

Sharon Lockhart's Historical Choreography; or, the War of Remembrance That Is History

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Sharon Lockhart's staging of Noa Eshkol's *War Dance (Heraldic)* is fierce. One portion of this dance is particularly striking (fig. 1). Three dancers are shown in a triangular arrangement—two in the foreground, one several feet behind—in a spacious, battleship-gray rehearsal room. Dressed simply and uniformly in black tops and black ankle-length pants, the dancers assume an identical pose: with weight balanced on their right legs they tilt back, extending left legs heel first toward the viewer while brandishing right arms above their heads in defiant fists. Though their bodies confront the viewer, their eyes look leftward, trained on an object out of frame in the near horizon. One can easily imagine spears grasped in those raised arms, or arrows deftly moving from quivers at their scapulas to bows held in their outstretched left arms. Here are three hunters stalking in the night, three fighters challenging a common enemy.

It is a forceful image. This is a dance of silent and powerful union: a warrior dance.

(If I told you two of the three dancers are women, would the dance be any less martial, any less fearsome?)

(If I told you that all three dancers are in their seventies, would that make them any less imposing, any less dancierly?)

It is an arresting image. Arresting, too, in another sense of the word: this is a frame from a film Lockhart produced for her five-channel film installation *Five Dances and Nine Wall Carpets by Noa Eshkol* (2011), the centerpiece of the exhibition *Sharon Lockhart | Noa Eshkol*.¹ Though it is an excerpt—a frame from a film—it appears final and complete. It has the look of what has been called a “cinematic photograph”: when time is halted in a static image, it allows for a precise composition that proves deeply satisfying, while still offering a promise of narrative fulfillment.²

For this film installation Lockhart restaged five dances, including *War Dance (Heraldic)*, from the dance suite *Theme and Variations* by Israeli dance and movement theorist, dance composer, and teacher Noa Eshkol (1924–2007).³ The three dancers were once members of Eshkol's Chamber Dance Group and worked with Eshkol in her studio in Holon, Israel. In the concord of the three bodies I can sense an ethic of martial discipline characteristic of Eshkol's choreographic style. The metaphor of the body in war—dance corps as military corps—is central to Eshkol's dance technique and, indeed, could be said to define dance training more generally; precise instruction and rigorous rehearsal separate professionals from those of us who traverse the world with rather less physical preparation. The metaphor of battle also offers a point of entry into Lockhart's reconsideration of Eshkol: the exhibition, which she has conceived as a two-person exhibition consisting of works by

1. Lockhart designed the exhibition in collaboration with the Los Angeles-based architecture firm EscherGuneWardena Architecture. The description of the exhibition in this essay is based on the version presented at The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, which I viewed in December 2011. Both the film and the selection of Eshkol's wall carpets and archival material vary with each venue.

2. See Corey Creekmur, “The Cinematic Photograph and the Possibility of Mourning,” *Wide Angle* 9, no. 1 (1986): 41–49. George Baker adopts this phrase in “Photography's Expanded Field,” *October*, no. 114 (Autumn 2005): 120–40.

3. Eshkol did not like to be described as a “choreographer”; following the terminology used in this book, I refer to her as a “dance composer.” The dances from *Theme and Variations*, which Eshkol premiered in 1965, are: *Ländler* (arranged by Racheli Nul-Kahana; dancers: Mor Bashan, Noga Goral, Or Gal-Or, Ruti Sela); *Fugue* (dancers: Nul-Kahana, Sela); *Strolling (Promenade)* (dancers: Nul-Kahana, Hamutal Peled, Sela, Sara Sheffi); *War Dance (Heraldic)* (dancers: Nul-Kahana, Sela, Shmulik Zaidel); and *Duet* (Nul-Kahana, Sela). The introduction to the book *Theme & Variations: Dance Suite, Book 1* (Holon, Israel: Movement Notation Society for the Noa Eshkol Foundation for Movement Notation, 2010) states that in “the suite ‘*Theme and Variations*’ . . . (or in its first name, ‘*Preludes and Fugues*’), Eshkol emphatically relates [the form of the dances] to serial orders, . . . fugue, etc. These musical forms served her in building a polyphonic composition, both among the single dancer's body parts, as well as among the dancers as a group” (6). Lockhart conceives her five films of these five dances as separate parts of one film; Nul-Kahana, who worked with Eshkol from the 1960s and possesses a deep knowledge of her dance compositions, staged the dances for the film.



