

Exploring the Invisibility of Conformable Shapes: a Vulnerability Study of Didi-Huberman's "Not-knowledge" Images

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Abstract: The context of the term "iconology" is continuously expanding today, while discussions around the traditional paradigm of iconography are rooted in the discourse framework of "Ernst Cassirer—Erwin Panofsky—Ernst Hans Josef Gombrich". However, in the history of academia, interest in the study of Warburg does not seem to have always been sustained. Until the end of the 20th century, through the retrospective exploration by figures like Georges Didi-Huberman and Giorgio Agamben, Aby Warburg's "Nameless Science" was finally brought back from the margins of art research. If this traditional paradigm presents the viewer with an image in an intuitive and easily understandable way, directly affecting the knowledge on the surface level of the artistic image, thereby making the visible readable, then beyond the stable equation formed by seeing and knowing, how should we define the "Not-knowledge" part that breaks through the simple formal level? Beyond the stability equation, the emergence of the "Not-knowledge" image effect is naturally a theoretical issue that requires clarification. Therefore, this article takes the questioning of linear narrative and the appearance of "cracks" in visual images as fundamental features of Didi-Huberman's study of "Not-knowledge" images. It focuses on the relationship between the intuitive presentation and the readability of the image, exploring how the ontology of Didi-Huberman's non-explicit visual elements, that is, the "Not-knowledge" image, generates its effectiveness. This analysis is primarily conducted from two perspectives: one is to critique and question the iconographic paradigm as the originating theory, and the other is to construct the emergence and manifestation of the ontological efficacy of "Not-knowledge" images as a subsequent theory. At the end of the article, the aim is to reflect on the phenomenon of "displacement" in art history research, which arises from neglecting the image itself, through a method of unveiling. The goal is to explore the insights that the "Not-knowledge" image theory can offer to the practical research in art history.

Keywords: Georges Didi-Huberman; rend; presentability; "not-knowledge" image; image efficacy

1. Introduction

As a scholar in image studies who breaks away from the traditional symbolic processing paradigm and the 'image-logos' centrism, Didi-Huberman resonates with the Aby Warburg school of thought at the end of the 20th century. He extends beyond the traditional "cognitive" paradigm of visual images, establishing a theory of images that differs from surface-level morphological interpretations. Although Panofsky has already interpreted the three levels of meaning in the context of visual images, the intertextual view regarding the dimensions of the images themselves has been established. Although the intertextual perspective on viewing the dimensions of images themselves has already been explained by Panofsky's theory of three levels of meaning in artistic images, it is worth noting that it was precisely Didi-Huberman who discovered the disciplinary implications of this duality on the visual appreciator's cognition. He takes a critical stance towards representational reductionism, which places the image in a transparent, interpretable layer and strips it of its potency. Based on this, at the anthropological level, Didi-Huberman attempts to "rend" the closed box of the original image through the fissure, or 'symptom,' which serves as the bodily image. This is an effort to explore the invisibility beneath the visible configurations in visual images, namely the "Not-knowledge" image. Making the "invisible" memory behind the configural visible, hence the 'rend' the concepts of 'manifestation' and "symptom" form the theory of the not-knowledge' image. This is also key to exploring the remnants of memory behind Didi-Huberman's image.

The concept of 'rend' concerning configurational images originates from Didi-Huberman's work "Confronting Images: Questioning the Ends of a Certain History of Art". He emphasizes that the logical entirety constructed by the readability of traditional art history narratives is both false and not entirely reasonable. The brilliance of art lies precisely in the tension between these narrative closed loops and historical truths. In establishing the theory of images, it draws on Sigmund Freud's reconsideration of the subject and extends Walter Benjamin's dialectical image theory, treating the image as a subject and imagining it as a crack rather than entirely intact, reflecting on the certainty of interpreting rational images as object attrib-

utes. At the same time, in the book “The Surviving Image: Phantoms of Time and Time of Phantoms: Aby Warburg’s History of Art”, he connects the re-emergence of Warburg’s memory with Gilles Deleuze’s theory of “becoming”, pointing to the “symptoms” that reveal the cracks of manifestation, which imply remnants — that is, the realm of “the not-knowledge” beyond the domain of knowledge within images. He attempts to unlock Aby Warburg’s non-linear historical memory.

