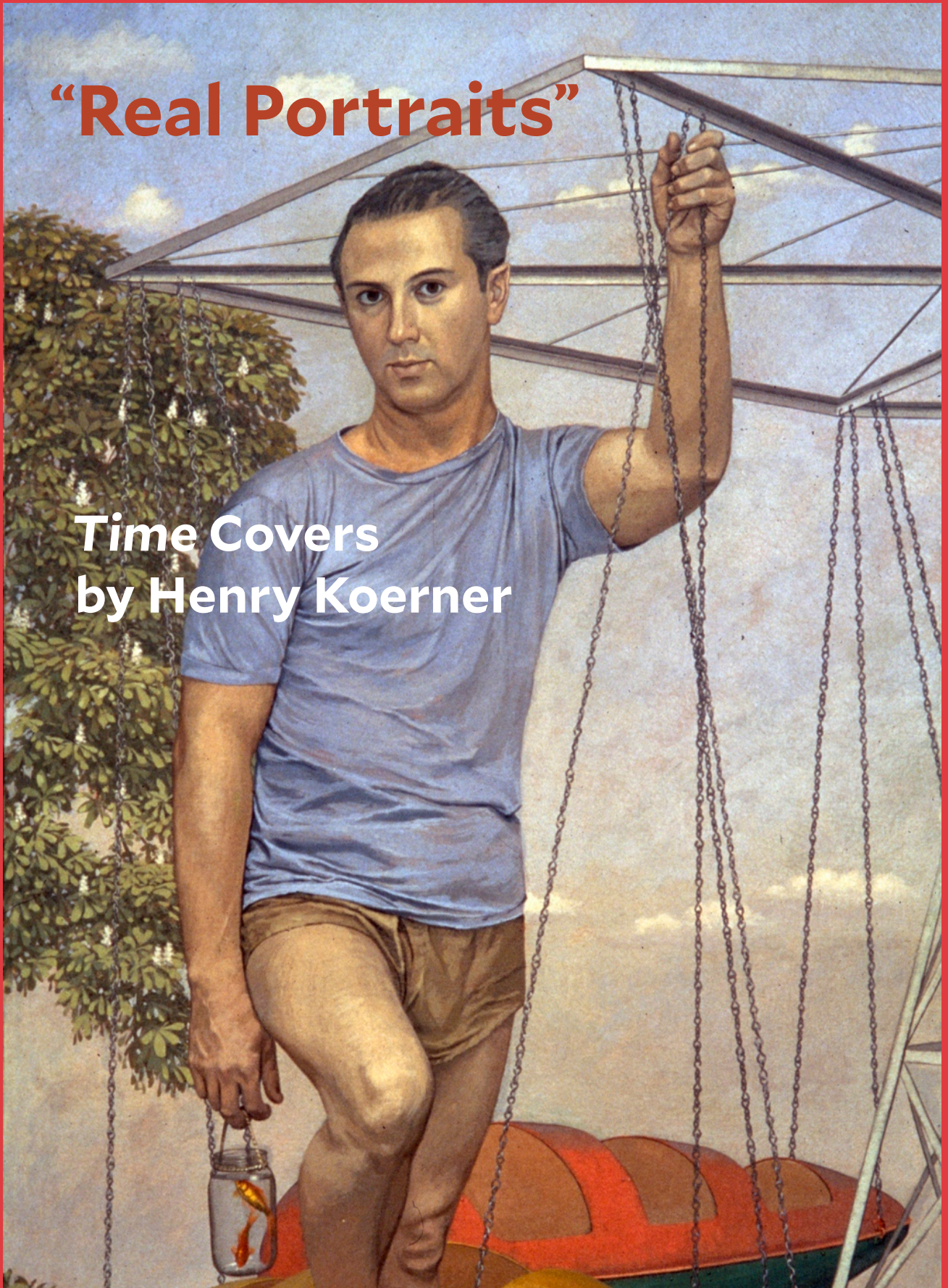


“Real Portraits”

**Time Covers
by Henry Koerner**



Henry Koerner, *Springtime for Henry*, 1950.
Casein on canvas. Private Collection



“REAL PORTRAITS”

***Time Covers* by Henry Koerner**

ANNABEL PATTERSON

Sterling Professor Emeritus of English

With essays by Philip Eliasoph and Jonathan Weinberg

This publication accompanies an exhibition
at the Henry Koerner Center for Emeritus Faculty, Yale University
13 October to 11 December 2015

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FOREWORD

The Henry Koerner Center for Emeritus Faculty is by design a community of fellows interacting with each other, but as I enter my third year as director, I want to enrich that community by bringing some speakers, artists, and outsiders into the center. Previous exhibitions have been of the art by Koerner Fellows, but I reasoned that no fellow could object to an exhibition of our namesake entitled “‘Real Portraits’: *Time* Covers by Henry Koerner.”

First and foremost, I want to thank Annabel Patterson, who has made this her project, curating the *Time* covers and writing essays for each portrait. Second, I want to thank Joseph Leo Koerner, Victor S. Thomas Professor of the History of Art and Architecture at Harvard University, and son of Henry Koerner, for his many contributions to the exhibition, but especially for the time he has found to talk with several of us about his father and his father’s art.

I am grateful to Philip Eliasoph, who has contextualized the art of *Time* covers, and to Jonathan Weinberg, who has enlightened us on the process Henry Koerner used to create his *Time* covers. I would also like to thank Mateusz Zechowski for photography, Lesley Baier for editing, and John Gambell and Fritz Hansen for design of the catalogue.

Gary L. Haller, Director

HENRY KOERNER 1915–1991

ANNABEL PATTERSON

Henry Koerner was an artist of prodigious versatility, output, and humanity. Born in Vienna to Jewish parents, he escaped from Austria when Hitler annexed it in 1938, and eventually arrived in the United States. But he left his family behind, a decision that haunted him. He served in the U.S. Army and when the war ended was sent by the army to Nuremberg to sketch the Nazis on trial. When he returned to Vienna in 1946, Koerner learned officially that his parents had been deported and killed by the Nazis. His elder brother vanished with the liquidation of the ghetto in Poland. Two moving portraits of his parents (1945 and 1946) and one of his brother (ca. 1957), in three completely different styles, not only expressed his melancholy and survivor's guilt but also his commitment to realism, in however many different manifestations. Even his most George Grosz-like representations of humans carry this creed forward, and it was exquisitely expressed in the 1950 portrait *Figure at a Typewriter*, a portrait of a journalism student who worked with Koerner in his studio in this period. The typewriter and the garden setting, however, are an early statement of the relationship between a person and his or her investment in the world – the trademark, so to speak. Much later, a typewriter would reappear in his *Time* portrait of the novelist John Cheever.

The portraits that Koerner painted for *Time Magazine*, of which twenty-two are displayed here, express this specific relationship in ways that I have tried to articulate. I would like to think that someone at *Time* had seen *Figure at a Typewriter* when considering retaining Koerner as a cover artist. The size of Koerner's talent was already known from his striking wartime posters (*Save waste fats*, the terrifying *Someone Talked!*, and the militaristic *United we will win*), but these were representations of objects rendered symbolic of the war effort, with no humans involved. But *Time* editor Alexander Arthur Eliot had definitely seen the openly allegorical *Mirror of Life* (1946) when he recommended Koerner to the magazine. In *Mirror of Life* the humans compete for space and meaning with each other and the tall building that houses or separates them. This painting represents what is called Koerner's Magic Realist phase, and the category, now no longer well regarded, was hard for Koerner's reputation to escape when he abandoned this style. But there is a very striking self-portrait, painted in 1950 and titled *Springtime for Henry* (cover and p. 1), a completely beguiling picture of the artist stepping out of a Coney Island ride, with a jar of tiny goldfish in his hand. While still in the unnaturally clear style of Magic Realism, this portrait marks a turning point in Koerner's art. In a 1951 interview, he declared that his style

and goals had changed: “Instead of painting just people I made them real portraits. I tried very hard for likeness. Do you think *Springtime for Henry* looks like me?”¹

Actually, Koerner had started drawing from life in 1945, when ten days on a troopship drove him to it. “During those ten days I saw the human face for the first time,” he told a *Time* interviewer in 1950 for an article that also used the phrase “Springtime for Henry” to open one of its paragraphs. The article began: “Five years ago Henry Koerner was a clever commercial artist, and nothing more. Today he is one of the most controversial figures in U.S. painting,” controversial because of his stern rejection of abstraction.² The occasion for the article was Koerner’s *fourth* one-man show, which had opened in Manhattan that week. The word “today” not only marks a meteoric rise in Koerner’s status, but also, by way of the self-portrait, anticipates this new phase in Koerner’s practice, “real portraits.” Still, one must wonder why the 1950 acclaim did not lead immediately to a commission. His first *Time* cover, the brilliant portrait of Julie Harris as Joan of Arc, did not appear until November 1955.

Koerner insisted on painting these new, real, important subjects from life. We are extremely fortunate to have detailed information on this from his son, Joseph Leo Koerner, who wrote:

[The insistence on painting from life] cost *Time* money and was sometimes annoying to the sitters who...would have been at the busiest time of their lives.

He always did the whole portrait from life: over many sittings, though without a preparatory sketch. He had to work fast. He painted an underpainting in oil paint thinned with turpentine, let that dry, and painted the rest in 2 or 3 more sittings. All this took several days. Some sitters were rude.

His chief concern was to create a memorable painting, rather than capture a personality.

The overall look of the painting, the entire configuration of face, body, background, where the edges of the picture intervene, and on top of this the abstraction of the brushwork: that was what he looked for.

His view of the *Time* covers was roughly as follows: he was the greatest painter of his time, not only technically but spiritually, as he [he claimed] had resolved the relation between Realism and Abstraction that had vexed painting since Cézanne;... His *Time* covers, then, were something for which he was destined; he would paint the most important figures of the day, as part of his *oeuvre*... He didn’t understand the art world’s understanding of these commissions, that they proved him to be an illustrator and a commercial artist. For him they were his version of *Las Meninas*.³

I trust that the covers I have selected represent his aims: twenty-two inarguably great figures from the different worlds of politics, music, the stage, sports, medicine, business, education, and the arts. The collection stands as an extraordinary record of an extraordinary slice of American history, from the middle of the 1950s through 1967. Those curious about covers not in the exhibition can consult the folder stored in the Koerner Center. The realism of the figures and their settings is modified by the Cézanne-like abstraction of the brushwork, which says above all “I am not a camera.” As for the ones that remained unpublished, we are in the extraordinarily privileged position of seeing three examples of original paintings, and one watercolor, displayed in our seminar room. They are reproduced in the catalogue; visitors to the exhibition can find their own explanations, both for the original commission and why *Time* passed them by.

Notes

1. Quoted in Edith Balas, *The Early Work of Henry Koerner* (Pittsburgh: Frick Art & Historical Center, 2003), 64–65.
2. “Storyteller,” *Time* 55, no. 13 (March 27, 1950): 56–61.
3. Joseph Leo Koerner, e-mail message to the author.

JULIE HARRIS 1925–2013

ACTRESS

The first portrait that Koerner painted for *Time* has premonitions of many of those that followed, in terms of his slightly Impressionist style, obviously, and also his careful indication of the occasion for the portrait: here, Julie Harris's breathtaking appearance as Joan of Arc in Lillian Hellman's adaptation of *The Lark* from the French play by Jean Anouilh. The context is rendered not only by Harris's armor but also by the sinister male figure behind her, who looks like an executioner. The subject of the play was Joan's trial for heresy in 1431, on the grounds of her claims of hearing voices and seeing visions of the archangel Michael and Saints Catherine and Margaret instructing her to support militarily Charles VII, the as yet uncrowned king of France, against the English and Burgundian factions. Technically, however, she was condemned for wearing man's clothing and cutting her hair short. Her extraordinary military success as a young girl (she was burned alive at about nineteen years of age) was in part natural aptitude for leadership and in part her ability to inspire the French troops with patriotism and belief in the French cause.

Koerner's portrait stresses her youth and vulnerability, as well as her quiet resolve. Harris's pose seems clearly to derive from a ca. 1485 imaginary portrait of Joan, which Koerner could have seen in reproduction, although the red and green hair against the green and red armor was his own touch. Almost. The playwright John van Druten, in a 1955 interview with *The New York Times Magazine*, said Julie Harris was like a glass pitcher: "You pour in red wine, the pitcher looks red; pour in crème de menthe, it is green. When she's by herself, Julie's almost transparent." This was published July 24, 1955, and Koerner's portrait was published on November 28 of the same year.

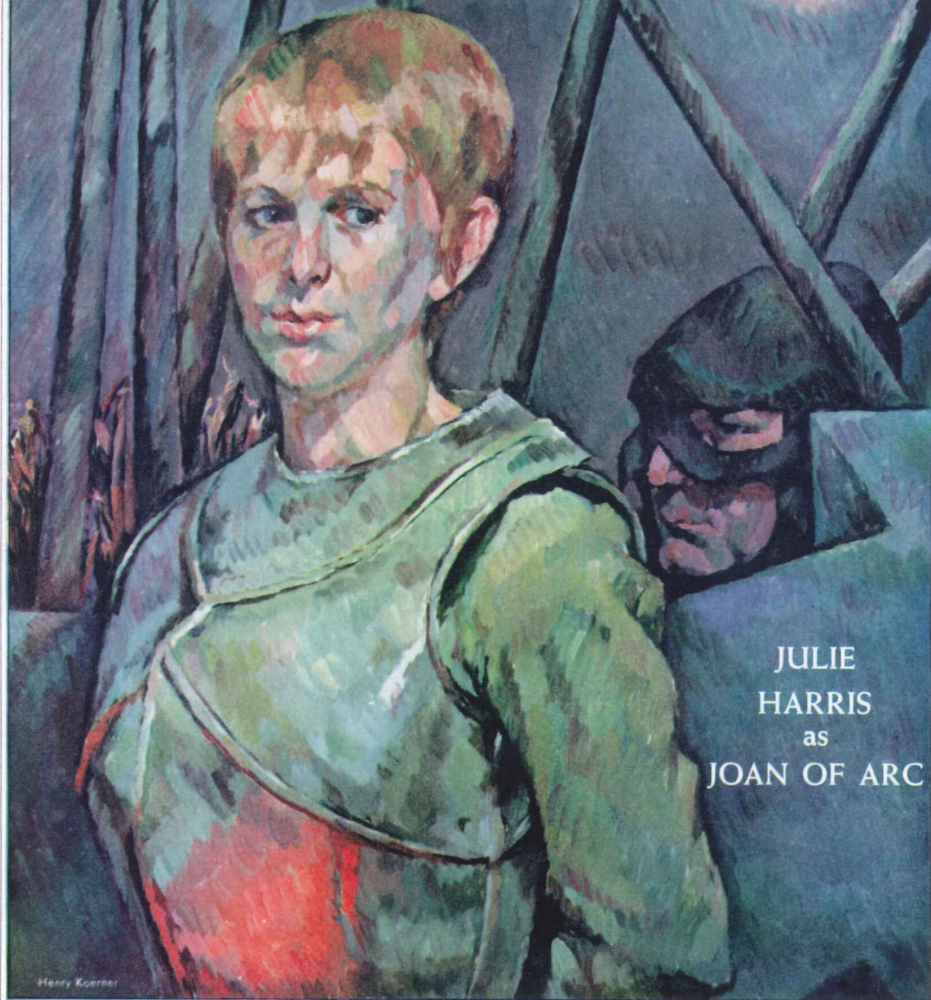
As a result of her performance in *The Lark*, said the *Time* cover story, "the girl with the plain little face and childlike limbs" had established herself as the "best young actress in America." On opening night the audience called for eight curtain calls and gave Julie Harris, not yet thirty, a standing ovation.

TWENTY CENTS

NOVEMBER 28, 1955

TIME

THE WEEKLY NEWSMAGAZINE



JULIE
HARRIS
as
JOAN OF ARC

Henry Koerner

\$6.00 A YEAR

(REG. U.S. PAT. OFF.)

VOL. LXVI NO. 22

MARIA CALLAS 1925–1977

PRIMA DONNA

On October 29, 1956, *Time* featured on its cover an astonishingly beautiful portrait of Maria Callas, who had “last week . . . swept into New York,” in the magazine’s own words, to prepare for her historic appearance at the Metropolitan Opera in the title role of Bellini’s *Norma* the following week. Her appearance on the cover, in Koerner’s luscious interpretation, was obviously a good advertisement for her New York debut, which occurred at the midpoint of a career marked by a stupendous climb from poverty and obesity to international fame. Born in New York to Greek parents who had recently immigrated, Callas made her earlier appearances in Greece and then Italy. She gradually acquired a reputation not only as a singer of extraordinary versatility, able to sing at every conceivable range for a woman’s voice (she could cover almost six octaves), but also as a great dramatic actress.

