

The Barred Colors of André Cadere*

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That which changes our way of seeing the street is more important than that which changes our way of seeing a painting.

—Guy Debord, *Report on the Construction of Situations* (1957)

MUSEUM . . . a rectangular director. A round servant . . . a triangular cashier . . . a square guard . . . To my friends, the people are not admitted. One plays here daily until the end of the world.

—Marcel Broodthaers,
Open Letter (1968)

On a June day in 1972, crowds were converging on the Museum Fridericianum for the opening of Documenta 5, the fifth installment of the large international art survey that at the time was held every four or five years in the picturesque city of Kassel, Germany. At some point during the opening, André Cadere excused himself from the festivities and quietly executed what was certainly the least appreciated “painting” in the entire show: an unsightly composition of red, blue, and yellow splotches that the artist illicitly spray-painted on one of the exhibition buildings in an act of defiance against its organizers. Months earlier, Cadere had been invited to contribute a piece to the show by Documenta director Harald Szeemann, but when he arrived that afternoon he was abruptly informed that Szeemann had rescinded the offer. As a matter of fact, Szeemann had banned Cadere from even *attending*

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André Cadere. Spray-paint on the rue Visconti, Paris. 1972.

Photograph by Daniel Pype. Courtesy of the Estate of André Cadere and Galerie Hervé Bize, Nancy.

Documenta 5, let alone *participating* in it, after discovering that the artist had disregarded a highly unorthodox proviso the director had folded into the invitation. The situation could not have been more awkward, given that Cadere had personally brought his submission on the train from Paris, in eager anticipation of his international debut. But it was not to be. A quarrel erupted in front of the Neue Galerie, and a short time later the south wall of the building was defaced. The graffiti itself contained no inflammatory message; it looked more like a code. The serial deposits of spray paint precisely duplicated the sequence of colors in Cadere's artwork, effecting a crude, one might say emergency reproduction of the censored object on the exterior of the exhibition site. The same spray-painted ciphers had already begun appearing on the walls and sidewalks of the gallery district in Paris earlier that spring. In a photograph of one such action, the crouching artist is seen in the foreground beneath a frieze of Krylon deposits—his blurred profile adding to the already entropic mood of the image—dripping colors subsumed in the gray scale. The image attests to the marginal state of Cadere's activities, and it portends, through the sum of its distortions, a rather different scenario of "dematerialization": not the lucid sublation of the art object, but the process of historical disappearance that awaits objects that have been disqualified from the sites and spaces of cultural reception. This outcome seems to have been anticipated by Cadere from the very start of his artistic practice. He alluded to it in a series of let-

ters to the gallerist Yvon Lambert: “My activity does not have a following, nor a future,” he wrote. “My work is by definition visual, it exists where it is seen.”¹

Until very recently, the activities that André Cadere conducted between 1970 and 1978 have remained largely unaccounted for in the histories of post-Minimal and Conceptual art—or they have been relegated to anecdotes, footnotes, and asides (“Enigmatic to us all” is how Catherine Millet begins the single paragraph about Cadere in her encyclopedic survey of contemporary French art).² The artist’s (re)emergence as a figure of interest within contemporary curatorial practices is perhaps surprising given the almost unanimous derision that greeted him throughout the 1970s. To the majority of observers in the European art world and most of his peers, Cadere’s work was not so much “enigmatic” as it was illegitimate, and Documenta 5 was neither the first nor the last scene of his institutional expulsion. Nevertheless, it is the appropriate site from which to begin retracing Cadere’s steps, inasmuch as it positions him in the vicinity of (but, crucially, outside) an exhibition that is synonymous with establishing the centrality of European Conceptual art to the art world at large. Moreover, the inclusion of Marcel Broodthaers, Daniel Buren, Michael Asher, and Hans Haacke ensured that the most radical and oppositional strains of Conceptual art would be a part of the exhibition, theoretically making Cadere’s exclusion all the more astonishing. And yet, when asked in a late interview to define the nature of his work, Cadere stated: “I define myself precisely as having *nothing* to do with the Conceptual movement.”³ Indeed, on further inspection, his project can be seen as initiating a cunning *détournement* of the strategies through which Conceptual art had staked its most radical positions, and as a consequence it remains one of the least understood artistic practices of the 1970s.

In 1967, Cadere immigrated to Paris, and within a year had abandoned the vibratory, op-inflected style of abstract painting he had practiced in his native Romania, undoubtedly in response to the artistic milieu he encountered in France, where op art had reached a saturation point and was being very quickly supplanted by more reductivist pictorial strategies.⁴ By 1969, Cadere had dispensed with the easel format altogether and begun experimenting with the object type that would preoccupy him for nearly a decade: a polychromatic cylindrical structure he constructed out of wooden dowel rods. It was a laborious process that involved sawing the readymade rod into tiny, modular segments—often just two inches in length and diameter. Cadere chiseled the edges of the round wooden pieces until they were smooth and painted them one at a time with high-gloss enamel. He then attached the monochrome segments with pegs and glue, bead-

1. André Cadere, “Letter to Yvon Lambert, May 24, 1978,” repr. in *André Cadere: All Walks of Life*, ed. Carole Kismaric et al. (Paris: Musée d’art moderne de la ville de Paris, 1992), p. 21.

2. Catherine Millet, *L’Art contemporain en France* (Paris: Flammarion, 1987), p. 184.

3. Interview with Sylvère Lotringer: “André Cadere: Boy with Stick,” *Semiotext(e)* (New York) 3, no. 2 (1978), p. 150.

4. See Stephen Bann, “From Kineticism to Didacticism in Contemporary French Art,” *Studio International* 185 (March 1973), pp. 105–09.

ing them together into a tubular assemblage of repeating serial colors that range in length from one and a half to six feet. Between 1970 and 1978, Cadere fabricated approximately 180 of these works, methodically varying their size, color scheme, and compositional order so that each ostensibly had the status of a “unique” object, though what kind of object is far from clear.

These diminutive, brightly colored constructions bear little resemblance to paintings or sculptures and could easily be mistaken for a concatenation of children’s blocks or an instrument culled from the inventory of a kindergarten. Cadere referred to them simply as *barres de bois ronds* (“round bars of wood”), a classification that sounds ostentatiously, almost apocryphally unassuming. (“Remember, Lynda,” he told the critic Lynda Morris when she inquired about his work, “the scientific appellation of my work is not ‘pole’ but ‘round bar of wood.’”)⁵ Mocking the technocratic rhetoric of the *specific* (object) and the *primary* (structure), “round bars of wood” conjures scenes of a preindustrial economy and imbues the ludic objects with vague, utilitarian overtones. None of the *barres* are signed or initialed.⁶ The artist instead issued index-card “certificates,” which did little to authenticate the works since they consisted of eight-to-twelve-digit serial numbers in a code known only to

Cadere. The generic-looking certificates and the clusters of misaligned segments, coagulated glue, and other fabrication defects put one in mind of the stereotypical deficiencies of a counterfeit luxury object, corroborating a faint but growing suspicion that these works are nothing but *faux* pieces of reductivist abstraction. But



Cadere. Barre de bois rond A 02301040, red/white/yellow/blue, 20 segments. No date (after 1972). Photograph by Philip Bernard.

5. André Cadere to Lynda Morris, May 9, 1975, unpublished letter cited in Kismaric, *All Walks of Life*, p. 21.

6. “None of the pieces are signed because a signature implies other considerations such as up, down, right side, wrong side, beginning and end. Each work has its own certificate. The certificates give a code number indicating all the characteristics of a particular piece. The certificates are not signed.” Cadere, *Présentation d’un travail/Utilisation d’un travail* (Hamburg, Hossmann/Brussels, MTL, 1975), p. 15 n. 8.

the minuscule circumference of the *barres* intimates a reductivism of a drastic or comical scale, as if the art object were now confined to the spatial dimensions of a doorjamb, a windowsill, or a clasped hand. Cadere placed no restrictions on how or where his *barres* of round wood could be displayed; his only stipulation, in fact, was that each one of them “must be of a size and weight that the artist can carry in order to maximize his opportunities for showing it.”⁷



*Cadere walking on the
Avenue des Gobelins,
Paris. 1973.*
© Archives de la Galerie
des Locataires.

As early as 1970, Cadere began “exhibiting” his *barres* anonymously in outdoor and semi-public locations in Paris such as bus kiosks and cafés; he carried a *barre* with him on the metro. And in the gallery district of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, it was not unusual to see him loitering on the corner with one of his flamboyant accoutrements, or in the bakery across the street from the Galerie Ileana Sonnabend, where he placed a *barre* in the window alongside the baguettes. Most intriguingly, he displayed his works while taking long solitary walks in Paris, Brussels, and New York. One of the only recordings of these actions, a 16-mm film from 1973, shows the artist traversing the avenue des Gobelins with a *barre* resting on his shoulder, slowly weaving his way through a crowd of trench-coated Parisians bearing shopping bags, briefcases, and quizzical looks.⁸ Staged at a distance from the institutional locations where art is ordinarily displayed, these perambulations remained almost completely indecipherable as “exhibitions” and were seldom ever documented. But in an inverse exercise of the *barre*’s portability, Cadere routinely “exhibited” his works, with-

7. André Cadere, “Presentation of a Work/Utilization of a Work,” (1976) trans. Beatrice Berger and Lynda Morris, repr. in Kismaric, *All Walks of Life*, p. 36.