2. The Vulnerability of Images as “Copies” — The Exclusion of States of Exception

In the recent work “Au pas léger de la servante. Savoir des images, savoir excentrique”, Didi-Huberman proposes the essential nature of “iconology”. On one hand, he rejects the traditional institutional study of iconology, while on the other hand, he questions the “historical models” constructed by historiography up to now.[1] Traditional art history, as a principle of visual intertextuality and discourse paradigm, has disciplined us into a binary, deterministic narrative logic when dealing with visual images. It has conventionally established the notion that what is seen is what is recognized, and what is recognized is what is known. The visually observable images and historical elements in art history are generated in a mutually corresponding manner. The historical narrative is the visualization of historical language, while images are the visualization of the “historical narrative.” As an object, the image is dependent on historical knowledge as a subject, and the subject of the visual image itself exists as a replica. In other words, the author believes that visual appreciators maintain two attitudes when perceiving images: one is a style analysis attitude rooted in criticism, and the other is a knowledge recognition attitude grounded in reductionism. Both of these approaches confine visual imagery to transparent surface forms, constructing a rational, logical theory of readability with a sense of certainty.

We seem to have never questioned the specific paradigms of writing art history, namely the traditional methodologies of art history established since Vasari and Panofsky. So the first step in studying Georges Didi-Huberman’s theory of “Not-knowledge” in images is naturally to ask: Does the certainty of our current intuitive definitions of images truly reflect the essence of what images aim to express? How is the “not-knowledge” hidden beneath the ‘knowledge’ in the current image being concealed? What has led art history to adopt such a tone of certainty? These questions challenge Didi-Huberman’s foundation of questioning the “reliable rhetoric.”*

The authoritative narrative of certainty, observed through the lens of intertextuality, outlines the contours of the discipline of art history, while simultaneously driving the operational modes of the art system and constructing the discourse on the identity of the artist. In this state, the observed image and the perceived image are equivalent, where the visible configuration in the visual image is transformed into a readable domain of knowledge. Within this certainty, there is undoubtedly an inherent duality of positivism and reductionism. One perspective, represented by Vasari, treats the process of creating images as the product of rational operations through the empirical cataloging of epochs. The other, influenced by neo-Kantian Cassirer, is Panofsky’s interpretation of perspective as a dual expression of technique and symbolism, representing a knowledge system perceived visually. Thus, under the framework of the two systems, art history has transformed into a closed and complete field of knowledge, a rigorous academic discipline with strict examination procedures, where exceptions are consequently constrained.

When the audience of visual images encounters points of confusion in these direct images and subsequently seeks explanations, it often seems to assume that the knowledge of art history will reveal everything about the images to us, as if, by mastering the knowledge of the discipline, we as the audience will also grasp definitive information about the images. However, Georges Didi-Huberman points out that “It should go without saying that the element of history, its inherent fragility with regard to all procedures of verification”[2], a fragility in which the historical narrative reflected in artistic images or the writing of art history is, in fact, distanced from history by two layers. This vulnerability indicates that the historical narrative information reflected in the writing of artistic images or art history is, in fact, separated from history by two layers. What are the two layers? The narrative of history is essentially the writing of historical events, but this writing is inevitably influenced by the political and economic factors of the time. The “invisible hand” of the ruling class and the subjective ideas of historians both influence the writing of history, thus historical narratives are, to some extent, subjective. They are also based on a definite linguistic framework, where uncertainty is excluded—specifically, the exclusion of the state of exception. So, will the historical elements in art history be flawless? There is already a layer of separation between the established historical narrative it is based on and actual history. Clearly, the historical elements in art history are, in fact, shadows of shadows, with three layers between them and true history.