By the time *Time* reintroduced her to New York, Callas was an international phenomenon. She had opened the season at La Scala in 1951, perhaps her greatest ambition, and lost about seventy pounds, causing some to worry that she had also lost the bodily support for her chest tones. She had also married an extremely rich Italian businessman, Giovanni Battista Meneghini, twice her age, who devoted his wealth and his life to supporting her career as prima donna. In the early 1950s she began “a love affair” with the British Royal Opera House that lasted, with intervals, until 1965. She gave historic performances in Chicago and Dallas, including, at the latter, in 1958, an interpretation of *Medea* “worthy of Euripides,” as *Time* put it. In 1958, a feud with Rudolf Bing (another of Henry Koerner’s subjects) led to the cancellation of her contract with the Metropolitan Opera, but they reconciled, and Callas returned to the house in 1965. That same year she reprised her first starring role, in Puccini’s *Tosca*, at the Royal Opera House in a production designed for her by Franco Zeffirelli.

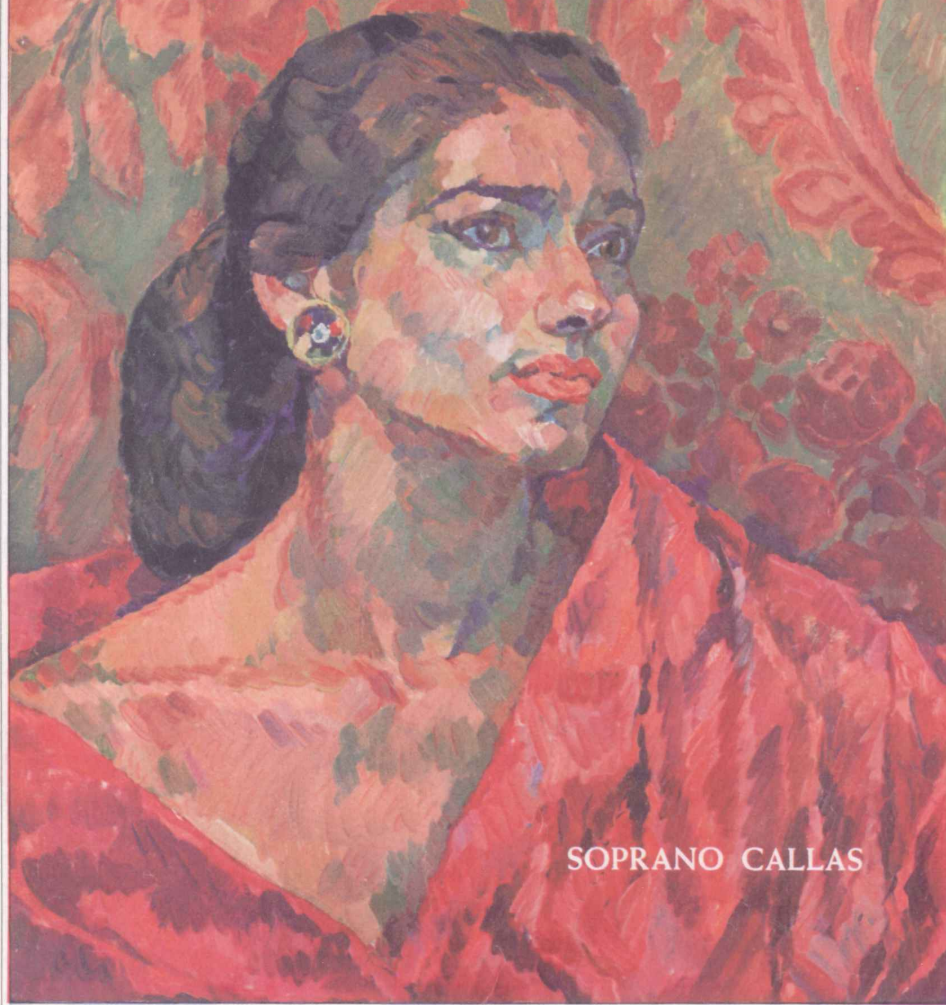
As a compelling postscript, there is an even more beautiful version of Koerner’s portrait in the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C. — more beautiful because it is the original, wider and unbound by the red margins — a handsome gift from *Time Magazine*.

TWENTY CENTS

OCTOBER 29, 1956

TIME

THE WEEKLY NEWSMAGAZINE



SOPRANO CALLAS

\$6.00 A YEAR

U.S. POST. OFF. 750-5

VOL. LXVIII NO. 18

LEONARD BERNSTEIN 1918–1990

CONDUCTOR AND COMPOSER

Koerner's portrait of Leonard Bernstein features the fabled conductor's upraised arms and left hand. Published on February 4, 1957, it stands on the threshold of Bernstein's acceptance of the baton, which he started to use only that year. The portrait is ambiguous on this point—Bernstein held the baton in his right hand. But in contrast to Belafonte, who seems to plead, Koerner rendered Bernstein as totally in command, profile fixed in maestro superiority. Necessary perhaps for a portrait painted from life, this marmoreal pose belies what Bernstein's conducting was remarkable for: its wild physicality, which so expressed commitment to the music that it drew orchestras into his ecstasy, and has been captured in many photographs.

The cover's publication date is a puzzle. It was long after Bernstein's stellar performances as assistant conductor of the New York Philharmonic. Called in on November 14, 1943, to substitute for Bruno Walter, who was ill, he delivered an unrehearsed performance that was cheered by the orchestra and was front-page news in the *New York Times* the next day. And the cover appeared nine months *before* the announcement of his promotion to sole director of the orchestra, replacing Dimitri Mitropoulos, and seven months before the premier of *West Side Story*. Unusually, *Time* did not run a cover story, but included (pp. 68–75) an anonymous biographical article that revealed no immediate causative event.

Born in Massachusetts on August 25, 1918, into a Russian Jewish family, and departing on October 14, 1990, Bernstein had a long life, all of it devoted to music. His first cultural hero was George Gershwin. He promoted American composers like Aaron Copland and did his best to extend his love of music to the “people,” especially through television. Through his *Omnibus* programs and Young People's Concerts he brought music back from its elite corner into the center of American life.

Bernstein's favorite composer was Gustav Mahler, and he is buried in Brooklyn with a copy of Mahler's Fifth Symphony lying on his breast. He is also buried next to his wife, Felicia. An indelible part of Bernstein's legend, now, is the fact that he married, although he was gay. As for his politics, Bernstein was firmly on the left; his protests against the Vietnam War earned him a place on a government blacklist. As the climax to his career he staged, on Christmas Day 1989, in Berlin, a performance of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony by an international orchestra to celebrate the dismantling of the Berlin Wall. And where Beethoven had titled the final chorus “Freude” (Joy), Bernstein made it stand for the world's striving toward “Freiheit” (Freedom), a more forward-looking and outward-directed goal.

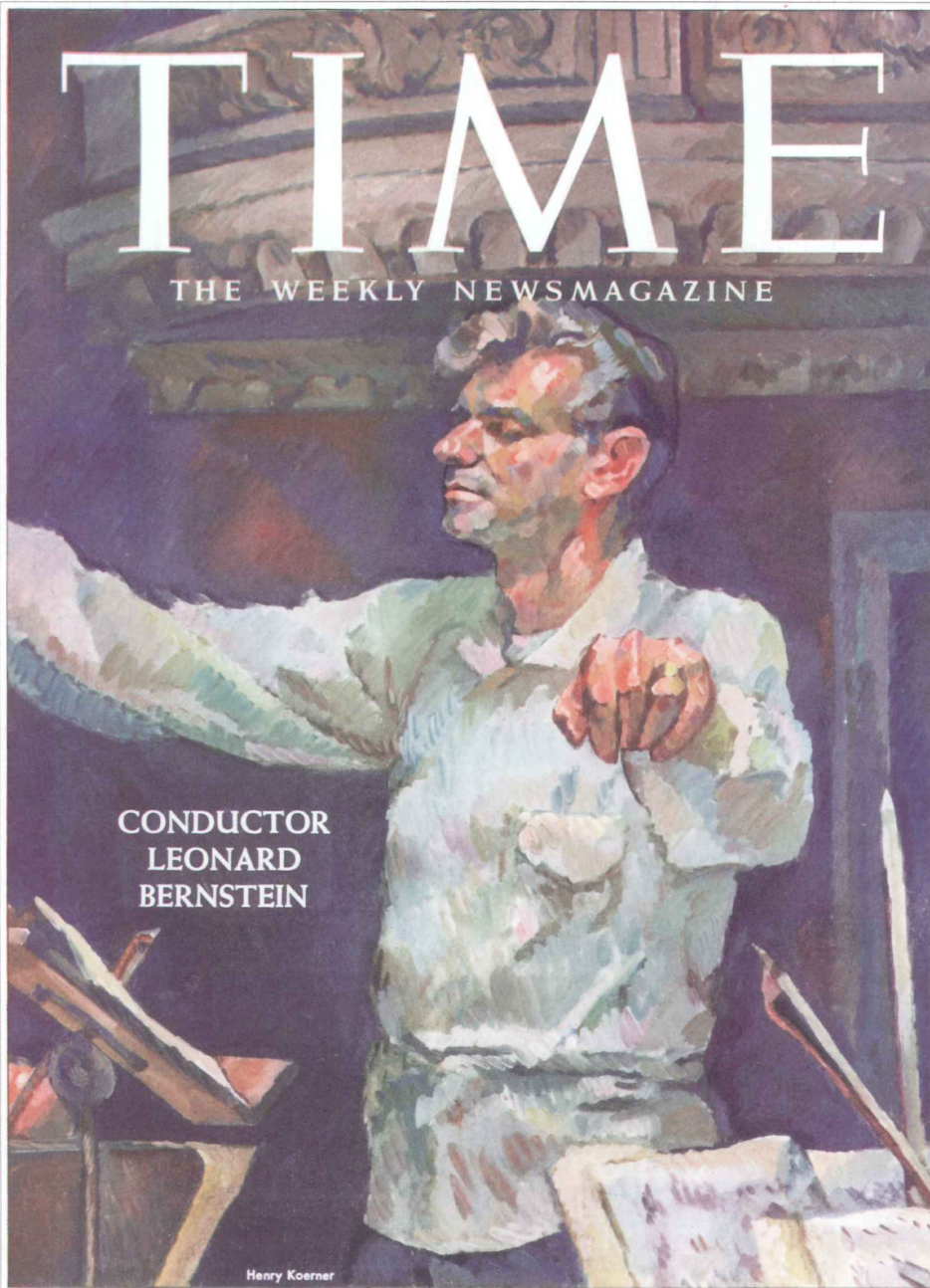
TWENTY CENTS

FEBRUARY 4, 1957

TIME

THE WEEKLY NEWSMAGAZINE

CONDUCTOR
LEONARD
BERNSTEIN



Henry Koerner

\$6.00 A YEAR

(REQ. U.S. PAT. OFF.)

VOL. LXIX NO. 5

JOHN F. KENNEDY 1917–1963

SENATOR

To write about John F. Kennedy today still feels like treading on hallowed ground: the young god cut off in his prime. It also feels unnecessary. Everyone in America who was alive and sentient on November 22, 1963, and who felt the shock of his assassination, before he had even completed his first thousand days as president, knows his story, which is more powerful than that of any other of Koerner's subjects.

When *Time* ran his profile in the late fall of 1957, half of that story was already available, and the magazine generously summarized it: majoring in international relations at Harvard, a stint that produced a senior thesis, later published, on Britain's unpreparedness for war; serving as his father's secretary when Joseph Kennedy was U.S. ambassador to that country; joining the U.S. Navy in 1941, which thrust him painfully into the role of wounded war hero; running successfully for Congress in 1946; running successfully for the Senate in 1952; and nearly getting the Democratic Party's nomination for vice president in 1956. The forward trajectory seemed obvious. And *Time* jumped on the bandwagon with its profile of this extraordinary young man at precisely the moment when its admiring support would be most helpful to him, when he was already evidently running for election to the presidency. His official candidacy was announced on January 2, 1960. He narrowly defeated Richard Nixon and became the youngest man and the first Roman Catholic to hold the most powerful position in the world. Three years later he was shot dead in Texas.

Time's profile was apparently planned at least six weeks before it appeared, on December 2, 1957. During that time Koerner must have received the most important commission of his career, and the sitting would have had to be squeezed in between Kennedy's dozens of speaking engagements. This would be Koerner's fourth commission for *Time*, and it would turn out to be the most important political portrait of the series.

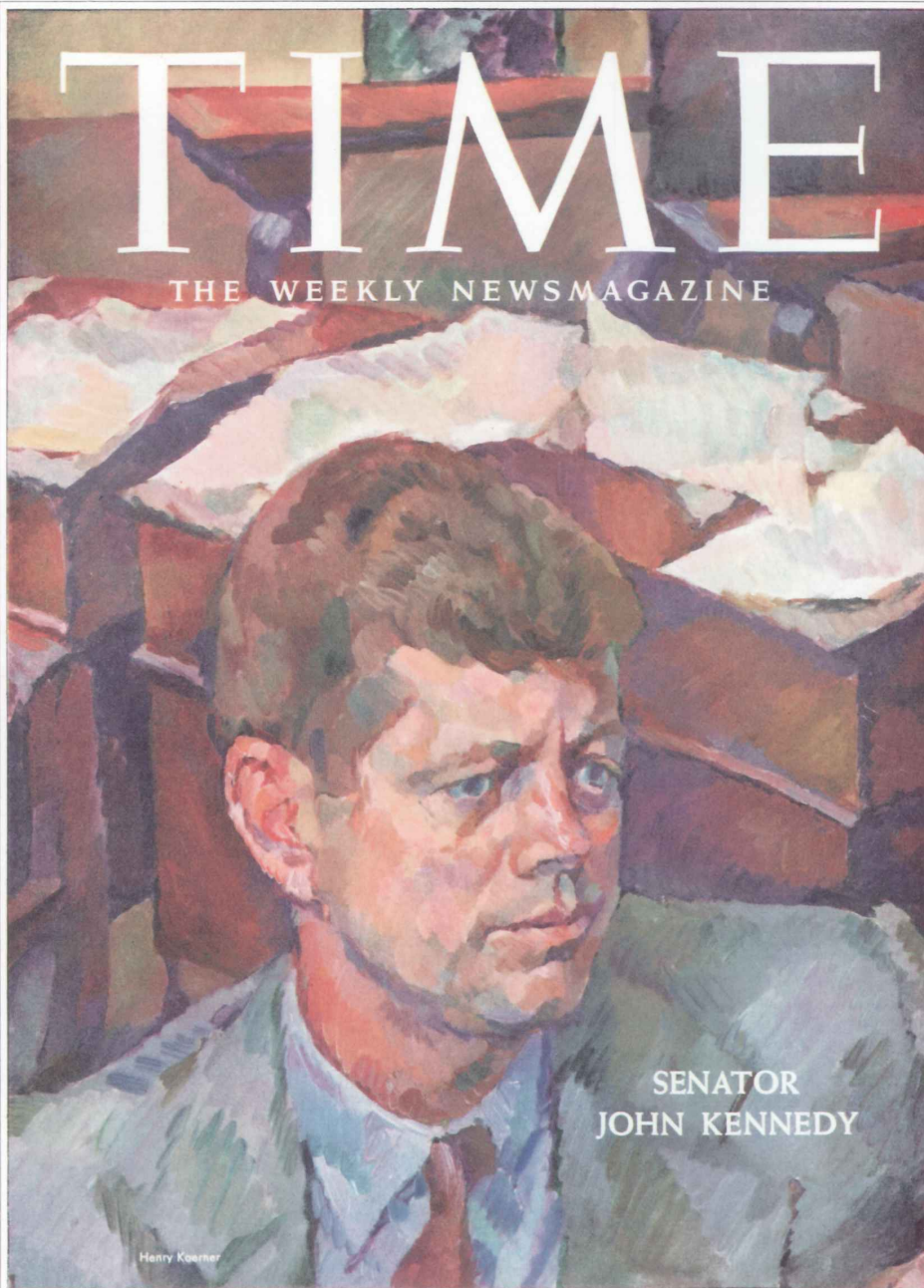
The portrait itself could not have been better suited to the role *Time* had assigned it. Kennedy is painted in the half-circular Senate chamber, seated in front of two desks covered in disheveled papers, clearly a sign of important work in progress. (In the larger original painting, there were three desks in view, and an imposing chair looming in the background). His head is a little turned away from the viewer, and his eyes are (we can now say) looking at the future, about which he seems a trifle worried. His extraordinarily good looks and exceptional youth are here captured forever. Koerner placed Kennedy lower in the picture frame than he did most of his subjects, and the effect is disarming. He is so close to us, still. Of the eight cover portraits of J.F.K. that *Time* ran during his lifetime, this is clearly the best.

