Catherine M. Soussloff

In the Name of the Artist

Janez Janša
Signature (Hollywood Walk of Fame),
Los Angeles, 2007
Action
Photo: Janez Janša
Courtesy: Aksioma

"The creation does not belong to the creator."

Salmon Rushdie

According to the dictionary, a proper name is a noun that designates a particular being. When a particular being is designated by a name something distinctive is denoted or signified, if only that the being is so understood by the society that names him. For the cultural anthropologist, the proper name functions as a place for the social inscription of the group upon the subject.[1] According to this view, a name tells us more about the society than the individual. The philosopher Michel Foucault understood the name in this way when he complained in an interview that individual identity, which is usually designated by a name, is "one of the first products of power, of that type of power that we know in our society."[2] For Freud, on the other hand, the proper name is an integral part of the personality of the individual.[3] But Freud also writes about "…the proper names of persons, which naturally possess quite different psychical importance for different people."[4] In this view, the name tells us about the individual named or the person using the name, rather than telling us about the society that names him. These differing – if not opposing – views of what might otherwise be considered the simplest linguistic marker of the human being indicate the complexity entailed in an exploration of the name of the artist, a particularized particular being. Where does the name of the artist belong in these conceptions of the proper name?

It seems significant to state, at once, that the name of the artist, both by nature of its infinite variations and by its very presence as a topic of concern in historical representation, refuses an "essential identity" for the individual artist.[5] Perhaps the most mutable kind of name in Western culture, the name of the artist may well be the cultural marker *par excellence* of the impossibility of an "essential self" or a "complete individual." The belief, or anxiety, that complete knowledge of the self or another may be impossible consistently appears

[1]See the extensive discussion of identity and the name in Claude Levi-Strauss, *L'Identité: Séminaire Interdisciplinaire* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1977), especially the essay by Jean-Marie Benoist, "Facettes d'Identité." In the preparation of this essay I have been aided in innumerable ways by the friendship and learning of my colleagues at the University of California, Santa Cruz: Karen Bassi, Margaret Brose, Tyrus Miller, Deanna Shemek, and Hayden White.

[2]Michel Foucault, "Entretien avec Roger-Pol Droit (1975)," http://foucault.info/documents/foucault.entretien1975.fr.html

[3]Sigmund Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Trans. by James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1963), Vol. 6, p. 83.

[4]Freud, SE, Vol. 15, p. 76. In this passage and elsewhere, Freud uses the forgetting of the proper name as the indication of its significance for the speaker. He also explores, to a lesser extent, the effect of forgetting on the one who is not named, or who is forgotten.

[5]Here lies the crux of where the philosophers and the cultural anthropologist disagree. In *Naming and Necessity* (Cambridge, Ma.: Harvard University Press, 1980), Saul A. Kripke argued that the name constructs an identity in history for the body, while Levi-Strauss and others (see footnote 1, above) cannot accept a concept of identity that encompasses the idea of the human subject. By refusing the linkage between a self and a name, however, it is possible that the anthropologists cannot allow for the historical representation of the human. This may be more a question of what or whom history, as a discipline or discourse, has allowed than of who the named being may have been. One must recognize that it has been the assumption in the Western written historical record that the name signifies an actual person who had an identity that could be recognized, if only it could be known.

as a topic of concern in Western thought from the ancient Greeks until the present.[6] The iteration of the name of the artist brings the issue of the meaning of the self to the fore in ways not possible with other kinds of proper names. While the recent assumption of the name *Janez Janša* by three different Slovenian artists (formerly known by their *given names*: Emil Hrvatin, Davide Grassi, and Žiga Karič) signals, among other things, the mutability of the name of the artist, it does not explain it. This essay will attempt to place this particular act of naming, or re-naming, within a historical and conceptual framework so that the significance of Janez Janša may be better known. The proper name of the artist denotes more than the particularity ascribed by the dictionary to any proper noun. Janez Janša demonstrates the validity of this statement, at least for today's situation. The surplus of knowledge given by the name of the artist and evidenced in the repetition of Janez Janša places the particular being named in a category of "better-known" or "well-known". However, fame hardly suffices to describe the kind of knowledge provided by the name of the artist, although the term has been extensively employed in regard to the renown of both individual artists and the cultural figure of the artist.[7] While the proper name of the artist clearly indicates a certain kind of particularity, the topic itself has been little explored by either art history or philosophy. In what follows here, I will argue that the name of the artist belongs to a special class of proper names designating particular beings for which Western culture has not and does not find it adequate to simply know, or to know simply.