However, in the author’s view, this imperfection can be likened to Plato’s ‘three beds’ metaphor. That is, the bed painted by the artist, imitating a particular bed, is not the essence of the bed itself. It can only be considered a “copy of a copy”, a “shadow of a shadow”, with reality separated by three layers.[3] Only here Plato’s “true” is “the world of ideas”, while in the actual writing of art history, our “truth” is the long river of historical development and change, the “traces” of memory left

by the passage of time. At this point, if we question and re-examine the characteristics of historical elements in art history, their conveyance, after two layers, will inevitably possess an inherent fragility.

This paper argues that the gap created by this multilayered coverage continuously points to the misalignment between visual experience and knowledge in the development of visual imagery. The relationship between material form and concept can be seen in conceptual artist Joseph Kosuth's "One and Three Chairs" (Figure 1). This work is precisely accomplished through the combination of language and text, the visualized presentation of objects from the text, and photography. A real-world chair, a photo of the chair, and the dictionary's definition of the word "chair"—these three parts directly convey Kosuth's disregard for the shape of visible objects and his emphasis on the transmission of inner meaning. This visible entity neither satisfies the aesthetic judgment criteria of formalist appraisal nor provides the complete knowledge that could be matched with history under reductionism. "In Kosuth's view, what truly impacts essence are ideas, not aesthetics or material forms with aesthetic elements." [4] This concept is precisely the authentic expression of the artistic creator, where the intentional disregard for visual representation is actually a critique of deterministic rhetoric. As Benjamin once said, "Once history is endowed with meaning and textualized, it loses its visibility and the ability to form images." [5]



Figure 1. Joseph Kosuth, *One and Three Chairs*, Installation, 1965,
Chair: 82×40×37 cm, Photos: 112×79 cm & 50×75 cm, Collection of the Centre Pompidou, National Museum of Modern Art, Paris

Therefore, the author believes that in the "knowledge" of certain artistic images, the relationship between the subject image and knowledge is complete and flawless, and the position between them and historical objects is a priori fixed. Art history, as a possessive subject of the object, exists as a "copy" of history. The narrative of art history is reduced to what is visible and readable, aligned with history, while the self-liberating aspect of art itself has disappeared, and the element of uncertainty is no longer present. However, Didi-Huberman readjusted the relationship between the subject and object attributes, using the immediacy of subjective perception to break the binary opposition between image and knowledge. This approach challenges the disciplining of visual perception by presenting the configuration of invisibility through the transformation of subject-object positioning into visibility.

3. The 'Rend' of the Complete Image—The Image of 'Not-Knowledge' as a Fissure

The concept of 'Rend' directly recognizable images originates from Georges Didi-Huberman's book *Confronting Images: Questioning the Ends of a Certain History of Art*. Unlike the manifestation of the complete image under Kantian rational concepts, Georges Didi-Huberman attempts to dismantle the "solid net" favored by the logocentric tradition of image perception, breaking open the closed box used for knowledge transmission, and reawakening the impulse of the intuitive image's ontology. At this moment, "the image is no longer a medium for the transmission of knowledge, but a space activated by the spontaneous operation of various heterogeneous meanings." [6] The particularities within the surface image are also torn open, and the once-perfect image now bears a "crack" due to uncertainty.

"Studies on iconography also reveal that the interpretation of an image's meaning depends on literary knowledge. Once the text identifies the image as either the story of 'Salome' or 'Judith,' the meaning becomes anchored, the image transforms into a narrative, and everything becomes safe and controllable." [7] It's not hard to notice that the discourse system of traditional iconology has filled the gap of uncertainty, a gap that exists in the area outside readable knowledge—an area of "not-knowledge". Typical knowledge constructs readable chains that obscure the real issue between language and image relationships. When we face an image, not all parts of the image (that is, the visible content of the image) can be articulated through words, creating a rift between the interpreted text and the image. However, the process of establishing rigorous and rational disciplinary knowledge essentially diverts the problem of "not-knowledge", without truly resolving the issue of the erosion of the image's inherent power.