TWENTY-FIVE CENTS

DECEMBER 2, 1957

TIME

THE WEEKLY NEWSMAGAZINE



SENATOR
JOHN KENNEDY

Henry Koerner

\$7.00 A YEAR

1957 U.S. PAT. OFF.

VOL. LXX NO. 23

J. PAUL GETTY 1892–1976

OILMAN

When Koerner painted his portrait of J. Paul Getty, his subject was sixty-six and by his own standards a complete success. By our standards, it seems fair to say that Getty was the worst man in Koerner's roster of successful people. An identical judgment was quoted in the *Time* cover story, from an unidentified business acquaintance. What the portrait shows (and it is of course limited to innuendo) is the most closed face of the entire series. Getty does not meet our eyes, and his hands are clenched in what might, if we are looking for allegory, be thought of as a physical representation of grasping. The previous year *Fortune* magazine had named him the richest living American, probably the cause of *Time*'s cover story in February 1958. By this time Getty was also known for being a miser. He seems to have been painted in his suite in the George V hotel, where "no accommodation is cheaper, none less fashionable." Being a miser in the twentieth century means, rather than sitting in a cellar counting one's gold, living a life of extreme and unnecessary personal frugality, which extended to what he was prepared to spend on his family.

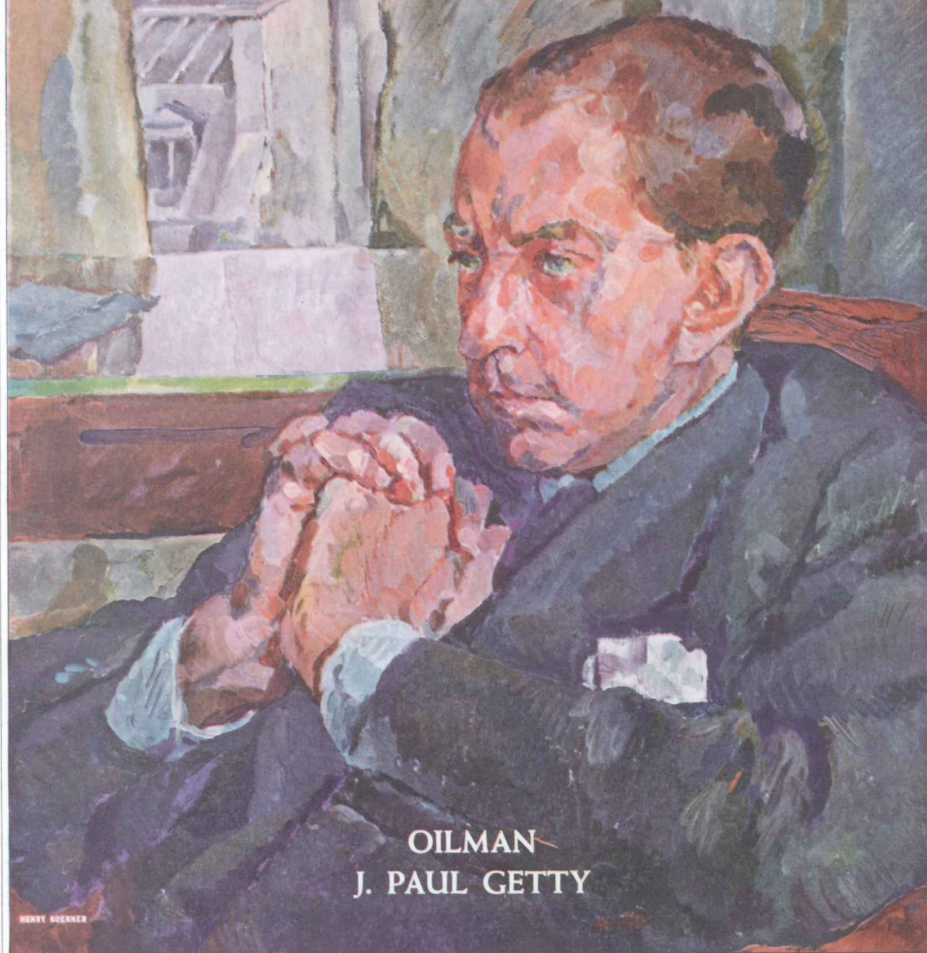
By 1958 Getty had already married and divorced five wives. He berated his fifth wife, Louise, for spending too much on treatment for their young son, Timmy, who had become blind because of a brain tumor. He notoriously had a pay phone installed at his house in London in Sutton Place, to avoid paying for long-distance calls made by members of his family or guests. In 1973 kidnappers took his sixteen-year-old grandson, John Paul Getty III, and demanded a \$17 million ransom. Getty refused. After a letter arrived containing the boy's ear, Getty agreed to pay \$2.2 million, the maximum that would be tax deductible. As for the facts behind *Time*'s sobriquet, "Oilman," we can continue to quote the man himself: "The meek shall inherit the earth, but not the mineral rights."

TWENTY-FIVE CENTS

FEBRUARY 24, 1958

TIME

THE WEEKLY NEWSMAGAZINE



OILMAN
J. PAUL GETTY

\$7.00 A YEAR

(SEE U.S. PAT. OFF.)

VOL. LXXI NO. 8

FRANKLIN CLARK FRY 1900–1968

“MR. PROTESTANT”

At first sight this portrait appears to be a rather conventional representation of a cleric in his pulpit, mild in face and demeanor. A second look discovers a rather startling detail (it would be irreligious to call it a prop). Hanging behind the cleric's right shoulder are a pair of bare feet, identifiable, of course, as those of Jesus on the cross. One may be equally startled into careful attention by reading the biography of Franklin Clark Fry, both in the *Time* cover story and on *Wikipedia*. How could one not have known about this man's achievements, even if one has no dealings with the Lutheran church? Or rather churches. For Fry became, as *Time* put it, “perhaps the most influential leader of world Protestantism” precisely by recognizing how many different Protestant and especially Lutheran churches there were, and how badly they needed to be integrated, if religion in America were to survive.

Born at the turn of the century, at age fifty-seven he was elected head of the Lutheran World Federation, an eminence that presumably led to the *Time* profile. He subsequently organized the merger of the United Lutheran Church in America with the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Augustana Evangelical Lutheran Church. The combined constituencies had 3.3 million members. Largely thanks to Fry, Lutheranism in America experienced exponential growth. His primary task was consolidation and the building of amity between different Protestant groups, and if one doesn't see why that was so necessary, the *Time* cover story provides an excellent account of Lutheranism and its relationship to its founder, Martin Luther. With his relatively simply doctrine, reducing the seven sacraments to only two, baptism and communion, and the rule of justification by faith alone, Luther opened the gates to theological debate and religious individualism. The result was a proliferation of Lutheran churches and synods with local creeds, at different spots on the axis between liberalism and conservatism on such issues as the literal interpretation of scripture.

Rather than being a theologian, Fry acquired eminence by being an expert, firm-minded, forward-looking mover and shaker. Administrator is too banal a term. Constitutionalist would be better. As one of his Lutheran colleagues remarked, “He is not exactly the warm-hearted shepherd. He has a tendency to kick the rumps of the sheep, rather than lead them.”

TWENTY-FIVE CENTS

APRIL 7, 1958



\$7.00 A YEAR

U.S. PAT. OFF.

VOL. LXXI NO. 14

HARRY BELAFONTE b. 1927

SINGER AND ACTIVIST

Koerner painted Harry Belafonte in the late winter of 1959, at the very beginning of his famous career as singer, actor, ambassador for humanitarian causes, civil rights activist, and protester against apartheid. Born in March 1927, Belafonte is happily still alive today. *Time*, which featured him on the cover of the March 2, 1959, issue, was responding to the huge success of his recording *Belafonte Sings of the Caribbean*.

Belafonte was born in Harlem. Both his parents were children of mixed-race (white and black) marriages. At sixteen, he joined the U.S. Navy, where he was assigned, of course, to an “all-Negro” unit. He was discharged after eighteen months and returned to Harlem, where he ran a cafe in Greenwich Village, helped to organize a folksinging group, and took acting courses. He also made his living as a club singer, debuting at the Village Vanguard, a jazz club. In 1952 he received a contract with RCA Victor, and in 1953 he recorded “Matilda,” which became his signature song. Belafonte starred in *Carmen Jones*, the popular version of Bizet’s opera, in 1954. Two years later he recorded the best-selling album *Calypso*.

Koerner magnificently captured, if one might so say, the Belafonte soul, especially via the expressive, fanlike fingers on which the *Time*’s cover story writer had fastened. To make sure that we recognize the musical context, there is an oblique view of a guitar player sitting on a high stool in the left-hand corner. Koerner designed the composition as a harmony between the different blues of the background and Belafonte’s shirt, and the series of diagonals created by the strange placement of the mike between the letters of TIME, the neck of the guitar, and Belafonte’s own left arm and splayed fingers. How could you not be drawn to this handsome man, in half profile, even if you had never heard him sing? They tell us that his voice is not trained, and that he does not read music. Who cares?

His politics were, like Bernstein’s, well to the left. Influenced by Paul Robeson, who was not only a great bass singer but an outspoken Communist, Belafonte opposed the American embargo on Cuba and met with Fidel Castro in 1999. This contributed to the transfer of hip-hop music to Cuban culture. One of Martin Luther King’s close advisers, he helped finance the Freedom Rides and bankrolled the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee. He opposed the administrations of both Bush presidents and referred to Colin Powell and Condoleezza Rice as house slaves. More recently he has worked for the campaign against AIDS in South Africa. In 2006, in a speech at Duke University, Belafonte said that he would like his final monument to carry the words “Harry Belafonte, Patriot.”

TWENTY-FIVE CENTS

MARCH 2, 1959



\$7.00 A YEAR

ISSN: 0022-2509

VOL. LXXIII NO. 9

PAUL TILlich 1886–1965

PHILOSOPHER

When Koerner painted his portrait of Paul Tillich, it was against a background of huge ancient leather-bound books, probably in the library of Harvard University rather than his own study. It is, therefore, eye-catching to recognize the object on his left as a human skull, long a sign in art of the “vanitas” theme. Amazingly, Koerner had planned this for some time. Frederick Voss, in his sketch of Koerner in *Faces of TIME* (1998) recalls that, in anticipating the *Time* project, he called it “a pleasurable dream to pose a pitcher on the mound, a theologian confronted with Adam’s skull, or a conductor in Carnegie Hall.” The dream took shape, and it is sweet to know that this portrait stands for one of Koerner’s three areas of interest for portraiture, the other two being sport and music. The skull’s rude reminder of human mortality bears obvious relation to Tillich’s work, categorized as theology, which reorganized the ideas of Christianity into a more abstract set of concepts, all based on the principle that philosophical thought must first solve the mystery of human life, or Being. One could reasonably call his approach Protestant Existentialism, and some thought he had made Biblical Christianity merely a set of symbols in which there was no need for an anthropological God.

When *Time* decided to focus on Tillich in 1959, he was already seventy-two and had been famous for several years, his acclaim based on the 1951 publication of the first volume of *Systematic Theology* and, the following year, of the popular *The Courage to Be*. It seems that he came to *Time*’s attention, however, with the appearance, in February 1959, of *Religion and Culture*, a collection of essays in honor of Tillich (a pre-mortem *festschrift*) by famous thinkers such as Erich Fromm, Karl Jaspers, Emil Brunner (whose rigorous revelationism was the polar opposite of Tillich’s system), and Reinhold Niebuhr, who had encouraged him to come to America. Tillich was one of many German intellectuals who did just that when the rise of Hitler made their profession impossible.

Unlike most of Koerner’s portraits for *Time*, Tillich meets our eyes, albeit in a sideways, skeptical, perhaps amused glance. The artist evidently respects him. Perhaps Koerner had read the cover story, which alludes to Tillich’s service as chaplain to the German army in World War I, and his protests against Nazi thuggery in 1932, which led to Hitler’s demand for his firing from the University of Frankfurt. In 1933, at the age of forty-seven, he emigrated to the United States and had to learn English in order to teach and publish in his new country. When you look at the books, and the skull, and the wise old eyes, imagine all that.

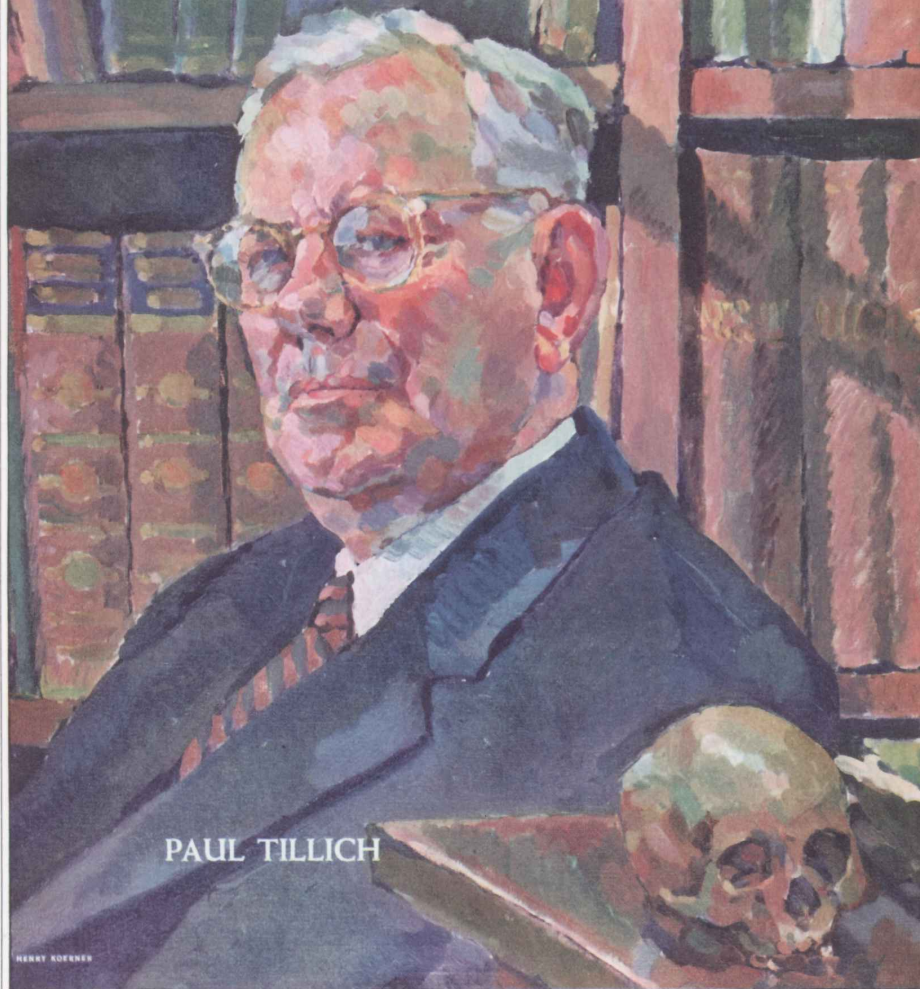
TWENTY-FIVE CENTS

MARCH 16, 1959

A THEOLOGY FOR
PROTESTANTS

TIME

THE WEEKLY NEWSMAGAZINE



PAUL TILlich

\$7.00 A YEAR

COPY 1000000000

VOL. LXXIII NO. 11

HENRY MOORE 1898–1986

SCULPTOR

The most likely reason for *Time*'s decision to feature a profile of Henry Moore in September 1959 was his commission to provide a statue for the UNESCO building in Paris (1957–58). By then Moore had developed his own style and his preference for figures of women, often reclining, and was beginning to receive significant commissions for public buildings. His technique had evolved from direct carving of figures out of stone to casting in bronze, modeling preliminary maquettes in clay or plaster. We have to guess, therefore, just what sort of figure stands behind the sculptor in Koerner's portrait. *Time* refers to it as a "bronze image rising above a lonely Scottish moor (pun inevitable)" yet the piece doesn't look like bronze; it looks like stone or the clay of a maquette. Moore is holding a piece of stone which, Joseph Leo Koerner says, his father had picked up off the ground and handed to the sculptor. Headless in the portrait, the figure is almost certainly of a woman with no head, or an unnaturally small one. It does not appear to feature the hole in the middle which by this time marked Moore's individual take on the human figure. There is very little difference between the sculpture and its Hertfordshire background, or, for that matter, between the sculpture and Moore's somewhat rocklike left arm.