Fig. 1. Sharon Lockhart, frame from *Five Dances and Nine Wall Carpets* by Noa Eshkol, 2011

both artists that mutually inform each other, can be interpreted as an exercise in “historical choreography,” in which Lockhart fights to remember, and to have us remember, past histories through the recovery and reinterpretation of objects, experiences, and people that “progress” has left behind.

Stand in front of Lockhart’s film of *War Dance (Heraldic)*, projected onto a large gray rectangular volume in the installation, as are the other four parts of the film, and you’ll see something even more incongruous than three mature dancers garbed in black performing a warlike line dance.⁴ In the left half of the projected image are three large “wall carpets,” the term Eshkol used to describe the textile works she began creating in 1973, mounted to vertical slate-gray volumes set at a 45-degree angle to the viewer (and the projection); these volumes evoke the form of the structure on which the image itself is projected. The carpets are bright and bold, all abstract designs, though they range from geometric figures to vegetal patterns.⁵ The arrangement of these three volumes within *War Dance (Heraldic)* parallels the diagonal orientation of the three dancers at stage left; together they appear like three additional (silent and immobile) participants in the dance.

These carpets—examples of which are found in each of the five projections as well as being physically installed on plinths in an adjacent room of the exhibition—are part of Eshkol’s decades-long practice of collecting fabric oddments and laying out the unaltered scraps in compositions stitched together by her dancers and friends. In contrast to the strict adherence to choreography that Eshkol demanded of her dancers, her acceptance of accidents of discovery in her carpets is a kind of contingency-through-control that attracted Lockhart to the works. Until now these carpets, hundreds of which exist, had never been publicly combined with Eshkol’s more well-known work as a dance composer.

When the projected textile and dance components are seen together within a single projected field, a bundle of contradictions emerges. Immediately obvious is how traditional gender and age roles in dance are troubled. Yet other sets of concerns are at stake here, too: the relationship between craft (as tradition) and art (as innovation); between dance (as choreography) and visual art (as composition); between film (as movement) and photography (as stasis); between originality and repetition, control and freedom, chance and design, collectivity and singularity. (In discussing these contradictions, these paired relationships, let us not understand them as antinomies, binaries, or oppositions. Each term can and should be seen through the lens of its couple, as a dynamic, mutually informing

4. Lockhart uses the term “volume” to describe the structures featured in the film and the structures on which the film is projected.

5. *Dolphin with Ball*, the squarish carpet to the left, is dominated by a giant circle. *Tree*, the narrow carpet to the right, depicts a more all-over twig-like floral pattern. *Nine Moons*, the large carpet in the center, is composed of a tessellated group of blue, white, green, and orange fabric blocks.



Fig. 2. Yvonne Rainer, *The Mind Is a Muscle*, as performed at Judson Memorial Church, May 24, 1966, photo by Peter Moore, © The Estate of Peter Moore/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY. Courtesy of The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (2006.M.24)

relationship, as part of a dialectic whose terms collaborate to produce a synthesis.) These dynamics are all at play in the exhibition, swirling through the designs of the textiles and in the gestures of the dances, in Lockhart's return to practices now forty-plus years old and largely unknown outside of Eshkol's circle. To understand why Lockhart brought these people and objects related to Eshkol together, the most important relationship to consider is the one between "then and now," between modernism and contemporaneity, the dialectic between actions past and present that expresses a paradoxical "fact of contingency" (to use Louis Althusser's phrase): that is, the ability to revisit and rethink histories in light of our own dynamic relationship to actions and events in the present.⁶

Reconsidering the work of Eshkol, Lockhart intertwines tropes and techniques of modernist art: social documentary practices (site visits, interviews, work with original company members) with nonnarrative explorations of durational and aleatory events.⁷ She asks what the stakes of these strategies of representation are today, connecting them to the broader set of interrelationships I mentioned above. Her selection of elements and artifacts from her subjects' physical world, and her combination of them with her own representations of their actions and gestures are strategies she has adopted in previous projects. It might be called a kind of "social choreography."⁸ Like Lockhart's work on Eshkol, in recent years other artists and filmmakers have turned to social choreography, specifically in dance, as a kind of hybridity beyond hyperspecialization, and as a model for collaborative practice and interdisciplinarity. Social choreography in Lockhart's work can be understood as a blurring of "the lines between ritual and recreation," a practice in which commonplace or familiar actions are reframed and revealed as loaded with social meaning.⁹ In this reconsideration she mines the rich and only recently historicized concerns of the Fluxus "event" score as a kind of paradoxical scripting of ordinary actions. She also revisits the related concerns of Judson Dance Theater, such as Yvonne Rainer's framing in *The Mind Is a Muscle* (1966, fig. 2) of