8. “Le Baton,” *16mm*, 2:58, Alain Fleischer, camera; produced by Ida Baird in association with Galerie des Locataires (Paris: April 1973).

out permission, in commercial galleries and museums. In 1970, he carried a *barre* into the opening of an exhibition of the Italian-Swiss artist Niele Toroni and paraded it past his *empreintes*, to the vexation of everyone in attendance. A spate of intrusions followed, but there was no discernible pattern to them. Cadere placed the *barres* in the middle of the floor, leaned them against the wall, stashed them in the corner, and set them at appallingly close range to the actual works of art on display, like some enigmatic offering. It was not long before the colorful objects began to be confiscated, increasingly at the behest of artists. As his activities persisted, Cadere would himself be routinely ejected from the premises, but rather than desist, he equipped himself with smaller, baton-sized *barres* that could be unveiled once inside.⁹ In 1972, he showed up to the opening of the Barnett Newman retrospective at the Grand Palais with a six-foot *barre* and was forcibly removed by director Reynold Arnould. But Cadere was undeterred. As he stated somewhat cryptically, he had but a single objective: “My only goal is to *show* and to keep that word from becoming useless, I am obligated to present my work in the most diverse situations and as often as possible. The purpose of my work is to be *seen* which means that reactions of indifference, hostility, or love are of no interest.”¹⁰

These visitations were impertinent to begin with, but from the perspective of the radical artistic practices of the late 1960s and early '70s, more serious objections could be leveled at Cadere's method, or lack thereof. The supposition that the abstract painterly object can be *shown* in virtually any location or framework just by dint of being transported there is a travesty of the site-specific protocols that post-Minimal and Conceptual artists deployed to initiate a critical analysis of art institutions. Insisting as they did that any credible attempt to contest the authority of the museum/gallery apparatus depended on acknowledging its determinations, these practices anchored the aesthetic intervention to the actual location where it appeared. Cadere's casual meandering from one place to another would seem to personify what Daniel Buren denounced in 1972 as “the illusion of self-sufficiency”¹¹—the “illusion” that works of art exist prior to, or

9. The slightly felonious aura of Cadere's activities is borne out in a short blurb about him in *Studio International* that seems to adopt the narrative conventions of the detective novel or the undercover reporter. “I had an appointment to meet Cadere in a café and I had been told that I would know him because he would have his work with him. ‘He will have his stick.’ . . . The one that he had with him on that day was about three feet long. It rested conveniently on the café table and didn't knock the glasses over when we got up to go. The one he took during the evening on his way to a couple openings was a more substantial affair that would barely fit in the taxi. For visiting museums or in situations where official objections might cramp his style, he had smaller pieces, easily palmed.” Daniel Forge, “Letter from Paris,” *Studio International* (March 1973), p. 116.

10. André Cadere, “Letter to Yvon Lambert, June 7, 1978,” repr. in Kismaric, *All Walks of Life*, p. 22.

11. “Whether the place in which the work is shown imprints and marks [it] . . . or whether the work itself is directly—consciously or not—produced for the Museum, any work presented in this framework that does not examine the influence of the framework upon itself falls into the illusion of self-sufficiency—or idealism.” Daniel Buren, “The Function of the Museum,” *Artforum* 12, no. 1 (September 1973), p. 68.

apart from, their institutional inscription. The very design of the *barres* (if the concept of design is even appropriate) is an affront to the decorative and administrative sobriety of Conceptual art. As if exemplifying the rejection of Conceptual art's methodical dismantling of the conventions of visuality, the *barres* appear to spring from the most irrational registers of scopic investment, mimetically oscillating between toy and totem, irreducible to language and altogether averse to it: "I am not a teacher and there is nothing to discuss, nor to write," the artist stated. "The purpose of my work is to be *seen*."

Cadere did speak about his work on rare occasions, however, and he made it quite clear that the transient condition of the *barre* was a function of its unusual morphology—its roundness. The recto/verso opposition that ordinarily determines the spatial orientation of a painterly object is collapsed by the application of color to its cylindrical support. Similarly, the modular division of the *barre*'s volumetric structure into an accumulation of identically sized units of color with no discernible pattern confounds the distinction between the object's top and its base. "A painting is automatically hung on the wall," Cadere explained. "It has a top, a bottom, a front, a back. None of this exists in a round *barre* of wood. . . . Unlike other paintings, this work does not have *two sides*."¹² The decision to map a non-compositional color sequence onto the dimensions of a manipulable device results in a plastic object with an undecidable spatial orientation: *barres* of round wood cannot be seen sideways, backwards, or upside down;¹³ they can only be *seen*. The ambiguity surrounding the proper way the *barre* should be placed, installed, and displayed is an index of its latent capacity to be *grasped* and transported elsewhere—*out* of the locations where objects acquire exhibition value or, perhaps, *into* them. By repeatedly and continually placing and displacing his *barres* in and out of official contexts and public places, Cadere suspends the object in a performative simultaneity of dislocation and display. As he put it: "A cylindrical form without a right or reversed side can be placed, carried along, propped, or hung . . . it requires no nails, no glue, or any other system of installation. . . . It is obvious that a round *barre* of wood can be exhibited anywhere."¹⁴

The tendency to dismiss Cadere's work as illegitimate or simply ludicrous might be redirected by recalling Theodor Adorno's statement that "what is artistically legitimate as alienating infantilism . . . becomes merely infantile when it starts to claim theoretical or social validity."¹⁵ Adorno's remark is provocative not for

12. André Cadere, "Letter to Yvon Lambert, June 7, 1978," repr. in Kismaric, *All Walks of Life*, p. 25.

13. This is a paraphrase of El Lissitzky's critique of the frontality of the easel painting cited by Yve-Alain Bois in his seminal analysis of Lissitzky's *Prouns*. Directing his remarks at Suprematist painting, Lissitzky states: "For all its revolutionary force, the Suprematist canvas remained in the form of a picture. Like any canvas in a museum, it possessed one specific perpendicular axis (vis-à-vis the horizon), and when it was hung any other way it looked as if it were sideways or upside down." Cited in Bois, "El Lissitzky: Radical Reversibility," *Art in America* (April 1988), pp. 161–80.

14. Cadere, "Presentation of a Work," repr. in Kismaric, *All Walks of Life*, pp. 22–23.

15. Theodor W. Adorno, "Commitment," in *Aesthetics and Politics*, ed. and trans. Ronald Taylor (New York: Verso, 1980), p. 183.

seeming to endorse an un-dialectical commitment to “alienating infantilism” but in raising the possibility that, under certain historical conditions, strategies of self-marginalization become necessary in the cultivating of an aesthetics of opposition and dissent. As I hope to show, Cadere’s wanderings and trespasses delimit a space of radical dislocation; a vantage point from which to reframe the neo-avant-garde critique of institutions in relation to a set of historical and theoretical questions that are often elided in the art-historical discourse of institutional criticality. If Marcel Duchamp’s *Boîte-en-valise*—a suitcase containing miniaturized reproductions—had figured the (trans)portable artwork in a form that unavoidably conjured the sample case of the traveling salesman, the sight of Cadere carrying one of his abstract painterly staffs evokes the enigmatic arrival of the wandering stranger¹⁶—a figure with whom the artist, as a Romanian émigré, identified. The disconcerting stipulation that each round *barre* of wood “be of a size and weight” that Cadere alone can carry implicitly nominates the body and its envelope of spatial and object-relations as one of the few remaining accessible “sites” where the artistic construct might be constellated. By allying the decontextualized circulation of the (art) object to the movements of a culturally dislocated subject, Cadere’s peripatetic performances re-situate the discourse of institutional critique around the disavowed geopolitical hierarchies between center and margins. His interventions in the neo-avant-garde’s putatively democratic project were unwelcomed (and unwelcome), what with the sudden intrusion of the body, the scandal of the handmade, and the insinuations of subjects—and subject-positions—to whom their self-reflexive project is not addressed. In this way, Cadere reopens the question of institutional critique not only from the perspective of the geopolitical margins but from the historically distant legacies of utopian thinking that had been associated with earlier historical phases of geometric abstraction but had been programmatically voided from the agenda of Conceptual and post-Minimal art.¹⁷ But rather than

16. “I have more and more the feeling about myself that I am a stranger in any situation: in France, in Italy, in England. Being a stranger means I arrive in a situation as a stranger. . . . I am not in a powerful situation, you know. I am an émigré. Not from beautiful Switzerland but from a completely underdeveloped and dirty East European country. . . . It means that from my position I have nothing to lose. A Marxist position, like the quotation from Marx, ‘the proletariat has nothing to lose but his chains.’ I feel myself to be in this position. I think that in the occidental countries the proletariat, the workers, have a lot to lose, they have a television to lose, a car to lose, a family. I have nothing. I have no television, no family, I really have nothing to lose.

LM: Your round bar of wood?

AC: If I lose it, I do it again, I really have nothing to lose.

LM: But by now you have a reputation?

AC: Maybe this is the poisoned gift [*laughing*]. The occidental cultural gift [*laughing*].” Cadere, “Talking with Lynda Morris,” interview (March 1976), published in *André Cadere: Peinture sans fin*, ed. Karola Grässlin et al. (Cologne: König, 2007), pp. 33–35.

17. “The utopian stance of the writings of these first abstract artists tends to be ignored by historians . . . but they all insisted on this point: art strives for its own end as a separate activity. The myth of the ‘last picture,’ or of the ‘dissolution of art into life,’ is one of the most common of the avant-garde theories of the twenties and underlies the importance of a hopeful eschatology (another name for utopia) in all the texts by artists of this first modernist wave.” Yve-Alain Bois, “Lissitzky, Mondrian, Strzemiński: Abstraction and Political Utopia in the Twenties,” in *Cadences: Icon and Abstraction in Context*, exh. cat. (New York: New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1991), pp. 81–105.

endorsing a facile art-into-life philosophy, as some have mistakenly assumed, his cylindrical painting attests to the increasing dissociation of these spheres through the vicissitudes of its transportation. As the *barre* shifts precariously between public and institutional precincts, between spatial and discursive boundaries, and between conditions of being *illegible* and *illegal*, Cadere enacts the restricted maneuvers of the nonhierarchical object in the new hierarchical order of spaces.

