

THE ART OF ARTERTAINMENT

Nobrow, American Style

Edited by

Peter Swirski

Wirth Institute, University of Alberta, Canada

Tero Eljas Vanhanen

University of Helsinki, Finland

Series in Art



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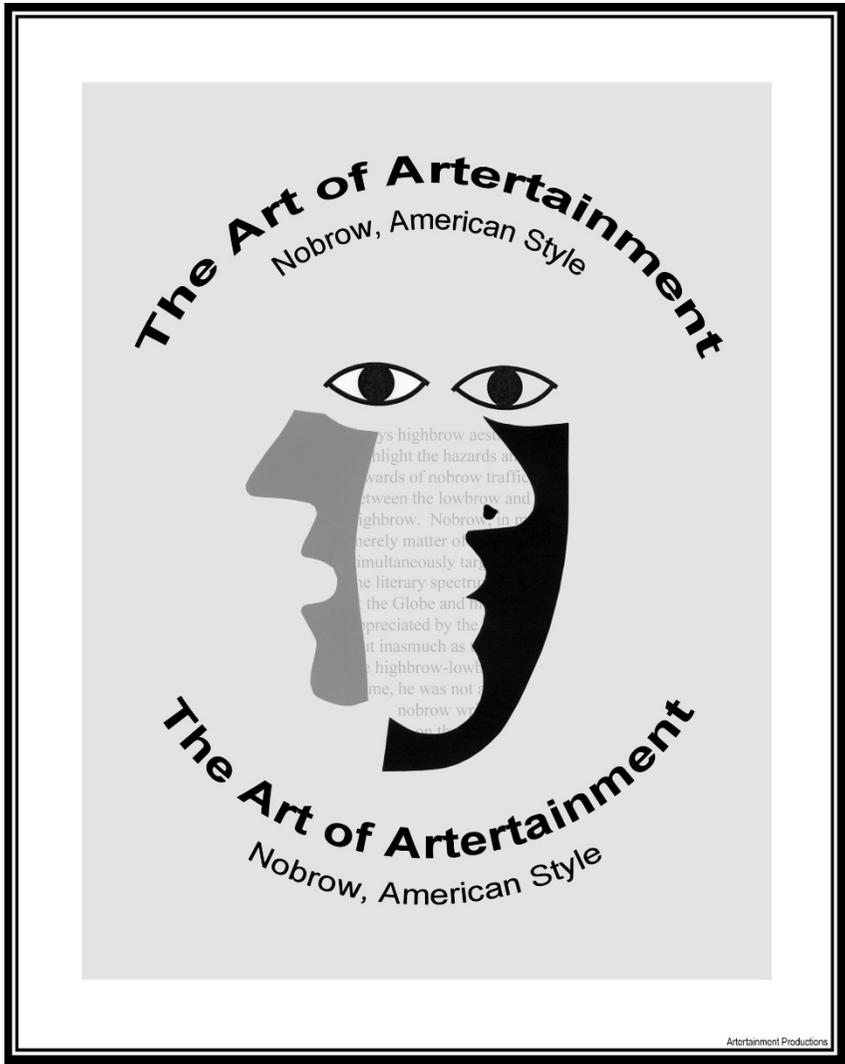
*This book is dedicated to
three unsung nobrow superheroes:*

Mini Mouse

Peaceful Monkey

and

Super Chicken



Poster Art... or Artertainment?

Figure 1. Poster art... or artertainment? Courtesy of Artertainment Productions.

Chapter 1

That's Artertainment! **(No, It's Not a Typo)**

Peter Swirski and Tero Eljas Vanhanen

My artistic intentions, if I thought about them, was to show a clash of cultures... Barbarian meets aristocrat, and each seems to have a need that the other can fulfill.

—Nelson DeMille, personal interview with Peter Swirski, 2015

Pluck the mannered audiences from a recital of Chopin's *Études*, drop them into the sweaty leather-clad crowd in a Metallica mosh pit, and you might be forgiven for thinking that art and entertainment are like oil and water. One is created for the nuanced contemplation of the highbrow elites. The other for the indiscriminate consumption of the lowbrow masses. And never, as they say, the twain shall meet.

Except, of course, they do. The *Études* are commercial finger exercises from one of the biggest crowd-pleasing superstars of his age.¹ Metallica has shared the concert-hall stage with a symphony orchestra to critical and commercial acclaim. What's more, examples of such nobrow crossovers are as plentiful as fleas on a dog. Gershwin wrote both classical and pop. So did Bernstein. So did Zappa, even before he was arranged and conducted by Boulez.

Not convinced? How about Elvis Pelvis singing lines from the *Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes*? The Beatles pirating verses from an Elizabethan stage play? Madonna remixing seventeenth-century Metaphysical poetry? Steve Vai touring with classically trained violinists? How about—in perhaps the greatest affront to those who draw thick lines between art and entertainment—Bobby McFerrin conducting orchestras that read like the *Who's Who* of the classical elites? The same Bobby McFerrin who in 1988 owned the pop charts with a cheesy little ditty called “Don't Worry, Be Happy”?

