative importation can be detected in many of the works in *Tendances et Confrontations*, and particularly among those that received accolades. For example, consider, as Ugochukwu-Smooth C. Nzewi has in his 2013 article, the Grand Prize-winning work *Le Bélier* (*The Ram*) (1965) by Ivoirian artist Christian Lattier, which incorporates the form of a mask created among the Dan ethnic group, and the first-place recipient in sculpture, *Rei* (King), by Brazilian artist Agnoldo dos Santos, whose work nods to the wooden sculptural traditions of Central Africa and its diaspora. Although their subjects, media, and styles diverge, both works show influences from academic European modernism as well as the spiritual objects that Senghor referred to as classical African art.

Alongside such competitors, then, entered *Big Bird*. Executed in oils and composed as a diptych, the painting displays inverted, reflected images of a white swan, abstracted nearly beyond recognition and posed upon a patchwork of highly saturated colours. It is difficult, if not inappropriate, to locate references to black identity, African ancestry, or political solidarity on this canvas, and in his writings the artist himself would later emphatically resist discussing his own work in such terms. Since the early 1970s, Bowling has become well known for his critical writing on the concept of black art, examining the subject regularly from 1969 to 1972 as a contributing editor to *Arts Magazine*. 'Should works of painting and sculpture continue to be a black issue and not an art issue', he once wrote, 'it is my considered opinion that these works will suffer. It is easier to say than to paint the thesis that works from black hands and psyches have a distinct stamp' (1971).

In view of Bowling's and Senghor's written work, the triumph of the former's abstracted waterfowl raises a question, articulated by art historian Tobias Wofford (2009, 185), that defies simple resolution: how could 'such work be chosen as exemplar of an identity-driven exhibition?' In purely pragmatic terms, the answer to this question is likely to reside, at least in part, in the particular tastes of the jury members assembled to judge *Tendances et Confrontations*. *Big Bird*'s victory, after all, was not a judgement handed down from Senghor himself, but rather the conclusion of a panel that included such diverse perspectives as those of Aimé Césaire, Alfred Barr, and Ulli Beier. Practical contingencies aside, however, *Big Bird*'s victory might prompt historians to reconcile two theoretical approaches to the idea of black art that appear, at first glance, to be fundamentally gridlocked: was Senghor's festival less invested in demonstrating the self-evident blackness of its arts than his writing might suggest? Or could Bowling's work, perhaps, have taken on greater significance with respect to themes of race and identity when presented in the context of 1966 Dakar?

Such questions appear to call for a kind of ideological Venn-diagramming, and *Big Bird* does provide a compelling foothold from which to

study the under-examined common ground shared by the prolific and influential written works of Senghor and Bowling. But the degree to which these indirectly related literary sources can shed light upon the visual material at hand is limited, and especially so due to the anachronistic logic required to apply Bowling's writing to *Big Bird*. The use of literature to examine the painting's reception is further troubled by the reality that such works are necessarily understood through the lenses of their readers and, particularly with reference to Senghor, interpretations vary. The ideals expressed by Bowling and Senghor appear most antagonistic, for example, if one understands Senghorian Négritude according to the indelible but contentious interpretation provided by Jean-Paul Sartre. In 'Orphée Noir' (Black Orpheus) (1948), Sartre discusses Négritude as the Hegelian antithesis to white racism and Western hegemony, thereby viewing Senghor's ideology as a temporary nativist movement, or, as he famously referred to it, as 'anti-racism racism'.

When Négritude is conceptualized in different terms, however, Senghorian philosophy appears more receptive to *Big Bird*, as well as several other aspects of the festival that dialectical interpretations provide few tools to explain, like the organizational role of Senegal's former colonizer, France. Without denying Négritude's mission to reject and reverse the effects of colonialism, philosophers Souleymane Bachir Diagne (2011) and Valentine Moulard-Leonard (2005) have offered methods for examining the ways in which Senghor's ideology advances a philosophy-in-itself, beyond such dialectical frameworks. Moulard-Leonard encourages readers to consider Négritude through the post-modern lens provided in the theory of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, whose portrayal of revolutionary action as multi-faceted, open-ended and perpetually changing might be applied to Négritude as an alternative to the teleology and binarism inherent in dialectics. Diagne, by contrast, posits that Senghorian Négritude offers affirmative content through the relationship it draws between African art and the nature of being. He argues that, for Senghor, art was philosophy, and that art objects were themselves expressions that could not be conveyed with equal effectiveness through the written word.