Therefore, the author believes that the “rend” of the perfect image contains two layers of meaning. First, the subjectivity of readable knowledge gives way to the image itself, meaning that it breaks away from Panofsky’s current knowledge-based image interpretation. In this view, both visibility and invisibility are equally important in artistic images. Second, “not-knowledge” is exposed at this moment and, as the power of the image’s material body, breaks through the metaphorical symbols’ erosion of the essence, revealing the part beyond the structured information corresponding to the real world.

Based on this, how should we tear apart the image to seek the non-knowledge? Georges Didi-Huberman proposes a solution— “paying attention to *Présentabilité*”, meaning that when confronting an image, beyond focusing on the knowledge visible through rational thinking, we must also consider what is absent and unknowable within the image. That is, beyond the subject of knowledge, the sensory experience of the thing’s physical presence is equally important. The “vision” viewing mode, which is based on a priori and knowledge, suppresses the “visual” perception mode of images, while the “visual” viewing mode is precisely the foundation that emphasizes the aspect of presentation. The act of viewing under the concept of “vision” is based on the rational recognition of visual motifs, the interpretation of themes, and the symbolic explanation of signs. The essence of this type of viewing is, in fact, to construct a writing paradigm with universal principles, where visible objects are predominantly conveyed through narrative storytelling, while the physical and sensory perception of things is diminished. For example, using Panofsky’s theory of iconology to confront images, the visual content is filled with narrative stories that correspond to the symbolic system and logos, representing an active mode of viewing. Unlike the “vision” mode, which emphasizes viewing based on visual acuity, the “visual” mode focuses on perceiving the essence of images, rather than being confined to the certainty of knowledge alignment or narrative storytelling. Here, knowledge and “not-knowledge” coexist, and under a logocentric view of imagery, spatial relationships are transformed. “The physical body, as a potential visible observer, allows the absent to face us who are present.” [8] This visual mechanism does not correspond the symbols in a rational state with a complete knowledge system to generate a corresponding, universally meaningful interpretation. Instead, it shatters the stable chain of reductionism, opening up the tension in the unconscious through the presentation of visual images.



Figure 2. Fra Angelico, *Annunciation*, 1440-1441, San Marco Convent

By relying on this passivity of “vision”, Georges Didi-Huberman discovered the overlooked “not-knowledge” image remnants in Fra Angelico’s “*Annunciation*” (Figure 2) from the early Renaissance. In this painting, the not-knowledge as a rupture intertwines with ordinary recognizable knowledge, and the relationship between the visible and the invisible is woven within it. If you actively face the image using the “vision” mode, it’s not hard to see that there are three figures depicted in the painting. On the left, the Archangel Gabriel and Saint Peter stand in elevated positions, while on the right, the Virgin Mary kneels in devout worship. Thus, through the identification of symbolic motifs, we instinctively recognize that the entire work is intended to depict a common theme from the Old Testament—the *Annunciation*, where Mary conceives through the Holy Spirit. The characters, the arch, and the light projected behind Gabriel are all visible, surface-level elements arranged by Angelico to present the straightforward biblical narrative. Therefore, within the closed logical loop of “vision”, the audience falls into the aforementioned trap of matching visual experience with knowledge. Consequently, determining whether an image is visible mainly follows three approaches. The first is through Alberti’s statement that “composition is the reason for painting” and that “the painter’s greatest work is the story, the parts of the story are the bodies, the parts of the bodies are the limbs, and the parts of the limbs are the surfaces.” Therefore, within the logical closed loop of “vision”, the audience falls into the misdirection of matching visual experiences with knowledge described above, thus determining the visibility of an image primarily through the following three approaches: First, by referring to what Alberti said, “Composition is the reason for painting,” “The painter’s greatest work is the story, the parts of the story are the bodies, the parts

of the bodies are the limbs, and the parts of the limbs are the surfaces.”[9] The three symbolic human figures are identified in the painting. The second method is through Vasari’s definition of artistic value, specifically by judging whether a piece of artwork demonstrates realism, supporting the dating and identification of the work with the idea that “art is approaching that state of accurate reproduction of nature’s reality and absolute perfection,” [10]proving that the work was created by Fra Angelico. Third, by utilizing Panofsky’s knowledge of iconography to identify the three figures, matching them with the underlying historical themes and concepts, the visible becomes readable, thereby interpreting the biblical story and allegory behind the three figures with a decisive tone. Therefore, under the observation of “vision”, the visual audience doesn’t even need to study Angelico’s original work. The artist’s ultimate goal is merely to present a straightforward narrative, allowing the audience to actively interpret a cultural consensus with universal Western values.

