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Enabling Authority: Ellen Emmet Rand, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, and the Power of Portraiture

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B.A., Skidmore College, 2011

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Enabling Authority: Ellen Emmet Rand, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, and the Power of Portraiture

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Introduction

Ellen Emmet Rand was hungry, hungry for fame and hungry for fortune. She desired financial freedom and personal independence, making her relationship to modernity less a matter of aesthetic than of self-determination, identity construction, and economic survival. Over the course of her forty-year career Rand established herself as a professional female portrait painter, a public persona and career identity entirely of her own making. When Rand began pursuing portraiture professionally in 1901, it was a newly opened genre for women. Propriety dictated that female artists paint primarily other women and children. Producing over eight-hundred portraits during her lifetime, of which the overwhelming majority were men, Rand challenged tradition—defining for herself what it meant to be a female painter in the twentieth century. Despite the success and critical acclaim Rand's portraits garnered during her lifetime, a permanent legacy eludes her. General indifference to preserving the legacies of women built without glamour or sensuality erased Rand from cultural memory, robbing her of a place in history. Using documentary and visual evidence this project intervenes in the historical record, reclaiming Rand's place as an innovative and important American artist. Rand's most prestigious commission, the official presidential portrait of Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR) offers an opportunity to recover the artistic agency, business acumen, and unrelenting tenacity that made Rand one of the preeminent portrait artists of her day.

Ellen Gertrude Emmet was born in 1875 to a well-to-do Irish immigrant family. Emmet family lore asserts that young Rand demonstrated impressive artistic skills at age four. Despite significant financial hardships caused by the early death of her father,

Rand's mother and the family's extensive network of friends strongly encouraged Rand's artistic development. At the age of twelve Rand attended the Cowles School of Boston to study with Dennis Bunker.[1] After two years in Boston, she enrolled at the Art Students League in New York City, where she studied with painters William Chase, Kenyon Cox, and Robert Reid.[2] During the summer of 1892, Rand attended Chase's Shinnecock summer art school at Southampton, Long Island.[3] While at Shinnecock, Rand's drawings caught the attention of Harry McVicker, who hired her as a staff artist for the newly formed *Vogue* magazine.[4] At age sixteen, Rand's income from illustrating became the sole financial support of her mother and four siblings.[5]

In 1897, at the age of twenty-one, Rand followed her mother and sisters to London. She traveled across the Atlantic armed with two letters of introduction, the first from the architect Charles McKim to painter John Singer Sargent in London, and the second from another architect Stanford White to sculptor Frederick MacMonnies in Paris.[6] A meeting with Sargent encouraged Rand to continue on to Paris, where she entered the atelier of MacMonnies, an ex-patriot at the height of his fame.[7] Four years in Paris, under the watchful eye of MacMonnies prepared Rand with the technical skills necessary for a portrait artist to succeed in a competitive market. Still under significant financial duress, Rand completed a number of commissions from relatives and family

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[1] Hildegard Cummings, *Good Company: Portraits by Ellen Emmet Rand* (Storrs:

[2] Tara Leigh Tappert, *The Emmets: A Generation of Gifted Women* (New York: Borghi & CO, 1993), 37.

[3] Ibid., 38.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Hildegard Cummings, *Good Company: Portraits by Ellen Emmet Rand* (Storrs: The William Benton Museum of Art, University of Connecticut, 1984), 4.

[7] Tappert, *The Emmets*, 39.

friends before returning to the United States in 1901.[8] The fees from these likenesses, including her famous cousins William and Henry James, allowed her to buy passage back across the Atlantic and establish a small studio in New York City.[9]

In the years following her return from Europe, Rand's portraits of industrial titans, leading intellects, and society women garnered critical and commercial praise. In 1902 she received the first one-woman exhibition at Durand-Ruel Gallery in New York.[10] Four years later she broke another barrier for female painters, earning a solo exhibition of ninety canvases at Copley Hall in Boston, an honor she shared only with Claude Monet, James McNeill Whistler, and John Singer Sargent.

In 1911, the artist married William Blanchard Rand. The couple purchased a horse farm in Salisbury, Connecticut, where they maintained a stable of one hundred horses. They had three sons in quick succession, but motherhood did not inhibit Rand's artistic production. During the winter months she moved into her New York City studio with her small children, in order to complete and pursue new commissions.

After three decades of painting professionally, Rand was acknowledged for her talent, but she desired greater recognition. When Rand petitioned Anna Eleanor Roosevelt (AER) for the opportunity to paint her husband for the White House, she had numerous awards to recommend her, including: a bronze medal at the Buenos Aires Exposition in 1910 for her portrait *Fredrick MacMonnies* (ca. 1899); the silver medal at the St. Louis Exposition in 1914 for *Portrait of Susan Metcalf* (ca. 1900); a gold medal at the Panama-Pacific in 1915 for Exposition for *In the Studio* (ca.1910); the Beck Gold

[8] Ibid., 41.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Ellen E. Rand, *Dear Females* (United States: Ellen E. Rand, 2009), 125.

Medal of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in 1922 for *Portrait of Judge Donald T. Warner* (ca. 1921); and the Gold Prize of the National Association of Women Painters and Sculptures in 1927 for *Portraits of Sophie Borie*.[11] FDR's portrait was Rand's chance for a lasting legacy, which she leveraged in every way possible.

Rand transformed her commission from the Roosevelts for a single portrait of FDR into three canvases, but until now the established chronology of these portraits and the narrative of Rand's incompetence that it has supported over time has gone unchallenged. The accepted story stipulates that Rand received a commission from FDR's mother, Sara Delano Roosevelt (SDR), in 1932. Allegedly, FDR and AER disliked the resulting painting, but when the time came to commission FDR's presidential portrait, the Roosevelts offered Rand a second chance. The third image is an unfinished bust portrait, AER requested from Rand while she was finalizing FDR's White House portrait. Chapter One intervenes in this chronology with substantial archival evidence indicating that SDR never commissioned a portrait from Rand before FDR and AER approached her to paint his official White House portrait in 1933. This chronological shift corrects the historical framing of the portrait as a second chance charitably given rather than rightfully earned.

Chapter Two considers Rand's portraits as radical interpretations of FDR's physicality, depicting how FDR understood and experienced his paralysis from poliomyelitis. Rand's portraits highlight the fluidity between FDR's experiences of ability and disability. The nuances of Rand's progressive portraits have gone unnoticed due to contemporary perceptions of FDR's disability as fixed in time and space. Rand resolves

[11] "Mrs. Ellen Rand, Noted Artist, Dies," *New York Times*, December 19, 1941.

the inherent tensions in FDR's oscillations between ability and disability by depicting FDR's physicality two ways. In 1933 she pictured him as the robust and physically vigorous candidate that traveled endlessly across the country in 1932 to win the election. In 1934 Rand depicted FDR gazing off lost in thought, capturing him moving mentally beyond his physicality. The 1934 portrait hung in the White House for eleven years, depicting FDR as warm and accessible, and with this image Rand redefined presidential portraiture for the modern era.