Taking cues from both philosophers, this article locates intersections in the critical and artistic undercurrents of *Big Bird* and *Tendances et Confrontations*, focusing upon material that literary analyses only obliquely consider: that is, the actual content and mechanics of the painting itself. By engaging with the visual material at hand, I argue that *Big Bird* critically appropriates formal gestures identified with American abstractionists according to the logic described by Deleuze and Guattari's concept of minority; furthermore, though critical in itself, I argue that the work's ability to interrogate the influence of history, power, and geography upon the meaning-making process became particularly elevated when exhibited at

Tendances et Confrontations. As it advances these claims, this article also begins to patch gaps in the two bodies of literature it places in conversation: first, discussions of Bowling's career, which have provided little but biographical commentary on the works that he created before moving to New York in 1967; and second, analyses of *Tendances et Confrontations*, which have been mostly silent regarding the content of the actual works on display.

Minor logic, major implications

More often than not, discussions of the festival's visual arts have sidelined *Tendances et Confrontations*, focusing instead upon the festival's exhibition of historical works, *L'Art Nègre*, which brought together over 600 African sculptures from museums and private collections around the world. The few critical responses that do dwell upon the contemporary exhibition communicate lukewarm enthusiasm – and occasionally outright disdain. Nigerian critic Onuora Nzekwu (1966, 87) remarked that participating countries 'jammed their stands with whatever they could lay their hands upon in the name of negritude. [...] The standard of works ranged from high to mediocre and less'. The *Washington Post*'s correspondent to the festival called *Tendances et Confrontations* 'the most disappointing aspect of the World Festival of Negro Arts', a failure he claims is predictable because 'painting was alien to black civilization" (Louchheim 1966, A9). These comments might be understood to exemplify the factors that art historian and cultural anthropologist Daniel J. Crowley, writing three years later, blamed for inhibiting the academic study of contemporary African art. He summarizes the constraints that art criticism of the 1960s imposed upon African artists:

> Art historians and anthropologists have in effect demanded the impossible of African artists. If [African artists] repeat the limited forms of the past, but without the socio-religious context, the art is called debased and stereotypic; if they copy Western styles, they are called derivative, mere copyists; and if they combine the two, the result is often judged bizarre, ill-digested, or monstrous. (Crowley 1969, 117)

Beyond the effects of such prejudicial criticism, a politically loaded discourse surrounded black artists' use of the techniques, forms and media historically associated with the Western academy. On the continent, such artistic approaches had often been introduced by the art schools and museums established by former colonial governments. After independence, even artists synonymous with independence-era nationalist arts – such as the Senegalese generation often referred to as the *École de Dakar* – would be criticized for adopting the logic of European Primitivism, as art historian Elizabeth Harney discusses (2004, 52-54). Across

the Atlantic, American artists such as those associated with the Black Arts Movement sought to forge an aesthetic that owed no debts to the white canons of Western art history; AfriCOBRA, a Chicago-based group of artists devoted to this mission, characterized black art through the use of figuration, bright colours, and political utility. Though geographically and ideologically diverse, each of these cases represents a different dimension of the fraught racial, geographical, and historical politics of style that affected the reception of the artists exhibiting in *Tendances et Confrontations*.

The critical apparatus that Crowley described, and the resulting institutional double-standards affecting African-descended artists of the 1960s, were grounded in racism and enabled by an ontological understanding of form – a logic that linked, for instance, figuration to collective action (or, for its critics, fascism and kitsch), or abstraction to avant-garde intellectualism (or, for its critics, white privilege and Western hegemony). *Big Bird* imposes a productive antagonism onto this ontology, insisting that the meanings generated by form are *relationally defined* and inescapably contingent upon their spatial, political and historical contexts. *Big Bird* unlocks the subversive potential of abstract expressionist forms through their strategic displacement and recombination. In this way, Bowling's painting can be productively understood with respect to the critical possibilities that Deleuze and Guattari (1975) attribute to 'minor literature'. Using the term to denote dissonance (and not, importantly, insignificance), Deleuze and Guattari classify as minor those works which displace dominant cultural forces from within. Taking the works of Franz Kafka, a Jewish resident of Prague who wrote in German, as their central illustration, they argue:

> A minor literature doesn't come from a minor language; it is rather that which a minority constructs within a major language. [...] The three characteristics of minor literature are the deterritorialization of language, the connection of the individual to a political immediacy, and the collective assemblage of enunciation. We might well say that minor no longer designates specific literatures but the revolutionary conditions for every literature within the heart of what is called great (or established) literature. (16)