Circumscribing Cadere's project from the outset within the discursive context of neo-avant-garde reception and institutional criticality counteracts recent attempts to reclaim him under the depoliticizing rubric of an "artist's artist" or to rejoice in his "eccentricity"; these misunderstandings of his activity might explain why the *barres* frequently appear *benumbed*, to recall Roland Barthes' description of the appearance primary objects acquire in their transposition to a secondary order of de-historicizing mythification.¹⁸ The commercial and museological canonization of artists associated with institutional critique has produced a range of attempts to re-clarify its aims, to probe the etymological ambiguities of the terms themselves, and to retroactively repudiate it as a project of complicity with the powers it claimed to be undermining.¹⁹ Cadere's tenuous place within that discourse confronts us with a different set of questions, as well as a potentially productive way to defamiliarize the project and its protagonists. Perhaps the opposite classification for Cadere's project, at least by way of introduction, is simply that of *critique*, in the specific sense that Michel Foucault defined the word: "Critique only exists in relation to something other than itself: it is an instrument . . . it oversees a domain it would not want to police and is unable to regulate. By its very nature, by its function . . . it seems to be condemned to dispersion, dependency, to pure heteronomy."²⁰

Portable Abstraction

In a 1974 lecture in Louvain, Cadere offered the most comprehensive explanation of his work, including the elaborate production method of his *barres*. The Belgian satirist Jacques Charlier composed a series of cartoons based on Cadere's talk that make a useful, if slightly risible, visual aid. In the first sheet, we see a quaint tableau of a forest, and below, an extreme close-up of two arms sawing a tree branch as beads of sweat and the audible scrape of metal against wood complement the pseudo-documentary angle of vision. Charlier's illustrations are unserious, but in this case his knack for caricature pays off: the portrait of the artist as a rural woodcutter is keenly attuned to the way Cadere himself plays up

18. Roland Barthes, "Myth Today," in *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (New York: Hill and Wang, 1972), p. 125.

19. Andrea Fraser, "From the Critique of Institutions to an Institution of Critique," *Artforum* (Sept. 2005), pp. 278–83.

20. Michel Foucault, "What Is Critique?," trans. Lysa Hochroth, in *The Politics of Truth*, ed. Sylvère Lotringer and Lysa Hochroth (New York: Semiotext(e), 2007), p. 25.



Jacques Charlier. Dessins Humoristiques
(André Cadere). 1975. © MHKA.

These blunt, cylindrical lengths of wood could fulfill any number of utilitarian functions (e.g., as broom handles, curtain rods), but they were predominantly employed in carpentry and light construction to fasten together and reinforce larger wooden structures. Dowel rods inhabit a liminal condition inasmuch as they have already been extracted and estranged from the natural world, and they are destined for still further fragmentation, sawed into pegs and secreted away into some more substantial object.

Since sawing the dowels is one of the prescribed and therefore most mundane actions one could perform on the material, there is little to distinguish Cadere's task from the garden-variety chores of builders and *bricoleurs* except for the dimensions of the cuts themselves. In his lecture the artist stated that after the wood had been cut, "the length of each segment must be equal to its diameter. This relationship," he added, "is determined by the material from which the object is made."²¹ The resulting abundance of minute, modular wooden seg-

the primitivizing expectations for authenticity that invariably greet—or rather, confront—an artistic producer from the geopolitical periphery (in this case, the densely forested, unevenly industrialized then–Eastern Bloc country of Romania). The arrow didactically identifying the cross-section of the tree branch and the accompanying shouts of “*DU BOIS DU BOIS!*” set the scene for the denaturing and disappearance of the venerable substance as Cadere crafts his hybrid, hand-held device.

After all, Cadere's “wood” is not exactly the majestic oak that Constantin Brancusi carved in Edward Steichen's garden at Voulangis in 1926, transforming the felled tree into a sublimely rhythmic articulation of vertically repeating rhomboids. He fashions his *barres* out of wooden dowel rods, an industrially prefabricated lumber product whose round, manicured contours are the work of a mechanized “wood-shaper.”

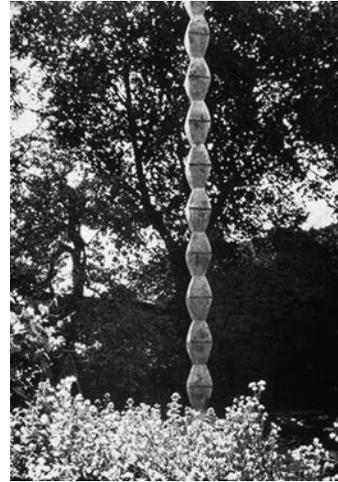
21. Cadere, “Presentation of a Work,” repr. in Kismaric, *All Walks of Life*, p. 29.

ments is a first sign that the dowel rod will be spared from its usual utilitarian function. One commentator dryly observed: “The artist’s task would have been a whole lot easier if he had simply painted a dowel with a succession of colors.”²² But it is precisely this lapidary ritual of splitting apart a prefabricated unit of matter and piecing it back together that will enable him to mime the idioms of advanced abstraction with procedures and materials plucked from the realm of the quotidian.

Cadere specified from the outset that the *barres* would be limited to combinations of only eight colors.

There are a limited number of colors that can be used: only those which give the greatest contrast: black, white, and the six colors of the rainbow: yellow orange red purple blue and green. However, these eight colors only constitute a reality in words. If we ask for green paint at a hardware shop the assistant will show us ten tins all containing different shades of green. The shade chosen must, in the context in which it is used, be different or distinct from the other colors: In this case, the most *obvious* green, the most *obvious* red, etc. . . . Subtle nuances must be avoided because they automatically make a work harmonic, aesthetic and subjective and so allow for an avoidance of discussion.²³

Store-bought color and the consequences it posed for painting and traditional composition is one of the central *topoi* of twentieth-century art, one that had been addressed relatively early by Marcel Duchamp. In his perplexing final painting, *Tu m'*, from 1918, Duchamp not only *depicted* color in the reified guise of a hardware-store catalog swatch, he enlisted the device of perspectival recession to create the illusion of a vast, mismatched assortment of deracinated color samples (mauves, pinks, lavenders) vectoring out of the upper left edge of the canvas. If Duchamp, circa 1918, underscored the aleatory excess of readymade tints and shades to mock the scientific pretensions of color theory, the converse decision by Cadere to select only the most “obvious” colors is attuned to the synthetic palette of post-war industrial-design objects. Dispensing with any “subtle nuances” lets him infuse



Constantin Brancusi. Endless Column, Voulangis. 1926–27. Installation photograph by Edward Steichen. © 2013 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris.

22. David Bourdon, “André Cadere, 1934–1978,” *Arts* (November 1978), p. 103.

23. Cadere, “Presentation of a Work,” repr. in Kismaric, *All Walks of Life*, p. 29.

the achromatic wooden *barres* with the kind of acrid hues that Barthes classified as “chemical color”—a chromatic condition that Barthes associated most closely with American Pop Art and polystyrene plastics.²⁴

Devoting himself to the recondite labors of a Miniaturist—not Minimalist—abstract painter, Cadere carefully painted the spool-shaped pieces with a single shade of high-gloss enamel, suffusing the tiny segments in a bright coat of lacquer. The artificial sheen of the paint combined with the underlying contours of the dowel parts gives the serial units the semblance of readymade industrial objects—an effect Cadere accentuated by minimizing the drag of the paintbrush. If it had been Brancusi’s tendency to efface the artisanal basis of his production by emulating the gleaming contours of serial machine parts, Cadere’s de-skilled procedures engender a different kind of slippage between the handmade and the mass-manufactured. He splices together heterogeneous substances and materials, extracting the most denatured properties of prefabricated matter and fusing them into generic hybrids that appear progressively more *industrial* as they become smaller, brighter, and more *infantile*.²⁵ These round, rigid colors could be the puzzle pieces of a child’s game, the color-coded components of assembly-line manufacturing, or a set of oversized Ben-Day dots designed by Claes Oldenburg. Thus Cadere’s fusing of painterly and sculptural elements will not so much disturb the division of labor between the studio-based disciplines as defamiliarize the very process of artistic production into a distorted hybrid of ludic game-playing and alienated labor.

This becomes apparent upon learning that the order and placement of the painted segments in each *barre* are automatically determined by a permutation of its color scheme. “I observe an order,” Cadere explained,

the most precise order in existence is the mathematical order. I have chosen a mathematical order of permutations. This is an example of the system of permutation: 1234, 2134, 2314, 2341, 3241, etc. We continue until we rediscover the first formula: 1234. Translate these numbers into colors.²⁶

With unerring logic, the permutation exhausts all the possible variations that can be obtained from a given color combination and maps them in one con-

24. “These acrylics, these flat primaries, these lacquers, in short these colors which are never shades, since nuance is banished from them . . . aggressively refer[s] to the artifice of chemistry, in opposition to Nature.” Roland Barthes, “That Old Thing Art,” in *The Responsibility of Forms*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1985), p. 204.

25. The complementarity between the serialized industrial module and the libidinally invested part-object is brilliantly analyzed by Mignon Nixon in “O + X,” *October* 119 (Winter 2007), pp. 6–20.

26. Cadere, “Presentation of a Work,” repr. in Kismaric, *All Walks of Life*, p. 30. Cadere employed two different types of permutation as well as a numerical code for every color. The intricacies of the system deserve a fuller elaboration than can be provided here, and are explained most lucidly by Bernard Marcelis, “How to Look at a Round Bar of Wood,” in *André Cadere: Catalogue Raisonné* (Köln, Germany: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2009), pp. 17–21.

tinuous linear sequence, leaving Cadere to glue sometimes upwards of eighty of the one-and-a-half inch pieces together. The prohibitions on compositional decision-making have their counterpart in the reduction of the role of the hand to a sequence of clipped, repetitive motions. One can distinguish a comparable attempt to align the artistic process with the fragmented routines of anonymous, unskilled labor in the paintings of Niele Toroni, which—beginning in 1966—consisted of nothing but repeated monochromatic imprints of a no. 50 brush, separated by intervals of 30 cm. Toroni’s serialized dabs purged the paint mark of any residuum of dexterity and desire, but this devaluation of painterly procedure belied a conservative attachment to the discipline’s artisanal legacy by retaining its master-tool—the paintbrush—which Toroni wielded with imperious delicacy. Cadere’s sorting,



Charlier. Dessins
Humoristiques
(André Cadere)
(detail). 1975.
© MHKA.

grasping, and fitting together of the tiny components recasts the process of placing and arranging colors in a radically unrecognizable guise that conjures an anonymous stage in the manufacturing process of serial objects, a kind of assembly-line abstraction.