The *en plein air* emphasis of the portrait, unique in Koerner's *Time* paintings, must be a response to Moore's assertion, cited in the cover story, that "sculpture is an art of the open air...Daylight, sunlight is necessary to it. I would rather have a piece of my sculpture put in a landscape, almost any landscape, than in or on the most beautiful building I know." Yet the commission for the UNESCO building was perhaps his most famous. The statue is unique in being carved out of Italian travertine marble, since Moore realized that bronze, being dark, would blend into the facade of the heavily glassed building behind it. It is a version of his favorite image, a woman in semi-reclined position, inspired by a Toltec-Maya figure from Mexico that he had seen in the Louvre in the 1920s. Whereas that figure seems to be doing abdominal exercises, Moore's version has been reduced (or expanded) into a smooth figure seemingly just risen out of the earth, of this world, but only barely.

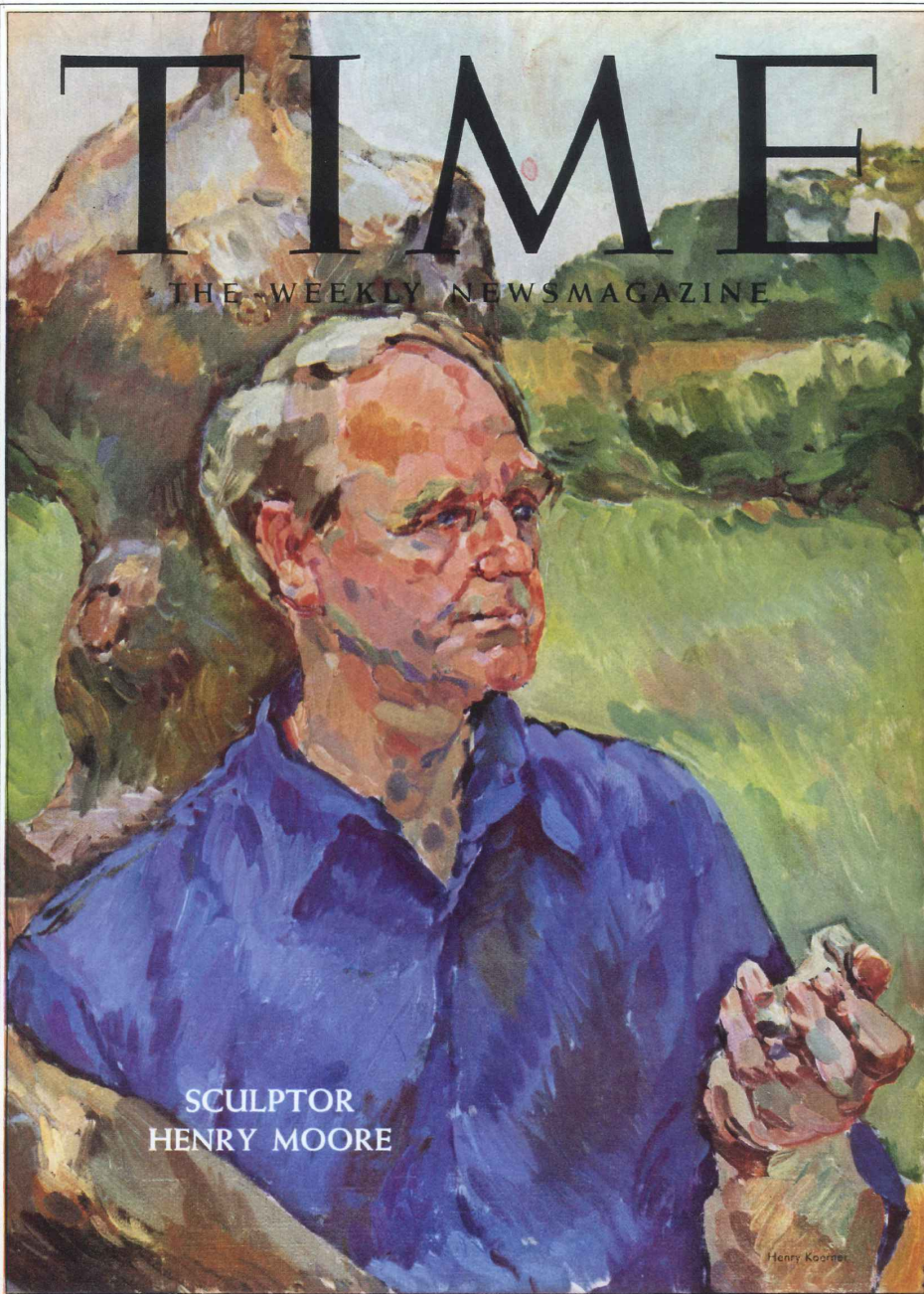
The UNESCO figure is not, of course, in a landscape, but it is in the open air. Said Moore: "On my last trip to Paris, I went to Unesco, and I saw that it's weathering nicely. In ten or twenty years' time, with the washing of the Paris rain, it will be fine."

TWENTY-FIVE CENTS

SEPTEMBER 21, 1959

TIME

THE WEEKLY NEWSMAGAZINE



SCULPTOR
HENRY MOORE

Henry Koortjes

\$7.00 A YEAR

(REG. U.S. PAT. OFF.)

VOL. LXXIV NO. 12

LEONTYNE PRICE b. 1927

DIVA

When *Time* commissioned a portrait of Leontyne Price for the issue of March 10, 1961, she had recently made a triumphant start of her diva career at the Metropolitan Opera. Manager Rudolf Bing (another of Koerner's subjects) had heard her sing Leonora in *Il Trovatore* in Verona with tenor Franco Corelli, and invited them both to debut in that opera in New York on January 27, 1961. Koerner painted Price in her Leonora costume, which made a splendid frame for her splendid bosom, in deep décolletage. It was a good choice. The purple of the dress and crownlike turban, almost reaching the upper frame of the portrait, is monarchical, while the gold braid on the turban echoes the gold ornamentation of the rows of seats behind her. One need hardly say that the theme of the portrait is curves, including those of Price's voluptuous lips.

It takes a few minutes to realize that she appears in the old Metropolitan Opera House, here no mere background, but a painterly homage to a building soon to be razed. Even one of the four painted roundels in the ceiling is visible between the M and the E of TIME. Given that photographs of the old Opera House are few, and almost none in color, this is an extraordinary piece of historical good fortune. Appropriately, Price would be one of the famous singers featured at the gala performance on April 16, 1966, which celebrated or mourned the closing of that House. She sang one of Leonora's arias from *Il Trovatore*, "D'amor sull'ali rosee."

An uninformed person might not immediately realize that Leontyne Price is African American: the skin tones are not much different from those in Koerner's portrait of Callas. But the *Time* cover story makes that fact unavoidable by starting with Big Auntie, a relative from Price's home in Laurel, Mississippi, a domestic servant. It makes much of her down-South roots. All of her family were in the audience at her Leonora debut and counted the forty-five curtain calls she received. She had to rise through multiple Besses in *Porgy and Bess*, through several Aidas (Aida was a slave girl), to being the star of *Madame Butterfly* and most of Puccini's and Verdi's other heroines. Her superlative voice, personal dignity, and great stage presence made the question of race irrelevant. To quote the *Time* cover story: "Once a wardrobe mistress forgot and warned her about soiling her light costume with the dark Aida makeup. Leontyne pointed to her skin and said, 'Honey, you'd be surprised; that won't come off.'"

TWENTY-FIVE CENTS

MARCH 10, 1961



HENRY KOENIG

\$7.00 A YEAR

ISSN 0022-2525

VOL. LXXVII NO. 11

MARY BUNTING 1910–1998

PRESIDENT OF RADCLIFFE

There is no doubt about what motivated *Time* to feature Mary Bunting in its lead article and cover for November 3, 1961: her appointment as president of Radcliffe College, the undergraduate college for women at Harvard. Both this appointment and *Time*'s article stand at the very threshold of the American women's movement, when barriers to women's education or professional life were still extremely high. The article begins with a scathing comment from a feminist that "Women are still at sea, and their rule is men and children first." The *Time* story continues this bias by relegating its account of Bunting's achievements to pp. 68–73, and including a photo of Bunting with her family, underwritten by the statement "A woman's place is in both home and tome." Even the Koerner portrait is somewhat unfortunate. While obviously locating Bunting in her Radcliffe role, it gives half of the space to the back of a female student wearing a graduating gown and mortarboard, her shining blonde hair a comment on the youth/age structure of the portrait and on the dumpiness of the bespectacled and double-chinned woman in front of her. There is no other Koerner cover where a single sitter had to share the picture space equally; and the photograph of Bunting on *Wikipedia* gives a completely different impression.

Bunting had majored in physics at Vassar College and earned a Ph.D. in agricultural microbiology at the University of Wisconsin. Her husband taught at Yale, and she was able to conduct research there until he died in 1954 of a brain tumor. Needing a full-time job to support her four children, she gladly became dean of the women's college at Rutgers. As president of Radcliffe, she used the authority of her position to integrate the college more fully into Harvard; more importantly, she founded the Radcliffe Institute for Independent Study, which opened in 1961, dedicated to research into the social factors that kept women's status low. One such factor was "the climate of unexpectation" for girls, to use her own strong words. The institute also supported female artists, scientists, and scholars, especially those trying to reenter their professions after their children were grown. Bunting remained president of Radcliffe until 1972, except for a leave of absence in 1964 to serve on the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission. Surely this appointment would not have been made had she not been regarded as a serious scientist.

TWENTY-FIVE CENTS

NOVEMBER 3, 1961

*GIRLS IN COLLEGE: They Have
Scarcely Begun to Use Their Brains*



HENRY KOERNER

\$7.00 A YEAR

100% U.S. PAPER

VOL. LXXVIII NO. 18

NELSON ROCKEFELLER 1908–1979

POLITICIAN

Time featured Nelson Rockefeller on its cover on June 15, 1962. It had done this twice previously: on May 22, 1939, when the very young Rockefeller was president of Rockefeller Center Inc.; and again on August 1, 1960, when he was governor of New York, a position he held from 1959 to 1973. The Koerner portrait registers his attempted move into national politics, with his sights set on the Republican presidential nomination two years later. Excited by what appears to have been a swing in the polls in Rockefeller's direction, *Time* apparently decided to give him the kind of boost that it gave J.F.K. in 1958. The portrait, however, is benign but dull. The cover story ran as its headline "It's the right thing to do," a quotation from Rockefeller himself, when encountering the frequent tendency to designate him a Republican liberal, a phenomenon which would be impossible today. Said Rockefeller: "I think those words — liberal and conservative — have little meaning in relation to present day problems.... When I make a decision, I think: 'It's human, it's right, it's neither liberal nor conservative, but it's the right thing to do.'" Rockefeller — who eventually lost the 1964 Republican nomination to Barry Goldwater — had anticipated running against Kennedy, of whom he was both jealous and critical. Yet he shared many of J.F.K.'s goals, such as care for the aged under Social Security.

Rockefeller did indeed do much that was right as governor of New York. He wiped out the state deficit with a tax hike of \$227 million. He pushed through the first statewide minimum wage bill and increased workmen's compensation and unemployment benefits. He spent vastly on primary and secondary education in the state. He expanded the New York park system and created the Department of Environmental Conservation. His tenure was very good for business — and for workers.

But when *Time* ran its profile, Rockefeller had not yet blotted his record in the territory of judicial law and tactics. The huge death toll in the Attica prison riot in 1971 might have been much reduced if he had responded to appeals to go to the site himself. He created the "stop and frisk" and "no knock" permissions for police, and in 1973 new drug laws that included mandatory life sentences for all drug users and pushers. We are still trying to dig our way out from under those cruel and ineffective laws and tactics. It seems a shame that this — and such lurid stories as the details of his death of a heart attack while having sex with his mistress, who was one-third his age (the inevitable joke at the time was that he died of low blood pressure, 70 over 25) — is what people remember of him, not the details of his original and beneficial programs.

TWENTY-FIVE CENTS

JUNE 15, 1962



VOL. LXXIX NO. 24

[REG. U.S. PAT. OFF.]

THEODORE HESBURGH 1917–2015

PRESIDENT OF NOTRE DAME

There can be no doubt about the message intended by Koerner's portrait of this eminent Catholic scholar and administrator. In line with many Reformation portraits, such as those of Luther and Melancthon, Hesburgh holds up to the viewer a book to signify the importance of learning and literacy in his life. But here the book complicates matters with another image to qualify Hesburgh's own, a medieval manuscript illumination featuring a Madonna and Child and facing a page of mathematical symbols. Hesburgh, who strongly felt that religion and science did not need to be in conflict, perhaps devised the pairing to show theology and science as equal partners. And can the Madonna and Child be Koerner's replication of Giotto's painting in the Uffizi, a late homage to a painter who had been a strong influence on him?

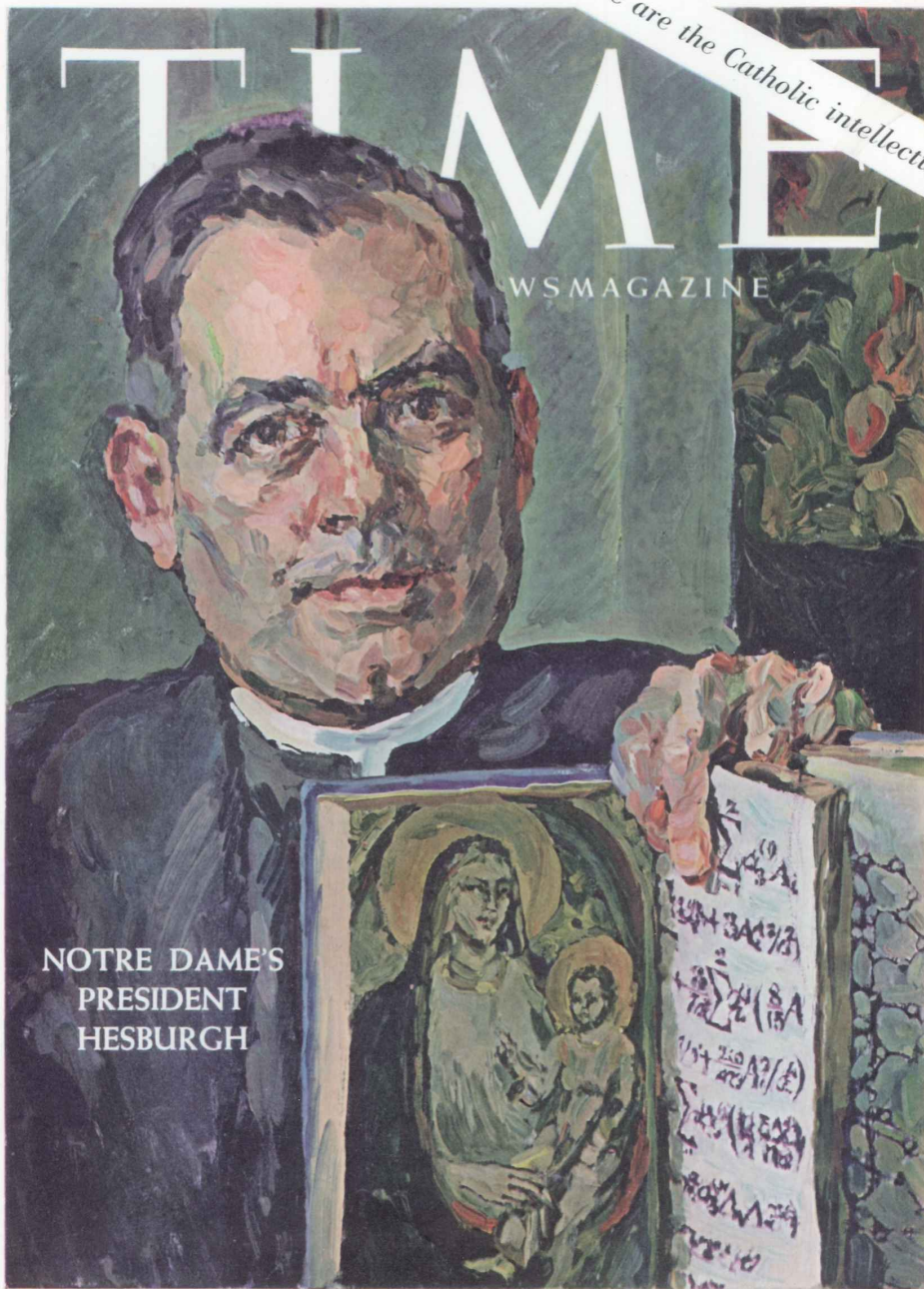
Even the least initiated reader would grasp that this is the portrait of a Catholic cleric and that it takes a strong position against the iconophobia of radical Protestantism. It is conceivable that the cover and its attached story were generated not by a specific event in Hesburgh's luminous tenure at Notre Dame, but by a wish to balance the 1958 article in *Time* on "Mr. Protestant," Franklin Clark Fry. Like Fry, Hesburgh was a reformer; though here the problem was not the diaspora of Lutheran congregations but the low quality of higher education in Catholic colleges and universities, a fact often lamented but difficult to acknowledge publicly, let alone deal with. Hesburgh brought Notre Dame into the twentieth century, first by a massive building program. Under him, the university put up twelve new buildings, increased faculty salaries by 90%, enormously increased spending on science, and raised admission standards to bring Notre Dame within visible reach of the levels required at prestige universities. But this was not achieved by secularization. Courses in theology were required for all students except the 2% who, at the time of the *Time* story, were not Catholics. Unfortunately the theology department, again in 1962, was "regarded by all students and most faculty members as the worst department on campus." Today two courses in theology are still required for undergraduates. And the SAT scores since Hesburgh retired in 1987 have continued to climb, from 536 to 660+ in verbal skills, and from 579 to 680+ in mathematics.