Since the late fifteenth century in the West, our knowledge of the individual artist has relied on an increasingly elaborated biographical tradition.[8] Biography became central to a culture that desired knowledge of "the exceptional or gifted figure," as Kris and Kurz argued in their seminal 1934 study on the "image" of the artist.[9] As might be expected, the name of the artist figured large in this culture, which emphasized the textual representation of both the individuality and the exceptionality of the artist – what has come to be known among art historians as the "singularity of the artist". The desire for the singular artist has not diminished and the name of the artist remains a strong indicator of this conception of the artist. Indeed, whether judged by the evidence of an increasing proliferation of biographies and monographs or by the escalation of prices in the art market for work by artists whose style may be described as singular, we could say that this desire has only increased.[10] The repetition of the name of the artist in textual locations, such as biographies, but also in mainly non-textual galleries, museums, and media can be taken as sign and outcome of the desire for the artist that permeates

[6] The amount of literature on this issue is extensive, but for this context, see Jacques Derrida, *On the Name*, Ed. by Thomas Dutoit (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), pp. 84-5: "According to a formula that haunts our tradition from Plontinus to Heidegger, who does not cite him, and to Lacan, who cites neither the former nor the latter, and better than ever, the gift of the name gives that which it does not have, that in which, prior to everything, may consist the essence, that is to say—beyond being—the nonessence, of the gift."

[7] See, recently, Richard Brilliant, "Introduction: Images to Light the Candle of Fame," in Gordon Baldwin and Judith Keller, *NadarWarhol: ParisNew York Photography and Fame* (Los Angeles: the J. Paul Getty Museum, 1999), pp. 15-27.

[8] On the history of this tradition and the genre of the biography of the artist, see my book: *The Absolute Artist: The Historiography of a Concept* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).

[9] Ernst Kris and Otto Kurz, *Legend, Myth, and Magic in the Image of the Artist: A Historical Experiment*, Trans. by Alastair Laing and Lottie M. Newman (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), p. 14.

[10] See the recent issue of *Artforum* edited by Thomas Crow for a number of articles that would support this statement, *Artforum* XLVI (April 2008).

contemporary culture. We might call this the "mediatization effect" of the artist, which is evident everywhere. For example, the artist Man Ray, deceased in 1976, currently has a website on Myspace.com (#39491992), where his surrogate(s) entertain(s) correspondence with anyone who logs on. It is tempting to explain the increase, over the last century, in the recognition of the singularity of the artist on the development and proliferation of mass media outlets – advertising, television, the world wide web –although such a correlation can only be surmised, not proven.[11] Many of these outlets have been supported by and give support to institutions of art, such as museums and universities, which insist upon and enhance the recognition of the singular artist through exhibition, publication, and instruction.

[11] This was, of course, the argument made by Jonathan Berger in the early 1970s, although he concentrated on the influence of advertising and television; see Jonathan Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: BBC, 1972 and New York: Penguin, 1977).

The heightened significance of the name of the artist in the contemporary world can also be noted in the present celebrity culture in which entertainers, filmmakers, actors, musicians, and others become known to the public, often without the prior necessity of a strictly biographical representation. While it may be the case, as Carol Ockman and Kenneth Silver have argued, that the origins of the celebrity category known as the "star" lies in the person of the nineteenth century stage actress, Sarah Bernhardt, they also suggest that her elevation to such a status owed as much to artists as to anything else, for it was they who represented her.[12] In this case, representation occurred in visual as well as textual media, contributing to the recognition of both the figure and the name of "The Divine Sarah." Film historian David Bordwell demonstrated that Classic Hollywood's star system not only "aids in distinguishing characters" in the movie narratives, it also works to project onto the characters the personality of the star.[13] This process of the projection of a person onto a character requires audience recognition of the star within the film narrative in order for the presence of the star to be significant. Recognition comes prior to the film, or

[12] Carol Ockman and Kenneth E. Silver, *Sarah Bernhardt: The Art of High Drama* (New York: Jewish Museum and New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005).

[13] David Bordwell, Janet Staiger, and Kristin Thompson, *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style and Mode of Production to 1960* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), p.p. 179-80.

Janez Janša
Signature (Kunsthaus Graz), Graz, 2008
Study for action, BIX Simulator_ 1.0.sit
Courtesy: Aksioma

it might be applied in retrospect through criticism or publicity. So, too, the artist must be recognized in order for the work that he makes to be known as his work, that is, in order for us to see him in it. This process of recognition occurs textually and visually, but in both cases the name of the artist is central to it.

