

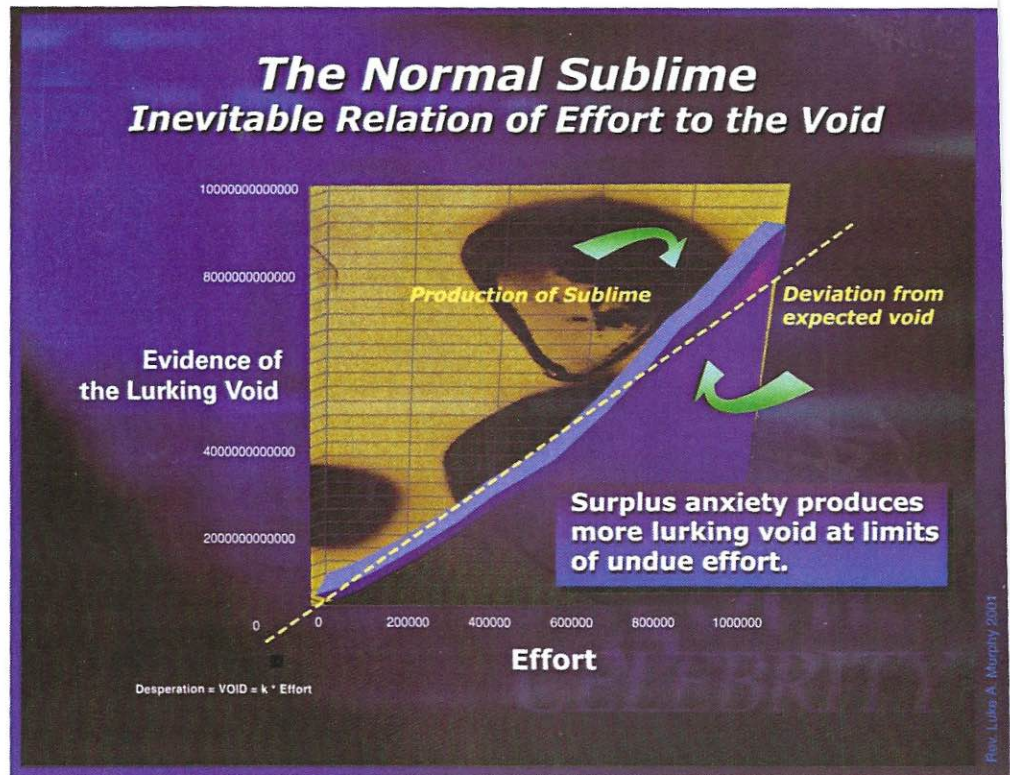
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1. Karlheinz Stockhausen, *The New York Times* (September 19, 2001) "What happened there is—they all have to rearrange their brains now—is the greatest work of art ever... That characters can bring about in one act what we in music cannot dream of, that people practice madly for 10 years, completely, fanatically, for a concert and then died. That is the greatest work of art for the whole cosmos... could not do that. Against that, we composers are nothing."

2. Kant Immanuel, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. W.S. Pluhar, 1790; Hackett Publishing Co, 1987, (sections XXV– XXX.) "...the inner perception of the inadequacy of all sensible standards for rational estimation of magnitude indicates a correspondence with rational laws; it involves a pain, which arouses in us the feeling of our supersensible destination, according to which it is purposive and therefore pleasurable to find every standard of sensibility inadequate to the ideas of understanding.

3. Vernon Hyde Minor, "What Kind of Tears? 9/11 and the Sublime", *Journal of American Studies of Turkey*, 14 (2001): 91-96.
www.bilkent.edu.tr/~jast/Number14/Minor.htm

4. Phillip Gahn, "The Politics of the Machine", *Afterimage*, November 1999, Pulse 48, by Bill Jones and Ben Neill, Sandra Gering Gallery, NY, NY July 8, - September 11, 1999. "Political intervention through abstract art is commonly expressed through the artwork's negation of political rhetoric and social hierarchies. By declaring its own autonomy, an abstract artwork can serve as a model for political freedom.



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ON EDGE

In the weeks following September 11, 2001, a group of AAA members sat down to discuss the upcoming Journal and the ramifications of the catastrophic attack— its effect on art making and the role of the artist in this reconfiguring culture.

As eye witnesses of the tragic event, downtown artists were confronted with a sense of inadequacy. A panel was convened at Art in General in Tribeca. The dialogue became extremely heated. Some artists took the side of composer Karlheinz Stockhausen, who articulated the futility of art next to such a mighty spectacle¹. Many were deeply offended by his remarks. Those who had actually experienced war were shell-shocked anew and could not return to their downtown lives. Some had lost everything. The majority of artists, however, remained in their studios while their neighbors fled. Whatever their reactions, 9/11 forced them into a conversation with the sublime, the experience of rapid alternation between amazement and terror as described by Kant.²

There was an international outpouring of sympathy, a cultural shift toward reconciliation. And for a moment, a place for art seemed to open. But the belligerence of our campaign of “shock and awe” squandered all hope of communication. Freedom of speech was under attack at home.

Eager to engage, AAA members created an editorial board that titled the Journal's fifth edition *On Edge: Aesthetics, Anxiety and Awe*. What was created from the over-heated atmosphere, we hoped, would open new paths for abstraction beyond the conventional. Contributions were sought to answer questions on art's focus, address, or even survival. We asked: “In times of political or deep personal crises: What do artists now face in giving voice to the language of abstraction? What is at stake?”

After sending out the call it seemed that there was an overload of problems raised. There had been confusion and minimal response. These were thorny issues. As Stockhausen said, we did have to ‘rearrange our brains’ to deal with a limit experience and the conflicting emotions it evokes³.

To open up the possibilities of response, the editors sent out yet another query, asking artists how they adapt abstraction's edge to their own critical thinking and studio production. Shifting from the anxiety of the incomprehensible to the intimacy of the studio allowed contributors to grapple, and gradually the collection grew.

Major structural changes in the AAA were also under way. Several key members had passed away. In honor of Peter Pinchbeck, the previous Journal Editor, we carried on, well aware that his literary talents and enthusiasm would be hard to replace. Ward Jackson dedicated his life to a pure vision of abstraction and he strongly believed in AAA's mission to publish. Thus, we dedicate this issue to these two unwavering proponents of abstract painting and pay tribute to them, along with six other influential artists, recently deceased, and whose art deserves wider recognition: Clinton Hill, Ibram Lassaw, Clement Meadmore, Steven Parrino, Beatrice Riese and Esphyr Slobodkina.

For the first time, the AAA Journal publishes full color images and includes interviews, poetry, exhibition reviews, performance, and articles on science and music. 50 artists and critics made contributions that explore and converse with the Edge. The range is wide and often surprising.

We believe this edition of the AAA Journal will stand as evidence to a most particular and profound time. We take this as a testament to art as a way of survival, a way of sorting things out, and abstraction as a model of freedom, a way of reclaiming the ethical and moving (along) the edge of the present.

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