6. In a series of late essays from the 1980s, Louis Althusser addressed criticisms that his view of determination overemphasized the reproduction of existing structures of domination, thereby diminishing the role of human agency in effecting structural change. In his reassessment of this necessitarian logic, Althusser introduced the idea of a "fact of contingency." Expanding on the concept, he maintained that in each event there are singular uncertain and unforeseeable elements that result in a "void essential to any aleatory encounter." Althusser, *Philosophy of the Encounter: Later Writings, 1978–87*, ed. François Matheron and Oliver Corpet and trans. G. M. Goshgarian (London: Verso Press, 2006), 170, 202, 264.

7. Lockhart's commingling of order and chance, as George Baker has noted, "[c]ombines that ethnographic tradition with a completely opposed set of codes, often from Cagean avant-garde aesthetics. Various types of avant-garde strategies are layered in her project that were formerly . . . incompatible. The work's challenge turns on whether and how these opposed legacies can be brought together. *Teatro Amazonas* (1999) is an ethnographic film that's also a Cagean event; *Goshogaoka* is an Yvonne Rainer dance performance as much as an ethnographic film." Baker in Baker et al., "Round Table: The Projected Image in Contemporary Art," *October*, no. 104 (Spring 2003): 82. See also Linda Norden, "So Here's My Holiday," in *Pine Flat* (Milan: Charta, 2006), 128–32.

8. Examples include *Goshogaoka* (1997), *Pine Flat* (2006), and *Lunch Break* (2008). In *Goshogaoka*, Lockhart worked with both a Japanese teenage-girl basketball team and a professional choreographer, Stephen Galloway, who choreographed basketball routines that have affinities with the dances of Yvonne Rainer.

9. Bernard Joisten, "Interview with Sharon Lockhart," *Purple* (Winter 1998–99), reprinted in Jenelle Porter, ed., *Dance with Camera* (Philadelphia: Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, 2009), 140–42.

everyday actions to dehabituate not only habits of spectatorship, but tics of performance, such as the virtuoso flourish or the photogenic “ta-da” moment of self-presentation.¹⁰ One is reminded, too, of Bruce Nauman’s filling the void of an empty studio with a dance exercise, as in his *Dance or Exercise on the Perimeter of a Square* (1967–68).¹¹

In the present exhibition, however, social choreography might be more accurately termed “historical choreography”: art-historical research combined with reenactment. To understand how this thinking-historically-in-the-present works, it is essential to conceive of the dynamic interrelationships I invoked—stasis and movement, design and chance, collectivity and singularity—as themselves collaborations. For various reasons, this way of thinking of collaboration either as social choreography, or as the temporally specific contextualization of bodies of historical choreography, was fraught if not impossible in Eshkol’s career as a dance composer and textile artist. It is important to note that such a hybridization of craft, dance, photography, and film as the shared practices of modernist experimentation is pressured by contemporary artists such as Lockhart, whose work asks that the contemporary museum rethink medium-specific separations in the interest of presenting more complex histories of how things *really* went down.

Eshkol—arguably Israel’s most innovative modern dance composer and the creator of Eshkol-Wachman Movement Notation in collaboration with architect Avraham Wachman—has been relatively overlooked outside of her home country. She undertook her work from a studio based in her home in Holon, where she lived from the 1940s until her death.¹² A tight-knit group of dancers formed around her. Many of them joined her Chamber Dance Group, which she established in 1954. Her exacting rehearsal schedule and outspoken, galvanic personality made her a polarizing figure in her day, a reputation that continues into the present. The Noa Eshkol Foundation for Movement Notation now maintains her archive, preserves and re-creates her dances, and cares for the carpets.