Hesburgh also had a rich record of service in other areas, including civil rights, peaceful uses of atomic energy, and immigration reform. He still holds the Guinness World Record for being the person awarded the greatest number of honorary degrees.

TWENTY-FIVE CENTS

FEBRUARY 9, 1962

"Where are the Catholic intellectuals?"



NOTRE DAME'S
PRESIDENT
HESBURGH

HENRY KOERNER

\$7.00 A YEAR

U.S. POST. OFF. REG. 1

VOL. LXXIX NO. 6

ROY WILKINS 1901–1981

NAACP LEADER

Roy Wilkins is not, but probably should be, an icon of equal importance to Martin Luther King in the story of how African Americans won equal rights for themselves in American society. The year 1963 might be seen now as a pivotal year in that struggle, and the *Time* portrait and cover story both illustrate the feeling that the time had come for more and faster improvement. In 1955–56 King successfully led a boycott to end bus segregation, and Roy Wilkins came to the leadership of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in 1955. But it was not until August 1963 that *Time* ran a cover story on Wilkins and his attitude as to how more and faster change could be effected. It was partially encouraged by John F. Kennedy's civil rights bill, which was bogged down in Congress, and you can be sure that the *Time* story was intended to jog that along. Everything is connected.

Koerner's portrait of Wilkins is one of his best. The upraised arm and staffs (did they hold banners?) are immediately reminiscent of Käthe Kollwitz's famous etching *Aufbruch* (Revolution). In case you think I am stretching it, *Time* ran its own banner across the top of the cover, "The Negro Revolution to Date." "Revolution" is a strong word, compared, say, to "activism," "protest," or Gandhian peaceful "demonstrations" and "marches." If one did not read the cover story, one might assume that Wilkins was a revolutionary leader. Far from it. He believed that the way to improve the lives, educational and housing opportunities, and access to the ballot box of black Americans was through legislation. The *Time* cover story makes this its theme. It notes the pressure from radical groups like the Black Muslims, who regarded the NAACP as much too slow and too tame. Read Koerner's cover carefully, and you will see that those movements are the *background* to Wilkins's moderate yet powerful influence, not its agents. In front of those raised arms and sticks stands a black man with a long, sober face, whose eyes, if they do not quite meet ours, are open to our inspection. What they express is seriousness. Especially above the formal jacket, white shirt, and calm blue tie.

This face can be even better understood in terms of the quotation from Wilkins with which *Time* chose to end its story: "This urgency? This new push? Well, it's cumulative. It's the emergence of Africa. It's being hungry. It's military desegregation. It's the G.I. Bill. It's major league baseball with Negroes...It's the consumer demand that television builds...The back of segregation is broken. A whole new era is before us. This will be a period when the Negro will have to make readjustments. We must counsel our Negro populations...you can't blame all disabilities on race, because this is self-defeating."

THIRTY CENTS

AUGUST 30, 1963

THE NEGRO REVOLUTION TO DATE

TIME

THE WEEKLY NEWSMAGAZINE



ROY WILKINS
OF THE N.A.A.C.P.

HENRY KOERNER

VOL. 82 NO. 9
(REG. U.S. PAT. OFF.)

BARBRA STREISAND b. 1942

ACTRESS-SINGER

Koerner's portrait of Barbra Streisand, one of the very few female sitters in his oeuvre, is arresting for several qualities that make it interesting, although as a portrait it has much less to say about the subject than almost all those that preceded it. The one fact, pictorial and historical, that it registers is Streisand's astonishing youth at the moment when the portrait and the cover story were produced. That moment was her runaway success in *Funny Girl*, the musical based on the life of Fanny Brice, produced on Broadway in April 1964. The show had bombed in Boston, and the New York debut was delayed by rewritings and other second thoughts, but by opening night Streisand revealed a talent advertised in the title, *Funny Girl*, and showed herself not only as a strong and confident singer but also as a stand-up comic. She was twenty-one, by far the youngest of Koerner's subjects, and also, perhaps, one of the most difficult to do justice to. How do you represent funniness? How do you represent the likelihood of future success?

Koerner caught the youth, the fine head of hair, the large, pharaonic, almond eyes, and the long, slightly bumpy nose that Streisand refused to have fixed. He might have exaggerated the bump, and he did not really show the unusually wide mouth that Streisand turned into a gag. He also caught the chutzpah. But you had to be there in 1964 to know who this girl is. There is no costume such as made the portrait of Leontyne Price so striking and that of Julie Harris so moving, nothing in the background, no professional markers at all. The distance between the prodigy and the long-term musical phenomenon is too wide for any brief biography to even try to bridge. What *Time* did register was Streisand's decision to alter the spelling of her first name (as did Leontyne Price). The *Time* article quotes her as saying, "I don't care what you say about me. Just be sure to spell my name wrong." This joke was typical of her self-presentation as a maverick, a Jewish self-made whiz, "a bagel on a plate of onion rolls," to again cite *Time*.

After the jokes, it is all statistics. Those interested should read the endlessly detailed report on *Wikipedia* and try to imagine how anybody could have accomplished so much in one lifetime. She is the only singer to achieve No. 1 albums in five different decades. She has won two Academy awards, eight Grammys, five Emmys, a Special Tony award, the National Medal of Arts, and the Kennedy Center Honors. She is also a lifelong and generous supporter of left-wing groups, causes, and institutions, including gay rights, women's heart health, and protection of the environment. An education advocate, she founded the Emanuel Streisand Building for Jewish Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in honor of her father in 1984.

THIRTY-FIVE CENTS

APRIL 10, 1964

TIME

THE WEEKLY

BARBRA
STREISAND



HENRY KOERNER

VOL. 83 NO. 15
1964 U.S. PAT. OFF. J.

JOHN CHEEVER 1912–1982

WRITER OF FICTION

John Cheever struggled for recognition as a writer of short stories, not least since he was in competition with J.D. Salinger, whose weird tales attracted more attention. Cheever's stories, and later his novels, were also weird, as in "The Enormous Radio," but their dark side was veiled by apparently naturalist accounts of American middle-class life. Although he is sometimes called "the Chekhov of the suburbs," his later work is really more like Ibsen, to whose plays his mother had frequently taken him as a boy.

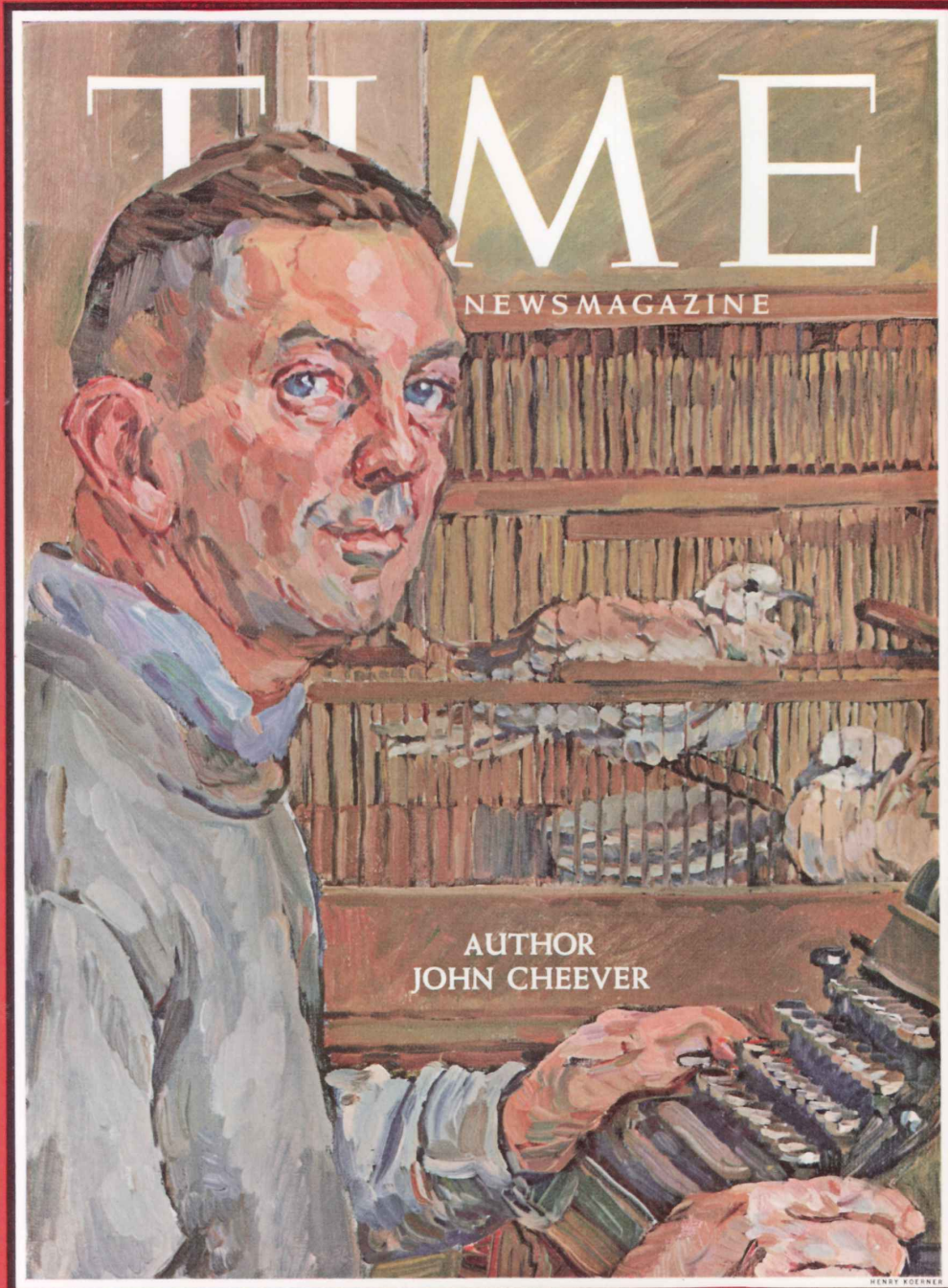
Cheever finally achieved the fame he sought with the publication of his second novel, *The Wapshot Scandal*, in 1964, the cause of his profile in *Time*, along with a rather touching portrait by Koerner of the man and his typewriter (and two doves in a cage!). The *Time* cover story, however, sees the work it celebrates as portraying an Ovidian underworld of monsters. Cheever clearly had problems with his wife, and one of his characters, Moses, suffers the metamorphosis of his wife Melissa; wrote *Time*, she is "transformed into a spirit of hostile chastity, and then into a voracious nymphomaniac, with Circe's vile power of turning men into beasts."

It may have been the result of having been born a Jew and converting into an avid New England Protestant that made Cheever's fiction so strongly moralistic. But he had a serious drinking problem that nearly killed him, and after his death it was discovered from his journals and letters that he had been bisexual. Two years after the success of *The Wapshot Scandal* he consulted a psychiatrist about his wife's hostility and "needless darkness." At a joint session with both parties, the doctor claimed that Cheever himself was the problem: "a neurotic man, narcissistic, egocentric, friendless, and so deeply involved in [his] own defensive illusions that [he has] invented a manic-depressive wife." Astonishingly, Cheever reported these words in his own journal.

Yet Koerner's portrait shows us a gentle, welcoming face, further softened in one's mind by the presence of the pair of doves, whose reputation for monogamy was a commonplace. He is also one of the very few subjects in this exhibition who deliberately, even urgently, meets our eyes.

THIRTY-FIVE CENTS

MARCH 27, 1964



VOL. 83 NO. 13
REG. U.S. PAT. OFF.

MICHAEL DEBAKEY 1908–2008

HEART SURGEON

Though there seems no immediately topical reason for the *Time* cover article on Michael DeBakey, one of the first things it mentions is the surgeon's 1964 operation on the Duke of Windsor, removing a huge, potentially fatal aneurysm from his abdominal aorta. It was DeBakey who brought the word "aneurysm" into common medical parlance and made the condition a famous center of his work from 1949 onwards. He pioneered the use of Dacron grafts to replace or repair blood vessels; and as for the heart pump, which we now take for granted, DeBakey invented the roller pump at age twenty-three, when he was still in medical school.

DeBakey (anglicized from his father's Lebanese Debaghi) was introduced to the general public by *Time* under the fetching pet-name of "The Texas Tornado." From 1942 to 1946 he served in the Office of the Surgeon General of the Army and helped develop the Mobile Army Surgical Hospital, familiar to us as MASH. By 1959 he had already been awarded the American Medical Association's Distinguished Service Award, and indeed he had been performing delicate heart and arterial surgery for more years than most surgeons are in active practice. When the *Time* cover story was written, DeBakey was seventy-seven.

DeBakey operated on more than 50,000 patients, including heads of state. At the age of ninety-seven, he was subjected, against his will, to his own procedure for fixing an aortic dissection, and had several more years of active life as a physician. He died at the age of ninety-nine.

Koerner's portrait is one of the few with the subject in full profile, usually a more distant form of representation; nevertheless it manages to convey the kindness and concern for his patients that DeBakey was famous for, despite his always hectic schedule. As compared to the several photos of his smiling face under his blue surgeon's cap, here he looks old, tired, and modest.