Redefining revolutionary qualities to transcend 'specific literatures', Deleuze and Guattari propose a logic by which to understand work that critiques hegemonic cultural conditions in terms of *method* rather than *content*. The method that the theorists describe, furthermore, is a politicized de-territorialization, a mechanism by which artistic influence and formal appropriation are agents of insubordination rather than subservience. To imagine this gesture in painting provides a logic by which to understand the criticality that attaches to abstract forms when transplanted into *Big Bird* and embedded within *Tendances et Confrontations*.

Bowling and the Bird

In accordance with the rules governing participation in *Tendances et Confrontations*, *Big Bird* was sent to Dakar following its selection by a national delegation. Although Bowling did not attend the exhibition himself, his work was shown on behalf of the United Kingdom, where he had lived since leaving his birthplace, British Guiana, at age eighteen. In 1962, he graduated from the Royal College of Art (RCA) in London, where he wrote a thesis on the works of Piet Mondrian and received a silver medal for painting in his class, placing him second to David Hockney. His impressive accumulation of modernist bona fides notwithstanding, Bowling was often excluded from the venues where his white London peers were gaining recognition; according to curator Mia Sundberg, 'his entire professional life has been marked by an involuntary struggle to be accepted as a Modernist painter, without having to represent anything more than that' (2014, 26).

Bowling confronted the question of representation not only in his efforts to control his professional identity, but also on his canvases, from which figural representation gradually disappeared. Prior accounts of his trajectory have discussed the paintings he created at around the same time as *Big Bird* as occupying a transitional stage in this process. While the artist's earliest London works, created while Bowling was enrolled at the RCA, included haunting still lifes (for example, *Bird Diptych*, 1960; *Still Life (Pig's Head)* 1961) and Goya-inspired portrayals of the human figure in peril (*Afternoon Nap*, 1962; *Two Figures on a Bed*, 1962) (Figure 2), those produced after his graduation granted less priority of

Figure 2. Frank Bowling, *Two Figures on a Bed*, 1962. Oil on canvas, 120 × 180 cm. Image courtesy of the collection of the Royal College of Art, London.

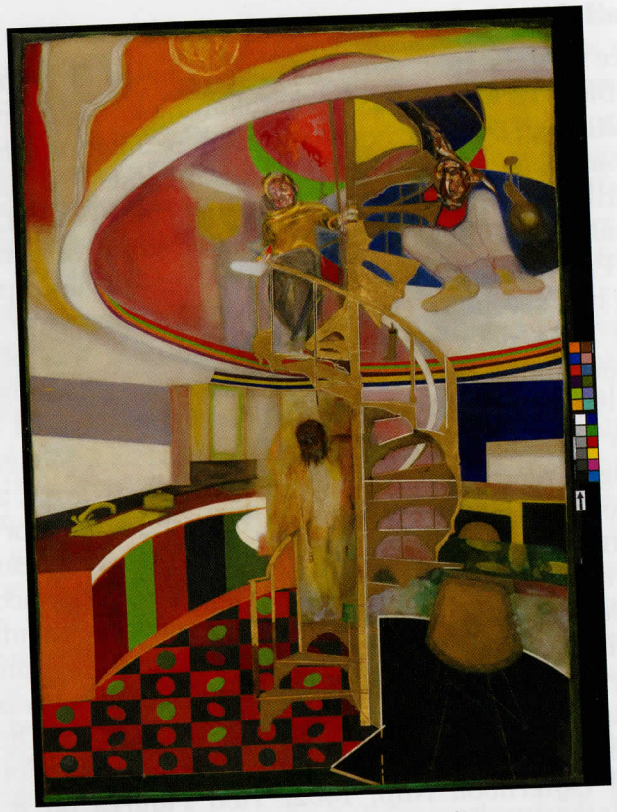

Figure 3. Frank Bowling, *Mirror*, 1964–66. Acrylic on canvas, 305 × 213 cm. Courtesy of Tate, London 2018, © 2017 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/DACS, London.

place to their subjects, which were often outshone by abstract and aggressively vibrant surroundings. *Swan I* and *Swan II* (both 1964), *Mirror* (1966) (Figure 3), and the painting in question here – *Big Bird* – can all be considered in these terms. Of the four works' subjects, however, the namesake sprawled twice across *Big Bird* is the most likely to escape a casual viewer's recognition. Particularly when viewed without a knowledge of the work's title or Bowling's prior works, the swans quite easily dissolve into various white marks: a gestural flurry of brushwork; a hazy, clouded mass; a flat, snaking curve; and a stack of identically sized circles. Before assembling a bird from these components, uninitiated audiences are as likely to observe the conversation that they mount between loose, expressive brushstrokes and measured, unmodulated planes of colour.