Lockhart made multiple visits to Israel over a three-year period, where she worked in the archive and with members of the foundation. Five main elements from this research and discussion emerged as central to the concept, design, and appearance of the exhibition. First and most important was the collaboration with several dancers, many of them longtime members of the Chamber Dance Group, to reconstruct Eshkol’s dances for the five-channel film installation mentioned above and the “exercises” for the single-channel film installation *Four Exercises in Eshkol-Wachman Movement Notation* (2011).¹³

Second, Lockhart combined a selection of Eshkol’s carpets with the dances, using the specially designed volumes as physical objects placed in the dancers’ mise-en-scène. Third, she selected and brought three of the carpets into the exhibition space, installing them on large plinths. Fourth, she included in the exhibition her photographic series *Models of Orbits in the System of Reference, Eshkol-Wachman Movement Notation System* (2011), which she produced by photographing seven wire-and-mesh spherical models Eshkol designed to represent the possible movements of any limb.¹⁴ And fifth, she brought selected notes, programs, posters, original publications, and photographs from Eshkol’s archive for display in specially designed vitrines.

The largest part of the exhibition is taken up with a snakelike sequence of five rectangular volumes upon which the five parts of Lockhart’s film of the dances are projected. Two of the dances are duets, two feature groups of four women, and one is the trio, *War Dance (Heraldic)*, described above. All the dances are performed to the synchronized sound of a metronome set at 120 beats per minute, as Eshkol intended. Because of the zigzagging flow of the five projections—three to the right when entering

10. See Carrie Lambert, “Moving Still: Mediating Yvonne Rainer’s ‘Trio A,’” *October*, no. 89 (Summer 1999): 87–112.

11. Lockhart’s former student Elad Lassry’s restaging of Balanchine choreography from multiple perspectives also comes to mind. In addition, think of Catherine Sullivan’s simplification of theatrical gesture into a series of choreographed movements enacted by both amateur and professional performers, Joachim Koester’s exploration of choreographing spontaneous dance in his recent film installation *Tarantulism* (2007), and filmmaker Pierre Couilbeuf’s work with various modern dance companies throughout Europe. If one appended contemporary artists who use coordinated gestures on the part of performers, combined with the popularity of the biennial Performa, the list surely swells. We are truly in a dance-theater-art-film nexus. For further examples, see Catherine Wood’s article “The Art of Writing with People,” in *Tate Etc.*, no. 20 (Autumn 2010), available at <http://www.tate.org.uk/tateetc/issue20/artanddance.htm>.

12. Eshkol’s father, Levi Eshkol, was the finance minister of Israel for twelve years and served as prime minister from 1963 until his death in 1969. For more information on Levi Eshkol, see Terence Prittie, *Eshkol: The Man and the Nation* (New York: Pittman Publishing Corp., 1969).

13. Eshkol used the term “exercise” for stage events performed by single dancers, in contrast to “dance” for pieces with more than one performer. Ruti Sela is the dancer featured in *Four Exercises in Eshkol-Wachman Movement Notation*.

14. For an in-depth discussion of the photographic series, see Stephanie Barron and Britt Salvesen, “Drawing in Space,” in this book.

near the introductory wall signage, and two to the left on the far side of the room—the viewer is in a consistently dynamic relationship with respect to the movements depicted on the screens. Negotiating the space of the exhibition involves a series of physical recalibrations on the part of spectators as they orient themselves to each screen. The size of the projections figures each dancer at an approximately “real” human scale, which puts viewers into a relationship of physical equality, in a partnership of sorts, with the dancers before them.

In some of the dances of *Theme and Variations*, dancers mirror one another’s gestures, creating patterns in the gray spaces as they harmonize or deviate from their fellow performers’ actions. This sense of a community of movement is extensive: in the dances with four performers one is invited to imagine how those patterns of movements depicted could extend into the space before the projection—the diegetic space of the film leaks into the space of reception. In particular, the warrior dance is a dance of coalition and equality; each performer’s actions conform precisely to the shared choreography in a way that nearly impels viewers to join the march. The ticktock of the metronome imbues the performance with the urgency of a heartbeat pounding, anticipating the climax of the hunt, or the adrenaline rush of battle, that, in this film, infects the viewer with a sense of intensity, of bodily identification.