Chapter Three explores Rand's embrace of the media attention FDR's portraits attracted as an opportunity to perform the role of professional female portrait painter before a national audience. Rand's investments in the 1934 portrait's public reception ultimately conflicted with those of AER. Rand and AER controlled the perceptions of their bodies through their objectification of FDR, legitimizing their cultural authority in a contest over the representation of the presidential body.

Despite Rand's determination to establish a legacy through her portraits of FDR, her canvases do not hang on the walls of the White House nor in the esteemed galleries of the National Portrait Gallery. Only one of her three canvases has been preserved for the public and now hangs in the living room of Springwood, the Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt National Historical Site (Springwood) in Hyde Park, New York. President Harry Truman precipitated the erasure of Rand's portraits by replacing her canvas with a portrait by Frank Salisbury. He returned Rand's portrait to the Roosevelt family, who in turn donated it to the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library in 1962 (FDRL). In 2001 the portrait was crated during renovations and never seen again. The Rand family was informed that the portrait had been lost, possibly stolen or accidentally thrown out with the trash

when the FDRL realized it was missing three years later.[12] Despite this obvious loss to the canon of American presidential portraiture, the true travesty of the missing FDR portrait is the appalling fact that its disappearance went unnoticed for three years. How is a portrait of one of America's most prominent and polarizing presidents sent out with the trash?

The portrait's path from 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's National Stolen Art Database is marked by historical conditions that exceed mere negligence. Central to the erasure of Rand and her portrait from cultural memory are the gender biases of the American canon and its finite definition of modern female painters as glamorous bodies that exude sexuality. It is not a coincidence that the sensual and classically beautiful artists such as Georgia O'Keeffe, Lee Krasner, and Helen Frankenthaler, women all tied romantically to the leading male modernists of their day, now occupy a central place in the history of American painting. As a businesswoman and an artist of considerable agency and exceptional skill, Rand defined for herself what it meant to be a professional painter. This performance began at the turn of the century, when Rand started concealing her body under painting robes and behind palettes. This intentionally conservative mode of dressing protected Rand and her desires for economic freedom against degradations of amateurism and associations with sexual impropriety. As the artist aged, she became increasingly self-conscious of her fading beauty and changing physicality, and professionalism became the mask she obscured her figure behind, while communicating her status as a cultural

[12] Jim Rutledge, "Missing FDR Painting from New York Library a Mystery," Antiqueweek.com, accessed May 2, 2015, http://www.antiqueweek.com/ArchiveArticle.asp?newsid=2334.

producer to the public. Rand's efforts to conceal her figure from the public while demanding the nation recognize her status as a professional portrait artist, highlights another central tension of this story: the media's visual perception of public bodies had tangible consequences for the lived experiences of those depicted. When Rand undertook FDR's presidential portrait commission, the stakes were high—historical legacies, political capital, and cultural agency hung in the balance for the painter, sitter, and his wife.

CHAPTER ONE
A Change of Events

In August 1933 the newly elected FDR offered Rand an exceptional opportunity, commissioning her to paint the most important portrait of his career and hers—an official White House portrait (fig. 1). Once elected to the highest office in American politics, FDR was confronted with a deluge of artists seeking to paint, draw, and sculpt the new and popular president. FDR chose Rand to paint his official portrait, making her the first American female painter to receive the honor. The work was intended for permanent display in the White House, assuring a place in history for both of them. The commission was an assertion of control over FDR's historical legacy, just beginning to form in the afterglow of his 'First 100 Days.'

Rand painted FDR three times. The accepted chronology is that the official White House image was the second canvas (fig. 2). Scholars believe the first was commissioned by FDR's mother, SDR, in 1932, and the third is an unfinished bust commissioned by AER in 1934 (fig. 3). This chapter traces the relationship between Rand and the Roosevelts, and explores the inconsistencies of the established timeline. Substantial archival materials indicate SDR did not commission a portrait from Rand in 1932, but purchased one of the two portraits Rand created for the official presidential portrait in 1939. When SDR purchased the portrait, Rand accidently signed the canvas with the incorrect date 1932.[13] This chronological shift directly impacts how Rand's presidential commission has been historically framed and resolves previously irreconcilable discrepancies in the historical documentation for each portrait. This new

[13] It is not clear from Rand's records why she signed the portrait with the incorrect date, but it appears that it was most likely a mistake. I refer to the 1932 date as a mistake throughout.

narrative also intervenes in the gender politics of American history, calling attention to the manner in which Rand's receipt of FDR's White House commission has been wrongfully framed as gallantly given instead of a rightfully earned honor.

At the turn of the century, the lives of a wealthy orphaned debutante and an emerging portrait artist intersected for the first time to form an unlikely friendship. AER and Rand were introduced in 1902 through Bob Ferguson, a former Rough Rider and close family friend of the Oyster Bay side of the Roosevelt family.[14] Ferguson, acting as the young debutante's escort, introduced AER to people outside of her Park Avenue circle including Rand.[15] Ten years AER's senior, Rand's Greenwich Village studio was one of the places where young AER escaped the demands of her social calendar and partook in bohemian fun.[16] The bonds of friendship were forged during a critical period in the lives of both women. Rand's career was gaining significant momentum with prestigious commissions, including AER's uncle, President Theodore Roosevelt, and famed sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens. It was also a period of romantic excitement for AER who was secretly courting her distant cousin FDR. When the Roosevelts' engagement was publicly announced in December of 1904, Rand was one of the first to write to AER to congratulate the young couple, remarking how lucky she and FDR were to have each other:

> I have heard with the greatest interest of your news, I want to be among the first to tell you how much pleasure your happiness gives me knowing as I do "both sides of the question" so to speak, I know how fortunate—

[14] Blanche Wiesen Cook, *Eleanor Roosevelt Vol. I 1884 – 1933* (New York: Penguin Books, 1992),129.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid.

you both are. And you have my warm congratulations. Hoping to see you very soon. (Perhaps next Thursday evening.)[17]