Prior literature has discussed the meeting of various styles in Bowling's London paintings as a tactic by which to communicate the artist's psychological unrest as he faced problems in his relationships and exclusion from major exhibitions. In his monograph on the artist, in fact, art critic and

curator Mel Gooding (2015) describes the works of this era in a chapter subtitled, to this effect, 'Images of Crisis'. Curator and art historian Courtney J. Martin (2010, 52) explains that Bowling's works from this time 'staged his battle with representation and abstraction, London and New York. [...] Should he stay in London, a dormant art market in which he had to contend with being excluded from significant exhibitions? Or should he move to New York and join the excitement of a robust art market, with new colleagues and a seemingly more cosmopolitan art scene?'

Such interpretations provide insight into the biographical influences upon Bowling's thinking. They leave room, however, to consider the semi-abstract London works themselves, and the types of meaning generated through the combinations that they stage. While it is fair to understand *Big Bird* in the context of the artist's life, and even as one step in his departure from figuration, it is important that the combination of these two narratives do not leave the content of the work to be understood as a confused byproduct of the artist's journey from expressive representation to pure abstraction. Instead, I argue, *Big Bird* offers a thoughtful meditation on the possibilities and limits of non-objective painting.

More form or morpheme?

Whether their work be spontaneous or measured – whether seeking to allow unmediated access to psychological states or to be inescapably self-referential – a common preoccupation characterized the interests of many of the most influential artists working during Bowling's formation: the possibility of unshackling form from representation and the powerful results that such a detachment might unlock. Barnett Newman, an American artist noted for painting flat, broad fields of colour, wrote of his rendition of this pursuit in an essay with the tellingly ambitious title, 'The Sublime is Now' (1948):

> We are creating images whose reality is self-evident and which are devoid of the props and crutches that evoke associations with outmoded images, both sublime and beautiful. We are freeing ourselves of the impediments of memory, association, nostalgia, legend, myth or what have you, that have been the devices of Western European painting. [...] The image we produce is the self-evident one of revelation, real and concrete, that can be understood by anyone who will look at it without the nostalgic glasses of history (53).

Newman locates the value of his work – and that of his American colleagues working in similar techniques – in the truth, presence, and universality of forms that refuse to serve as intermediaries to any world beyond the impenetrable viewer-canvas circuit to which his paintings

aspire. Yet, amid a composition that cites multiple American modernists, *Big Bird* alludes most obviously of all, perhaps, to Newman – retooling one of the forms most central to his quest to defy representation into a seeming allusion to the artist himself. The black, vertical line bisecting the canvas into its diptych structure replicates Newman's iconic 'zip' – a word the artist used to describe the stripes, parallel to the edges of a work's canvas and extending across its full length, that divided so many of his fields of colours. The earmarks of other mid-century American abstractionists emerge upon further examination, particularly amid the varyingly hazy and defined rectangular forms composing the image's ground. The signature style of Mark Rothko, who sought to give access to the interior states of the human conscience through his work, looms over the mustard mass ambiguously emerging from a lighter yellow ground, for example, as well as the periwinkle cloud that floats upon the surface of a less saturated grey rectangle. The flatter, more rectilinear planes of colour, by contrast, recall the works of hard-edge painters, particularly resembling the tiles of colour in the works of Ellsworth Kelly.

The internal doubling at play in *Big Bird* (a work decisively not titled *Big Birds)* further negates any possibility of viewing the painting's abstract forms independently, without referents. Bowling's abstractions are immediately placed in conversation and comparison with their approximation, which lay on the other side of the bifurcating black zip. The painting's critique of formal invention spares not even itself; *Big Bird* denies the originality of its own criticality, as it is compositionally and conceptually indebted to the earlier parody of individual spontaneity lodged by Robert Rauschenberg in his own twin works, *Factum I* and *Factum II* (1957).[4]