As you can see even from this quick tableau, our cultural highs and lows are much more diffuse, not to say mongrelized, than we've been trained to

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Artertainment for Everyone: American Culture in the Zettabyte Age

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Literature and Artertainment: Faulkner and Nabokov

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Chapter Four

The Colonial Art of Artertainment: Wiltwyck, America, 1664

Kenneth Krabbenhoft

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Notes on Contributors

Peter Swirski is a Canadian literary and cultural critic featured in *Canadian Who's Who*. Currently Senior Research Associate at the Wirth Institute at the University of Alberta, Canada, and Honorary Professor of American Literature and Culture at Jinan University, China, he was formerly Distinguished Professor of American Studies and American Literature at SYSU in China, and Professor and Research Director at Europe's elite Helsinki Institute for Advanced Studies in Finland.

He has published extensively on contemporary American literature and culture, including popular fiction and popular culture, winning critical awards and attracting praise ranging from the *Financial Times* to the *TLS*. Among his nineteen books, the groundbreaking *From Lowbrow to Nobrow* is a staple of popular culture studies, joined more recently by *American Crime Fiction: A Cultural History of Genre Literature as Art* and *When Highbrow Meets Lowbrow: Popular Culture and the Rise of Nobrow*. He has given keynotes and lectures on all continents of the world save Africa, in 2012 delivering a plenary at UNE's Institute for Global Humanities alongside Noam Chomsky. He has also made multiple television appearances in Europe, Russia, the United States, and Hong Kong, as well as on the BBC World Service with audiences of 200 million worldwide.

He can be reached at peter.swirski@ualberta.ca.

Tero Eljas Vanhanen is a literary scholar and cultural critic specializing in the role of emotions in art, entertainment, and arertainment, as well as in the study of the fissures and affinities between elite and popular culture. Currently, he is a teacher and researcher in Comparative literature at the Universities of Turku and Helsinki. He teaches subjects ranging from Aristotle's poetics to contemporary popular culture to the problem of evil in literary history. He is a member of the board of Young Academy Finland, an elite invitation-only division of the Finnish Academy of Science and Letters. Previously, he was a Fulbright Scholar at the University of California, Berkeley.

He is the co-editor (with Peter Swirski) of *When Highbrow Meets Lowbrow: Popular Culture and the Rise of Nobrow*. His articles have appeared in journals such as *Philosophy and Literature*, *SubStance*, and *The Journal of American Studies*. He has also contributed to several scholarly collections, including *Values of Literature* in Brill's *Value Inquiry Book Series*. Outside the academia, he is a rhetoric coach hosting workshops for businesses and organiza-

tions on how to utilize storytelling and post-classical rhetoric to achieve their communication goals.

He can be reached at tero.vanhanen@helsinki.fi.

David Rampton is Professor of English at the University of Ottawa, Canada. A specialist in American and Comparative Literature, his publications include books and articles on all aspects of modern and contemporary fiction, beginning with Vladimir Nabokov. His *A Critical Study of Nabokov's Novels* marked a turning point in Nabokov criticism, rejecting the idea of Nabokov as an aesthete primarily interested in creating aesthetic puzzles. His study of Nabokov in the Macmillan Modern Novelist series remains a canonical introduction to the writer's work. More recently, *William Faulkner: A Literary Life* was noted for its revisionist view of Faulkner's status as the foremost twentieth-century American novelist.

He has edited a number of well-known anthologies, from *Prose Models* (3rd edition) and *Short Fiction* (2nd edition) to, in a more comparative vein, *The Government Inspector and Other Works* and *Notes From Underground and Other Stories*. He has taught with great distinction for more than thirty years, supervised a clutch of groundbreaking dissertations, served as Chair of English at the University of Ottawa from 2002-2007, and as a member of the University's Senate and Board of Governors.

He can be reached at David.Rampton@uOttawa.ca.

Kenneth Krabbenhoft is Professor Emeritus of Spanish and Portuguese at New York University. He has written about early modern Spanish and contemporary Portuguese and Brazilian literature, literary rhetoric, poetry, mystical theology, science fiction, and nobrow theory. His major publications include *El precio de la cortesía* on the Senecan style in Quevedo and Gracián; *Neoestoicismo y género popular*, on Cervantes and Spanish Golden Age theater; *Abraham Cohen de Herrera: Puerta del cielo*, an edition of the influential kabbalist's work; and *Fernando Pessoa e as doenças do fim de século* (2011), on Modernism's greatest poet and his search for himself in nineteenth-century psychology.

He has also published numerous essays on Luis de Góngora, José Saramago, Clarice Lispector, Philip K. Dick, and Stanislaw Lem, as well as on colonial history, architecture, and intellectual life in the Hudson Valley and on the evolution and demise of highbrow-lowbrow conventions across the ages. His translations include Cohen de Herrera's masterwork, *Gate of Heaven* (2002), and poetry and prose of St. John of the Cross, Jorge Luis Borges, Pablo Neruda,

Eduardo Lourenço, and Eugenio Trías. He and his wife, the illustrator Ferris Cook, live in Marbletown, New York.