Rand's brief note offered encouragement to her younger friend, insinuating that in Rand's eyes AER was also a catch, and that the handsome Delano Roosevelt heir was equally fortunate in her acceptance of his proposal. Rand writes with humor and sensitivity toward the cruel whispers circulating in New York high society about the Roosevelts' unlikely match. AER was not a typical beauty and was known even to her family as the "ugly duckling."[18] Highly conscious of her appearance AER feared she would not be able to hold FDR's attention and affection.[19] Despite Rand's knowledge of AER's personal life, she was not one of the small group of intimate friends invited to attend the Roosevelts' nuptials, but she sent a thoughtful and carefully calculated gift, a sketch of AER's favorite aunt, Anna Roosevelt Cowles (fig. 4, ca. 1905), which AER cherished.[20] Despite her absence, Rand's gift allowed her to promote herself at the social event of the season, where President Theodore Roosevelt, gave away his niece. According to one of AER's biographers, Blanche Wiesen Cook, Rand's "zest for life and joy in work, as well as her bohemian circle, were refreshing to the uptown debutante."[21] As both women aged, however, fate and fortune separated their paths, and the connection between them faded from one of personal friendship to acquaintances from the same New York City social circles.

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[17] Letter, Ellen 'Bay' Emmet Rand to Eleanor Roosevelt, December 2, 1905, Container 2: Engagement Congratulations, Engagement Congratulations: Letters to AER, Papers of Anna Eleanor Roosevelt, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

[18] Wiesen Cook, *Eleanor Roosevelt Vol. I,* 95.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid.*,*140.

[21] Ibid.

By the time FDR emerged on the national political stage, Rand and AER had been out of touch for decades.[22] Rand, a staunch Republican, abhorred FDR's liberal politics and her diaries from 1932 are filled with frustrated exclamations of the public's approval of him. March 4, 1933, the day of FDR's inauguration, Rand wrote in her diary, puzzling over his election to the presidency: "The Roosevelts have a talent for making things ring with a rich sounding intonation. What is it that touch of aristocracy or this indictment of it, or the fact that they are not plain people—is it because they have a layman's point of view…"[23] By FDR's election, AER and Rand's only remaining connection was Grenville T. Emmet, Rand's first cousin and one of FDR's closest friends from Harvard University. In 1920 FDR joined the law firm of Grenville T. Emmet and his father, Richard Emmet (Rand's paternal uncle). The firm became Emmet, Marvin & Roosevelt, but FDR's active involvement in the firm lasted only a year due to the onset of polio in 1921 and officially ended in 1924.[24] Grenville T. Emmet and his wife, Pauline Emmet, remained close friends with the Roosevelts, with Grenville T. Emmet serving as United States Ambassador to the Netherlands in 1934 through 1937 and Austria in 1937.

A month after Roosevelt's inauguration, on April 10, 1933, Rand lunched with Pauline Emmet. Just back from Washington, D.C., Pauline Emmet brought news of the Roosevelts and a new commission on the horizon for Rand. Rand wrote in her diary that evening, "She [Pauline] said they are very much inclined to have me paint F.D.R. and

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[22] Before 1934 there are no letters archived that attest to AER and Rand being in direct contact or close friends.

[23] Diary, March 4, 1933, Ellen Emmet Rand Papers, Brooklyn, New York.

[24] Tara Leigh Tapport, *The Emmets: A Generation of Gifted Women* (New York: Borghi & CO, 1995), 43.

possibly Eleanor R."[25] A few days later, Rand caught up with her cousin Grenville Emmet, who confirmed that she would most likely be asked to paint the president.[26] An invitation to paint FDR did not arrive promptly, so Rand sought one out. Despite her disgust with FDR's politics, Rand reached out to AER, unwilling to let the opportunity to paint a world leader pass her by. Rand wrote to AER on April 24, 1933:

> I want now to say, that I should like very much to paint a portrait of the President at a time when he can manage it. If not in Washington I could do it at Hyde Park. Which is not far from me. I think in the case of the President being painted the question of price does not come into it as in other cases. If you want to pay me something for it I will leave that to you. I would consider it a great privilege to do the work even if I got nothing for it. I don't know how well you know my portraits but I hope that you feel sufficient confidence in me to want me to do it…The President would be a fine subject perhaps sometime you could come to my studio and I could show you some work and some photographs.[27]

Painting FDR was not all she wanted, Rand also wanted to paint AER. Her letter from April 24, 1933, less forcefully requested to paint AER, she wrote, "I told Pauline [Emmet] that I would like to paint your portrait. I have always thought you are very paintable. She argued with me about this, and said you did not seem to be too much interested."[28] It is noteworthy that even the official request for the commission was seized by Rand, AER, and Pauline Emmet as an opportunity to manipulate their relationships with one another and assert their power over the portrait request. Rand's letter went unanswered, but

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[25] Diary, April 10, 1933, Ellen Emmet Rand Papers, Brooklyn, New York.
[26] Diary, April 12, 1933, Ellen Emmet Rand Papers, Brooklyn, New York.
[27] Letter, Ellen 'Bay' Emmet Rand to Eleanor Roosevelt, April 24, 1933, Container 9: General Correspondence, R-Miscellaneous, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.
[28] Letter, Ellen 'Bay' Emmet Rand to Eleanor Roosevelt, April 24, 1933. Container 9: General Correspondence, R-Miscellaneous, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

Rand was undeterred. Months later, on July 25, 1933, Rand wrote to AER again, expressing her desire to paint the president:

> If there is a chance that I might try my luck with a portrait of the President, would he have time on this next trip to Hyde Park to give me a sitting so that I could get a start. Pauline said that there might be a chance of this, though perhaps he is too busy! I did not suppose he could give many sittings but it might be possible to get one or two. I am not far away, and go in that direction quiet often. As the boys see a good deal of the Delanos.[29]

On August 8, 1933 AER finally replied:

> Franklin says that he is most anxious for you to do his portrait to be left in the White House. The only trouble is that he feels he could afford to pay only a very small sum. Could you do it for one thousand? He says that you can come at anytime while he is here [i.e Hyde Park]. He can give you whatever time you want."[30]

Rand accepted AER's offer the next day, reiterating, "the question of the prices does not come into it at all whether I am paid or what I am paid is not important," and immediately began making plans to travel to the Hyde Park the next day to "see the light."[31]

Regarding the commission price, Rand arguably 'protests too much.' Rand's profession necessitated she move in elite social circles, but maintaining her class standing required continuously negotiating and requesting commission payments, an endless task. As a mother painting to support her children through expensive private educations at the Groton School and Yale University and sustaining the family farm

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[29] Letter, Ellen 'Bay' Emmet Rand to Eleanor Roosevelt, July 25, 1934. Container 9: General Correspondence, R-Miscellaneous, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

[30] Letter, Eleanor Roosevelt to Ellen 'Bay' Emmet Rand, August 8, 1933. Container 9: General Correspondence, R-Miscellaneous, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

[31] Letter, Ellen 'Bay' Emmet Rand to Eleanor Roosevelt, August 9, 1933. Container 9: General Correspondence, R-Miscellaneous, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

during a period when commissions were becoming increasingly difficult to come by, the price mattered a great deal to Rand. A thousand dollars for a portrait that would eventually measure 54 x 42 ½ inches was exceptionally low, especially for an artist who typically received between three and five thousand dollars per commission.[32] AER's assertion of FDR's limited funds shrewdly posited Rand's obvious desire to paint FDR against her financial needs while reinforcing her position of power over the artist. Informing Rand of FDR's financial constraints, insured that she could not negotiate without risking the commission altogether and appearing desperate.