Bowling's later creations further prompt one's recognition of *Big Bird*'s engagement with the claims of American abstraction. After moving to New York in the year following the Dakar exhibition, the artist began to address his interlocutors more explicitly, incorporating their names into the titles of his work. *Clem's No. 1* (1972), for example, must certainly reference the renowned critic and art historian Clement Greenberg, an influential and outspoken opponent of representational painting with whom Bowling became close friends.[5] *Who's Afraid of Barney Newman* (1968), appropriates the title of Newman's 1948 painting *Who's Afraid of Red, Yellow and Blue?* (1948), which, on its part, mounts a critique of the overburdened symbolism of colour in the works of Mondrian.[6] *Looking at Barney and Mark* (1972) declares the painting's relationship to Newman and Rothko explicitly, though its techniques leave little ambiguity regarding the work's dominant formal sources (Figure 4). This painting incorporates allusions to both the former's 'zip' and the latter's hazy, levitating rectangles. Perhaps most cheekily, Bowling's name is faintly but unmistakably stenciled, in reverse, in the painting's top left corner – as if to equate

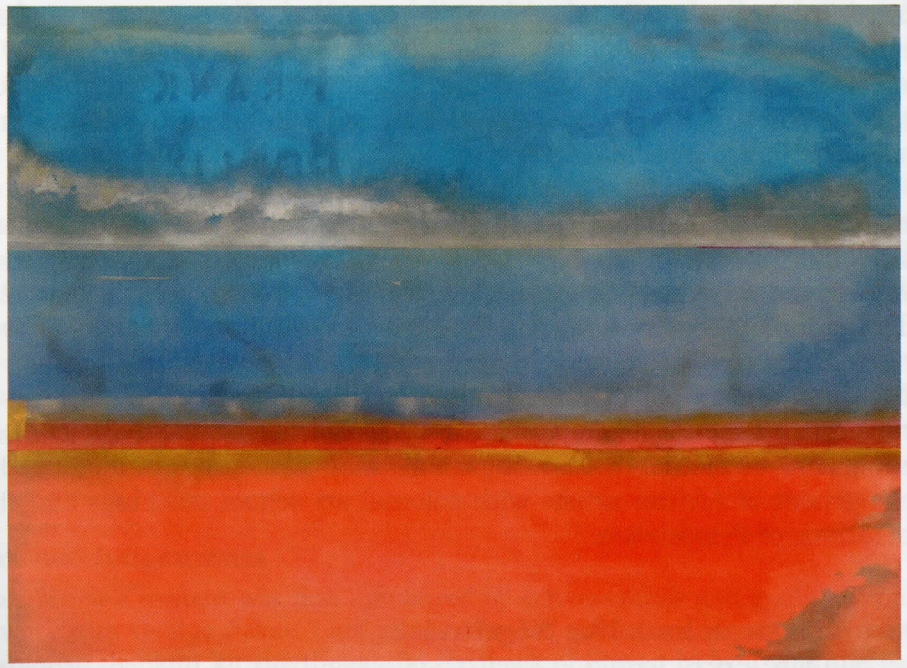

Figure 4. Frank Bowling, *Looking at Barney and Mark*, 1972. Acrylic on canvas, 184 × 241.5 cm. Image courtesy of the Hales Gallery, © 2017 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/DACS, London.

the efficiency with which the well-known artists' formal models referred to their makers with Bowling's straightforward printing of his name upon the canvas.

Finding, then, its references to be multiple and deliberate, *Big Bird* mounts a Greatest Hits of American Abstraction. Bowling is not alone in confronting the legacy of abstract expressionism through his work – Robert Rauschenberg had rubbed away a drawing by Willem De Kooning and exhibited the remains as art more than a decade before Bowling would set foot in New York (*Erased De Kooning Drawing*, 1953). The mechanisms underlying Bowling's critique are nonetheless innovative and specific. Through its appropriations, the painting reduces the recognizable features of a major artist or movement into morphemes: units of meaning that could be assembled into various systems. The painting's legibility requires audiences to engage with the ways in which such styles function neither through unmediated self-expression nor perfect self-referential objectivity, but with semiotic efficiency – as precisely the signs they are designed to deny. Thus, within a work that is itself visually akin to New York-style abstraction, *Big Bird* undermines the utopic ambitions of celebrated, white, American colour-field painters. By retooling such artists' forms, the painting gives lie to their claims to be apolitical and

ahistorical, exposing the shortcomings of the mythologies that underpinned their success. *Big Bird*, then, becomes revolutionary through a process of *making minor*: a critique of abstraction from within, which functions through a logic of deterritorialization in an affront to existing configurations of institutional and critical power.