Although differentiating the identically sized segments with maximally contrasting colors introduces a nascent logic for piecing them together, it paradoxically impedes the production of anything resembling a finished, integrated object; the staccato color combinations unavoidably superimpose a sequence of *optical* disjunctions onto the manually re-assembled *barre*. This paradoxical making and unmaking is the inevitable result of Cadere’s functional definition of color. “The essential function of color is to differentiate objects,” Cadere explained:

If you open a transistor, you will see groups of wires inside. They are not different colors to make the inside of the transistor pretty, but to

show that they have different functions. Color is used in this work for this essential quality: *to show a difference*.²⁷

To a person prying open the transistor, the contrasting colors of the wires spark a rudimentary understanding of how the device is constructed by differentiating its electrical circuitry. In a non-technological instrument like the *barre*, these chromatic cues are radicalized to the point where the mere perception of the colored segments de-fetishizes the object entirely: “You can see the segments, you can see that the segments are assembled,” Cadere explained. “The segments are all the same size. . . . The finished piece does not hide the means by which it is manufactured.”²⁸ Yet like the wires in the transistor, the colors in the round *barres* are coextensive with—indeed, inseparable from—the components they’re assigned to designate. By tautologically mapping the means for deciphering the different parts of the object onto the parts themselves, he effaces the ground that would permit us to recognize colors as functional. In contrast to the monochrome’s fusing of figure and ground, which renders the rectangular-shaped *painting* an object in actual space, applying a single paint color to these minuscule “supports” with their manifestly tactile dimensions causes *color* to acquire the guise of an object. Dislodged from the prescribed rectangularity of the painterly support but not yet subsumed into a finished structure, the units of the *barre* of round wood signify little more than *reds, yellows, blues, greens*. The excessive instrumentalization of material and gesture returns in the finished *barre* as a surfeit of color and a non-instrumental perceptual experience.

Using color to demarcate and, in a sense, *signal* the artwork’s fabrication process is anathema to the way color was deployed in the industrially derived hybridization of pictorial and sculptural elements in American Minimalism. The decision by Donald Judd to discontinue his early practice of painting directly on plywood supports in favor of pre-colored, synthetic materials was motivated by a desire to dispense with the applied, extraneous quality of painting. It was a means to more effectively consolidate “shape, color, and surface” on the way to asserting the presence of a “single thing that was intense, clear, and powerful.”²⁹ For Judd, this was the very anatomy of a specific object—that it *had* no anatomy, no “visible parts, connections, or transitional areas.”³⁰ A round *barre*, on the other hand, is nothing but visible parts, connections, and transitional areas. The pride that Judd and many of the Minimalists professed in outsourcing the production of their objects is likewise undone in Cadere’s *barres* by the clusters of egregiously mis-

27. Cadere, “Presentation of a Work,” repr. in Kismaric, *All Walks of Life*, p. 30.

28. Ibid. It’s worth noting that the verbal refrain “round *barre* of wood” participates in the de-fetishization process by invoking an achromatic material and tacitly disclosing that the *barre* is in fact painted.

29. Donald Judd, “Specific Objects,” *Arts Yearbook* 8 (New York, 1965), repr. in *Judd: Complete Writings, 1959–1975* (Halifax, Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1975), p. 187.

30. Judd, p. 187.

aligned segments, unseemly gaps, and other errant traces of the hand that are set into palpable relief by the modular uniformity of the vertebrated segments. The accumulation of these tiny manual discrepancies render the cylindrical *barres* slightly crooked and contorted, multiplying the spectrum of contradictions in these objects, which appear somehow both hand-crafted and industrially derived, primitivistic and not biodegradable. While in theory a given *barre* could consist of

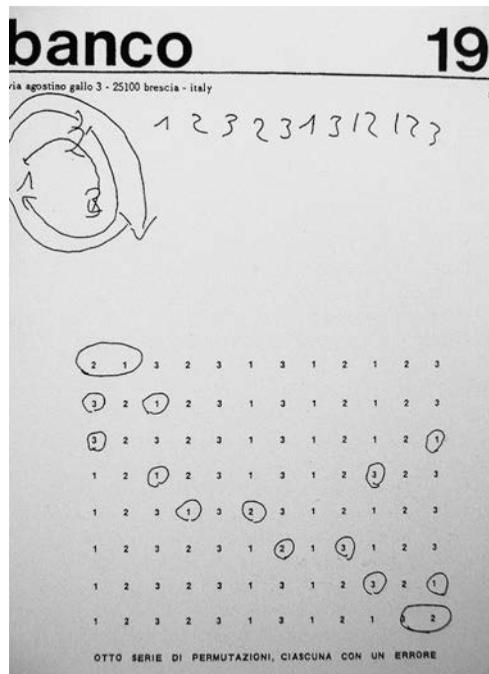


Cadere. Barre de bois rond B
02300140, violet/white/yellow/
blue, 52 segments (*detail*). No date
(after 1972).

combinations of all of the eight possible colors, in reality the permutational expansion of more than five colors would result in an object too large for Cadere to carry and therefore was not attempted, drastically limiting the number of works he could produce.³¹ By adopting the (non)compositional “serial attitude” that was de rigueur to Minimal and Conceptual art, but insisting on the manual execution of the proliferating seriality, Cadere exposes that “order” to imprecision, breakdown, dysfunction. To wit, every *barre* contained what the artist termed an “error”: a minor but deliberate transgression of the color order dictated by the permutation, which casts a disconcerting pall on the discourse of *specific* objects and confronts us with the stigma of a *defective* one.

Cadere introduced the error by transposing two differently colored segments from the permutational sequence prior to gluing the pieces into place. This seemingly facile maneuver was not entirely uncomplicated, however; it had to be executed without causing either of the transplanted segments to be re-placed beside an adjacent segment of the same color, as this would have interfered with the non-compositional neutrality of the color sequence and made the discrepancy glaringly

31. “Since everything—size, colors, number of permutations—is limited, it is obvious that the number of pieces I could make is likewise limited. And even if it is higher than the number of pieces that I could make in my lifetime, it nevertheless reveals a principle that traditional artists reject, since they wish to convey the illusion of something like an infinite ‘creativity’; my work is located at the exact opposite, clearly revealing its limits.” Cadere to Yvon Lambert, June 16, 1978, repr. in Kismaric, *All Walks of Life*, p. 24. “Other mathematical series, the binary one, the Fibonacci sequence, can go on ad infinitum. In the realm of art they provide an illusion of infinity, of absolute freedom. All this is nothing but romanticism, for in reality, every artwork is limited. The limit should not be masked, it should be shown in the very structure of the work.” Cadere to Yvon Lambert, June 14, 1978, repr. in Kismaric, *All Walks of Life*, p. 23.



Cadere. The eight ways in which an “error” can be produced in a three-color barre. 1975. Courtesy of the Estate of André Cadere and Galerie Hervé Bize, Nancy.

apparent. Instead, the error is embedded in the *barre*, becoming manifest only as the spectator starts to decipher the underlying permutational pattern through a close inspection of the colors. According to Cadere, the error ensured that “each piece is unique at one point,” and to that end he refrained from generating an identical error in *barres* bearing the same combination of colors.

Error does not chime with the practiced ineptitude we associate with artistic “deskilling”; nor could it be said to arise through chance operations. Error identifies an instance of misconduct within a set of administrative and disciplinary parameters, and it reverberates with disapproval. In *Difference and Repetition*, Gilles Deleuze ponders the epistemological status of error and concludes that for all of its pejorative charge, an error only reaffirms the axiom that it transgresses:

Does not error itself testify to the form of a common sense, since one faculty alone cannot be mistaken but two faculties can be, at least from the point of view of their collaboration, when an object of one is confused with *another* object of the other? Whence does it come if not from

a false distribution of the elements of representation? . . . Error, therefore, pays homage to the “truth” to the extent that, lacking a form of its own, it gives the form of the true to the false.³²

Camouflaged in the monotonous yet playful micro-tasking, the error could be the consequence of fatigue and distraction; it could be a ludic gambit; or it could be a furtive “double-switch” engineered to sabotage the machinery of production; error ambiguously suspends the subject’s agency between its sheer propensity to lapse and its potential to enact micrological forms of noncompliance under partial cover of repetition. “The error is apparent because of the order,” the artist stated. “Its existence is made possible by a strict framework, a preexistent structure. The dogma can only be seen in comparison to the error. If it disappears, the dogma becomes invisible, moreover, unthinkable.”³³ Defined in this way, adopting the order/error binary as a compositional principle poses an implicit counter-model to the post-Cagian paradigm of order and chance that had remained a compelling model for structuring non-compositional procedures.

Summing up the fabrication process, Cadere made a rather surprising comparison:

[T]he car has an important role in society; it is made by means which correspond economically and socially to thousands of workers and factories. . . . Now, the manufacture of this object is not industrial; it is not part of the economy of a country. The process is limited to the individual. The finished piece does not hide the means by which it is fabricated.³⁴

Thus the *barre* finds its quintessential counter-object in the car, the technology that Guy Debord anointed in 1959 as “the sovereign good of an alienated life and the essential product of the capitalist market”³⁵ (a distinction that now belongs to the iPhone). If the production process of the car is made recondite by the monochromatic surface shell, the *barre* has a polychromatic pattern indicating each step of its fabrication. If the primary function of the car is to transport the subject, the *barre* is a functional object defined by its capacity to be transported. And if the mobility of the car renders the subject’s body sedentary, the mobility of the *barre* necessitates that the subject’s body become active so as to distribute it through public space: a round *barre* of wood in a forest of signs.

32. Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), pp. 148–50.

33. Cadere, “Presentation of a Work,” repr. in Kismaric, *All Walks of Life*, p. 30.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 24.

35. Guy Debord, “Situationist Theses on Traffic,” *Situationist International* 3 (December 1959), cited in Kristen Ross, *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies: Decolonization and the Reordering of French Culture* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995), p. 26.