To be fair, FDR's funds for his official White House portrait were limited, despite public appearances.[33] In many ways, Rand and AER faced similar financial fears regarding the upkeep of their elite lifestyles due to troubling family finances.[34] Parallels can also be drawn between AER and Rand's public identity performances as women of significant financial and social stature. Despite their financial realities, both women projected outward appearances of wealth, presenting themselves as having the comfort and stability their elite social connections and presences in society columns implied. Unlike Rand, however, AER did not have control over her family's finances. AER spent the majority of her marriage in the dark about these things and did not share Rand's opportunities to make money by working. The Roosevelts were entirely beholden to

[32] Letter, Anna Roosevelt Cowles to Ellen Emmet Rand, July 15, 1930. Ellen Emmet Rand Papers, Brooklyn, New York. From AER's letter it seems that AER was aware she and FDR were offering considerably less then Rand's standard commission fee. Three years prior to AER commissioning Rand, Rand painted a much smaller portrait of Ann Roosevelt Cowles's son Sheffield at a significant discount for two thousand dollars.

[33] Jan Pottker, *Sara and Eleanor: The Story of Sara Delano* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2004) 245.

[34] Ibid.

FDR's mother, SDR, for their financial solvency, living far beyond the income from their inheritances and FDR's small earnings from public office.[35] Only in 1928 did AER begin seeking some small financial independence and security, earning a small salary writing for the popular women's magazines, *Redbook* and *McCall's,* in order to support her own projects and charitable causes.[36]

Ultimately, FDR did not have to pay for the portrait at all. By personally funding Rand's commission, FDR broke with century-old acquisition policies of the Executive Mansion. In the late nineteenth century, Congress began appropriating funds for each president to commission a portrait for the White House collection from an artist of their choosing.[37] During the early-nineteenth century, Gilbert Stuart's portrait of George Washington was the only one in the White House collection.[38] The absence of portraits in the White House reflected early efforts to historicize the young nation and make a clear separation between the seat of power of the fledgling democracy and the grandeur of European palaces, where portraits attested to bloodlines and the divine right of kingship.[39] Not until the 1857 arrival of prominent American portrait painter George P.A. Healy in Washington, D.C., did Congress commission a series of portraits of past presidents for the White House.[40] After the White House presidential portrait collection

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[35] See Wiesen Cook, *Eleanor Roosevelt Vol. I,* 266. The Roosevelts maintained two homes with large staffs, significant medical expenses due to FDR's polio and extended stays to in Warm Springs Rehabilitation Center, and relied heavily upon the generosity of SDR.

[36] Ibid.*,* 332.

[37] "Inside The White House: Décor and Art," The White House, accessed October 4, 2014, http://www.whitehouse.gov/about/inside-white-house/art.

[38] William Kloss, eds., *Art In The White House: A Nations Pride* (Washington, D.C.: White House Historical Association, 2008), 24.

[39] Ibid., 26.

[40] Ibid., 29.

was firmly established it remained customary, if the president commissioned a portrait before the end of his term, to display it out of the public eye. Portraits of incumbent presidents were placed in the private rooms of the first family until the end of the sitter's term, when it could be officially accessioned into the White House collection by a Congressional committee and moved into the public rooms.[41]

By commissioning Rand early in his presidency, FDR followed the example set by his twentieth century predecessors, including his idol President Theodore Roosevelt. With the exception of President Herbert Hoover, all of FDR's predecessors sat for their White House portraits within the first two years of their presidencies. When Rand inquired where in the public rooms her portrait might hang, FDR responded, "As to 'hanging myself' it is quite contrary to custom to have any portrait of the incumbent in the White House where anyone can see it! Therefore, we are going to hang it in the upstairs hall."[42]

During his lifetime FDR sat for over forty portraits and busts, willing to sit it, would seem, for portraits commissioned by any government agency or private institution that wished to have his likeness. FDR also collected portraits of himself, taking great joy in surrounding himself with his own image, much it seems to AER's horror. The sheer number of portraits of FDR displayed in Springwood, prompted a humorous quip from AER regarding his penchant for portraits in a letter exchanged with Rand concerning the possibly of AER sitting for a portrait of her own:

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[41] "Inside The White House: Décor and Art."

[42] Letter, Franklin Roosevelt to Ellen 'Bay' Emmet Rand, June 19, 1934. Papers as President, Family, Business and Personal Papers, Container 5, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

> I really will turn you down on painting me! I simply cannot bear it! There are so many busts and portraits of Franklin around the house that I could not bear to add one of mine to the collection. I would love to have you do any sketches of the White House and grounds or of anybody else you would like.[43]

AER conveys a sense that Springwood brought a highly literal meaning to the expression 'the walls have eyes,' due to FDR's enthusiasm for portraits of himself. But equally telling is AER's adamant refusal to be Rand's subject. AER begs Rand to turn her critical gaze anywhere but on to her, putting all of the White House at Rand's disposal, so long as she did not attempt to paint the First Lady. Public life required the constant presentation of AER's body through photographs, but the woman who known to her own family as an "ugly duckling," vehemently declined to be the subject of visual representations when given the choice, unlike FDR who relished the attention.

FDR was highly accommodating to artists who wished to work from life, although he was too busy to pose. He frequently welcomed artists into his office or sitting room to paint or sketch while he worked.[44] However, during his tenure as Naval Secretary, New York Governor, and President, FDR refused to give formal sittings, preferring to allow artists to do what they might with his constant movements and the interruptions of his staff, rather than sacrifice his valuable time and pose perfectly still.[45] As president,

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[43] Letter, Eleanor Roosevelt to Ellen 'Bay' Emmet Rand, May 16, 1934. Container 9: General Correspondence, R-Miscellaneous, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

[44] Otis L. Graham, and Meghan Robinson Wander, *Franklin D. Roosevelt: An Encyclopedic View (*Boston: G.K. Hall, 1985), 333.