The work acquires another dimension of significance when displayed at *Tendances et Confrontations*. *Big Bird* trumpets the creation of meaning through displacement and relationality, inviting viewers to continue considering the way these factors attach meaning to form well beyond the edges of its canvas. Underscoring the critical possibilities of formal appropriation, it prompts viewers to recognize the potential for allusions to Picasso *or* to Dan masquerade to reflect critically upon their sources. It draws attention, for example, to the possibility discussed by Harney (2004, 101–102) that a knowing irony may sometimes underpin the engagement of African artists with colonial art school teachings and the operations of Primitivism.

Does this swan look like Négritude?

So, could *Big Bird* have been what Négritude looked like after all? To suggest a true equivalence between the two would be nonsensical, a dull reinforcement of the same ontological understanding of form that *Big Bird*, I have argued, disrupts. But the gesture that *Big Bird* performs – a destabilization of power relations from within through a radical deterritorialization of forms, a gesture that this article has understood with the help of Deleuze and Guattari – is, to a certain extent, also enacted when Bowling's abstract, expressive painting appears in and is crowned victor at *Tendances et Confrontations*. *Big Bird*'s style and iconography thwart the equation of Négritude with nativism as well as the rote dismissal of abstract expressionism's social relevance beyond a white, Western artistic establishment. *Tendances et Confrontations* and *Big Bird* act upon one another, bringing out a dimension of each that becomes less pronounced in the absence of the other: the ability to reveal the instability of the connotations attached to style and form through the recontextualizations internal to them.

The making-minor at work in this essay might thus be understood as twofold: first, as the gestures of well-known abstractionists are displaced within *Big Bird*, and second, as *Big Bird* is displaced from the London art scene to the Dakar exhibition mounted in Négritude's name. The transposition of a literary concept to visual media carries inherent problems, of course, but by accommodating perpetual movement and limitless multiplicity, the minor offers an apt model to accommodate the fluidity of the meaning-making processes that it – like this essay – posits. *Big Bird* and *Tendances et Confrontations* illustrate a visual manifestation of Négritude

perhaps most completely if one follows Moulard-Leonard's (2005) definition of Négritude as forever in constellation with multiple dynamic interests and influences, and perpetually in the process of defining what it is.

In any case, the preceding discussion compels a return to painting's subject and namesake, which may be an apt protagonist, after all, to navigate the intersections linking form, meaning, and subject position in Dakar. Prior to *Big Bird*, the swan made cameos on tableaus throughout the history of art in its role as a deceptive, feathered vessel temporarily assumed by Zeus in an act of duplicitous seduction – an iconic motif that appears in the works of Leonardo Da Vinci, Paul Cezanne, and Cy Twombly, among many others. A symbol of transformation and duplicity, a sly reminder lies within both the big bird and *Big Bird:* to pay mind to the unstable and potentially conspiratorial relationships between form and meaning.

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Notes

1. Archival sources indicate that organizers had also considered a category called '*Technique Traditionelle, Expression Moderne*' but ultimately opted not to distribute the prize ('Grand Prix Des Arts Plastique').
2. In the view of Cedric Vincent (2017), the display 'did not result in a monolithic affirmation of Négritude as a unifying Black identity. In this sense, the exhibition did not fulfill its mission, and was perhaps overly inclusive in the way it was organised, but it undoubtedly constituted the most profound expression of the festival's role as a form of laboratory in which one could question, defy, debate and explore – rather than simply asserting or passively accepting a global Black identity/community and the artistic and cultural manifestations that might represent it. Instead, the festival became a forum in which the various actors

could negotiate their own understanding of Black culture and its art in complex and often contradictory ways' (101).

3. See also Abdou Sylla's (2006) reflections on the effects of an 'ethno-esthétique' upon Senegalese art.
4. The content and titles of Bowling's own 'twin' works, *Swan I* and *Swan II* (both 1964) support the possibility that Bowling was interested in Rauschenberg's *Factum*s and keen to play with their underlying premise.
5. In the early 1990s, in fact, Bowling consulted with Greenberg in his pursuit of American citizenship. Bowling, Frank. Letter to Clement Greenberg. 24 January 1993. Getty Research Institute, Clement Greenberg Papers, 1928–1995. Box 13, Folder 1.
6. Kobena Mercer discusses this dynamic in *Discrepant Abstraction* (2006, 202).

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