Yet the metronome’s monotony, combined with the deliberation and lack of haste in the dancers’ movements, refuses dramatic arcs or narrative catharsis. Even in their most literal moments, like the one signifying attack in the warrior dance, the metronomic linearity of time in the dances implies that events can unfold endlessly, punctuated only by the repetition of certain cyclical gestures—arms swinging overhead, weight toggling between extended legs, or hips slowly rotating. Eshkol’s characteristic pattern of choreographed movement is the form of the revolving circle, a circle encompassing the body’s own rotational joints (neck, waist, shoulders, elbows, wrists, hips, and ankles), circles rolling into smooth progressions without flourish. Lockhart’s decision to loop each of the five parts of the film, each of a different length, emphasizes this weave of time and space. The sound design, in which the metronome can be heard throughout the gallery, yet in actuality is concentrated in speakers inside the volumes that act as screens, lends viewers’ movements through the space a sense of increasing rhythmic intensity upon approaching each volume, heightening the phenomenological siting of spectatorship in the body.¹⁵ This mode of spectatorship is further accentuated by the viewers’ relationships to the volumes themselves as objects, which evoke Minimalist sculptures, particularly Robert Morris’s gray-painted plywood sculptures of the mid-1960s.¹⁶

In bringing Eshkol’s textile and dance works together, Lockhart situates Eshkol’s production within a complex interdisciplinary performance tradition it refused in its time. This tradition extends from Oskar Schlemmer’s and Vsevolod Meyerhold’s works of the 1920s to Merce Cunningham’s work of the 1950s—particularly his collaborations with Robert Rauschenberg. Think, for example, of Rauschenberg’s *Minutiae* (1954, fig. 3), an early Combine created as a set piece for a Cunningham dance featuring a musical score by John Cage. As the dancers remarked to Lockhart, the project of joining the different components of Eshkol’s career would have been vehemently opposed by Eshkol, though the resulting contextualization within other modernist explorations of movement delighted the dancers themselves.

It is through these strategies of making the objects a part of the dancers’ (and viewers’) subjective experiences that Lockhart opens up the proscriptions of Eshkol’s separation of the

15. Lockhart created the minimalist musical composition for the film with composer Becky Allen and sound engineer Dane Davis. It consists of two tracks audible from three speakers embedded in each of the five volumes onto which the five parts of the film are respectively projected: the beat of a metronome set at 120 beats per minute (the same for each part of the film), and a mix of the sound of the dancers’ movements as they perform each individual dance (different for each dance) and the reverberations recorded in the performance space during each individual dance and then amplified (also different). Just as Eshkol’s dance scores map the dancers’ movements in space graphically, the tones of the musical composition map their movements sonically. The musical composition further relates to Eshkol’s dance scores and notation system to the extent that it consists of different elements all coexisting and brought together into a unified composition.

16. One is reminded of Michael Fried’s (disparaging) characterization of the spectatorial relationship produced by Morris’s sculptures in particular and Minimalist sculptures in general in “Art and Objecthood”: “Whereas in previous art ‘what is to be had from the work is located strictly within [it],’ the experience of literalist [Minimalist] art is of an object *in a situation*—one that, virtually by definition, includes the beholder.” Michael Fried, “Art and Objecthood,” in Gregory Battcock, ed., *Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 125. Although beyond the scope of this essay, the relationship of Lockhart’s work to Minimalism, including the work of artists such as Morris, Rainer, and Steve Reich, is a rich subject for further exploration.



Fig. 3. Performance of Merce Cunningham's *Minutiae* (1954) for the PBS television series *Dance in America: Event for Television* (1977), showing dancer Ellen Cornfield with Robert Rauschenberg's *Combine Minutiae* (1954)

dances from the carpets. Other prescriptions (the prescribed gesture through notation, the prescribed movements of the dancers) are opened up by Lockhart's camera through framing, by bringing the carpets into a relationship with the dancers. This new relationship with the subject folds back to the chain of dialectics I mentioned before: perhaps a key dialectic is not merely *time* (then and now), but also that of the *subject*. You or me, them or us; the subject/object relationship constructed as a polarity is perhaps what Lockhart disrupts the most. The "objects" in the images (for example, the carpets) are as much subject as the dancers.¹⁷ Contrariwise, "you," as subject, are physiologically implicated as an object of the performance in the way the phenomenological effects of the sound and the human scale of the projections act on you.

For Lockhart the representation of these objects and experiences is a kind of advocacy. She has taken disparate threads of Eshkol's work and put them into the museum as contemporary art. Thus, Eshkol's diverse practices, in their interdisciplinarity, may now be found where they never had a home before. Is it now the role of contemporary art to fight for the kind of interdisciplinarity and hybridity that modernist figures in dance like Schlemmer, Meyerhold, Cunningham, and others practiced, which Eshkol herself practiced, in a half-expressed manner, in her work as a dance composer and textile designer?