[45] Ibid. Artist Samuel Johnson Woolf, who painted FDR in 1941 described the experience of painting FDR as: "He is a sympathetic sitter who always expresses great interest in the progress of a drawing. But he is rarely quiet and, to make matters harder, his expression constantly changes…I cannot remember any other sitter whose face seemed to vary so much as his, or so often or so quickly" (As quoted in: Meschutt, "Portraits of Franklin Delano Roosevelt," 46.)

demands for sittings occasionally necessitated making arrangements for multiple artists to paint him at the same time.[46] In the years Rand painted FDR (1933-34), she was one of only six to have life sittings with the president; she was also the first female artist to receive a portrait commission from FDR personally.[47]

Painting the president was an honor but it certainly was not a pleasure. Rand found FDR's unwillingness to pose and the constant interruptions of his aids, congressmen, and cabinet members arduous. During her first trip to the White House, Rand exasperatedly wrote in her diary, "I could really get a lot of fun out of this life, it is comfortable & very independent, it is O.K. as long as one is not trying to paint the President."[48] Her progress was further delayed by the arrival of sculptor Jo Davidson in December 1933.[49] Aggravated at first by Davidson's interruption, Rand eventually found solace in their shared frustrations. The artists commiserated at the opening of Davidson's exhibition later that year in New York, noting that evening in her diary, "J.D. said he thought him [FDR] very difficult."[50]

Rand was a dedicated diarist, writing daily about her work, family, friends, and health. Her journals provide a unique perspective into the development of portraits from the artist's point of view. Rand devoted the majority of her daily pages to the coming and goings of her sons, sisters, and friends, remarking upon her work only in passing—

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[46] David Meschutt, "Portraits of Franklin Delano Roosevelt," *American Art Journal* 18 (1986): 8.

[47] Rand's 1933 portrait made her the first woman to be commissioned by FDR personally. Society painter Natalie Johnson Van Vleck was the first female artist to depict FDR, commissioned by the New York State Historical Association's collection of governor portraits (Fig. 18). For other portraits of FDR from this period see: Meschutt, "Portraits of Franklin Delano Roosevelt," 9-21.

[48] Diary, November 11, 1933, Ellen Emmet Rand Papers, Brooklyn, New York.

[49] Diary, December 5, 1933, Ellen Emmet Rand Papers, Brooklyn, New York.

[50] Diary, December 20, 1933, Ellen Emmet Rand Papers, Brooklyn, New York.

except for the period when she was painting FDR. Rand painted FDR for approximately nine months, from the summer of 1933 to the spring of 1934, and her diaries detail her progress, anxieties, and frustrations at length. Rand's careful records provide the foundation for establishing a new timeline for her FDR portraits and subsequently, an alternative artistic legacy.

The historical record established by Rand's own signature, which dates her first portrait of FDR (fig. 2) as 1932, is incorrect and must be challenged. The portrait currently hanging in the living room of Springwood was not a commission from SDR, but Rand's first canvas for the White House portrait that FDR's mother later purchased from the artist in 1939. Rand signed the portrait, after the sale and six years after its completion, with an incorrect date. An intervention in the chronological narrative is necessary because the 1932 date is erroneous and has led scholars to overlook both Rand and one of the most prestigious and historically significant commissions of her career. The history of this portrait is also tarnished by FDR and AER's supposed disapproval of the likeness, causing historians to label it a failure. This claim can be traced back to the FDRL's curatorial files on Rand, which state without substantiating documentation, "neither President Roosevelt nor his wife cared much for this portrait, but it was a favorite of his mother."[51] Interpretations of the 1932 date, in conjunction with the claims of FDR's alleged displeasure with the canvas, have diminished Rand's legacy. David Meschutt's essay, "Portraits of Franklin Delano Roosevelt" builds upon the timeline using a quote from the artist's son that recalls, "she felt she had worked on

[51] Ellen Emmet Rand, Curatorial File, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

it too much and wanted to make a fresh start."[52] Meschutt uses this quote to argue that Rand also found the portrait unsuccessful, causing her to seek out a second chance from FDR. Meschutt implies that FDR and AER were receptive to Rand's plea and that she was given the White House portrait as an opportunity for a "fresh start."[53] This narrative suggests Rand's incompetence, inexperience, and insecurity as an artist, disregarding the thirty years Rand labored establishing herself as a leading portraitist. FDR's commission is then read as a benevolent favor to an aging female artist, one who could not get it right on the first try. Instead, I argue that FDR commissioned Rand as one of the preeminent portrait painters of her time and when she made a fresh start, it was at her own discretion.

During the first six months Rand painted FDR, August to December 1933, she referred to her portrait in her diary as the "President's portrait." In January of 1934, Rand began making a distinction between a first presidential portrait and a second in her letters and diary, indicating that Rand painted the White House portrait twice during this period. Rand began the second because she—not the Roosevelts—was unsatisfied with her results. After a week of sittings with FDR at Hyde Park in late August 1933, Rand reflected on her progress with frustration, "I worked hard on the head & got it much better but there is still something about the portrait not to my taste. People seem to like it quiet a bit."[54] Rand wrote the next day following another sitting at Hyde Park, "Everything went well today. I just wish the far arm less fussy—but I can't help that…I

[52] Meschutt, "Portraits of Franklin Delano Roosevelt,"11.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Diary, August 28, 1933, Ellen Emmet Rand Papers, Brooklyn, New York.

will get it O.K. at any rate. They think it like him."[55] Rand's diaries voice the opinions of an artist confident in her abilities and clear in her vision. Meschutts misinterpreted Rand's son, and his reference to Rand's fresh start reflects her artistic agency. Having worked the portrait to a point where she was no longer satisfied, Rand began again; but, because of her age and gender, Rand's devotion to her artistic integrity has been twisted into a narrative of incompetence and failure. Had the first portrait been a true failure in her eyes, she would have destroyed it or painted it over. Painting two portraits for the commission was an artistic choice but also a shrewd business strategy, allowing Rand to walk away from the commission with an additional canvas that she might sell to recover the funds she lost by accepting FDR's meager commission payment. On the market, a presidential portrait done from life sittings is far more valuable than one modeled from a photograph.