But can such a rational logical loop truly complete our visual experience? I believe that if we return to the aforementioned logical loop, using Alberti’s standard that “what gives a story its appeal is the richness and diversity of things”, [11] Judging from the diversity in evaluating the story of the painting and considering Panofsky’s interpretation of symbolic elements, the details of this painting are undoubtedly “unreal”, and its characteristics are also ambiguous. The story it tells is so thin and straightforward, and the style of the painting is in a state of stagnation, lacking fluidity. “It lacks emotional expression, action, and even any color rendering.”[12] The fluidity intertwined with the face-to-face interaction with the image has disappeared, thus the viewer might feel disappointed with this meager piece. This is the result of the delineation of art history under the visible and readable categories—portraying the author as a “simple-minded, even angelically naive painter.”[13]

Compared to the ‘vision’ mode of viewing, the way images are presented under “visuality” vividly reflects this very imperfection. Returning to the original setting of the work (Figure 3), this piece was deliberately painted inside a monk’s living quarters at the San Marco Monastery in Florence, on a shaded wall, and covered with a large area of white lime plaster. As a result, for most of the time, our viewing of this piece occurs in a dimly lit environment. From the perspective of the psychological processes explained by Ernest R. Hilgard’s psychology, “the sensitivity to light intensity is precisely determined by rod cells and cone cells. In well-lit conditions, the perception of shape details is enhanced, and compared to the central area, the visual acuity at the edges is lower.”[14] When appreciating a work of art, the boundary between light and shadow transitions actually constitutes the most basic visual element of shape. However, the perspective in “*Annunciation*” itself weakens the ability to capture and perceive details. Large white areas are placed near the main figures in the painting, creating a visible but unreadable white field, an image of “not-knowledge” as a gap. This color coincides with the cement of the real environments wall, so the color and light together create a visual impression of “not much to see.” [15] It could be said that it is precisely these overlooked, ‘unreadable’ white spaces that distinguish Angelico from those traditional art historians who adhere strictly to the “visible” and “readable” qualities, excelling instead in a formable invisibility. The “unreadable” and “unknowable” quality of this white crack is precisely something that cannot be highlighted by translating the image into knowledge and information. The “not-knowledge” in the visual field of image recognition is relative to “knowledge”. Berman believes that the part of the image presented cannot be simply reduced to knowledge; the effectiveness of the image lies in the intertwining of knowledge and not-knowledge. When directly facing an image, one should not deliberately invoke historical knowledge through fixed patterns to identify corresponding knowledge in the painting. Instead, it is about avoiding the clarification of all visual elements, abandoning the interpretation of the image, and allowing the image to understand itself.



Figure 3. Fra Angelico, The fresco of “*The Annunciation*” painted on the wall inside the San Marco Monastery in Florence

Therefore, from the author's perspective, when we confront the physical body of "*Annunciation*" once again through a visual perception mode, our gaze shifts from the specific figures within the painting to the vast white area. At first, we may think of it as empty, invisible even, but in reality, it lies between visibility and invisibility—a kind of formable invisibility. 'This white space precisely represents the essence of truth—conceptual truth—not the fleeting, superficial truth that changes the next second.' [16] Since this white block is not a tangible, visible object available for display and manipulation, but rather an essential component of the images physical embodiment, the depiction here is essentially a fracture. And tearing open this white area, we will discover that white is the expression of an event. According to Didi-Huberman, this event is "the testimony of a heavenly sound that cannot be represented through imagery nor expressed through words." [17] This sacred process of Amine is revealed to us by Angelico through the white wall as a rupture, allowing us to discover 'not-knowledge' and conveying what is hidden, the part beyond knowledge. The attention to the material body of the image implied behind this "not-knowledge" is precisely a matter that art historical research today must also emphasize.

