



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

Edinburgh Research Explorer

[Review of] Joan Kee Models of Integrity: Art and Law in Post-Sixties America

Citation for published version:

Kennedy, C 2022, '[Review of] Joan Kee Models of Integrity: Art and Law in Post-Sixties America', *Edinburgh Law Review*, vol. 26, no. 2, pp. 285-286. <https://doi.org/10.3366/elr.2022.0774>

Digital Object Identifier (DOI):

[10.3366/elr.2022.0774](https://doi.org/10.3366/elr.2022.0774)

Link:

[Link to publication record in Edinburgh Research Explorer](#)

Document Version:

Peer reviewed version

Published In:

Edinburgh Law Review

Publisher Rights Statement:

This article has been accepted for publication by Edinburgh University Press in the *Edinburgh Law Review*, and can be accessed at <https://doi.org/10.3366/elr.2022.0774>.

General rights

Copyright for the publications made accessible via the Edinburgh Research Explorer is retained by the author(s) and / or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing these publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

Take down policy

The University of Edinburgh has made every reasonable effort to ensure that Edinburgh Research Explorer content complies with UK legislation. If you believe that the public display of this file breaches copyright please contact openaccess@ed.ac.uk providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.



Joan Kee, MODELS OF INTEGRITY: ART AND LAW IN POST-SIXTIES AMERICA
Oakland, California: University of California Press (<https://www.ucpress.edu/>), 2019. x + 310 pp.
ISBN: 9780520299382. £50.

Joan Kee's *Models of Integrity* is a fascinating book that makes a valuable contribution to interdisciplinary legal scholarship. Focusing on the United States and the period between the early 1970s and the mid-1990s, the book considers some of the ways that expanding forms of legal regulation conditioned and complicated the relationships between art, audience, and artist. At the same time, the book reflects on the way that artistic works challenged developments in the legal and political landscape, such as the Vietnam War and the Watergate scandal, and the communities of (purported) consensus on which laws tend to rely. In addition to these two ambitions, the book seeks to highlight the manifold ways that law depends on its ability to recognise, and also generate, particular kinds of experiences and reactions. Even though these phenomena are not always easy to capture in the textual, formalistic, sources that lawyers typically use, they are nevertheless core to the operation of many legal doctrines and processes.

Kee pursues the aims of her book across six chapters, each of which focuses on a particular artistic work or works. All of the chapters contain rich insights about the work(s) in question but, in addition to this, there are certain powerful, cross-cutting themes.

For example, chapters one and six consider how protections offered by the laws of intellectual property and contract can both foster and stymie artistic creativity. Kee explores this point in chapter one by examining *The Artist's Reserved Rights Transfer and Sale Agreement*, a model contract produced collaboratively by curator and activist Seth Siegelaub and lawyer Robert Projansky. This writing aimed to capture what the authors considered to be the needs of artists selling their works. But in a transactional setting where economic and other kinds of value sat (and perhaps still sit) uncomfortably alongside one another, the work received a mixed response within artistic communities.

Highlighting the difficulties that can arise on the acquisition end, in chapter six Kee discusses the certificates of authenticity and ownership produced by Felix Gonzalez-Torres during the 1990s. In contrast to ordinary certificates of this kind, which "unilaterally impose the intentions of the artist on buyers" Gonzales-Torres's certificates "shared with owners some of his authority and duties" (192). In challenging traditional conceptions of authorship and ownership this way, Gonzales-Torres's certificates were both oddly prescient (compare his stipulation that "the physical manifestation of this work in more than one place at a time does not threaten the work's uniqueness since its uniqueness is defined by ownership" (222) with so-called non-fungible tokens) and cumbersome for curators who felt paralysed by the freedom his certificates granted them.

The themes of freedom and restraint also crop up in chapter four, in which Kee analyses Tehching Hsieh's *One Year Performances* – a series of commitments, "contracts" between the artist and himself, to live in extremely challenging commitments, such as in a small cage or entirely outdoors. Among other things, these performances presented an opportunity to "speculate about the law's capacity to set standards for ethical behaviour" (161). The question of what exactly constitutes ethical behaviour is picked up later by Kee, in chapter five, in her examination of the works of photographer Sally Mann. Mann's *Immediate Family* series, which contained nude photographs of her young children, was perhaps unsurprisingly strongly criticised yet, as Kee argues, the photographs might be interpreted as a rejection of the sexualization of children and a challenge to assumptions about the correlation between age and agency.

The final theme of *Models of Integrity* I want to highlight is that of proprietorial control. This theme features in chapters two and three in relation to land and housing, respectively. With reference to land, the work at the heart of chapter two – *Running Fence*, a 24.5-mile-long fabric fence completed by Christo and Jeanne-Claude in 1976 – powerfully draws attention to some of the tensions between individual and collective interests and obligations that arise in the context of land access and usage. Sadly, as the magnitude and severity of our current climate and migration crises reveal, these issues continue to demand serious attention. Something similar might be said about the exclusionary nature of private property (at the level of individuals and social groups), particularly housing, which is the subject matter of chapter three. As this chapter shows, Gordon Matta-Clark's provocative acts of slicing buildings open worked to render them quite literally incapable of serving to exclude. Through

these acts of “vandalism”, the artist made a bold and arresting statement about the fragility of seemingly natural rules of ownership. Like the other examples Kee selected for her book, Matta-Clark’s work therefore demonstrates the ability of art to, as Kee puts it, “spawn forms of consciousness that might bring pressure to bear on politics in need of accounting” (37).

As this short review has hopefully conveyed, despite the geographical and temporal focus of the book *Models of Integrity* touches upon issues that remain relevant today and across different parts of the globe. On top of this, the book presents many intriguing and challenging reflections on various areas of law and constitutes an important addition to the expanding and exciting field of law and art scholarship.

Chloë Kennedy
University of Edinburgh