The portrait SDR ultimately purchased is the same painting that accompanied the *Harford Courant*'s announcement that FDR was sitting for his official White House portrait (fig. 5). Published on September 3, 1933, the photograph depicts both FDR and Rand, posed before the unfinished canvas. According to Rand's diary, the photograph was taken on August 30, 1933.[56] In November 1933, Rand journeyed to Washington, D.C. for sittings with Roosevelt with a blank canvas to begin a new portrait. On the midnight train down from New York she wrote, "going to the White House to spend the week end, what will come of it heaven alone knows but I have a canvas to paint a ready F.D.R. and that I am going to do, so that I can get the thing just right and I will sit around

[55] Diary, August 29, 1933, Ellen Emmet Rand Papers, Brooklyn, New York
[56] Diary, November 10, 1933, Ellen Emmet Rand Papers, Brooklyn, New York.

until I get enough sittings."[57] On her first day at the White House, she had poor sittings, but "mostly got him drawn in—he looks well I think."[58] The following day went more smoothly for her, "The President said he would sit until a conference at 3, so up I flew & got started, I was surrounded by Cabinet officers & secretaries, but I pushed right ahead and got some paint on & got I think a proper start."[59] As Rand continued to work on this second canvas, she was confident in her efforts. On January 23, 1934 Rand wrote, "I did do a lot I worked on the 2nd Presidential portrait. It really is a lot better than the first & may turn out all right. Several people have seen it & all like it very much. I worked darned hard, how glad I will be when it is finished."[60] She had the second portrait photographed in preparation for her last series of sittings with FDR, enabling her to show FDR and AER her progress.[61] Rand wrote of the first family's approval of the second portrait to her husband from Washington, D.C. on January 26, 1934:

> "Miss. Delano, Freddy's Aunt is staying here…she is going to bring the model of the Constitution from Hyde Park so I can put it in the second portrait. They all like the photograph very much, a lot better than the first portrait. My sketch down here is going alright and I had a good sitting through he was going over papers all the time. Such telephone messages he was getting all the time, about bills being passed, and appropriations of hundreds of millions, but he did not turn a hair. The sketch will be a great help to me."[62]

During these last sittings, Rand began a third portrait of FDR, one that might have been specifically meant for AER. In a letter to AER the next week, Rand wrote, "The sittings I had over the weekend helped quite a lot so I shall finish that head & shoulders for you.

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[57] Ibid.
[58] Diary, November 11, 1933, Ellen Emmet Rand Papers, Brooklyn, New York.
[59] Diary, November 12, 1933, Ellen Emmet Rand Papers, Brooklyn, New York.
[60] Diary, January 23, 1934, Ellen Emmet Rand Papers, Brooklyn, New York.
[61] Diary, January 26, 1934, Ellen Emmet Rand Papers, Brooklyn, New York.
[62] Letter, Ellen Emmet Rand to Blanchard Rand, Ellen Emmet Rand Papers, Brooklyn, New York.

It has possibilities with a little more work."[63] This bust portrait (fig. 3) was never completed and remained unknown to the public until 1947 when it was discovered in Rand's attic, six years after her death.[64] The bust portrait is a testament to Rand's keen ability to turn a single commission into many. On her last trip to Washington, D.C., not only did Rand leave with a second commission from the Roosevelts, but she secured herself an invitation back to the White House. Laying the groundwork for additional commissions, Rand left blank canvases in the care of FDR's personal secretary, Marguerite LeHand, for safe keeping until she could return in the fall and paint the White House grounds.[65]

Rand's distinction between a first and a second portrait cannot be between a 1932 canvas and a 1934 canvas because Rand did not paint Roosevelt in 1932, and as the *Hartford Courant* photograph illustrates, the portrait was unfinished in the fall of 1933. This fact is corroborated by absences from both Rand and SDR's historical records. In Rand's diaries from 1931 through 1932, when she would have presumably painted the portrait commissioned by SDR, there is no mention of painting the president elect nor receiving a commission from his mother, although, her displeasure with FDR's politics were frequently mentioned. A close examination of the correspondence and accounting records of both Rand and SDR likewise reveals that the artist and the president's mother were also not in contact in 1932, nor did SDR pay Rand a

[63] Letter, Ellen 'Bay' Emmet Rand to Eleanor Roosevelt, February 1, 1934. Container 9: General Correspondence, R-Miscellaneous, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

[64] Ellen Emmet Rand, Curatorial File, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

[65] Letter, Eleanor Roosevelt to Ellen 'Bay' Emmet Rand, May 17, 1934. Container 9: General Correspondence, R-Miscellaneous, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

commission fee at this time. SDR, however, did pay Rand in 1939 for a portrait of her son.[66]

On November 18, 1939, Rand and her husband packed the first portrait of FDR into their station wagon and drove to Hyde Park for lunch with SDR.[67] Prior to this date Rand makes no mention of painting FDR, indicating that she retained the first White House portrait. Rand wrote in her diary that evening:

> The President came in late for lunch & sat right down at the table. He came in to the dinning room & all greeted him there he was very pleasant and chatty & had a good conversation with Eleanor. Blanchard already liked him, we all feel fond of Mother Roosevelt, "Mummy" as F.D.R. calls her. She and I had a business chat & she decided to buy it for $2,500. I left it there[68]

The next week, Rand returned to Hyde Park for, "lunch with Mrs. R. & [to] sign the portrait of the President."[69] Five years after painting the first canvas from the White House commission, Rand accidentally signed it with the incorrect date 1932. A single digit, unfortunately marked by Rand's own hand, was enough to distort the accomplishments of the first female portrait painter in the historical record.

FDR commissioned Rand not as charitable gesture or a second chance, but as one of the preeminent portrait painters in the United States. Until now, narratives of failure and incompetence engendered by the 1932 date have obscured Rand's creative

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[66] Diary, December Accounts 1939, Ellen Emmet Rand Papers, Brooklyn, New York.

[67] Ibid.

[68] Diary, November 18, 1939, Ellen Emmet Rand Papers, Brooklyn, New York. Ultimately, SDR paid less then the originally negotiate price. Rand described the tea where she lowered the price of the president's mother in her diary as, "Mrs. R's gave me a check & I cut down the price a bit as I think that it was troubling her and after all she is a good sport after all." See: Diary, December 9, 1939, Ellen Emmet Rand Papers, Brooklyn, New York.

[69] Diary, November 25, 1939, Ellen Emmet Rand Papers, Brooklyn, New York.

and professional agency. As a woman who painted for artistic satisfaction and to maintain the lifestyle she and her family were accustomed to, Rand was tenacious in her pursuit of commissions; so when painting the leader of the free world became a possibility, she made it a reality. Despite her hatred of FDR's politics and the frustrations she experienced painting a man who refused to pose, Rand's dedication to her vision for the portrait was absolute. She painted the modern presidency, portraying FDR as dignified yet accessible while capturing the extraordinary complexities of FDR's physicality as he experienced them. Knowing the portrait guaranteed her a small space in the history of American art, Rand transformed a commission for one canvas into three, attempting to ensure her name and her work would not be forgotten.