Is *this* the battle being contested in Lockhart's staging of *War Dance (Heraldic)* and Eshkol's other dances? Is this why Lockhart has chosen to return us to these acts and objects? Let us consider these questions in relation to another work of art on view at the Israel Museum, the site where *Sharon Lockhart | Noa Eshkol* was first presented: the small Paul Klee work titled *Angelus Novus* (1920, fig. 4) in the museum's permanent collection. Walter Benjamin once owned this work, and his now-famous interpretation of it in his "Theses on the Philosophy of History" (written in 1940, the year of his death) has made it "an icon of the left."¹⁸ Here is Benjamin:

17. Likewise, Lockhart's photographs of the Eshkol-Wachman spheres initially seem to present these objects neutrally against a gray background. Yet the gleaming metallic suspended forms are shot with an eerie frontality, as though they were portraits. Each form is photographed turning on its longitudinal axis, highlighting its dimensional complexity, rather than the cursory visual inventory the object catalogue or database provides.

18. Otto Karl Werckmeister, *Icons of the Left: Benjamin and Eisenstein, Picasso and Kafka after the Fall of Communism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).



Fig. 4. Paul Klee. *Angelus Novus*, 1920, India ink, colored chalk, and brown wash on paper, 12 1/2 x 9 1/2 inches (31.8 x 24.2 cm), The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, Gift of Fania and Gershom Scholem, Jerusalem, John Herring, Marlene and Paul Herring, Jo Carole and Ronald Lauder, New York. B87.994

A Klee painting named “Angelus Novus” shows an angel looking as though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. The storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress.¹⁹

19. Walter Benjamin, “Theses on the Philosophy of History” (1940), in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt and trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), 249.

Later in the “Theses,” Benjamin restates his sense of progress as a storm leaving the past as an undifferentiated pile of rubble. In this second passage he argues that the imperative of history is to sift the wreckage in order to alter the course of that storm called progress. The urgency of thinking-historically-in-the-present prevents the debasement of real struggles achieved in the past to be treated as mere wreckage. He argues that a faithful articulation of history must always contest the ease of forgetting. It is therefore necessary to:

retain that image of the past which unexpectedly appears to man singled out by history at a moment of danger. The danger affects both the content of the tradition and its receivers. The same threat hangs over both: that of becoming a tool of the ruling class. In every era the attempt must be made anew to wrest tradition away from a conformism that is about to overpower it.²⁰

For Benjamin, revitalizing traditions under threat of ever-encroaching revisionism can awaken alternatives obscured by the dominant culture. The reproduction of circumscribed possibilities as “history” has been termed the “selective tradition” by Raymond Williams: “The way in which from a whole possible arena of past and present, certain meanings and practices are chosen for emphasis, certain other meanings and practices are neglected and excluded.”²¹ The process of refining the objects of historical interest and cultural transmission to a rehearsed and often static canon or tradition serves to regulate and diminish the capacity for social and cultural change. Reconsidering the past requires vigilance, avoiding the power of repetition of the selective tradition that is in effect the violence of history. History is a battleground, a field of conflict from which we must constantly rearticulate lost practices. The helpless movement of the Angelus away from this as-yet-sifted wreckage is the “progress” we must arrest, if only contingently, to find new arrangements of what we call “the past” in this pile of discarded remnants. This may be what Althusser meant by the “fact of contingency.” That is to say, the order of the world is fraught with radical instability, and though there is a *fact* of order, that order is provisional and from a medley of various contingent possibilities comes the necessity of any one particular order. It is therefore important, as he wrote, to “think the openness of the world to the event, [to] the as-yet-unimaginable.”²²

In the case of her work on Eshkol, Lockhart asks what Eshkol’s modernism—itsself a reception of early twentieth-century precedents in the study of movement—can do for us in our present. What can be done today to recover the lost potentials of modernist practices that, for a variety of reasons, can be understood only belatedly? In revisiting these overlooked, and in the case of Eshkol, largely forgotten, practices, a new look at the charge of modernism’s strikingly “modern” ambitions can be undertaken. What Lockhart is proposing is a model of continuity for concerns such as attention to form and interdisciplinary hybridity, rather than a model of rupture and rejection. This is a collaboration between individuals and objects, but also between individuals and our collective history. It is historical choreography: the process of writing history into our time, recovering and reinterpreting the objects and experiences “progress” leaves behind.

20. *Ibid.*, 255.

21. Raymond Williams, “Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory,” in *Problems in Materialism and Culture* (London: Verso Press, 1974), 39.

22. Althusser, 264.