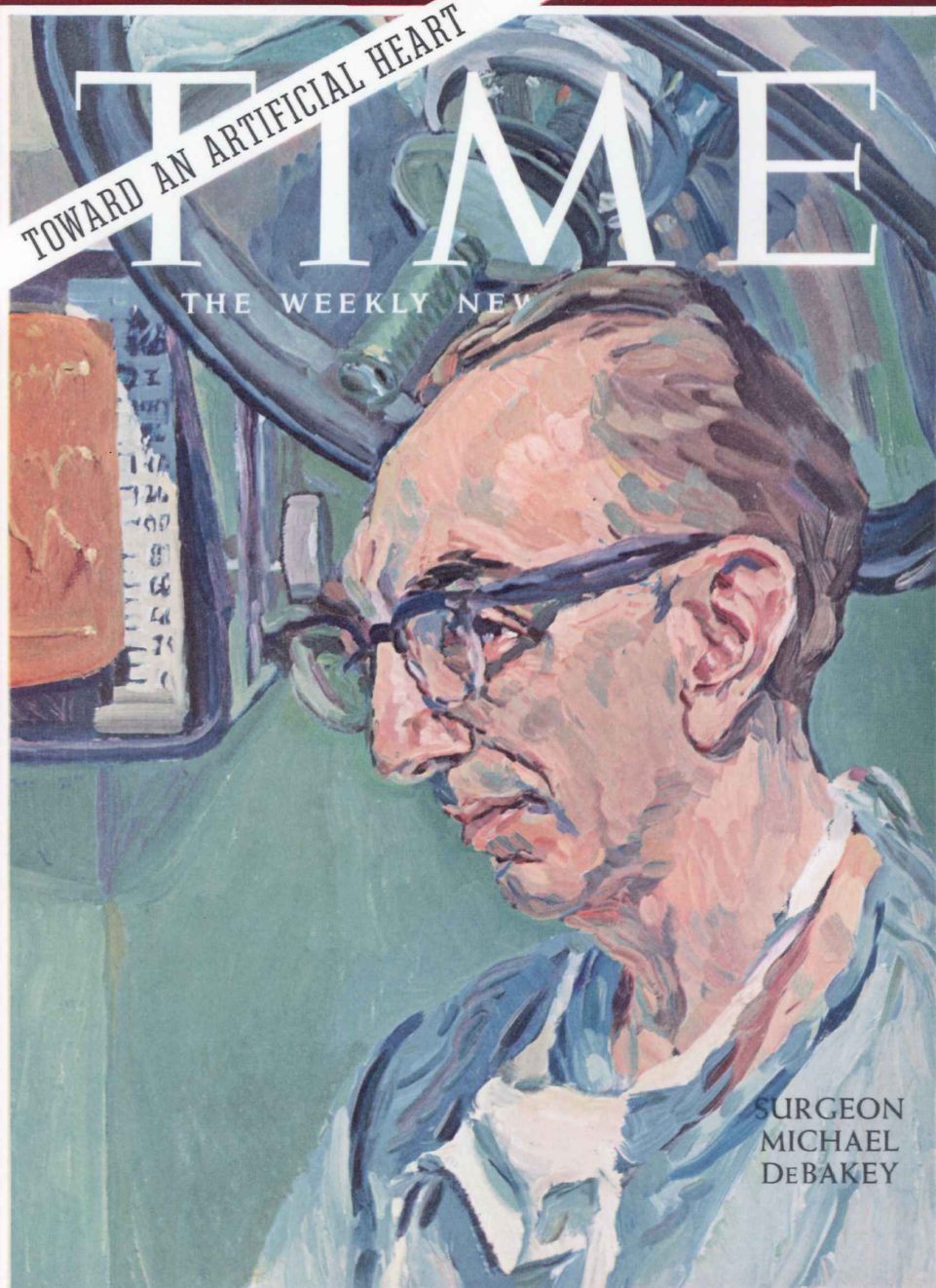
THIRTY-FIVE CENTS

MAY 28, 1965

TOWARD AN ARTIFICIAL HEART

TIME

THE WEEKLY NEWS



SURGEON
MICHAEL
DeBAKEY

VOL. 85 NO. 22

1965 (U.S. PAT. CO.)

JIM CLARK 1936–1968

THE QUICKEST MAN ON WHEELS

America is the land of speed, swiftly followed by Germany. But speed kills. Three years after Koerner painted his brilliant portrait of Jim Clark in one of his racing cars, in celebration of his regaining the World Championship Crown in automobile racing, Clark was killed in a racing accident in Hockenheim, Germany. The *Time* story for which Koerner painted his portrait began dramatically with a spectator's impression of Clark's performance in the 1965 French Grand Prix. It quoted one aghast French spectator, "C'est formidable," and another, before the race was over, "C'est termine," a fatalistic choice of words. *Time* declared that "at 29, he is the man to beat in any kind of race, in any kind of car, on any kind of track, anywhere." And Joseph Leo Koerner relates that, as his father's son, he got to sit briefly in Clark's racecar, a heady experience heightened in retrospect by the disaster three years later.

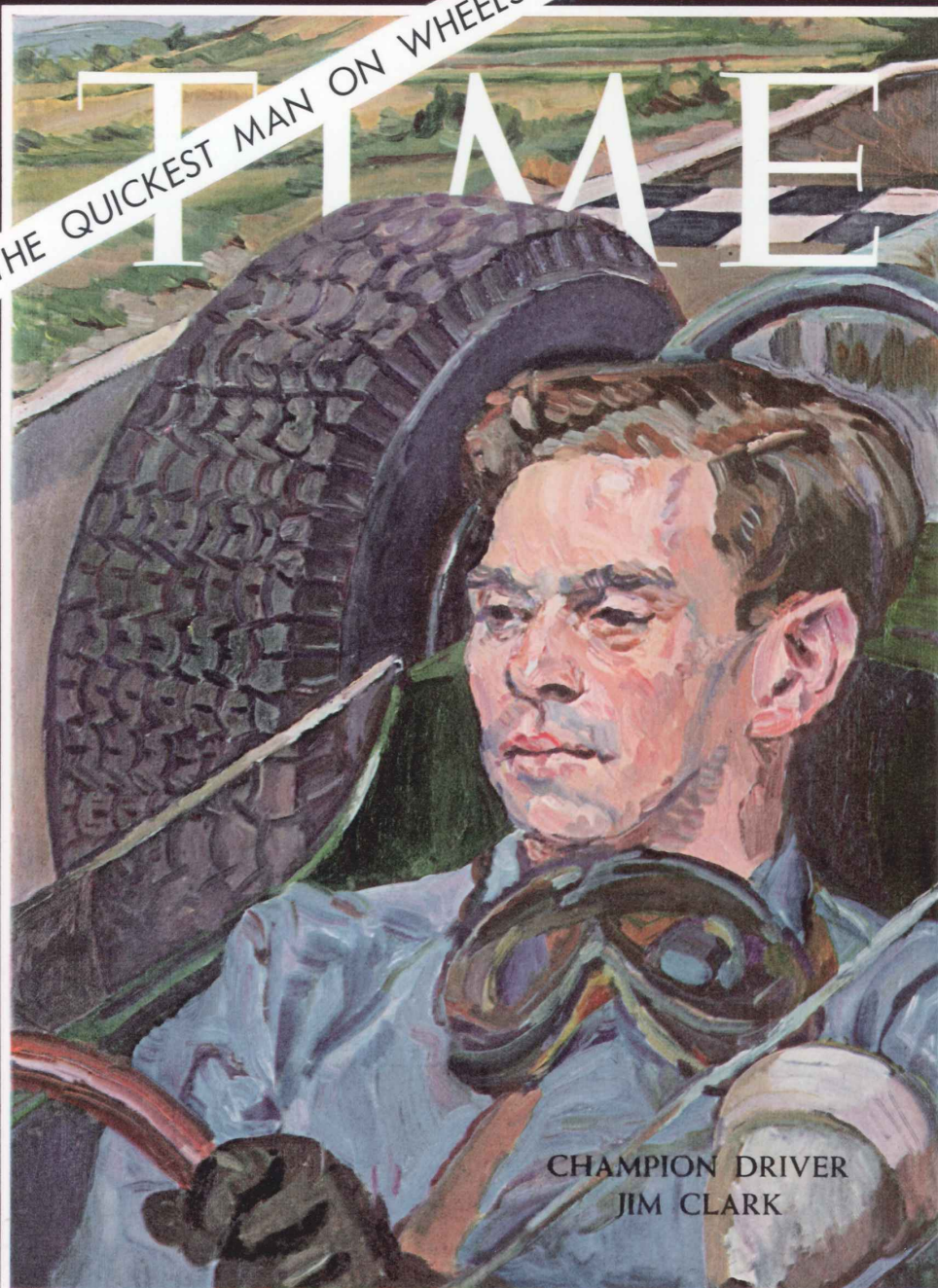
There is an obvious problem writing about a man whose life was cut short and who had one, and only one, talent and interest. Formal schooling was boring, even though his Scots parents put him in fine private schools. He left Loretto School in Musselburgh at sixteen, whereupon his father gave him a sheepdog and a stick and told him to become the second shepherd on Edington Mains, the family's 1,200-acre farm. Clark was running the whole farm by himself at eighteen, all the while secretly racing in his own car, a vintage Sunbeam Talbot, in local rallies. In 1958 he joined the Border Reivers, a Scottish racing club, whose dark blue racing helmet he still wore in 1965, though it is missing from Koerner's portrait, for obvious reasons. Yet he respected his beginnings as a farmer and asked for it to be recorded on his memorial stone, a request honored when he was buried in Chirnside, in Berwickshire.

Beyond that, Jim Clark's story is all racing statistics, locations, and expressions of admiration that are not hyperboles. Clark himself said that he and his car, whatever its make, became organically fused: "The car happens to be under me, and I'm driving it, but I'm part of it and it's part of me."

THIRTY-FIVE CENTS

JULY 9, 1965

THE QUICKEST MAN ON WHEELS



CHAMPION DRIVER
JIM CLARK

VOL. 86 NO. 2
(\$50, U.S. PAT. OFF.)

HENRY KOERNER'S VIETNAM

One has to wonder what Koerner thought in retrospect of his double cover for October 22, 1965, commissioned in reference to President Johnson's decision in July to mount a massive "surge," as we might now put it, of American troops and weapons against the Viet Cong. Koerner actually went to Vietnam to see for himself in order to paint an authentic representation. His painting bore *Time's* over-optimistic banner, "The Turning Point in Viet Nam," and the cover story quoted Johnson's hubristic statement: "We will stand in Viet Nam.... If we are driven from the field in Viet Nam, then no nation can ever again have the same confidence in American promise or in American protection."

The story continued: "Everywhere today South Viet Nam bustles with the U.S. presence. Bulldozers by the hundreds carve sandy shore into vast plateaus for tent cities and airstrips. Howitzers and trucks grind through the once-empty green highlands. Wave upon wave of combat-booted Americans...pour ashore from armadas of troopships. Day and night, screaming jets and prowling helicopters seek out the enemy from their swampy strongholds.... If the U.S. has not yet guaranteed certain victory in South Viet Nam, it has nonetheless undeniably averted certain defeat."

The political ironies here are too painful for more words. But it is interesting to see how much less than epic was Koerner's representation of the scene; indeed, except for the black birds of the helicopters, it is almost pastoral. Yet Joseph Leo Koerner reported that his father "had a helicopter 'pose' overhead for hours and hours, forcing it to refuel while fighting was taking place nearby." What is verisimilitude, anyway?

THIRTY-FIVE CENTS

OCTOBER 22, 1965

THE TURNING POINT IN VIET NAM

TIME

THE WEEKLY NEWSMAGAZINE



HENRY KOERNER

VOL. 86 NO. 17
OCT. 22, 1965

JAMES BROWN b. 1936

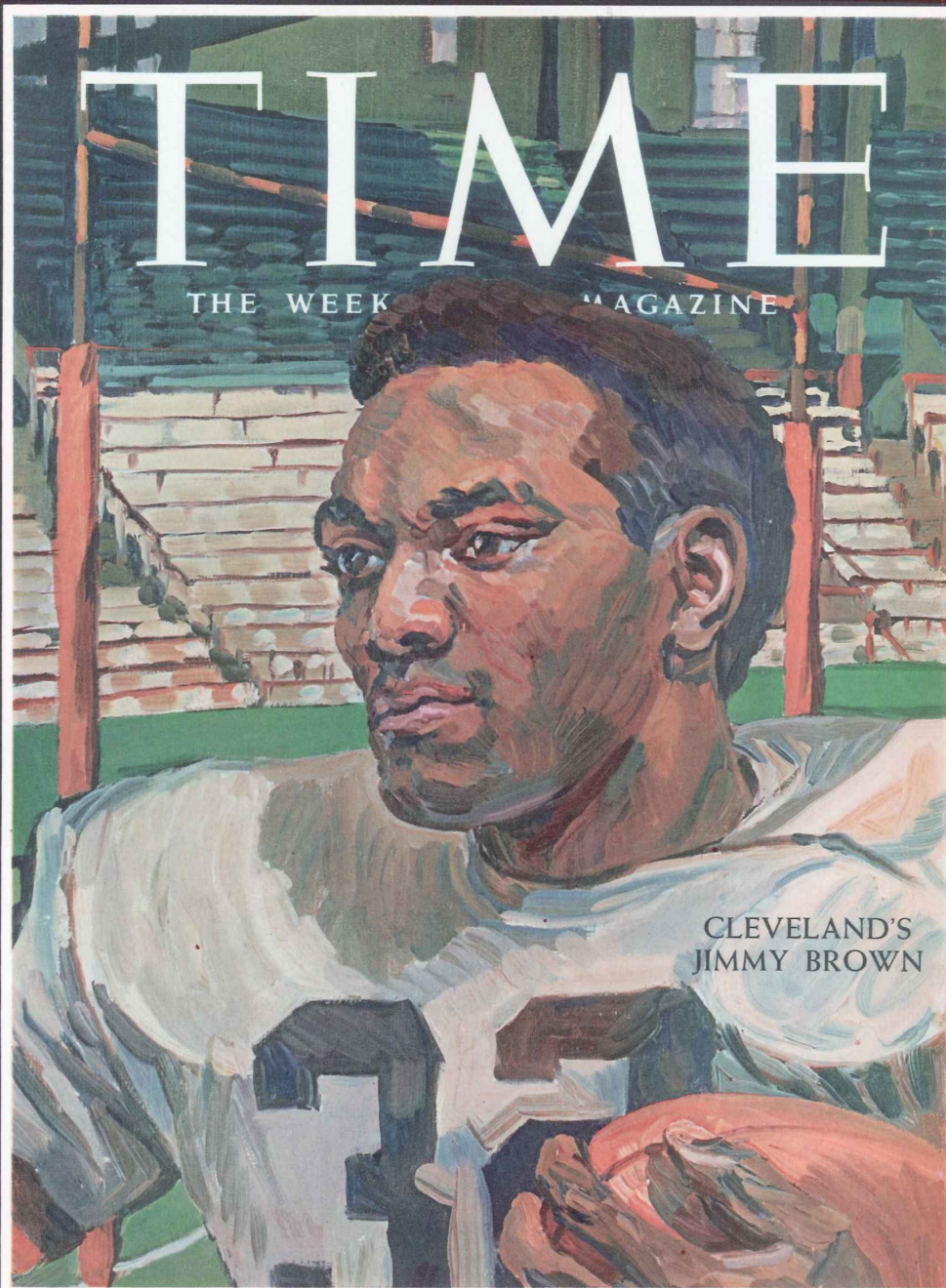
FOOTBALL CHAMPION AND ACTOR

How many football stars have built so strange a dichotomy into their careers, and not by accident or default? Jimmy Brown, as he is still universally known, is primarily remembered for his record-setting career as running back for the Cleveland Browns, a career that Brown himself terminated in 1966 *before* his contract ran out. He left as the all-time leader in rushing touchdowns, total touchdowns, and all-purpose yards. Although he excelled as well in other sports, his unique talent was in running. He was immensely strong and extremely difficult to tackle. He knew how much it hurt to tackle and be tackled, and he did not fancy the inevitable and painful slowing down that constrains most football players after the age of thirty. When he retired from the Browns he had already dipped a toe into the world of theater and film, where he proceeded to act in films and television dramas, mostly military or violent, until today. The match between his own name and that of his team cannot have been coincidence. More or less fatherless, brought up by his grandmother on an island off the coast of Georgia, Brown decided to go to college at Syracuse University even though it didn't offer him a football scholarship, although forty-five other colleges had. Sidelined because of his color, he eventually won the respect of his coach and was a unanimous All-American in his senior year, when he set Syracuse's record for highest rush average in a season.

Fate decreed that Brown's prestigious talents as a football rusher would be celebrated by *Time* just before he retired. On November 26, 1965, his portrait appeared on the cover with the title "Cleveland's Jimmy Brown" and a cover story that reveled in the statistics. Koerner painted him seemingly in motion, with the pigskin tucked underneath his left arm, and a set of white empty stands serving as a perfect frame for his dark, soulful face. The soul was later proven when he founded the Amer-I-Can Program in 1988 to work with boys caught up on the wrong side of inner-city life. What the *Time* cover story published as his epigraph was a statement he made to someone claiming to overlook his race: "Look at me, Man, I'm black!"

THIRTY-FIVE CENTS

NOVEMBER 26, 1965



CLEVELAND'S
JIMMY BROWN

VOL. 86 NO. 22

(Published November 26, 1965)

SIR RUDOLF BING 1902–1977

IMPRESARIO

Rudolf Bing was born to a well-off Jewish family in Vienna, Austria, at the very heart of opera. He studied music and art history and from 1928 to 1933 served as assistant manager of opera houses in Darmstadt and Berlin. With the rise of Nazism, Bing and his wife emigrated to England, where he helped found the Glyndebourne Festival. In 1950 he moved again, to the United States, where he became general manager of the Metropolitan Opera. There was a *Time* cover portrait of him the next year (January 15, 1951), under a banner advertisement for New Management, a distinguished man with the serried lights of the old opera house behind him. That cover story, however, stressed the difficulties of the cumbersome old opera house, the difficulty of raising money, and the fact that New York operagoers would rather revisit old Italian favorites in old costumes than support new, more daring productions. Fifteen years later Bing would accomplish his grand hope, the building of a new opera house in Lincoln Center, which opened with huge fanfare on September 16, 1966. A week later, there appeared a second *Time* cover portrait, this one by Koerner. There is no difficulty in placing this portrait in its historical context.