Until now, this last statement found its fullest expression in the figure and work of Andy Warhol. The visual artist Andy Warhol, who was born Andrew Warhola in 1928 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, did the most to cement the relationship of the singular artist with celebrity culture in the popular imagination. The name and the representation of the face of Warhol must be considered central to any investigation of the recent history of the "image" of the artist, including the proper name. Whether or not the name change from Warhola to Warhol may be related to a conscious intention on his part to efface his Slovakian ethnicity, as some have believed, the changed name and its recognition pertains to the manipulation of a mutable public self that became a central subject of the artist's work in the 1960s. Warhol's manipulated image and his self-construction has affected contemporary culture's understanding of the singular artist – particularly the name and the face of the artist – since ca. 1970. Some of the details of Warhol's celebrity in his own time deserve further exploration before we turn to the historical aspects of the history of the name of the artist with which they resonate and on which they partially depend.

Warhol's childhood and adolescence encompassed the classical Hollywood era and his formation as an artist has been tied to the star system, both because his later work in painting, silkscreen, performance, film and photography exhibit a deeply serious connection with the concept of the star – one that extended to his own sexual and gender identity – and also because historians have found, in his early life, an exposure and identification with a major visual product of the Hollywood star system: the glossy 8 x 10 Hollywood publicity photograph.[14] Beginning in the 1930s, Warhol began collecting photographs of Hollywood stars. As early as 1941, he began manipulating them through colouration and collage. In these acts of celebrity manipulation, the name of the star figured significantly. In art school, he emulated the star photography of Cecil Beaton and Irving Penn and when he moved to New York City he sought to achieve the openly gay lifestyle that these men embodied for him.[15] Throughout his prolific and multi-faceted career as a visual artist Warhol used the portrait photograph – together with the increasing celebrity culture that depended on it – to fashion his own identity and to ensure the renown of his name. His self-portraits reveal a fascination with celebrity photographs of all kinds and the way that manipulation of his own image works with them. The culture of celebrity – the fashion-, film-, advertising-, and publicity-worlds – reciprocated this fascination and self-construction by employing Warhol during the 1960s and 1970s. Critics have understood the subsequent use of the celebrity artist

[14] For an excellent summary of the facts of Warhol's lifelong relationship to celebrity and celebrity photographs and photography, which I follow here, see Judith Keller, "Warhol: Andy Warhol's Photo-Biography," in Gordon Baldwin and Judith Keller, *NadarWarhol: ParisNew York Photography and Fame* (Los Angeles: the J. Paul Getty Museum, 1999, pp. 133-44 and the catalogue pp. 146-227).

[15] The best discussion of how he and we view Warhol's significance as an artist may be found in Douglas Crimp, "Getting the Warhol We Deserve: Cultural Studies and Queer Culture", I*n[]visible Culture: An Electronic Journal for Visual Studies* (1999): http://www.rochester.edu/in_visible_culture/issue1/crimp/crimp/html.

image and name to underwrite fashion and lifestyle products as resulting directly from Warhol's example and work.[16] The extensive process of projection or "reverberations" between artist and work – which was perfected by Warhol and has since been deployed by numerous artists – signifies the extent of the circulation of the image of the artist.

Historically speaking, the first sign of the potential cultural effect of the circulation of the celebrity image of the artist may be found in the name.[17] Even the appellation of "divine," which was tied to the name of the so-called first star, Sarah Bernhardt, belongs to an earlier representation of the artist. The Italian Renaissance had a concept of the "divine artist", someone whose creations both came from and manifested an inner vision brought about by a special access to divinity. For example, and most famously, the Italian biographer Giorgio Vasari followed his contemporary Ariosto in describing Michelangelo as *divino*: "Michel, più che mortale, Angel divino."[18] Here the name of the artist explicitly signals the assessment of his singularity on the order of myth.

In the Early Modern period in Europe, this concept of the artist and the assessment or characterization of his work according to an individual style, or *maniera*, were mutually supportive. The work came to be viewed both as of a style that was identifiable as particular to an individual and the visible sign of the artist as an exceptional being.[19] From the Renaissance onwards, the name recognition of the artist could not be separated from factors involving the visual recognition of qualities inherent in the work of art. Often the name of the artist signaled qualities in his oeuvre deemed particularly significant. Such a practice appears to go back to ancient times, although it is hard to evaluate there because so little writing on art has survived from the Greek period, including what might have been a significant biographical literature on the artist, which is where the identification of the artist in the work presumably would have manifested. The majority of the writing on art, however, consisted of treatises on the invention of forms and techniques by individual craftsmen and artists.[20] Some of these Greek names appear to bear the sign of the innovations in art for which the particular artists were known. For example, Eupompus reportedly espoused a return to naturalism, and his name means "trusty guide" because he showed the way to this naturalistic manner to the better-known sculptor Lysippus.[21]

Such special names for artists went against the common practice in ancient Greece of

[16] Matthew Higgs, "Likeness," in Matthew Higgs, Kevin Killian, David Robbins, *Likeness: Portraits of Artists by Other Artists* (San Francisco, CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, 2004), p. 13.