UNE PRESENTATION DU TRAVAIL DE CADERE

AURA LIEU A PARIS LE 25 JUIN 1974

16 h 00 - métro Pont Neuf, quai direction Porte de la Villette
 16 h 10 - bouche métro Pont Neuf
 16 h 25 - coin Pont Neuf/quai de Conti
 16 h 28 - coin Pont Neuf/quai des Grands Augustins
 16 h 30 - coin quai des Grands Augustins/rue Dauphine
 16 h 35 - coin impasse de Nevers/quai de Conti
 16 h 36 - coin quai de Conti/rue Guénégaud
 16 h 46 - coin rue Guénégaud/rue Mazarine
 16 h 47 - coin rue Mazarine/rue Jacques Callot
 16 h 50 - coin rue Jacques Callot/rue de Seine
 16 h 56 - coin rue de Seine/rue Mazarine
 17 h 02 - coin rue Mazarine/rue Jacques Callot
 17 h 05 - coin rue Jacques Callot/rue de Seine
 17 h 07 - coin rue de Seine/rue Jacob
 17 h 08 - coin rue Jacob/rue de l'Echaudé
 17 h 16 - coin rue de l'Echaudé/rue de l'Abbaye
 17 h 20 - coin rue de l'Abbaye/place St. Germain des Prés
 17 h 21 - coin place St. Germain des Prés/boulevard St. Germain des Prés
 17 h 23 - bouche métro St. Germain des Prés
 17 h 28 - métro St. Germain des Prés, quai direction Porte d'Orléans

les rues seront utilisées du côté impair .

Cadere. Itinerary for a Promenade, June 25, 1974. Paris. Courtesy of the Estate of André Cadere and Galerie Hervé Bize, Nancy.

Walking in the City

In the small cache of ephemera related to Cadere's activities, we find a 1974 flyer designed by the artist announcing an upcoming exhibition of his work in Paris: it comprises twenty outdoor locations—street corners, quais, metro stations, kiosks—and the corresponding times when Cadere would pass by these non-sites during a June 25 promenade. The use of a simple forward slash between streets to denote an intersection (“coin rue Jacob/rue de l'Echaudé”) results in an abundance of tiny typographic bars that play quietly in the bureaucratic typewriter font like tokens of the object whose coordinates they mark. Setting out from the Pont Neuf metro stop at 16:00 sharp, Cadere crossed over to the Left Bank, passing the quai de Conti at 16:25 and proceeding south-southwest. He took a roundabout route through the 6th arrondissement, crossing streets and turning corners at the appointed times, until he reached the Saint-Germain-des-Prés metro stop, where the perambulation abruptly concludes at 17:28. Brief intervals of two, three, and five minutes between locations indicate that the artist

is in unhurried but constant motion for the extent of this unconventional “traveling exhibition.”

Cadere carried a *barre* with him everywhere he went, of course, even on utterly mundane errands; resting them on café tables and countertops during a repast; maneuvering them in and out of taxicabs and subway cars and thereby insinuating his portable painting-objects into a variety of spaces where artworks aren’t ordinarily seen. “To emphasize the independence of the work, it is important to show outside art enclaves,” he stated, “in the streets, subways, restaurants, everywhere . . . which [is] possible because the presence of the wall is not necessary.”³⁶ While these everyday meanderings were un-choreographed and largely anonymous, a suite of so-called “promenades” like the one conducted on June 25 were more formal affairs. The typed itinerary is reminiscent of a Fluxus event score in serving to “frame” an everyday occurrence so it might receive “art-like attention.” But this was not so easily achieved. In the absence of any legitimating institutional markers—where the diminutive object would be framed by a panoramic assemblage of signs, signals, bodies, and buildings—the aesthetic intentions behind Cadere’s actions are subject to erasure, his mobile exhibitions morphing into ambiguous, fugitive interventions into the everyday.

Cadere’s walks are situated at an oblique intersection between categories of performance and public artwork: ultimately, they remain irreducible to either genre. As “performances,” they occur outside the studio/laboratory settings where post-Minimalist artists staged somatic events and recorded their interactions with objects.³⁷ But though Cadere’s promenades took place in *public*, his roaming the streets with a particular object constituted an ephemeral and for the most part anonymous action, an activity so “public” that it risked dissolving into the amorphous multiplicity that is public space. The very gesture of *displaying* the object was submerged in the quotidian activity of walking. What Cadere’s transient exhibitions *showed* us was not so much, or not only, an object but a subject, the archetypal traveler—the stranger, the vagabond, some kind of wandering sage. This in turn raises the vexing question of whether the “independence” of Cadere’s project was not merely the performative reanimation of a mythical—and mystical—personification of the artist.

This is apparently what Harald Szeemann thought when he learned of Cadere’s walks. Szeemann invited the artist to participate in Documenta 5 with one condition: that he make his way to Kassel on foot carrying one of his *barres*, a mock reenactment of the sojourn that fellow Romanian Constantin Brancusi purportedly made from Munich to Paris in 1904. Cadere consented to Szeemann’s

36. Cadere, “Presentation of a Work,” repr. in Kismaric, *All Walks of Life*, p. 36.

37. As Astrid Ihle points out, “Cadere steadfastly refused to have his rounds documented in forms which could be exhibited in a gallery or sold. Only few photographs exist of him during his actions in the public domain, and most of these pictures are personal, souvenir photographs.” Ihle, “Andre Cadere: Interventions in the Public Domain,” in *Peinture sans fin*, p. 57.

proposal, and in the weeks leading up to the June opening, he mailed a series of postcards to Szeemann and Jacques Caumont falsely updating them on the progress of his journey.³⁸ His final communiqué exposed the ruse: it contained the departure and arrival times of the train Cadere and Jean Le Gac were scheduled to take to Kassel, infuriating the Documenta director so much that he banned Cadere from participating.

The Documenta imbroglio sheds further light on the performative dimension of Cadere's project: with the *barre* resting on his shoulder or held like a walking stick or pilgrim's staff, Cadere affected the bearing of an archetypal wanderer; a geopolitically displaced, preindustrial figure whose itinerancy is associated with religious pilgrimage, statelessness, migration, and eventually—by the mid-nineteenth century—bohemian subjectivity. This was the moment when the socially marginalized figures of the Gypsy

and the *juif-errant* would emerge as newly authentic models of avant-garde artistic identity, most scandalously in Gustave Courbet's 1854 painting *Meeting: A Portrait of the Artist as a Wandering Jew*. However, the vivacity of Cadere's "staff" quickly checks such anachronistic references. Its strident colors spring from the land of mass-produced design objects. With a complicated double gesture, Cadere effaces any regionally specific sign of cultural identity by



Gustave Courbet. *Meeting: A Portrait of the Artist as a Wandering Jew*. 1854.

allegorically alluding to an outmoded but canonical personification of a nomadic subject; at the same time, he inscribes this rural, transhistorical figure in the present-tense of urban-industrial object production, metonymically encapsulated by the *barre's* bright colors. Against the backdrop of urban commuting, this premodern invocation of "migrating" registers as a pedestrian protest against the spatiotemporal regimentation of everyday life.

38. For Cadere's correspondence with Szeemann and a valuable historical account of his earliest experiments with Le Gac and Sarkis, see *Une Scène parisienne 1968–1972*, ed. Jean-Marc Poinot (Rennes: Centre d'histoire de l'art contemporain, 1991), pp. 99–111.

In the short recording of his 1973 promenade on the avenue des Gobelins, Cadere traverses the sidewalk at a medium-slow, almost meditative pace. With his back to us, and the camera trailing at a considerable distance, he advances against the direction of the traffic that passes in and out of the left side of the frame. He has a *barre* propped casually against his right shoulder; its stacked segments appear to extend three feet beyond his head. As he progresses, Cadere is increasingly obliged to break stride as cars turn left onto the avenue. The sheer number of automobiles—parked along the curb like a quasi-serial row of Minimalist objects or idling at traffic lights in a cloud of exhaust fumes—heightens our awareness of the asynchronicities of walking and driving, the disparity between the enclosed interior of the car and the exterior space of the street. With each surge of pedestrians, the *barre* elicits double-takes, eye squints, and expressions of incredulity: some passersby literally look Cadere up and down, others shoot a quick glance at the *barre* as they pass it or furtively turn around and peer, but none slows his or her pace, and neither does Cadere. In this ambient field of traffic lights, signs, and café tables, the *barre* can sustain no more than a passing glance—the “curious, then empty but fascinated look” that Maurice Blanchot characterized as the perceptual modality of the everyday.³⁹ The multitude of small painted modules that comprise the *barre* finds its spectatorial corollary in the profusion of hurried looks, anonymous glances, and microscopic responses by pedestrians who unexpectedly pass it on the street.

Alain Fleischer’s three-minute recording of the walk gives little indication that these public actions were ever intended to engender alternative artist/spectator relations. (“I don’t collect the public’s feelings,” Cadere once said.⁴⁰) In this respect, it is worth comparing his walks to the pedestrian interventions of Stanley Brouwn, whose earliest projects evinced a similar concern with traversing urban space, albeit in vastly different ways. In 1961, Brouwn began a series of works in which he approached a random pedestrian in the city of Amsterdam and asked him or her for directions to a particular part of town. Often, the obliging passerby sketched the route on a piece of paper that Brouwn provided. With each improvised encounter, the artist gradually amassed a collection of small, spontaneously executed drawings that vary dramatically in draftsmanship but share recurring motifs like grid-like configurations signifying city blocks, directional arrows, and boldly drawn circles marking Brouwn’s desired destination. He stamped each drawing with the words “this way brouwn,” a non-signature that authenticated the collaborative production process between Brouwn and an anonymous pedestrian.⁴¹ Given that the artist had immigrated to Amsterdam in the late 1950s from the Dutch colony of Suriname and thus had presumably found himself in the position of asking the denizens of the colonial metropole to assist him in spatially

39. Maurice Blanchot, “Everyday Speech,” trans. Susan Hanson, *Yale French Studies*, no. 73 (Fall 1987), p. 14.

40. Cadere, “Presentation of a Work,” repr. in Kismaric, *All Walks of Life*, p. 22.

41. For a useful introduction to Brouwn’s underexamined activities, see Antje von Graevenitz, “We Walk the Planet Earth’: The Artist as a Pedestrian in the Work of Stanley Brouwn,” trans. Ruth Koenig, *Dutch Art and Architecture Today* 1 (June 1977), pp. 2–11.

reorienting himself, Brouwn's seemingly anodyne ritual of soliciting directions takes on an unlikely ethico-political inflection.