CHAPTER TWO
Portraying Ability

The story of Rand's FDR portraits is a story of two people's attempts to overcome the restrictive hegemonies of their physicalities through portraiture. Both Rand and FDR entered the commission with specific notions of how this canvas would shift the perceptions of their bodies and shape their legacies. In order to explore how these portraits were ultimately erased from cultural memory, a parallel must be drawn between FDR's efforts to manipulate his body to his own ends and Rand's efforts to do the same. Rand wished to shift the cultural constraints placed upon her body as a female portrait artist with financial strains. FDR desired to memorialize himself with the body he understood himself to have, one that reflected his own desires and mobility. Rand wanted to be remembered not merely as a lady painter. If FDR could circumvent the complexities of his body to become Commander and Chief of the United States, then surely she could find her own success and visibility.

Rand's portraits must be contextualized within the investments of FDR, the electorate of 1932, and contemporary American history in the capabilities of his body's mobility. FDR's body existed in the liminal space between ability and disability, and he used these frames to create a narrative about his paralysis as a journey of recovery. FDR spun a heroic narrative about his perseverance over poliomyelitis, but it was not mere political posturing—through seven years of rigorous rehabilitation FDR had regained strength that enabled a limited mobility.[70] During the 1932 presidential election, Republicans asserted that his physical disability made FDR unfit to hold public

[70] Matthew Pressman, "Ambivalent Accomplices: How the Press Handled FDR's Disability and How FDR Handled the Press," *The Journal of the Historical Society* XIII: 3 (2013): 332.

office, which he refuted with strategies historians now categorize as normative performances of ability or passing.[71] After his inauguration, FDR's paralysis continued to be an issue for his critics. Using this issue against him was complicated because his body was no longer attached to a singular identity, but functioned as a symbol of the Executive Office and the nation.[72] At the time of FDR's death in 1945, the American people did not know the true extent of his paralysis.

Yet, in subsequent decades, and with the increased civil rights and theoretical work around disability issues, Roosevelt's disability has become a critical element of his legacy. Rand's portraits of FDR highlight a tension in the realities of FDR's lived experience and contemporary history's rigid categorization of his body as disabled, a characterization reinforced by historical understandings of disability as biologically determined, instead of as culturally constructed. New consciousness regarding the discourses that define and sustain disability, much like the constraints that have been placed upon race, gender, and sexuality, have prompted the reimagining of FDR's legacies. This shift culminated in 2001, when the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial was reopened with a figurative representation of FDR seated in the wheelchair the American people never saw (fig. 6 and fig. 7). Planned for decades before the ground breaking in 1991, the monument is a product of its historical moment and the

[71] Daniel J. Wilson, "Passing in the Shadow of FDR," in *Disability and Passing*, ed. Jeffery A Brune and Daniel J. Wilson (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2013), 15.

[72] Pressman, "Ambivalent Accomplices," 350-351. Pressman argues that the American public found overt attempts to use FDR's paralysis against him offensive, citing the black lash Georgia governor Eugene Talmadge faced when attacking FDR's radical politics by making reference to his inability to walk. The press and the general public expressed outrage at the impropriety of such blatant attempts to use FDR's body against him for political gain.

emergence of the disability rights movement.[73] Designed by Lawrence Halprin in 1975 the monument was planned with one large-scale figurative statue of FDR. After much negotiation between Halprin, the sculptor Neil Estern, and the congressional memorial commission regarding how to depict FDR's body, it was decided to depict FDR seated.[74] The sculpture presents FDR's shoulders draped with a naval cape. Underneath the cape, two small wheels are barely visible (fig. 6).[75] FDR's dog, Fala was included in the design; Fala was the president's constant companion and favorite mode of deflecting attention.[76] In the interim between the initial designs and the unveiling, the identity politics of the 1980s and the passage of the 1990 Americans with Disability Act recast FDR as a symbolic figure and role model for disability activists.[77] Disability activists demanded the memorial reflect FDR's disability more acutely, and their efforts resulted in the addition of a second figurative representation of FDR clearly seated in a wheelchair (fig. 7).[78] When the Franklin D. Roosevelt Memorial reopened in 2001, the second statue solidified a paralysis, which he actively obscured from the general public during his lifetime, as central to his historical memory. The FDR this memorial commemorates is not the figure Rand depicts.

Rand's portraits communicate FDR's limited mobility and his comfort with his body. Interpreting these images as mere continuations of FDR's passing strategies or succumbing to public pressure denies the fluidity between paralysis and disability that

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[73] Sally Stien, "The President's Two Bodies: Staging and Restaging of FDR and the New Deal Body Politic," *American Art* 18, no. 1 (Spring 2004), 51.
[74] Ibid.
[75] Ibid., 46.
[76] Ibid., 49.
[77] Ibid., 51.
[78] Ibid., 51.

characterized FDR's experiences of his own body. History has also passed judgments about FDR's representation of his body, labeling his choices and his power to execute them as deception, conspiracy, and shame.[79] I argue that FDR's body falls victim to a paradigm which reifies the binary of disability versus ability, obscuring the complexities of his lived reality and perpetuating narratives that privilege able-bodiedness. FDR walked, FDR drove, and FDR stood before thousands; he did these things non-normatively, but he did them nonetheless. Moving in non-normative ways also brought FDR pleasure. These actions are inharmonious enactments of ability and normative performances. An understanding of them as both is critical to Rand's portrayals of FDR, which replicate his lived experience by painting him without a fixed conception of the limits of his physicality.