[17] On the "Warhol effect," see Simon Whatney, "The Warhol Effect," in Gary Garrels, Ed., *The Work of Andy Warhol* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1989), p. 118.

[18] Ariosto, Orlando Furioso, canto xxxiii.2, quoted in Patricia Rubin, Giorgio Vasari: *Art and History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), p. 183, note 160.

[19] Phillip Sohm argues that the artist's style resides in the viewer or art historian, although I believe this is a somewhat simplistic, and possibly ahistorical, understanding of the complex interrelationship between the concept of the artist and the work of art, see Philip Sohm, *Style in the Art Theory of Early Modern Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

[20] A. A. Donohue, *Xoana and the Origins of Greek Sculpture* (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1988), p. 197.

[21] Kris and Kurz, 19-20. The reliability of these statements may be questionable, as Kris and Kurz indicate. See J. J. Pollitt, *The Ancient View of Greek Art: Criticism, History, and Terminology* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), p. 65: "When asked which of his predecessors he took as a model, Eupompus is reputed to have pointed to a crowd of people and said that one ought to imitate nature itself, not another artist… Schweitzer has suggested that this passage may reflect a profound change in the attitude of the ancient world toward artists and artistic production, a change away from the view that the artist was simply a craftsman who learned his trade from other craftsmen toward the view that the artist must be understood as an independent creator with a deep understanding of nature."

using one name, usually the name of the father – the patronymic.[22] Consequently, artists, like kings and philosophers, belonged to a special class of humans who could be known by a "nickname." For example, the nickname of the philosopher Dio Crysostom meant "the golden mouthed", referring to the eloquent speech for which he must have been particularly known. Because artists have often been known by nicknames, implying that the name of the father did not suffice, the meaning of the term deserves comment here. The term "nickname" *describes* "instead of or in addition to the one [name] belonging to an individual."[23] The nickname, therefore, supplements the proper name in order to describe the special particularity of the named being. What I will henceforth be calling the *descriptor name* points to that which the philosopher does or the artist has made, rather than to family or place of birth. The descriptor name relates closely to the rhetorical term *antonomasia*, but more to its ancient Greek meaning as an epithet given in substitution for a proper name, rather than to the modern meaning of "a descriptive phrase for proper name."[24] In the Renaissance, names of artists were often such epithets, such as Il Sodoma, Bramantino, and Vecchietta. Such naming continues today, for instance, the popular music artist Curtis James Jackson III bears the name "50 Cent", an epithet he chose for himself. The artist Judy Chicago changed her name after the death of husband, giving up Gerowitz, her married name, for the name of the city where she was born and raised, and with which she was identified.[25]

[22] For what follows here on Greek names see, *The Lexicon of Greek Personal Names*, http://www.lgpn.ox.ac.uk/names.

[23] *Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield, Ma.: G. C. Merriam, 1967), p. 570.

[24] See Richard A. Lanham, *A Handlist of Rhetorical Terms, Second Edition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), p. 17 whose examples lead me to make this statement.

According to *The Lexicon of Greek Personal Names*, the systematic practice of using hereditary surnames in Europe did not occur until ca. 1000 A. D. so that the descriptor name would have been among several commonly-used methods of naming in European culture before that time. However, when a methodology of naming became uniform it must have seemed more necessary than in earlier times to provide an explanation for names that deviated from the norm, such as the names of artists. In our day, this explanatory necessity for the name of the artist manifests in the archaeology of art historical knowledge, particularly the *Union List of Artists Names*® (ULAN), "a structured vocabulary of artists' names and biographical information" administered by the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles, California.[26] This informational tool lists 293,000 names and biographies of visual artists, including so-called "variant names," pseudonyms, and language variants. The expansion of explanatory means for understanding the name of the artist – which have resulted in publications like the ULAN – began with the Early Modern biographies.

The structure and many of the topics found in the early biographical literature on the artist had been modeled on the precedent biographies of the Tuscan poets Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio and the *topos* of the explanation of the descriptor name is no exception.[27] For example, a long section on Dante Alighieri's name can be found in Boccaccio's *Vita di Dante* (ca. 1350). First, the author explains, at length,

[25] See now, Gail Levin, *Becoming Judy Chicago: A Biography of the Artist* (New York: Random House, 2007), p. 2.

