

The work of art and its record

by Abel Cervantes

IN 1962 AN ART COLLECTOR BOUGHT YVES KLEIN a work that only he and the artist knew: when he finished reading the paper that contained the work, the collector broke it and set it on fire. Klein, meanwhile, threw half of the gold coins he had received in return to the Seine River. The work of art materialized for a few moments, vanished in seconds. And of it only one record remained.

From that moment, various museums exhibited this work in different ways. One of them placed blank boxes. Another, put in place a written explanation that detailed the work. In 2017 the MUAC of Mexico City showed a photographic series that documented the moment and, its curator, Cuauhtémoc Medina, mentioned that with that gesture Klein inaugurated art that is no longer based on an object but on an idea.

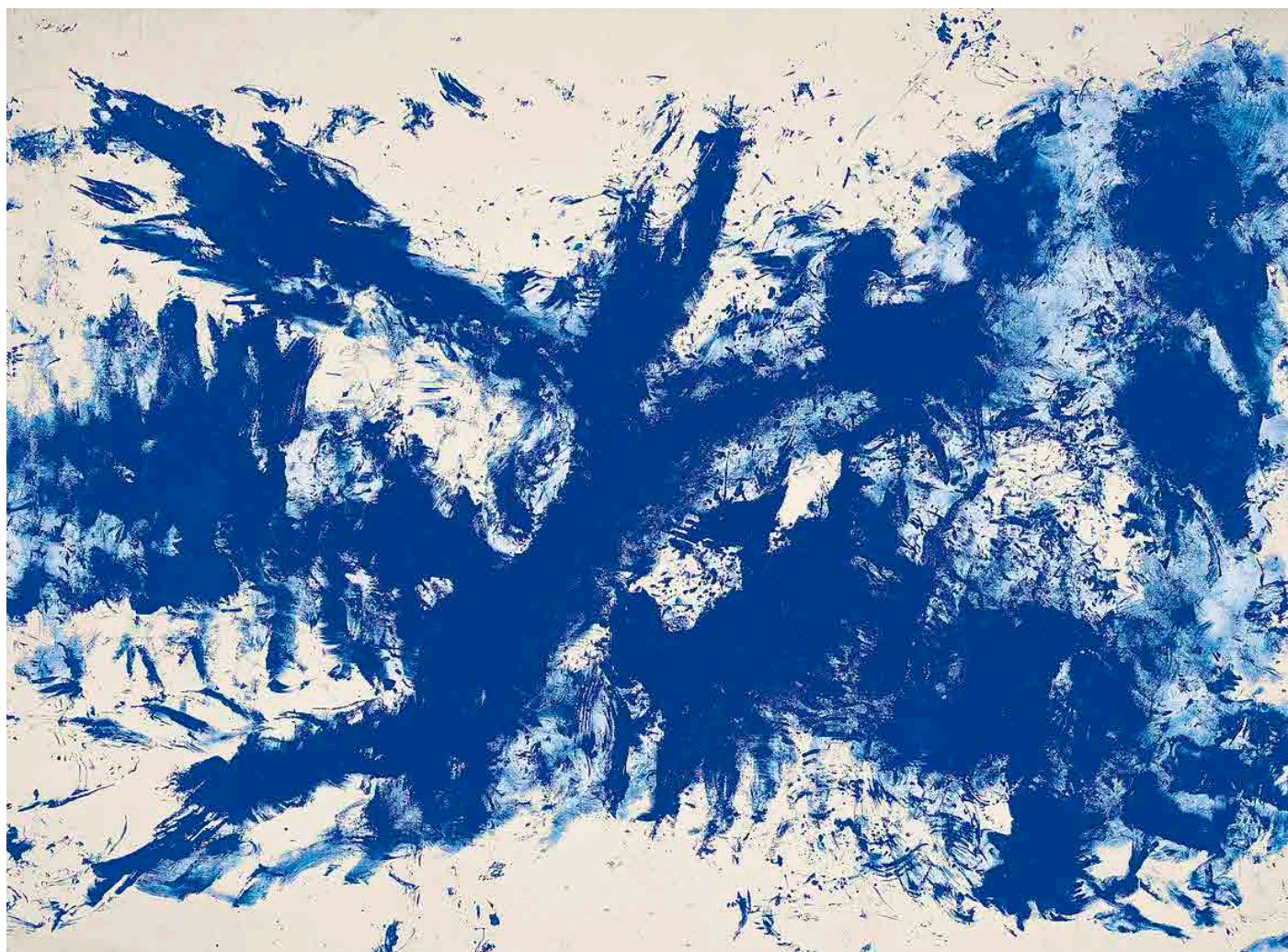
When we visit a museum or a gallery of contemporary art, many of the times we face photographs, videos or other documents that, apparently, only record a work of art. But in recent years contemporary art has taught us that the piece is not exclusively what is in the museum, but also the research behind it, its work process and, of course, its documentation.