The salient difference between the two artists' utilization of the urban everyday is not one's foregrounding of dialogic interaction and the other's quietistic detachment; rather, it is Brouwn's inclusion of the anonymous passerby in the *production* process and Cadere's inscription of the pedestrian public in the process of *reception*. Cadere's inscrutable appearance produces a momentary sense of strangeness, but it does not exactly disrupt the smooth functioning of urban public space. The strangeness that ripples through the crowded sidewalk is not the spectacular scene of pathology but the incongruity of being near the aesthetic without recognizing it as such. The strangeness of the object metonymically implicates Cadere himself as a *stranger*—an identity that is reinforced by the *tableau vivant* of a nomadic wanderer. In Georg Simmel's excellent definition, the stranger is a figure combining relations of distance and nearness:

The unity of nearness and remoteness involved in every human relation is organized, in the phenomenon of the stranger, in a way which may be most briefly formulated by saying that in the relationship to him, distance means that he, who is close by, is far, and strangeness means that he, who also is far, is actually near. For, to be a stranger is naturally a very positive relation; it is a specific form of interaction. The stranger is an element of the group itself—an element whose membership involves both being outside it and confronting it.⁴²

If Cadere's attempt to display his artwork independently of any institutional setting seems to intimate the proximity of an alien(ated) subject, a stranger—or, at the very least, a figure marked by alterity—then this points to a complicated interrelation between the artist's condition of geopolitical displacement and the (im)possibilities of a public or publicly available artwork. Cadere's solitary processions resonate with what Leah Dickerman has called, in relation to the pre-World War II Dada practices of Hugo Ball and Tristan Tzara, "the public performance of privatism."⁴³ As Dickerman argues, the two exiled artists publicly enacted their isolation through the mediums of the manifesto and the poetic recital, exploiting

42. Georg Simmel, "The Stranger" (1908), in *On Individuality and Social Forms*, ed. Donald N. Levine (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1971). I am indebted to Rosalyn Deutsche's citation of Simmel's text and to her elaboration of strangeness as an ethico-political category in an essay about the "immigrant instruments" of Krzysztof Wodiczko. The relationship between these objects and Cadere's is undoubtedly complex, and even a cursory attempt to differentiate their historical contexts would exceed the boundaries of a footnote. See Rosalyn Deutsche, "Sharing Strangeness: Krzysztof Wodiczko's *Aegis* and the Question of Hospitality," *Grey Room* 6 (Winter 2002), pp. 26–43. Deutsche's thinking on public urban space has informed much of my discussion here. See especially *Evictions: Art and Spatial Politics* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996).

43. Dickerman positions Dada's assault on the communicative functions of language within what she terms "an aggressive detachment from collectivity" whose nostalgic and memorial overtones signal the loss of traditional community structures. Leah Dickerman, "Dada's Solipsism," *Documents* 19 (Fall 2000), pp. 16–19. See also T. J. Demos, "Zurich Dada: The Aesthetics of Exile," in *The Dada Seminars*, ed. Leah Dickerman (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 2005), pp. 7–30.

these forms of verbal production to transgress the phonetic and semantic axes of language and hence the communicative functions of language itself. The air of privatism surrounding Cadere's walks is not the clamor of glossolalia; it is engendered through the autotelic silence of the nonrepresentational painterly sign, through its separation from the institutional locations that give it legibility, and by the intimate proximity of the object to Cadere's body. Holding the *barre* only recapitulates its *inaccessibility* by coding an unidentifiable object as a personal possession, much in the same way that walking expedites the withdrawal and removal of the object from every space and spectator to which it comes into proximity. This dialectic of approaching and retreating, of extending and withholding, epitomizes the paradox of Cadere's peripatetic exhibitions.

The suspicious stares and sidelong glances directed at Cadere and his *barre* could not supply more poignant evidence of the failure of abstraction's utopian aspirations to one day constitute a universal language capable of transcending linguistic and geopolitical differences. Through the metaphor of the painterly object as pilgrim's staff, Cadere reoriented abstraction's claims to universality from the anticipation of a transcendent internationalism to the ever more "universal" experience of cultural dislocation and displacement. Yet the recognition of the inapplicability of utopian ideals allows for the emergence of a radically different model of how an aesthetic object can function in the present. Benjamin Buchloh has suggested that the extent to which the utopian thinking that informed earlier avant-garde experiments in abstraction in the 1920s has waned can be gauged by the drastically different way postwar artists conceived of the relationship between painting and architecture. As an example, he cites the dramatic expansion of pictorial scale in the abstract paintings of Barnett Newman and Ellsworth Kelly:

One could venture as far as saying that it was precisely the ever increasing emphasis on scale, size, and dimension in Kelly's, Morris Louis', and Newman's work from the late 40's that reveals the deeply felt loss of an *actually given social space*, either as an architectural framework to correspond to the claims for autonomy in the spaces of the paintings themselves or in the sense of an audience with which these communicative structures could be enacted.⁴⁴

What Cadere's portable painting foregrounds to an almost grotesquely comical degree is precisely *the loss of an actually given social space*, a loss that is objectified in the shrunken format of the *barre* and performatively reiterated in the physical labor of carrying it through the streets—an action that itself epitomizes transience. The close intertwining of artist and work forfeits any claims for painting's autonomy, suggesting that neither subject nor object is complete and entirely self-sufficient under their dual conditions of displacement. The inscription of Cadere's somatic presence into the visual field of painting/object recasts the public dimension of the work within the fleeting intersubjective relation between one's self and another, between near-

44. Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, "Isa Genzken: The Fragment as Model," in *Isa Genzken*, exh. cat. (Chicago: University of Chicago, Renaissance Society, 1992), p. 136.

ness and distance, between sight and touch. The solitary, de-dramatized ritual of carrying the *barre* through the crowded streets of Paris suggests the paradoxical form that a collectively available artwork would assume when the actual conditions of publicness are ones in which subjects are spatially proximate but socially isolated.

The tension embodied in the *barre* between pictorial sign and functional device is present in the work of Daniel Buren, whose decision in 1967 to restrict his pictorial output to the simplified pattern of alternating white and colored vertical stripes resulted in a systematic analysis of the museum. By modifying the format and installation of his striped canvas/cloth material every time it was presented, and by letting the particularities of the location dictate its placement, Buren demonstrated that the “meaning” of the work was always suspended and interwoven with institutional and discursive frames. The striking incongruities between Cadere’s *barres* and Buren’s stripes—between, that is to say, a practice of nomadic dislocation and a discourse of site-specificity—become particularly pronounced in the context of an early exhibition by Buren that incorporated the act of walking. For the 1968 Salon de mai at the Musée d’art moderne de la ville de Paris, Buren installed a fifty-four-by-fifteen-foot piece of green-and-white-striped paper inside the museum, where a customary wall label identified the artist. For a second component of the exhibition, Buren engaged the services of two men equipped with sandwich boards fitted with rectangular sheets of the same green-and-white-striped paper to circulate in the public vicinity of the museum. By inserting his (emblem of) reductivist painting into the sandwich-board placards—devices that ordinarily advertise disposable goods or coming attractions—Buren reversed the process of rarefication that the readymade striped paper underwent through its placement in the museum. The implication that even aesthetic objects will stoop to the most vulgar sales pitch magnifies the vernacular violence of the commodity form by affirming it as a universal principle from which not even art is exempt. In this way, Buren subjected art and advertisement to a double mortification. But the subdued stripe motif deflects our attention back onto the harness-like contraptions borne by these “human billboards,” whose bodies are converted into a sign for something they did not produce⁴⁵ and whose labor requires their separation from the aes-

45. The following description of the piece is published on Buren’s catalogue raisonné website: “Repeatedly, two men walk about Paris wearing on their back, by means of straps, a placard in two parts—a large one above their head and a little one at the level of their torso—covered with green and white striped paper. . . . Nothing else is visible, no title, no author’s name: in addition, the men were ordered to respond, in case of interrogation by passers-by: ‘We are wearing some placards covered with green and white vertical stripes.’” (catalogue.danielburen.com/fr/).

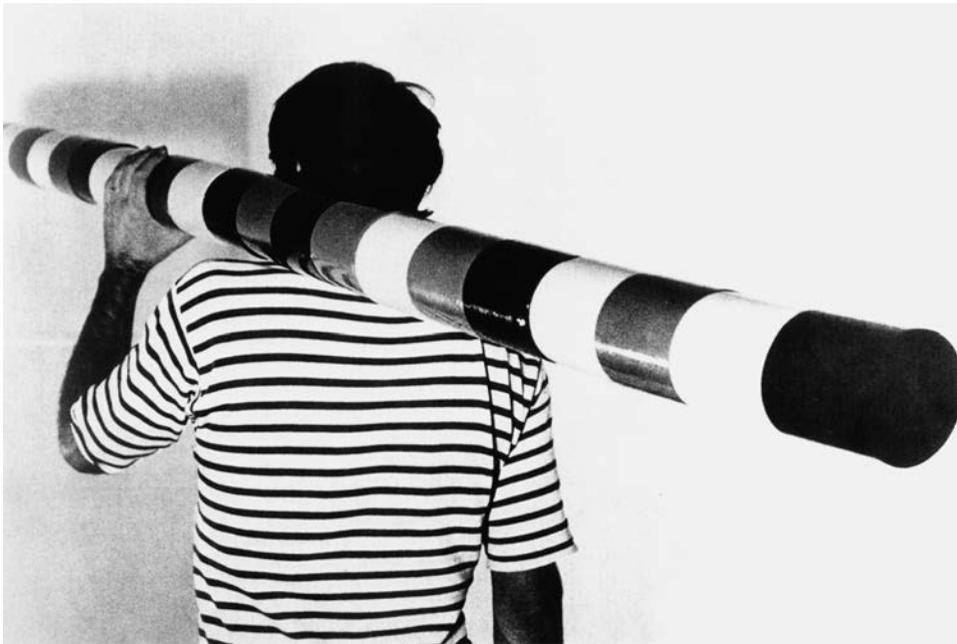


Daniel Buren.
Hommes/Sandwichs.
April 1968, Paris (detail).
© DB-ADAGP Paris.

thetic epiphanies theoretically occurring inside the museum.⁴⁶ Exhibited in the shadow of the May '68 uprisings, Buren's gesture reverberates with profound cynicism about the viability of artistic practice when other, more direct means of intervention have been dismantled. But in the attempt to homeopathically devalorize the aesthetic, he precipitates a scene of actual degradation. The Salon de mai exhibit prefigured subsequent observations by Buren's critics that the repetitions of his iconic motif unavoidably function as a kind of corporate logo, making his post-Situationist interventions uncomfortably close to an advertising campaign. Here, Buren literally mounts the logo on the backs of subjects whose labor generates the extractable surplus value that makes the existence of works of art possible.