4. The "Displacement" of Moving Images—A Reflection on the "Vision" Viewing Mode

The theory of misperception in international politics points out that "misperception refers to a situation where a decision-maker makes a misjudgment about the information received, causing their decisions and actions to deviate from reality. As a result, the outcome of events does not align with the decision-maker's original intentions." [18] The "displacement" of moving images discussed by the author of this article is based on the theoretical framework mentioned above and the deviations that arise between the images seen during the process of viewing and the real images. This refers to the discrepancies that arise from the visible elements within an image and the physical embodiment of the image itself, particularly in the context of how audiences interact with the image. This inconsistency restricts the "not-knowledge" aspects beyond mere understanding, influencing the fluidity of visual imagery and the audience's desire to confront the physical presence of the image.

From the analysis of the similarities and differences between the viewing modes of "vision" and "sight" in the previous text, it can be understood that the viewing under "sight" eliminates the uncertainty of the image, generating a definitive logical encoding between the image and knowledge. This solidifies the fleeting image within the dimensions of time and space, creating a "displacement" between the image's physical essence and the viewer. Coincidentally, I believe this phenomenon of 'vision' in viewing also exists in today's cultural studies, and its essence lies in the issue of interpreting images through language and text. For example, in visual imagery culture, when comparing the perception of visual audiences while watching versus analyzing visual imagery, it is not difficult to discover that there is a considerable difference in the visibility of images within their visual range.

When the audience watches a film, whether it's their first time or they've seen it multiple times, the repeated viewing leads them to focus on the dynamic progression of the moving images, overlooking the symbolic elements intentionally placed within the film's narrative. However, when the audience rewinds and analyzes individual shots frame by frame, they are compelled to consider the camera movement, scene composition, and framing. At this point, the fluid image becomes frozen in time. It is precisely because of the fleeting nature of films that audiences tend to focus all their perceptual energy on the progression of moving images during viewing, often neglecting background cues, or even symbols. Conversely, if the audience dissects the film frame by frame, they are more likely to lean toward symbolic, extra-textual suggestive knowledge.

Interestingly, in previous art history research, this image's "displacement" was used as a traditional analytical method, serving as a cultural code for writing knowledge about art works or the ontology of images. That is, the asynchronous image is fixed during element analysis, with the dimensions of time and space being anchored by knowledge. Each visible element has its own stable symbolic meaning, as if by mastering this code, we could understand all images. The blurriness of the image becomes a narrative element, the psychodynamics that the body spontaneously generates in front of the image are suppressed, and the fleeting sensations are completely overlooked. But when it comes to appreciating art or watching movie imagery, should one follow the rhythm of the film, or pause each frame for detailed analysis? Could we then also say that this type of frame-by-frame analysis to write a film review is a form of bullying towards the fluid storytelling of a movie? Due to the numerous analysis and commentary videos about movies, they indeed capture the details that we often overlook during our viewing experience. This, in turn, gives rise to more discussions related to sociology, psychology, and the original work. However, this content is not necessarily "about the movie" but rather "about culture" and even "about literature". Similarly, in the study of traditional iconography in art history, Panofsky emphasized a visual image analysis based on historical narratives, where surface-visible objects are deliberately matched with encoded knowledge. Everything that can be configured is read within this knowledge. However, for the physical body of the image, the correspondence in iconographic knowledge obscures the "displacement" nature of fluid images. One might even say that language imposes a

form of dominance over images.