[26] See http://www.getty.edu/research/conducting_research/vocabularies/download.html.

[27] See Catherine M. Soussloff, "Lives of Poets and Painters in the Renaissance," *Word and Image*, 6 (April June 1990): pp. 154-162.

the unusual facts of how the cognomen or surname came to be derived from the mother's line. Then Boccaccio explains the first name or given name, Dante, meaning "that which is given by God:"

> Not long after it befell that the due time for her labor arrived, and she brought forth a son whom she and his father by common consent named Dante; and rightly so, or as will be seen as we proceed, the issue corresponded exactly to the name.
>
> This was that Dante of whom the present discourse treats. This was that Dante given to our age by the special grace of God. This was that Dante who was the first to open the way for the return of the muses, banished from Italy. By him the glory of the Florentine idiom has been made manifest; by him all the beauties of the vulgar tongue have been set to fitting numbers; by him dead poesy may truly be said to have been revived. A due consideration of these things will show that he could rightly have had no other name than Dante.[28]

There is no doubt that Boccaccio would have been aware that Dante's own writings give ample evidence of the ways that names describe the qualities of the person nominated, as he said in *Vita nuova*: "Nomina sunt consequentia rerum."[29] In chapter two of the same text, Dante describes his first meeting with Beatrice, whose name embodies her character as "Bearer of Beatitude."[30] Later, when Dante has a vision of Beatrice preceded by Giovanna, the girlfriend of the poet Guido Cavalcanti, he is told: "The one in front is called Primavera only because of the way she comes today; for I inspired the giver of her name to call her Primavera, meaning 'she will come first' (*prima verra*) on the day that Beatrice shows herself after the dream of her faithful one. And if you will also consider her real name, you will see that this too means 'she will come first', since the name Joan (*Giovanna*) comes from the name of that of John (*Giovanni*) who preceded the True Light…"[31]

Following the model of the poets, the descriptor name may be found in abundance in the Early Modern biographies of artists, but as in Boccaccio's account of Dante these names provide the occasion for explanatory comment. Such is the case with Leonardo da Vinci, who Vasari said was the son of Ser Piero da Vinci (sir Piero, son of Antonio of Vinci), indicating a possibly aristocratic heritage with two prefixes: *Ser* before the father's name and *da* before the name of the small town in which he was born.[32] To indicate the patronymic of an illegitimate son was, no doubt, in itself unusual and an honorific sign. However, for the first time the title of Vasari's biography called Leonardo "*Florentine* Painter and Sculptor," an obvious way of stressing Leonardo's artistic lineage above that of his family. Vasari also spelled the first name, 'Lionardo', referring in Italian to the heroic animal, the lion. With these variations on the name of Leonardo da Vinci, Vasari established the artist's strength and nobility together with a Florentine pedigree. Vasari also invoked both visual and name recognition at the level of myth at the beginning of the biography:

[28] Giovanni Boccaccio, "The Life of Dante," in *The Earliest Lives of Dante*, Trans. by James Robinson Smith (New York: Russell & Russell, 1901), p. 15.

[29] Dante Alighieri, *Dante's 'Vita Nuova'*, Trans. by Mark Musa (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1973, p. 22. I am grateful to Margaret Brose for the following citations from Dante's text and for her discussion of the name in Dante's work.

[30] Dante, *Vita Nuova*, p. 3: "la quale fu chiamata da molti Beatrice li quail non sapeano che si chiamare."

[31] Dante, *Vita Nuova*, p. 52.

[32] On the significance of Leonardo's name for his style and the concept of style *tout court*, see my forthcoming essay: "Discourse/figure/love: The Location of Style in the Early Modern Sources on Leonardo da Vinci," in *Leonardo da Vinci and the Ethics of Style,* Ed. by Claire Farago (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 2008), pp. 65-89.

[redacted], roj. 07.12.1970 v kraju Bergamo, Italija, se dovoli sprememba osebnega imena v novo osebno ime Janez JANŠA.

XXXX XXXXXXX, born 28.05.1973 in Ljubljana, Slovenia, is allowed the change of his personal name to the new personal name, Janez Janša

Janez Janša, Signature, 2008, Marker or rubber-stamp on paper, 14 x 23 cm

Janez Janša, Janez Janša, Janez Janša
Signature (Conspire. Transmediale 08), Berlin, 2008
Action
Marker or rubber-stamp on book pages 216-217, *Conspire.* Transmediale Parcours 01, Stephen Kovats, Thomas Munz (editors), Revolver, Frankfurt am Main, 2008
14 x 23 cm
Edition of 1000
Courtesy: Maska

[redacted], roj. 06.02.1964 na Rijeki, Hrvaška, se dovoli sprememba osebnega imena v novo osebno ime Janez JANŠA.