We do not know whether Cadere's habit of donning striped shirts was meant to coyly implicate Buren's signature striations in the realm of fashion or whether he sim-

46. By the year of Buren's exhibit at the Salon de mai, the sandwichman was already a somewhat obsolete advertising device. But as Susan Buck-Morss reminds us in a brilliant essay, the figures who performed the task were historically synonymous with the proletariat. "The sandwichman was a denigrated, yet familiar figure in Paris in the 1930s, one which would have entered the perceptive range of most city-dwellers. Human billboards, they advertised and publicized the products and events (cinemas, store sales) of bourgeois consumer culture. Yet they themselves, despite the uniforms they were loaned to give a respectable appearance, were associated closely with poverty. . . . The step from displaying sandwich board advertisements to the display of one's own body for sale seemed to them a small one." Susan Buck-Morss, "The Flaneur, the Sandwichman and the Whore: The Politics of Loitering," *New German Critique*, no. 39 (Autumn 1986), pp. 109–10.



Cadere with barre. 1974.
Photograph by Bernard Borgeaud. Courtesy of the Estate of André Cadere and Galerie Hervé Bize, Nancy.

ply wore the clothing to highlight the three-dimensionality of his own “painting.” The mimetic transformation of the artwork into an advertisement and the uncanny figures of the *hommes-sandwichs* attest to a form of publicness that is different from, but no less alienated than, Cadere’s solitary nomadism, because it tacitly aligns the social legibility of the subject in public space with the way his or her activities and appearances facilitate the circulation of sign-exchange values. Buren had acknowledged the transportability of the art object as an unavoidable “compromise” in its necessary passage from the studio—the site where it originates and languishes as a “non-entity”—to the public walls of museums and galleries where it gains official visibility. He wrote:

Work produced in this way [i.e., in the studio] makes its passage, *in order to exist*, from one refuge to another. It should therefore be portable, manipulable if possible, by whoever (except the artist himself) assumes the responsibility of removing it from its place of origin to its place of promotion. . . . Thus the studio is a place of multiple activities: production, storage, and, finally if all goes well, distribution. It is a kind of commercial depot.⁴⁷

Buren’s hopes for the eventualities of distribution (“if all goes well”) are ruptured by the proscribed scenario of *the artist himself* literally transporting his works. Cadere’s decision to assume responsibility for the distribution of an object in addition to its fabrication is clearly unthinkable in Buren’s scenario because it complicates the division of labor between the purely creative domain of the artist and the menial sphere of the promoter of the products of that creativity, just as Cadere’s mode of exhibiting threatens to de-differentiate artist and spectator. Buren’s sardonic reference to the artist’s studio as a “commercial depot” calls to mind the *mise-en-scène* of shipping crates, moving truck, picture postcards, and personnel that Marcel Broodthaers assembled for the opening of his fictitious *musée* in 1968. Cadere’s stipulation that his objects be limited to a size and weight that he can physically carry portends a mode of distribution that is bereft of these devices of dissemination. It implies that the work’s passage from “origin” to institutional “refuge” is beset with vicissitudes and indefinitely postponed. In lieu of Buren’s inexorable arrival to the place of *promotion*, the form of Cadere’s diminutive objects mimetically anticipates their abandonment to interminable *motion*.

Colors for a Brick Wall

Had Cadere been content to simply make his round wooden paintings and circulate more or less unobtrusively through the streets with them, his practice would have certainly paled in significance to the sophisticated dismantling of exhibition conventions that artists like Buren initiated and honed over the next

47. Daniel Buren, “The Function of the Studio,” (1971), trans. Thomas Repensek, *October* 10 (Fall 1979), pp. 51–58.

decade. But just as the *barres* of wood disguise a lucid understanding of reductivist painterly idioms beneath a seeming credulity in cult and craft, the indifference to institutional framing conditions implied by Cadere's desultory walking and wandering is misleading. For it is precisely by showing his work in "one place after another"—to borrow Miwon Kwon's indispensable formulation of the demise of the site-specific paradigm—that will enable Cadere to intervene in the institutional framework in ways that would have been unthinkable to his peers.

What begins to emerge from an analysis of Cadere's walks is that his antipathy for Conceptual art was grounded in a more serious objection to its methods. One can readily surmise that any claims to democratize the art object by situating it within a spectrum of linguistic or architectural determinations would have appeared profoundly inadequate from the perspective of the language deficits and dislocation that determine the experiential conditions of being a "stranger." More likely still, Cadere's position as a stranger led him to recognize that there was nothing innately transgressive about the doctrinally self-reflexive project of critique promulgated by the neo-avant-garde; on the contrary, it entrenched their practices ever deeper behind the walls where Western European institutions housed their embarrassing riches of cultural production, and it sublimated more radical demands and desires that had historically been entwined with avant-garde visual practices. Cadere's project hinges on the way he deploys the trappings of his own unassimilated, or partially assimilated, cultural identity to claim a space of alterity and opposition to the institutional *acculturation* of "radical" art, devising a practice of critique that does not presuppose unlimited and universal access to artistic institutions.⁴⁸ Lawrence Weiner once wryly referred to the process of installing sculpture as "the intrusion of a fabricated object into space." But what does it mean for Cadere and his *barre* to literally intrude into institutional space, with "intrude" being defined as putting oneself "into a place or situation where one is unwelcome or uninvited"?

After declaring his portable paintings independent of any architectural supports and therefore equipped to be shown "everywhere," the artist appended a caveat: "Nevertheless, there are museums and galleries, particular places for looking at art. If we don't take them into consideration, our position is illusory."⁴⁹ This acknowledgment that "particular places for looking at art" have a singular power to determine the reception and the discursive status of objects prompts the recognition that Cadere's daily practice of carrying his *barre* is less a modus for disseminating his work than a purposeful way of dissociating and dislocating the abstract painterly objects from "museums and galleries." Habituating the *barres* to the spaces, scenarios, and object-relations of the everyday makes it possible to

48. "One must also point out that the artist comes from an eastern European country. This is a profoundly determining factor. Indeed, could we imagine, say, an American artist bringing his own work to an exhibition if he hadn't been invited to participate in it?" Cadere, *Présentation d'un travail/ Utilisation d'un travail* (Hamburg: MTL, 1975), pp. 15–16, n. 10.

49. Cadere, "Presentation of a Work," repr. in Kismaric, *All Walks of Life*, p. 22.



Cadere. Barre. No date.

invest them with a subversive utilitarian capacity at the very moment they cross over into “particular places for looking at art” (as they inevitably would)—the capacity to produce and call attention to the very situation of their own ineligibility and disqualification. “My work does not have anything to do with the architecture, with the style, with the aesthetics of the gallery,” Cadere explained to Lynda Morris, “but it does have to do with: ‘What is a gallery?’ A gallery is a structure of power. My work has a critical attitude against that power. So it is possible to look at what is the power of galleries from the position of my work. This is what I call the political in my work.”⁵⁰

What governs the dialectic between “Presentation/Utilization”—the two terms comprised in the title of Cadere’s lecture—is the *barre*’s incessant shifting between locations and frameworks: circulating more or less freely in public space, where objects are presumed to be practical, fungible, and transient; or, alternately, entering “particular places of art” but without permission or consent. It is this splitting and polarizing of the performative proposition from the locational context within which it would find its validity that generates the force field of Cadere’s actions and prevents the *barre* from ever resolving into a merely visual or merely functional object. While it had been something of a normative preoccupation to examine the changes that objects/materials undergo when they cross into and out of discursive and institutional boundaries, Cadere’s project is distinguished by the introduction of a bodily presence into the equation. Placing himself at the threshold between public and institutional space alters the question concerning the eligibility of his work from an anonymous, invisible administrative decision to an embodied confrontation that radicalizes the disembodied, self-affirming paradigm of the performative in Conceptual art with somatic presence, speech, and argumentation. As Cadere stated: “I have to speak when the situation allows me to . . . Speaking *for* my activity becomes extremely important.”⁵¹

Now, as Emile Benveniste reminds us in an exemplary passage, the outcome of a performative proposition is intricately bound up with the question of authority:

A performative utterance . . . has existence only as an act of authority. Now, acts of authority are first and always utterances made by those to whom the right to utter them belongs. This condition of validity, related to the person making the utterance and the circumstances of the utterance, must always be considered when one deals with the performative. . . . Anybody can shout in the public square, “I decree a general mobilization,” and as it cannot be an *act* because the requisite authority is lacking, such an utterance is no more than *words*; it reduces itself to futile clamor, childishness, or lunacy.⁵²

50. Cadere, “Talking with Lynda Morris,” interview (March 1976) in *Peinture sans fin*, p. 31.

51. Cadere, “Letter to Yvon Lambert, 22 May 1978,” repr. in Kismaric, *All Walks of Life*, p. 21.

52. Emile Benveniste, *Problems in General Linguistics*, trans. Mary Elizabeth Meek, Miami Linguistics Series, no. 8 (Miami: University of Miami Press), p. 236.