Figure 4. Donald Judd, *Untitled (Stack)*, 1967, Lacquer on Galvanized Iron, 22.8 × 101.6 × 78.7 cm, Museum of Modern Art, New York

This focus on the physicality of the human body has, in fact, long been reflected in minimalist art. Minimalists believe that “real space is inherently much more powerful and distinctive than the space depicted on a flat plane.”[19] It conveys the object’s inherent, compulsory “presence” to the audience, forcing them to abandon their a priori rational knowledge structures, as if they were on-site, directly confronting and experiencing the subject’s existence. For example, in Donald Judd’s artwork “*Untitled*” (Figure 4), twelve identically sized cubes are suspended on the wall, equally spaced apart. Through this visual presentation, the work eliminates superficial knowledge-based metaphors, allowing the audience to confront the physical object directly. This prevents distractions caused by form hierarchy or color differences, keeping the focus on the visual subject—namely, the corporeal essence of the object itself. While this approach uses extreme purity in form to showcase the installation, it is the attention to “object,” “site” and “space” behind the repeated, uniform arrangement that reflects the effectiveness of the artwork. This demonstrates the principle that “only through interaction with the viewer can the artwork reveal its value.”[20]

Therefore, in the author’s view, “not-knowledge” exists within it, where the symbolic elements that traditionally pointed to specific patterns were altered. The analysis of iconography under visual perception failed to express the sacredness of the white, which was replaced by indistinct white areas. However, it is precisely this “not-knowledge” white zone that emerges as a fissure, generating ghostly remnants of memory. This causes different audiences to continuously flash back within the present’s unknowable images, invoking the power of the images and sensing the unspeakable visual overflow of the corporeal images as they flow before them. These induced images are not fixed symbolic themes or intentions, but rather a potential field of illusions created at the intersection of the individual gaze and the image itself. Therefore, as traditional realistic representational modes gradually give way to the visual revolution of image-based information, the efficacy of images between narrative closure and historical truth remains a point of inquiry for us, as art history researchers. By confronting these images directly, we continue to search for the “not-knowledge” within the fissures, ultimately returning to the flow of desire inherent in the corporeal essence of images.

5. Epilogue: The “Situating” of the Phenomenology of Vision and Perceptual Beliefs

The traditional reduction of linguistics and phenomenology is based on a dialogue at the level of rational consciousness. The readability of the surface form and content of the image is confined within a logical framework, and the image’s inherent ability to attract the audience is obliterated, causing the image to lose its expressive power. However, Didi-Huberman calls on the audience to pay attention to the manifestation of visibility, that is, to approach the symptomatic display of the “not-knowledge” image through the rupture torn open by the image, abandoning the simple perceptual dimension that has

been assigned meaning, and instead embracing the image's call to the viewer, returning to the point where the original gaze and the image converge. If consciousness were "established on the absolute clarity of my thoughts... I would once again doubt my experience of the world." [21] When the audience deliberately seeks meaning within the image, illegible visual elements interrupt the "fluency" of knowledge reading. They wish to rationalize this uncertainty by imposing a post-hoc formalization with an epistemic gaze on the image. However, they fail to realize that this interruption of "fluency" disperses the phenomenology of vision and the "not-knowledge" image continuously in the scene, thereby activating the viewer's perceptual belief. As Didi-Huberman put it, "The color patch itself has no metaphysical meaning: it is merely the power of painting, the symptom of painting — paintings materiality, that is, color — that no longer serves to 'color' an object." [22] In traditional knowledge systems, although the indecipherable color blocks lack a corresponding chain of restoration, they act as cracks or material regions that interrupt smooth narration. These regions restore the scene where the original gaze intersects with the image, diffusing the image's effectiveness. At this moment, the compelling image stirs emotions in people, resonating as remnants of memory behind the organic image mechanism driven by desire.

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Note

The term “established and reliable rhetoric” is derived from the concept of “rhetoric” as explained in Georges Didi-Huberman’s book “In the Presence of Images”. In the book, Didi-Huberman refers to the authoritative rules in traditional art history writing — those that possess rational logic, adopt a tone of certainty, and are used to guide image creation or establish criteria for evaluating images — as a Kantian Tone. The term “certain and reliable rhetoric” used in this article refers to the rules of reading everything in visible things and pattern-matching what is seen with rational knowledge. However, this process actually eliminates the uncertainties present in the image, namely, it disregards the “not-knowledge” aspects that cannot be aligned with existing knowledge. As a result, this process is deterministic, and the ‘cracks’ in the image’s subject are concealed.