He can be reached at kenkrabbenhoft@gmail.com.

Cynthia J. Miller is a cultural anthropologist specializing in popular culture and visual media. She is a Kansas Humanities Council Scholar, a Research Fellow of the Will Rogers Memorial, and former Fellow of the Boston Historical Society. Her recent awards include the Jim Welsh Prize for Lifetime Achievement in Adaptation Studies and the Peter C. Rollins Book Award in Popular Culture Studies. She teaches in the Institute for Liberal Arts at Emerson College.

She has written and spoken extensively on the horror movie, B-movie, and exploitation film genres, as well as on homelessness and social justice. She is the editor of over a dozen scholarly volumes, including the recent *What's Eating You?: Food and Horror on Screen*, and her work has appeared in journals and edited volumes across the disciplines. She has delivered numerous keynotes and featured talks at venues ranging from conferences and film series to festivals and conventions. She has also produced several visual media exhibitions, including "Images from the Streets: The Homeless Photography Project" and "Underground Art: Art and Poetry by Boston's Homeless," which have been featured segments on ABC's "Chronicle."

She can be reached at cynthia_miller@emerson.edu.

Wm. Keith Heimann is a Professor of Humanities, having earned both a Bachelor's and Master's degree from The Juilliard School on full-tuition scholarships. As a professional musician, he sang with opera companies in New York, Vienna, Los Angeles, Santa Fe, and Houston, and appeared in Broadway's *The Phantom of the Opera*, *Lady in the Dark*, and *Evita*. He has presented his research on music iconography all over the United States and most recently at the Rimsky-Korsakov Museum in St. Petersburg, Russia.

His publications range from contributions to *Music in Art: International Journal for Music Iconography* published by Research Center for Music Iconography (RCMI), to *The Répertoire International d'Iconographie Musicale* (RIDIM), to *American Music Teacher*, the journal of the Music Teachers National Association. More recently, he has contributed to *The World of Jim Crow*, in which he examines the contributions of African-American classical composers in the early twentieth century.

He can be reached at kheimann@brookdalecc.edu.

A. Bowdoin Van Riper is a historian whose research focuses on images of science and technology in popular culture and public understanding of the past. He has taught courses in United States history, world history, the history of science and technology, and science studies at Northwestern University, Franklin & Marshall College, Kennesaw State University, and Southern Polytechnic State University, among other institutions. He is currently Research Librarian at the Martha's Vineyard Museum, and editor of the Museum's quarterly journal, the *Dukes County Intelligencer*.

He is the author, editor, or co-editor of sixteen books, including *Imagining Flight*, selected as a *Choice* recommended book, and *Learning from Mickey, Donald, and Walt*, winner of a Ray and Pat Browne Award for best edited collection. His most recent publication is *Divine Horror: Essays on the Cinematic Battle between the Sacred and the Diabolical*, the latest in a series of collections co-edited with Cynthia J. Miller. His shorter work has appeared in publications ranging from the *Dictionary of National Biography* and the *Journal of American Culture* to *New Scientist* and *Martha's Vineyard Magazine*. He has served as a historical consultant for the U. S. National Park Service and television programs aired on Discovery Channel Canada, TLC, and PBS.

He can be reached at abvanriper@gmail.com.

Rossen Ventzislavov is a philosopher and cultural critic specializing in aesthetics, architectural theory, literature, popular music, and performance art. He is the 2017 recipient of the *Curriculum Diversification Grant* from the American Society for Aesthetics. His work has appeared in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, *Deleuze Studies*, *Contemporary Aesthetics*, *The Journal of Popular Music Studies*, etc. He is currently Associate Professor of Philosophy at Woodbury University.

His research on performance art has been channeled into presentations at prestigious events like the *Night of Philosophy* in New York City and the *Autonomous Academy* lecture series at Plato's original Academy in Athens, Greece. He is a member of the editorial board of interdisciplinary journal *Evental Aesthetics* and has served as a judge at the *Downtown Urban Arts Festival* in New York. Since 2013, he has been a member of a Los Angeles based art collective, which explores the performative practice of intersubjective encounter.

He can be reached at rossen_ventzislavov@yahoo.com.

Adriana Mariella is a writer and scholar whose work explores the intersections of mass media, politics, and pop culture and the ways in which collec-

tive memory and popular history are constructed through them. She has worked in advertising on global television and digital media campaigns for some of the world's biggest brands, including adidas, Alexander Wang, and Cheerios. Her scholarly work also benefits from her hands-on perspective on the practices of mass communication and firsthand insight into the strategies that advertisers employ to communicate effectively with their audiences.

She is a graduate of both New York University's interdisciplinary John W. Draper program, where she received her Master's Degree in Humanities and Social Thought, and Boston College where she received a BA in English cum laude and the Randall Award, presented to the author of the best essay in the field of American literature and culture. Her most recent publication was in the *International Journal of Humanities and Cultural Studies*.

She can be reached at adriana.mariella@gmail.com.

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