The 1951 portrait showed Bing as distinguished in appearance, but not at all the autocrat that some thought him to be. In fact, Koerner makes him look even more concerned than he appeared on the 1951 cover, even tragic. Without the starry opera house setting, he is just an elderly man; rather than cheer for him, it is impossible not to worry about him. Yet a banner above his head prophesies “Grander Days for Grand Opera,” and indeed there were many magnificent and surprising productions, starting perhaps with *Die Frau ohne Schatten* (The Woman without a Shadow) in October 1966. Bing remained a British subject for the rest of his life, and he was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II in 1971. His second *Time* portrait remains a tribute not only to him but to Henry Koerner’s lifelong love of opera, wherever it could be staged.

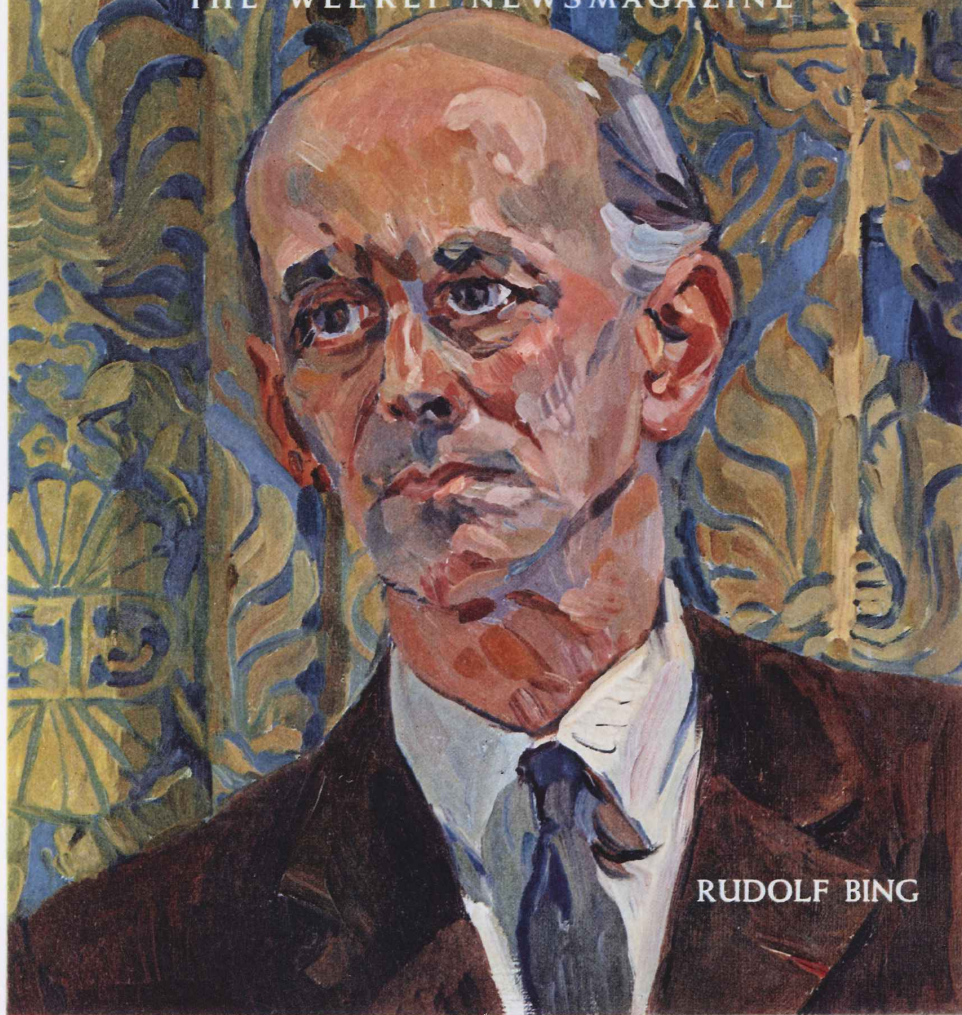
FORTY CENTS

SEPTEMBER 23, 1966

GRANDER DAYS FOR GRAND OPERA

TIME

THE WEEKLY NEWSMAGAZINE



RUDOLF BING

VOL. 88 NO. 13
(REG. U.S. PAT. OFF.)

EDWARD BROOKE 1919–2015

SENATOR

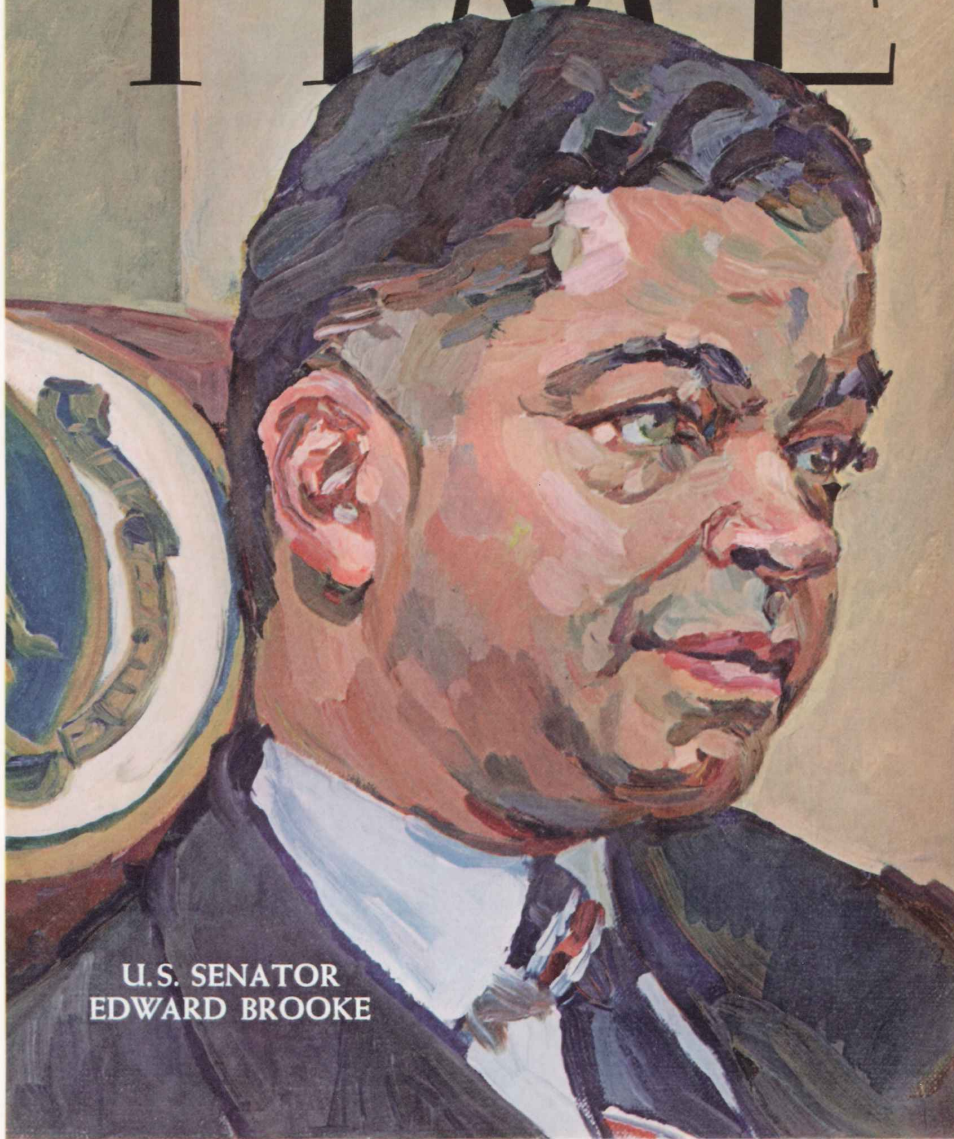
Edward Brooke is the last subject in the Koerner series of *Time* portraits. When I first wrote this, he was still alive, at ninety-four. He died January 3, 2015. There is something sadly appropriate in ending this 2015 catalogue with him, reminding us, to speak pure banality, of the two different chunks of time we can overlay: the years during which Koerner painted for *Time* and the markedly different years since then. *Time* featured Brooke in its issue of February 17, 1967, in celebration of his stunning election as senator to the 98th Congress, besting Democrat Endicott Peabody by winning 62% of the vote. The cover story was titled: “An Individual who happens to be a Negro.” Pale-skinned, with green eyes and a killer smile, a war veteran, and an outspoken moderate on the most controversial issues of the time, Brooke had probably done more for black-white relations than any of the more well-known and adversarial figures, with the possible exception of Martin Luther King. Unlike most of the Koerner portraits, the *Time* cover bears a striking resemblance to the photograph taken to celebrate his election, diagonally striped tie and all.

Brooke’s role in American politics is best summed-up in the title of his own autobiography, *Bridging the Divide* (Rutgers University Press, 2007). He was elected to the Senate as a Republican; but he was a member of the liberal wing of the Republican Party and organized the Senate’s “Wednesday Club” of progressive Republicans who met over lunch for strategy discussions. In 1968 he stood side by side with Walter Mondale in authoring the Fair Housing Act of 1968, which prohibited racial discrimination in the housing market. This was but the first of many acts and amendments he supported to make life better for blacks, people of low income, and women. In November 1973 he was the first Republican to call on President Nixon to resign. In 1976 he supported legalized abortions, but was defeated in the Appropriations Committee by the pro-life movement. This cost him the support of Catholics in Massachusetts, and his demise was hastened by scandal caused by his divorce from his Italian-born first wife, which involved misstatements of his finances. In 2004 he was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the country’s highest civilian honor.

FORTY CENTS

FEBRUARY 17, 1967

TIME



U.S. SENATOR
EDWARD BROOKE

HENRY KOENIG

VOL. 89 NO. 7

WEEKLY U.S. PAY 1967

HENRY KOERNER'S BEAT: "TIME OUT"

PHILIP ELIASOPH

In taking good measure of Henry Koerner's memorable twenty-two *Time* covers celebrated here, let's also consider Dave Brubeck's 1959 platinum jazz classic, *Time Out*. The chronological motif—pausing now to see spaces shaping Koerner's post-Impressionist colored strokes or hear Brubeck's jaunty 5/4 beats—unexpectedly binds the painter and pianist at midcentury.

Koerner's portraits of world leaders, critically acclaimed performing artists, and intellectual notables evoke their own waltzing two-step of personal reminiscences and critical responses. Both artists, inventing asymmetric rhythms of brush and keyboard, employed unpredictable strokes, slightly offbeat syncopations, and virtuoso thematic structures to astonish audiences. Born within five years of each other, Koerner, a Viennese Jew, and Brubeck—partly a Native American from northern California's Modoc peoples—came from "outsider" ancestries.

Drafted into the U.S. Army, both endured life-altering circumstances. Koerner's parents and brother were Shoah victims; after the *Götterdämmerung* he learned in 1946 he was orphaned. Brubeck was pulled from the mud and ice before the Battle of the Bulge when an officer recognized that his musical talents could entertain shell-shocked troops. In the aftermath of Nazi death camps and Hiroshima's radioactive cloud, their hard-won American identities, forged of these experiences, prepared them to reshape the future of American art and music. Practitioners of exemplary classical training, both gained international critical acclaim.

As a young graduate student preparing my dissertation on Paul Cadmus, I was digging through the Whitney Museum's permanent collection, taking the pulse of several overlooked Magic Realists. That initial encounter with Koerner's 1946 masterpiece, *Mirror of Life*, was unforgettable. Striking a film noir note of quaking suspense, it eerily juxtaposed European surrealism and American iconography. Hyper-realistically rendered, its obsessively detailed panorama is a discordant, haunting excursion into the painter's angst-filled unconscious. Considering Koerner's obscure arrival on the American scene, we can appreciate the magnitude of his sudden success in 1948, when he was featured in *Time*'s sister magazine, *Life*: "No new artist in years has been accorded the sudden, unanimous praise received by Koerner."¹

Warping its calculated quattrocento perspective, *Mirror of Life* projects a transmogrified, fantastical dream. Koerner's technical powers served to amplify an even deeper flight of imaginative narrative. Capturing period details of architecture, tattered clothing, and a bare-chested protagonist [the artist], Koerner's bird's-eye

view swoops into a rollercoaster-riding, mind-ripping, Americana carnival midway of the mind. This landmark painting is a double-helix update of Grant Wood's *American Gothic*, or Peter Blume's *The Rock*, but coiled through a cinematographically whipped dolly shot through the lens of Fellini's early neorealist films. It's the type of painting that used to promote earnest discourse among unassuming museumgoers and cantankerous critics alike. As proven in his strongest statements, Koerner rearranged anecdotal street scenes into hallucinatory supernaturalism.

Beginning in the late 1930s, however, Clement Greenberg and other purists denounced representational painters, such as Koerner, as purveyors of sentimentalized "kitsch."² Narrative art was in league with Soviet Socialist propaganda and tainted with crypto-Nazi *volkish* pandering. Realism was simply not very cool and was summarily exiled into a cultural gulag. By the 1950s a broadband spectrum encompassing Thomas Hart Benton, Isabel Bishop, Reginald Marsh, Andrew Wyeth, and Norman Rockwell was dismissed as dinosaurs still pounding the pavements along 57th Street's galleries. Let's remember that abstractionist Adolph Gottlieb predicted "we're going to have perhaps a thousand years of nonrepresentational painting."³

More recently, they would be dismissed as retro-paleo-painters in the modernist canon informed by the Museum of Modern Art's master narrative. An inherent hostility to representational painting is demonstrated by MoMA's reinstallation, with Hopper's *House by the Railroad* and Wyeth's *Christina's World* hidden down corridors next to escalators or bathrooms. Peter Blume's *The Eternal City* actually disappeared from public view.

It has been my privileged role during the past forty years to excavate and in some instances — Paul Cadmus, Robert Vickrey, Colleen Browning, Adolf Dehn, Stevan Dohanos — virtually resurrect the careers of numerous once heralded, eminently respected artists. My Nosferatu-esque grave-robbing activities were guided by Ad Reinhardt's now famous 1946 drawing "How to Look at Modern Art in America" in the newspaper *PM*. It's a graphically cruel scorecard of the winners and losers of American art at midcentury.

In *Mirror of Life*, Koerner seamlessly stitched together a tapestry crossing my favorite artists in a variety of media: John Atherton, Luis Buñuel, Paul Cadmus, Salvador Dalí, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, O. Louis Guglielmi, Alfred Hitchcock, Jack Kerouac, Priscilla Warren Roberts, Robert Vickrey, Orson Welles. It even responds to the master animators at the Disney studios who created *Fantasia* in 1940. It took a newly landed immigrant to capture the psychic horrors and uncertain tensions of post-WWII America.

Positioned within that charmed but hermetically elusive circle, Koerner peaked in sync with the Magic Realists' zenith. In defining their elusive signature approach,

Lloyd Goodrich described how Cadmus's artistic language was "an unusual combination of extremely precise realism and an essentially classic sense of design." Koerner's technique clearly shared in this devotion to "fully pondered design and scrupulous execution."⁴ As the movement's philosophical avatar, impresario Lincoln Kirstein pronounced that its adherents would "submit to a rigid discipline of almost anonymous manual dexterity, always controlled and never spontaneous.... Magic realists try to convince us that extraordinary things are possible simply by painting them as if they existed."⁵

Whatever has been forfeited, overlooked, or simply disintegrated in American painting is painfully evident with a quick glance at Koerner's most memorable *Time* covers, including some on view here at Yale. Maria Callas is an ethereal goddess shimmering out of tangerine "tonalities" of vocalized intensity; Leonard Bernstein transforms into a musical Valhalla while conducting; Henry Moore's visage becomes a chiseled, crosshatched block of carved marble; Nelson Rockefeller carries an aura of connoisseurial authority as statesman and MoMA visionary; Barbra Streisand is an uncompromisingly Yiddish ethnic chanteuse; Mayor John V. Lindsay is all Knickerbocker noblesse oblige towering over funky Red Grooms-like yellow taxis.⁶

Rethinking Koerner's career through the lens of his *Time* covers prompts three more questions. While opening a Pandora's box of aesthetic/cultural/political dilemmas, we realize how history is indeed written by the winners. How do these artworks address (1) the ongoing debate about the boundaries of fine and commercial art?; (2) the continuing art world discourse weighing the heritage of [Kirstein's] classically inspired, representational painting versus [Greenberg's] avant-gardist "purism"?; and (3) the ongoing scholarly investigation into the disingenuous co-optation of the Fourth Estate by *Time Magazine* as a disguised instrument of U.S. foreign policy manipulated by its ironfisted founder, Henry Luce?