Recording a work of art does not refer exclusively to documenting an event. By printing an event on an image or finding its resonance in a voice, the work of art takes on new forms. The content is transformed in proportion with the form does. On the other hand, the viewer is involved in a two-movement process. At first, he observes a series of records that transport him to an artistic practice. And be seduced by it. Upon returning, those same records acquire a different value.

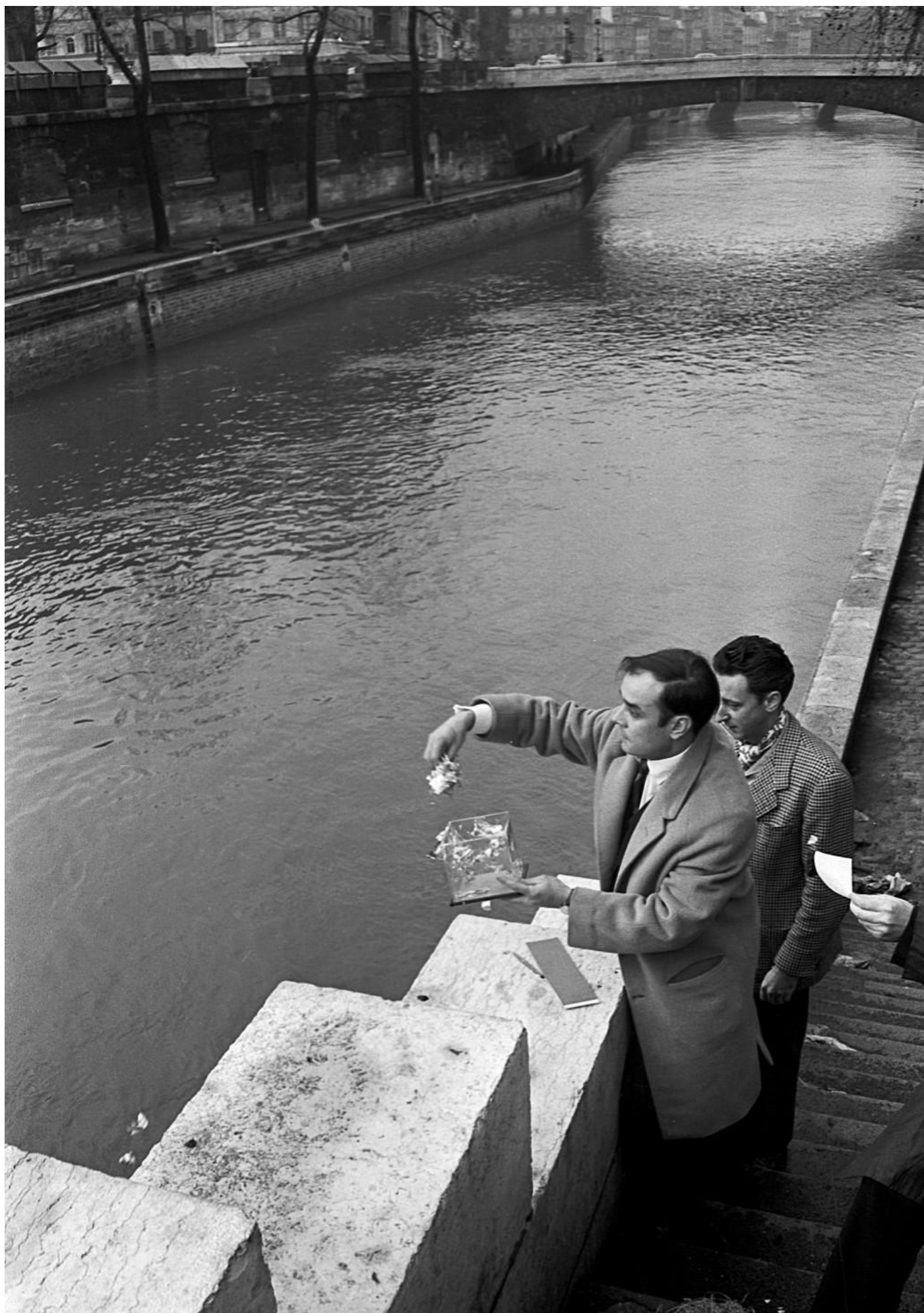
However, the artwork has not ended there. The record is integrated into the memory of the viewer, in the sense of Kierkegaard: memory is repetition, some of the past is presented again in the present. Without repetition we could not recognize anything. Memory surrounds the present as a ghost of the past, a double what it was, happening again in a present expanded. Thus, the viewer will not know what new form the artwork will acquire in his future, because it has already become part of his unconscious.



Yves Klein, *El hombre en el espacio*, 1960



Yves Klein. ANT 105, 1960 | Yves Klein. ANT 125, 1960



Transfer of an *Intangible Pictorial Sensitivity Zone* to Claude Pascal.