Benveniste's reference to "utterances made by those to whom the right to utter them belongs" goes straight to the problem of so-called "speech act" aesthetics. In the case of Robert Rauschenberg's notorious 1961 telegram bearing the message "This is a Portrait of Iris Clert if I Say So," it is on account of the sender's status as an artist—one invited by the Clert Gallery to contribute a work, no less—that Rauschenberg need only tack on his name to validate the proposition contained in the telegraph. One implication of Rauschenberg's work is that the legislating subjectivity of the artist enables a situation in which a performative proposition is always already authorized under the dubious auspices of creativity or caprice. A somewhat knottier meditation on the issue raised by Benveniste concerning authority and performativity can be found in Marcel Broodthaers's decision to inaugurate a fictitious art museum and assume the bureaucratic role of director.⁵³ The ingenuity of Broodthaers's gesture lies in the way it mobilizes the artist's performative capacities to renounce the delusion that the artist is a figure who still possesses any meaningful social agency under present historical conditions. The shift in the enunciative register from artist to depersonalized entity of "art institution" would become the explicit subject of one of Broodthaers's *Industrial Poems* from around this time—a rectangular, vacuum-sealed plaque-object embossed with an array of lettering, the most prominent of which spells out the word MUSEUM in bold capitals, thereby evoking the exterior nameplate/signage that one would encounter near the entrance to just such a destination. Oscillating between a poem, an entrance policy, and an administrative chain of command, the plaque begins by listing several very general plastic attributes of artworks—form, surface, volume—and then inexplicably dubs them "servile"; institutional personnel are associated with "hard edges"; beneath the word MUSEUM is embossed the sadistic interdiction *enfants non admis*. But what is the status of the performative proposition from which the requisite authority is *lacking*, and which is destined to "futile clamor, childishness or lunacy"?

Cadere stated his rationale for exhibiting his work without invitation—or even "against the will" of the location's owners—in this way:

The power of these institutions is first of all the power of selection. We are not in a free situation. If it is not possible to destroy their power, it is necessary to at least show it. . . . It must be noted that this way of showing the work is entirely peaceable and non-aggressive. A round *barre* of wood is materially a small thing, and does not prevent, in any way, an exhibition to take place. The fight takes place on an essential, ideological level, and aggression and violence are always employed by those who are powerful.⁵⁴

53. Rachel Haidu incisively analyzes Broodthaers's performative strategies in *The Absence of Work: Marcel Broodthaers, 1964–1976* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2010).

54. Cadere, "Presentation of a Work," repr. in Kismaric, *All Walks of Life*, p. 34. English translation modified by Yve-Alain Bois.

As this last and slightly ominous-sounding remark suggests, the sight of the colored stick in exhibition spaces touched off myriad skirmishes and provoked a decidedly different reaction than the distracted stares that pedestrians directed at Cadere as they passed him on the street. Small and unobtrusive though it may be, the illegitimate addition of the *barre* is a poisoned gift, a “temporary loan” that was never requisitioned but has nonetheless installed itself. Its totemic and ludic characteristics provide an almost anthropological demonstration of how an un-aculturated object would appear in the antiseptic spaces of advanced curatorial practice by conjuring after-images of the primeval categories of experience (the magical, the ludic) for which institutionalized art serves as a disenchanting substitute. Mobilizing the disruptive effect of the supplement, Cadere’s illegitimate submissions cause the institution’s dedicated operations of “selecting,” presenting, and preserving objects to lurch into reverse, inducing personnel to perform grotesquely literal acts of exclusion, removal and confiscation, the authoritarian overtones of which are only magnified by the childlike qualities of the *barre*.⁵⁵ But it is Cadere’s bodily proximity to his *barres* of round wood that imbues the ritual of their institutional removal with a vaguely disquieting air, suggesting that the power to expel and exclude objects is perhaps never very far removed from a perceived right to exclude subjects or visitors. Indeed, one of the poignant aspects of Cadere’s institutional critique—exemplified in the image of his being ushered out of the entrance to the Grand Palais—is that his thwarted attempts to place his *barres* into official exhibition spaces are recognizable as the very embodiment of the subject’s desire to gain access to the cache of cultural artifacts.

Cadere evidently realized from the start that any truly radical contestation would have to invite the possibility of *not* being received or recognized as an artistic object/practice at all, *while at the same time* demonstrating perfect fluency with the coding systems and meta-languages of the advanced forms of artistic produc-

55. The most notorious of these incidents occurred in June 1973, when Michel Claura and René Denizot organized “A Painting Exhibition Reuniting Certain Painters Who Put Painting in Question,” a group show in the posh apartment-like setting of the first-floor exhibition space at the Place Vendôme in Paris. Cadere deposited a *barre* of round wood on the occasion of the opening, only to return several days later to discover that the work had been removed from the exhibition space and placed in the nearby broom closet at the behest of one of the show’s participating artists—Daniel Buren. In response to this casual act of censorship, Cadere distributed a text to friends and colleagues announcing that an exhibition of his work would be on display in the “Cagibi” at the Place Vendôme, directing them to the custodial *non-site* where the *barre* was sequestered. At the bottom of the announcement was a bulleted list describing the exhibition space: “The rest of the place was occupied by: some mirrors; some marble fireplaces; an exhibition of artists questioning the status of painting; marbled doors and walls; crystal chandeliers; etc. . . .” Displacing the *barre* to the broom closet—in addition to denouncing Cadere—was undoubtedly meant as an implicit critique of Cadere’s disavowed reliance on the strategy of the readymade by returning the *barre* to the realm of functional objects. Ironically, though, Cadere’s canny decision to use the incident as the basis for an exhibition perfectly exemplifies the simultaneity of the *barre*’s “Presentation/Utilization,” making it perhaps the closest example of a site-specific exhibit of his work—a painting that questions certain exhibitions about painting, as it were. For details on the incident, see Bernard Marcelis in “Peinture sans Fin / Unlimited Painting,” in *L’art conceptuel, une perspective* (Paris: Musée d’art moderne de la ville de Paris, 1989), p. 143.

tion. Yet since it was generally assumed that “placing an object in a context where . . . spectators will be conditioned toward the expectancy of recognizing art objects”⁵⁶ was tantamount to declaring that the object was a work of art, he would have to sabotage the success of the performative every time he insinuated his *barres* into the legitimating ambience of “particular places for looking at art.” Illegitimately displaying the cylindrically shaped pieces of painted wood alongside officially exhibited artworks is an example of what Jacques Rancière calls an “egalitarian assumption”: a making “visible of what had no business being visible,” which, by becoming visible, instigates an “argument and a demonstration.”⁵⁷ Yet this is a deeply paradoxical gesture insofar as it stages its claim for equality with objects that are defined by their radical singularity and difference; it constitutes, in a sense, an impossible demand, since the act of positing the *barre*’s status as a work of art would theoretically render the latter category sufficiently porous as to dissolve it altogether. By inserting his *barres* in official contexts, Cadere critiques the neo-avant-garde’s *merely* discursive contestation of institutional power as unacceptably conservative, and logically calls for the abolition of art as a separate, specialized category; at the same time, the method of his intervention is that of repeatedly petitioning for the discursive legitimation that he protests as insufficiently egalitarian.

As Bernard Marcelis and others close to Cadere have pointed out, the artist’s situation would eventually undergo a change—but only after several years of activity and only very gradually. He would cease to be a stranger. He would even be welcomed. When he did accept the invitation to officially exhibit his work, though, he typically demurred from presenting objects in the gallery, choosing instead to walk the streets with a *barre* of round wood, “at the whim of the different movements that only a city can trigger: encounters, curiosity, fatigue, boredom.”

Even when they would be (eventually) displayed and disseminated through the proper channels, there is still something a little bit “erroneous” about Cadere’s *barres*; their roundness never properly squaring with the “rectangular galler[ies], . . . rectangular magazine[s],” and “rectangular thought patterns” that Allan Kaprow once identified as art’s spatial and cognitive frameworks.⁵⁸ Mounted on the wall “in the classic fashion” (which the artist fully allowed it could be),⁵⁹ the *barre* inhabits the venerated place accorded to painting, and withholds even a modicum of planarity, like a striped canvas that has rolled itself back up in refusal. Its meager linear vol-

56. Introduction, *Art & Language* 1, no. 1 (May 1969), p. 5.

57. Rancière, *Disagreement*, p. 92.

58. Allan Kaprow, “The Shape of the Art Environment,” *Artforum* 6, no. 10 (Summer 1968), reprinted in *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*, ed. Jeff Kelley, p. 92.

59. Cadere was careful to point out that although his work was deliberately conceived to be exhibited in non-conventional spaces by virtue of not being dependent upon the traditional display space of the wall, “the very same work can be hung on a wall—including a gallery wall—and fixed or set-up in any number of ways in the places assigned to ‘classical works.’” Cadere, “Letter to Yvon Lambert, June 7, 1978,” repr. in Kismaric, *All Walks of Life*, p. 22.



Cadere being ejected from the Grand Palais after attempting to enter the opening of a Barnett Newman exhibition, 1972. Photograph by André Morain. Courtesy of the Estate of André Cadere and Galerie Hervé Bize, Nancy.

ume protrudes awkwardly off the wall, soliciting our tactile senses before eventually abandoning us to stare at the ponderous and empty expanse of white wall. Set down on the floor like a would-be sculpture, the *barre* is every bit the dangerous supplement, its only conceivable tie to the vertical axis being its capacity to upset the spectator's uprightiness in the way that Marcel Duchamp's *Trebuchet* (1917)—a coatrack Duchamp mischievously nailed to the floor of his apartment/studio—caused visitors to “stumble out of virtual space into actual space,” as Benjamin Buchloh once described it. When the *barre* is coaxed into the customary spatial assignment of a pictorial or sculptural object—that seems to be the moment when it is most decidedly *not* such an object.

If anything, it accommodates itself to the creases between wall and floor, to baseboards, doorjambs, and protruding ductwork, as if magnetically attracted to the functional nooks of architecture. Being placed without being implanted in display space is epitomized by the gesture of propping the work against the wall, in

the way one might momentarily rest a broom or a mop handle on a nearby surface. While this mode of display is one we tend to associate with demonstrations of elementary sculptural forces, the spindly lightness of the *barre* of round wood imbues its presence with the casual impermanence of things that we not only look at but also use; it appears to us the way an object might look on moving day.

Cadere concluded his “Presentation/Utilization” lecture with an anecdote on the ambivalence of acculturation. Not to be left out of the rampant *Cézannisme* of the moment, he recounted a rather different story about the man that returned to the rustic backdrop of Aix: “One last example will illuminate this point,” Cadere began. “After Cézanne’s death, one of his paintings was discovered patching up a hen coup. It was being used to keep the rain out. Cleaned and restored, it was presented to a museum. It is obvious that on the hen coup Cézanne’s painting was in use, but it was not presented. I hope the work presented here acts in a very different manner.”⁶⁰

60. Cadere, “Presentation of a Work,” repr. in Kismaric, *All Walks of Life*, p. 36.