XXXX XXXXXXX, born 06.02.1964 in Rijeka, Croatia, is allowed the change of his personal name to the new personal name, Janez Janša

Janez Janša, Signature, 2008, Marker or rubber-stamp on paper, 14 x 23 cm

Janez Janša, Janez Janša, Janez Janša
Signature (Conspire. Transmediale 08), Berlin, 2008
Action
Marker or rubber-stamp on book pages 212-213, *Conspire.* Transmediale Parcours 01, Stephen Kovats, Thomas Munz (editors), Revolver, Frankfurt am Main, 2008
14 x 23 cm
Edition of 1000
Courtesy: Maska

[redacted], roj. 07.12.1970 v kraju Bergamo, Italija, se dovoli sprememba osebnega imena v novo osebno ime Janez JANŠA.

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Janez Janša, Janez Janša, Janez Janša
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Marker or rubber-stamp on book pages 214-215, *Conspire*.
Transmediale Parcours 01, Stephen Kovats, Thomas Munz
(editors), Revolver, Frankfurt am Main, 2008
14 x 23 cm
Edition of 1000
Courtesy: Maska

> The greatest gifts are often seen, in the course of nature, rained by celestial influences on human creatures; and sometimes, in supernatural fashion, beauty, grace, and talent are united beyond measure in one single person, in a manner that to whatever such an one turns his attention, his every action is so divine, that surpassing all other men, it makes itself clearly known as a thing bestowed by God (as it is), and not acquired by human art. This was seen by all mankind in Leonardo da Vinci, in whom, besides a beauty of body never sufficiently extolled, there was an infinite grace in all his actions; and so great was his genius, and such its growth, that to whatever difficulties he turned his mind, he solved them with ease. In him was great bodily strength, joined to dexterity, with a spirit and courage ever royal and magnanimous; and the fame of his name so increased, that not only in his lifetime was he held in esteem, but his reputation became even greater among posterity after his death.[33]

Importantly, Vasari was the first writer to systematically include portraits with the biographies of artists. He explained the great lengths to which he went to obtain true likenesses, thereby underlining the interconnection between the name and visual representations of the faces of the artists towards establishing a broader recognition of the artist in historical representation.[34] This is the moment in Western art when the name, the work, and the body (particularly the face) become mutually-supporting aspects of the concept of the singular artist. These are the factors of the name of the artist that later fed into the concept of the star in popular culture. In this sense, portraits supplement and enhance – even further than a descriptor name alone could do – the name of the artist. After Vasari, publishing portraits and biographies of artists together became the established literary-historical convention.

Significantly, the repetition or iteration of the name of the artist is central to this convention, as illustrated by Giovanni Pietro Bellori's book of 1672: *Le vite de pittori, scultori et architetti moderni*. There, the narrative of each artist's life is preceded by at least three iterations of the name of the artist, together with illustrative material each on separate pages: 1) a title page with the name of the artist imposed over an allegorical figure, 2) a portrait engraving of the artist with the name of the artist either at the base or in the portrait itself, and 3) the name of the artist on the first page of the narrative, above which can be found another allegorical figure. In the 1651 edition of Leonardo da Vinci's *Trattato della Pittura*, which also includes a biography, the first page consists of an engraved portrait of the artist with the name of the artist illusionistically inscribed on the base. The simplicity of this arrangement underlines the aspects of the artist required in historical representation – the name, the portrait, and the work, indicated in the title page by the artist who is visualized literally as the work of art.

I have been arguing that the elevation of the artist to celebrity status further enhances what had already been established in the early biographies: the belief that the artist is in the work of art and that his character and body are significant to it.[35] I have already noted the significance of the star in this culture of celebrity and the recognition of body and name that this implies. The philosopher Bernard Williams posited the body as essential

[33] Giorgio Vasari, "Life of Leonardo da Vinci Painter and Sculptor of Florence," in *Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors & Architects*, Trans. by Gaston Du C. De Vere (London: Medici Society, 1913), vol. 4: p. 89.