Undoubtedly these issues have filled countless doctoral theses, academic journal articles, and even popular best-selling books intersecting art, politics, and culture in the United States. In the first instance, "assorted elite groups...claim jurisdiction over 'art' as a means of acquiring authority and influence in their fields and in the broader culture."⁷ Next, eschewing the role as aesthetic troglodytes, we can appreciate avant-gardist art forms in the context of Marshall McLuhan's 1962 book *The Gutenberg Galaxy*. If the medium is indeed the message, then an ability to capture multitudes in *Time*'s "hot" medium seems to trump those left hopelessly in the dark by postmodernism's "coolness." Inside the iconic red border of its covers, *Time Magazine* is viewed in print and online by more than sixteen million Americans weekly. That visual reality prompts a conversation about traditional "fine art" versus the commodification of visual culture as the ill-begotten, orphaned child of avant-gardism. Offering a critical assessment of "fine art" on the cover of such a

global media monster is akin to Saturn devouring his own children. How does one calculate our wildly emotional responses to Koerner's personalities versus the inscrutable coolness of Matthew Barney's *Cremaster Cycle* or Jeff Koons's *Banality* series?

Appealing to newsstand audiences comprising "middlebrow world culture... by the mid-1950s..." 'Time Inc. was an arm of U.S. foreign policy.'⁹ Luce, ever the missionary's son, invented a triumphalist branding for the "American century" and launched a perfect vehicle for converting millions worldwide. Like the stonecarvers evangelizing on a medieval tympanum, Michelangelo envisioning the Universal Church on the Sistine's walls, or McCann Erickson expanding its client's reach into lucrative third-world markets with the jingle "I'd Like to Buy the World a Coke," *Time's* "best covers capture the zeitgeist of the week while surviving the judgment of history."¹⁰

Enlightened now with 20/20 hindsight, we might wonder: how did the elitism of the Abstract Expressionist critics converge with the hegemonic political agenda of U.S. foreign policy to forge an alloy of American cultural imperialism advancing the myth of invincibility? Happily, just at the moment when Telstar and Sputnik satellites were reshaping global communications, Henry Koerner's *Time* covers ensured that America's cultural icons were colorfully depicted and humanely portrayed "in the flesh."

Notes

1. "Henry Koerner," *Life* (May 10, 1948): 77.
2. Clement Greenberg, "Avant-Garde and Kitsch," *Partisan Review* 6, no. 5 (1939).
3. Quoted in Selden Rodman, *Conversations with Artists* (New York: Devin-Adair, 1957), 91.
4. Lloyd Goodrich, foreword to *Paul Cadmus: Yesterday & Today*, by Philip Eliasoph (Oxford, Ohio: Miami University Art Museum, 1981), 11.
5. Lincoln Kirstein, introduction to *American Realists and Magic Realists*, by Dorothy Miller and Alfred H. Barr, Jr. (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1942), 7.
6. The Lindsay cover appeared on November 12, 1965.
7. Michele H. Bogart, *Artists, Advertising, and the Borders of Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 7.
8. David Joselit, "Painting Beside Itself," *October* 130 (Fall 2009): 125.
9. John Derbyshire, "Henry Luce's Foreign Policy," review of *Henry R. Luce, Time, and the American Crusade in Asia*, by Robert E. Herzstein, *The New York Sun*, August 22, 2005.
10. Henry Muller, foreword to *Faces of TIME: 75 Years of Time Magazine Cover Portraits*, by Frederick S. Voss (Boston: Bulfinch Press in association with the National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, 1998), 6.

UNEASY PICTURES

JONATHAN WEINBERG

One of the many ironies of Henry Koerner's career is that his most seen work, his covers for *Time*, has been the least examined in the art historical and critical writings about the artist. This undoubtedly has something to do with the low status that commissioned portraits, once among the highest genres of the old masters, have in modern art. But it also has to do with the strangeness of the pictures themselves, which even one of the ardent supporters of his early work, Lincoln Kirstein, didn't get. According to Kirstein, Koerner had lost his vision "via Cézanne and *Time*."¹ Undoubtedly for the antimodernist Kirstein, the brash colors and broken brushstrokes of Koerner's new style were too undisciplined and improvisational, too much like abstract painting, while for the modernist critics, Koerner's evocation of Cézanne was retrograde. At the height of Abstract Expressionism and later Pop and Minimalism, to make easel paintings from life was bad enough, but to commit the sin of allowing these paintings to be used on a magazine cover as if the artist were a mere "illustrator" was worse. And yet if Koerner failed to satisfy the movers and shakers in the art world, he managed to please Otto Fierbringer, the *Time* editor in charge of selecting artists to create the covers that in their day were synonymous with power and fame.

The twenty-two covers on view at Yale's Koerner Center represent roughly half of the portraits Koerner made for *Time Magazine* from 1955 to 1967. In some ways Koerner was a natural for the commissions, since he had begun his career designing posters and, unlike many of his fellow painters, had no prejudice against illustration. According to his son, the art historian Joseph Leo Koerner, Koerner enjoyed the way *Time*'s designers played with the masthead, allowing it to become an active part of the composition.² Certainly the magazine's signature red border played off beautifully against the bright greens, pinks, and tans of Koerner's palette. Rather than seeing such commercial work as demeaning, he welcomed the opportunity the *Time* commissions gave him to depict the great political and cultural leaders of his age, comparing it to the way Velázquez had painted the royal family of Spain. Although Koerner was not the type to be cowed by celebrities — he told his family that Barbra Streisand was cross-eyed, and he annoyed the notorious diva Maria Callas by making her sit for hours beyond the original agreed time — how could he resist the charisma of the actress Julie Harris, the singer Harry Belafonte, or the president to be, John F. Kennedy?³ How could he not be impressed by the extraordinary talent of the sculptor Henry Moore or the soprano Leontyne Price? Getting such power brokers as J. Paul Getty, Patrick Moynihan, and Nelson Rockefeller to sit across from his easel for hours



Henry Koerner, *Patrick Moynihan*. Oil on canvas.
Private Collection

Henry Koerner, *Jean-Claude Killy*. Watercolor on paper,
mounted on cardboard.
Private Collection

while he committed their likeness into paint was to be their equal and to be connected to the zeitgeist. More importantly, Koerner believed that in depicting such powerful personalities he was validating the continued viability of painting to connect with large audiences and be an intrinsic part of the national discourse.

The great challenge of the *Time* commissions was to demonstrate that making portraits directly from life, “painting only what he saw,”⁴ was not anachronistic in the age of the photograph. Although from its beginnings in 1923 *Time* had hired artists as well as photographers to make cover portraits, the necessity to produce a likeness quickly meant that artists such as Samuel J. Woolf, and later Boris Artzybasheff, Ernest Hamlin Baker, and Boris Chaliapin, almost always based their portraits on photographs. As Woolf put it, such photo-based work tended to produce “a copy instead of an interpretation.”⁵ Koerner insisted that his portraits be painted from real life. This often involved enormous difficulty and expense. Busy politicians on the level of a Kennedy or a Rockefeller were reluctant to spend much time posing for a painter. Fortunately, one of the benefits of Koerner’s impressionist style was speed of execution. He typically began by doing fast watercolor sketches of his subjects to get a sense of their character and how he planned to ultimately pose them. His watercolor of the Alpine skier Jean-Claude Killy in front of a ski slope, with its overlapping planes of transparent color, is just such a fresh sketch, although it never became a finished cover.

Koerner loved the challenge of painting his subjects quickly. Before settling on the final composition for his portrait of the influential Lutheran Dr. Franklin Clark Fry at the pulpit, he sketched him crossing a busy Manhattan street. Fry remembered with amusement “blocking traffic and everybody in New York City seemed to be honking

at me.”⁶ Koerner’s insistence that he paint everything from life meant that he risked his own life and limb in Vietnam at the height of the war. In order to complete his “group portrait” of soldiers loading a bazooka, he had to get a pilot to hover a helicopter overhead. At one point it almost landed on Koerner’s work: “Please, please!” Koerner shouted at the whirling chopper, “Save my drawings!”⁷

Why was it so important for Koerner not to use photographs in the process of making his portraits? Earlier in his career he had used the camera as a tool to heighten the verisimilitude of his images, but in the 1950s he had come to mistrust the culture’s reliance on the photograph as the measure of truth.⁸ What could be more artificial or phonier than the celebrity cover photograph? Famous people know how to strike a pose for a few seconds for the camera’s shutter; but under the long scrutiny of the artist’s gaze it is hard to maintain such a bland and cheerful demeanor. Indeed, almost no one smiles broadly in Koerner’s portraits, which makes his sitters look intelligent, if not particularly happy. And yet it is not that Koerner was after some sort of psychic unmasking or inner core of personality. In many of Koerner’s portraits, the eyes of his sitters don’t even engage the viewer; rather than soulful, they seem restless, as if what is important is everything in the world but the inward self. Koerner’s brushstroke is equally restless; he gives as much weight to the frills of Mary Bunting’s blouse as he does to the irises of her eyes. Koerner’s fracture and the nonhierarchical way he composed his paintings may have been derived from Cézanne, but he had no patience for the slow, methodical way that Cézanne reworked his paintings. Koerner trusted his first impressions, not because he thought they were necessarily correct, but because in their very fallibility they convey something about the way he uniquely experienced the world. Above all, Koerner’s impressionist mode of painting speaks of impermanence. If the great politician’s ultimate fantasy is to be rendered forever in stone on Mt. Rushmore, defying *time*, Koerner’s portraits are all about time passing. They are about the presence that occurs in front of the painter’s eye, not all at once as in a photograph, but through the accretion of observations gathered over time.

This additive quality sometimes makes Koerner’s portraits seem stitched together, as if he were looking at his subjects from different perspectives. For example, there is an abrupt shift between Cheever’s typewriter and the birdcage; and it seems impossible for NAACP President Roy Wilkins to be standing so close to the raised arm of the marcher behind. Koerner painted John Cheever and the writer’s beloved doves from life, but the two subjects did not necessarily occupy the same space at the same time. Undoubtedly, the Wilkins portrait was also based on what Koerner saw from different vantage points. Koerner was consistent even when juxtaposing presidential adviser Arthur Schlesinger with the absent Kennedy. He managed to get Kennedy’s face in the background by repainting his own cover portrait of the senator “from life,” as it were. However, this means that the two heads in the Schlesinger painting are



Henry Koerner, *Schlesinger-Kennedy*.
Oil on canvas. Private Collection

Henry Koerner, *Norman Chandler*.
Time cover (July 15, 1957). Private
Collection

Photographer unknown, *Norman
Chandler and Henry Koerner*. Private
Collection

slightly out of whack, which may be why it was never used for a *Time* cover. In general, Koerner's practice of bringing together on one canvas different elements often of radically different scale and lighting reflects the artist's shifting perspective, which was always combining and refashioning experience.

This sense of Koerner's shifting focus is apparent even within the faces of his subjects. Invariably he gave more emphasis to the lines of the nose and mouth, as you can see in the portrait of the fullback Jimmy Brown or the philosopher Paul Tillich. People erroneously think that the eyes are our most distinctive feature and subsequently the hardest to paint, but Koerner shared with John Singer Sargent the realization that "a portrait is a likeness in which there is something wrong about the mouth," meaning that the sitter's resemblance is dependent on how well an artist can render the line between and around the lips.⁹ No matter how much Koerner wanted to convey the overall pictorial unity of his picture, he had a responsibility to his patrons and to his sitters to make sure that he got a reasonable likeness. And yet I think Koerner employed such inconsistencies of depiction throughout the painting expressively, to create an overall sense of anxiety that is the opposite of the calm authority most *Time* covers project.

Anxiety is precisely a feeling that powerful and successful people are supposed to dispel. The impresario Rudolf Bing put it best when he told Koerner that it was all right to make his eyes look sad, "but don't make them look afraid. I'm not afraid of anything."¹⁰ Whatever doubts great leaders entertain in private, we expect them to emanate calm and authority. And yet paradoxically, it is the very ability to question such certainty, to be nonconformist, that is a characteristic of true greatness.



Koerner's peculiar style of painting, with its strange lapses and discords, subtly undermines the certitude of his subjects without fundamentally disturbing the comforting familiarity of their likenesses. Like a mole in a Cold War spy novel, Koerner subverted the job he was supposed to perform. In the end, the way the pictures are painted seems far more interesting than what their subjects look like. We are left with the nagging suspicion that the famous people we think are so great are strangely vulnerable, their vaunted image merely a matter of dabs of paint.

Los Angeles Times publisher Norman Chandler claimed that Koerner never flattered.¹¹ This was as true for the viewers of his paintings as it was for his subjects. Certainly, Koerner refused to ingratiate himself to the readers of *Time*, particularly in comparison to the photographically rendered portraits that were typically on its cover, but neither did he paint to please the modernist art critics. I too find many of Koerner's paintings off-putting in their discontinuity and brashness. They are difficult—that is, profoundly *uneasy*—pictures. But I am awed by the integrity of his practice with its confidence in the redemption of the artist's vision. As a portrait painter myself, I share his faith that painting a human being, face-to-face, over time, is a worthwhile, even necessary endeavor.

Notes

I want to thank Joseph Leo Koerner for spending so much time on the phone with me talking about his father's work with such honesty and openness. I also want to thank Philip Eliasoph for similarly open dialogues about what really matters in modern art and for being such a persuasive advocate for artists like Koerner that I was trained in college to ignore. My husband, Nicholas Boshnack, is always my first editor, but Lesley Baier is one of the best.

1. Gail Stavitsky and Henry Adams, *From Vienna to Pittsburgh: The Art of Henry Koerner* (Pittsburgh: Museum of Art, Carnegie Institute, 1983), 22. This catalogue devotes a few paragraphs to the *Time* covers, but it is more about how they hurt Koerner's reputation rather than the intrinsic merit or meaning of the work.
2. Joseph Leo Koerner, phone interview by the author, July 10, 2015.
3. Koerner's son shared the anecdote about Streisand with me. The story about the difficulty of the Callas interview is in Frederick S. Voss, *Faces of TIME: 75 Years of Time Magazine Cover Portraits* (Boston: Bulfinch Press in association with the National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, 1998), 36–37.
4. Joseph Leo Koerner, *Unheimliche Heimat Henry Koerner* (Vienna: Österreichische Galerie Belvedere, 1997), 9.
5. Voss, 15.
6. "A Letter from the Publisher," *Time* 71, no. 14 (April 7, 1958): 11.
7. "A Letter from the Publisher," *Time* 86, no. 17 (October 22, 1965): 21.
8. For a discussion of Koerner's use of the camera see Robert Cozzolino, "Henry Koerner, Honoré Sharrer, and the Subversion of Reality: 'Magic Realism' and the Photograph," in *Shared Intelligence: American Painting and the Photograph*, ed. Barbara Buhler Lynes and Jonathan Weinberg (Berkeley: University of California Press; Santa Fe: Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, 2011), 102–21.
9. Grace Glueck, "Revival of the Portrait," *New York Times*, November 6, 1983, accessed online at <http://www.nytimes.com/1983/11/06/magazine/revival-of-the-portrait.html?pagewanted=print> on July 30, 2015.
10. "A Letter from the Publisher," *Time* 88, no. 13 (September 23, 1966): 19.
11. "A Letter from the Publisher," *Time* 84, no. 25 (December 18, 1964): 19.

Annabel Patterson is Sterling Professor Emeritus of English at Yale and an assiduous member of the Koerner Center Fellowship. Since her work has mostly focused on the English seventeenth century, long, long ago, curating this show, in partnership with Joseph Leo Koerner, has been a wonderful experience of self-education.

Philip Eliasoph is Professor of Art History at Fairfield University. A champion of Magic Realist masters whose careers were too often eclipsed, he strives to animate the discourse on the tensions between the proponents of narrative realism versus avant-gardism in mid-century American painting.

Jonathan Weinberg is a painter and art historian. Author of *Male Desire: The Homoerotic in American Art* and *Ambition and Love in Modern American Art*, he teaches at Yale School of Art and the Rhode Island School of Design. In 2010 the Leslie Lohman Museum hosted a retrospective of his work.

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Henry Koerner, *Ludwig Erhard*. Oil on canvas. Private Collection