[34] Rubin, pp. 205-08.

to the personal identity of any individual, but, as we have seen, the artist's body is triangulated in historical representation with his name and his work creating a distinctive kind of being, one that is known both visually and textually.[36] The proper name distinguishes beings from one another and the nickname and the descriptor name often further distinguish the singular artist, thereby heightening the significance of both for the work of art. This heightened significance of the artist's name – or the celebrity artist's name – surfaces in the disciplinary functions of art history related to connoisseurship, attribution, and the definition of personal style. Two locations in the work of the artist may be explored in support of this last statement: the signature of the artist, in which the textual and the visual may be said to merge or superimpose; and the use of visual quotation in the work of art, which, based on the history given here, cannot be separated from the name of the artist. In both instances, the artist may be said to be subject to quotation; as Mieke Bal argues when she investigates the use of Caravaggio for art history, writing: "Quotation then is situated beyond individual intention, at the intersection of objecthood and semiotic weight."[37]

[35] I have expanded upon much of what I state here in summary form in Chapter One of *The Absolute Artist*, pp. 19-42.

[36] Bernard Williams, *Problems of the Self: Philosophical Papers 1956-1972* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), pp. 1-10.

The signature of the artist may be said to be as mutable as the name of the artist. It is often the case that individual artists "sign" their work, but the variation on signatures remains a major source of interest to scholarly catalogues and the ULAN because signatures aid in the authentification of works of art for the market. In his book on the social history of style in the fifteenth century, Michael Baxandall demonstrated that the name of the artist, as well as his signature or the recognition of his "hand"(mainly in documents), became part of "the economic basis for the cult of pictorial skill."[38] In the early biographical literature, the hand of the artist is sometimes discussed, while the signature of the artist is barely mentioned. One of the first instances of an extensive discussion of the hand of the artist occurs with Leonardo da Vinci. The discussion of his hand figures prominently no doubt because he was known for his writings on art, done in "mirror" writing, as much as for his paintings. In 1517-18 Antonio de Beatis wrote: "One cannot indeed expect any more good work from him, as a certain paralysis has crippled his right hand."[39] In this passage the 'hand' of Leonardo serves as a descriptive and metaphorical marker for the style of the artist. The discussion of the hand, or *mano* in Italian, functions to indicate how the artist literally marks out and describes the bodies that are represented and of how he may be distinguished from others: "he can no longer paint with the sweetness of style that he used to have, and he can only make drawings and teach others."[40] *'Divinum Ingenium, Divina Manus'* forms part of an epitaph appended by Vasari to the 1550 edition of da Vinci's biography. The Latin may well be a play on the name of the artist. In a discussion

[37] Mieke Bal, *Quoting Caravaggio: Contemporary Art, Preposterous History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), p. 14.

[38] Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy: A Primer on the Social History of Pictorial Style*, 2nd Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), "Preface to the First Edition", n.p.

[39] See, Ludwig Goldscheider, *Leonardo Life and Work* (London: Phaidon, 1959), p. 39. Translation of the Italian of Antonio de Beatis in Ludwig von Pastor, *Erlauterungen und Erganzungen zu Janssens Geschichte des Deutschen Volkes*, Vol. 4: *Die Reise Cardinals Luigi d'Aragona durch Deutschland, die Niederlande, Fransreich, und Uberitalien von 1517-1518 von Antonio de Beatis* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herderiche, 1905), p. 143.

Janez Janša, Janez Janša and Janez Janša
Signature (Konjsko sedlo /Horse Seddle/),
Konjsko sedlo, 2007
Action
Photo: Janez Janša
Courtesy: Aksioma


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of the variation on the signatures found in the paintings and prints of the nineteenth century artist Edouard Manet, James Rubin demonstrates the significance of wordplay and mirroring between hand (*la main, manus*) and name (Manet).[41] In Manet's case, the signature functions as a kind of visual punning. Rubin views the new emphasis on the inscribed signature of the name of the artist in Manet's painting as evidence of the integration of realism with the first Avant-Garde aesthetic in the history of art.

We could say that beginning with Manet Avant-Garde artists and movements play a major role in the increasing variety found in the names of the artist in modernity and post-modernity. According to Karen Moss, the ubiquity of the name changes of Dada, Surrealist, and other Avant-Garde artists of the first half of the twentieth century indicates a desire for an alternative personality, or as she puts it, an "altered ego."[42] An emerging self-consciousness about the representation of the artistic self may surely be recognized in the proliferation of such name changes, such as Marcel Duchamp as Rrose Sélavay, Alfred Jarry as Père Ubu, Kurt Schwitters as Anna Blume, Lucy Schwab as Claude Cahun, Emmanuel Radnitsky as Man Ray, and Maya Derenkowsky as Maya Deren, to call out but a few. According to Kris and Kurz, however, this self-consciousness about one's position in the art tradition occurs at the professional level, while the "enacted biography" of the artist, which prominently includes the name change, points to the unconscious.[43]

To be sure, the self-consciousness that leads to the appropriation of a *nom de plume* functions at the individual level in ways that the historical significance of the name of the artist that I have outlined here may indeed subvert. An investigation of the particular artists who changed their names reveals a number of more or less motivated reasons for doing so. In brief, Amelia Jones has argued that Marcel Duchamp's appropriation of the name of a woman distinguishes, for the first time, the figure of a woman or femininized artist together with the possibilities of her role in the history of art.[44] But a convincing argument has been made by Milly Heyd that Man Ray's name change relates to a desire to conceal his roots as the son of a Jewish sweatshop worker.[45] My own work on the avant-garde filmmaker Maya Deren reveals that the meaning of the artist's assumed name shifts according to who speaks her name or writes her history.[46] This returns us to Freud's observation that the name signifies differently according to context or hearer.

The same point has been made by Jacques Derrida in regard to speech of any kind.[47] However, as we have seen, the proper name has a heightened resonance in speech, a point made manifest by the existence and definition of the "proper name." In addition, the name

[40] Beatis quoted and discussed in Carmen C. Bambach, "Leonardo, Left-Handed Draftsman and Writer," in *Leonardo da Vinci Master Draftsman*, Ed. by Carmen C. Bambach (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art and New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), p. 239.

[41] James Rubin, "Signatures and the Double Self", a chapter from a forthcoming monograph on Manet. I am grateful to James Rubin for allowing me to read this important study prior to publication.

[42] See the extremely important but little-known exhibition catalogue and collection of essays on this topic: Karen Moss, *Altered Egos* (Santa Monica: Santa Monica Museum of Art, 1994).

[43] Kris and Kurz, p. 132.

[44] Amelia Jones, *Postmodernism and the En-Gendering of Marcel Duchamp* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

[45] Milly Heyd, "Man Ray/ Emmanuel Radnitsky: Who is Behind *The Enigma of Isidore Ducasse?"* in *Complex Identities: Jewish Consciousness and Modern* Art, Ed. by Matthew Baigell and Milly Heyd (New Brunswick, N. J.: Rutgers University Press, 2001, pp. 115-141).

[46] Catherine M. Soussloff, "Maya Deren Herself," in *Maya Deren and the American Avant-Garde*, Ed. by Bill Nichols (Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 105-129.

of the artist further increases – in the many ways that I have outlined here – the magnitude of the resonance of the proper name. Derrida also argued that iteration affects the speech act or event in ways that the originator of the event cannot control, and Amelia Jones explores an aspect of his argument in her essay in this volume. It must be observed that the heightened iteration of any proper name will be bound to occur in our present context, a society that legislates a normalized identity through the marker of the name in "identity papers" (such as the birth certificate, driver's license, and passport) and one in which celebrity figures large.

I have already explored the issue of celebrity in regard to the name of the artist in the twentieth century. When the culture that has particularized the name of the artist demands the iteration of the proper name as a matter of course and when the artist enacts that iteration, the act of iteration assumes a heightened significance in the context of the name of the artist. This is the situation or event in which *Janez Janša* has/ve emerged and is/are articulated. In this current situation, it could be said that the name of the artist has drowned out or overwhelmed the particularity of the work of art. If it is the case now that the creation no longer belongs to the artist, as Rushdie asserts in the opening of this essay, then the artist and the work of art no longer appear in the same relationship as they did in the past. Recent theories and histories of "performance" and "performativity" have implicitly argued as much.[48] The "actions" of Janez Janša, including their appropriation of a name from an overtly political context, may be placed in this realm of performance.

The conclusion to our investigation of the name of the artist may already be obvious but it bears stating: when the artist performs the name of the artist as the work of art in the present social context, relationships to the concepts of art, the artist, and the institutions of art manifest in ways that relate to present historical and political situations. Just as the name of the artist remains imbedded in historical discourse, this present includes references to the past imbedded in it. However, no longer transparent to each other, as they once were, the artist and the work of art have, to a great extent, lost each other as a stable referent. This situation, or result, of the name of the artist should not be lamented as a loss for art, but recognized rather as the outcome of the representation of the artist today. The overtly political referent in *Janez Janša* names the state of being of the artist and the work of art in the new era.

[47] Jacques Derrida, "Signature Event Context," in *Limited Inc* (Evanston, Il.: Northwestern University Press, 1977), pp. 1-23.

[48] A good place to begin to explore these changes is the introduction to *The Twentieth-Century Performance Reader, 2nd Edition*, Ed. by Michael Huxley and Noel Witts (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 1-9.