Considering FDR's self-presentations as liminal and situational highlights the ways Rand's portraits contradict twenty-first century determinations of FDR as exclusively disabled. Using the work of disability theorist Tobin Sieber, I argue that a more nuanced understanding of FDR's relationship to his paralysis is necessary to highlight the progressive nature of Rand's portraits. Sieber's essay "Disability As Masquerade" offers a theoretical framework for reconsidering how FDR's historical memory is bound to a wheelchair he only used for transitional moments and never remained seated on. Sieber challenges the rhetoric of passing as ultimately reinforcing binaries between disability and able-bodiedness, suggesting that framing disability as a

[79] Hough Gregory Gallagher, *FDR's Splendid Deception* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1985), 212.

masquerade offers conceptual flexibility that better encompasses the spectrum of differently abled experience.[80] Sieber argues:

> Passing preserves social hierarchies because it assumes that individuals want to rise above their present social station and that the station to which they aspire belongs to a dominant social group. It stamps the dominant social position as simultaneously normative and desirable.[81]

Exploring the ways disability and visibility intersect in the daily lives of those who are constantly confronted by a society shaped by and for normative bodies, Sieber presents anecdotes that reveal the social, political, and personal motivations for concealing, revealing, or exaggerating bodily difference.[82] Sieber's examples highlight the situational nature of disability; his framework of the masquerade demonstrates how the needs of the differently abled can be momentarily satisfied by making disability visible or rejecting dominant society's understanding of disability as fixed and stable.[83] While Sieber's examples do not fit the historical conditions that defined FDR's reality, his underlying conceptualization of the fluidity between ability and disability as a means of empowerment for the differently abled is crucial to reconsidering FDR's lived experience and Rand's portrayals of it.

The tensions between enactment and performance surrounding FDR's body are demonstrated in a 1928 photograph from FDR's gubernatorial campaign. The image testifies to his dignified countenance and physical prowess (fig. 8). FDR stands erect staring outward to meet the speculative gaze of the American electorate. Grasping a

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[80] Tobin Siebers, "Disability As Masquerade," *Literature and Medicine* 23 (2004): 5.

[81] Ibid., 5.

[82] Ibid., 8.

[83] Ibid.,19.

cane in a stately manner, the photograph communicates restraint and authority. Upon closer examination, however, it is clear that FDR holds a second cane behind his back. Twenty-first century constructions of FDR's memory dictate that this photograph be read as a masquerade or a deception about a body and what it could not do.[84] In the first half of the twentieth century, however, this image functioned for FDR as a demonstration of his accomplishment in refusing to allow poliomyelitis to stifle the advancement of his political goals. This photograph also illustrates how FDR resolved the tensions between his enactments and performance of ability by presenting the contortions each entailed as comfortable and natural. Standing rigid while discreetly holding a second cane behind his back, would have required a painful twisting of his torso and thrusting of his shoulder forward in order to make his upper-body appear lateral. Attesting to the ability of his body through its visual representation, FDR transcended the limits society places on bodies coded as disabled.

Discourses surrounding the presentation of FDR's body focus largely on the reception of the viewing public, framing his prohibition on photographs depicting him in his wheelchair and his non-normative walking as extensions of a fraudulent narrative of recovery.[85] These assertions falsely presume the permanence of disability, and ignore

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[84] Sally Stien, "The President's Two Bodies,"33.

[85] See Pressman for a full discussion of FDR's ban on photographs depicting him as disabled. According to Pressman, from 1933 when Roosevelt took office to his death in 1945, only one photograph depicting Roosevelt in his wheelchair was published. And of the 35,000 photographs of him in the archives of the FDRL, only two additional photographs depicting him seated in his wheelchair are known, both of which were published after his death (Pressman, "Ambivalent Accomplices, 337). The most common theory regarding the press's compliance in concealing Roosevelt's paralysis is that a "gentleman's agreement" existed between the press and the White House. There were certainly individual photographers who out of respect for the president refrained from photographing him being pushed in his wheel chair, attempting to walk ramps, or

portraiture's ability to mitigate FDR's dysphoria regarding the material condition of his physicality. Portraiture offered FDR the pleasures of being seen and an authority over his representation that photography [and indeed even his daily reality] could not. FDR seemed to find genuine enjoyment in having his portrait taken and surrounding himself with them. Misconstruing FDR's paralysis as a constant state of disability ignores the periods of time when he believed himself to be in recovery and the situational nature disability can inhabit.[86]

Roosevelt contracted poliomyelitis in August of 1921, seven years before becoming governor of New York and eleven years before winning the presidency. The public was informed of FDR's affliction on September 16, 1921, with an announcement in the *New York Times*:

> Dr. George Draper of 116 East Sixty-Third Street, Mr. Roosevelt's family physician, said that Mr. Roosevelt's condition was much improved, and that he was regaining control of his legs. He is still unable to walk, however. 'I cannot say how long Mr. Roosevelt will be kept in the hospital,' said Dr. Draper, 'but you can say definitely that he will not be crippled. No one need have any fear of permanent injury from this attack.'[87]

Upon reading the article, FDR jested, "Now that I have seen the same statement officially made in the *New York Times* I feel immensely relieved because I know it must

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being carried to his car, but the FDR White House did not leave anything to chance (Pressman, "Ambivalent Accomplices," 339). A 1946 survey of the White House photography corps states that photographers who, "Disregarded instructions…and were caught taking banned photographs had their cameras emptied, their film exposed to sunlight, or their plates smashed by the secret service" (Pressman, "Ambivalent Accomplices," 339). For members of the White House press corps photographers who transgress Roosevelt's dictums also risked being barred from the White House altogether (Pressman, "Ambivalent Accomplices," 340).

[86] Robery E. Gilbert, "Disability, Illness and the Presidency: The Case of Franklin D. Roosevelt," *Politics and the Life Sciences* 7, 1 (August, 1988), 35.

[87] "F.D. Roosevelt Ill of Poliomyelitis," *New York Times*, September 16, 1921.

be true."[88] Historians point to this optimism as the first act in a performance of deception that would carry on for twenty years. Two months after the initial onset, the virus had not even run its course and permanent paralysis was not a forgone conclusion.[89] From the medically informed viewpoint of twenty-first century, scholars recognize that full recovery was a biological impossibility. In 1921, however, that was not how medicine understood the poliomyelitis, its treatment, or rehabilitation from its symptoms.[90] What the future held for the material condition of FDR's body was still unknown to him in the fall of 1921, a critical detail advocates of deception theories conveniently ignore.

FDR removed himself from the public spotlight for seven years to focus on rehabilitation from the virus's symptoms, sidelining his political aspirations for the better half of a decade. Within his first year of convalescence, FDR developed a means of reconciling the state of his health with his paralysis, coming to understand it as negligible to his overall well-being. FDR reported to his doctor:

> My health has become remarkably good and I can negotiate steps. I am glad to say that Dr. Lovett finds all the muscles working and all of them growing more powerful daily, in every other way I am entirely normal and, in fact, in better health than I have been in years.[91]

FDR viewed himself as improved because rehabilitation had strengthened his body beyond its condition prior to falling ill, an attitude he would sustain throughout two gubernatorial campaigns and his first presidential campaign. In a draft of a campaign speech from 1928, FDR planned to attest to his robust health, "Let me soothe their fears

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[88] Geoffrey C. Ward, *A First-Class Temperament: The Emergence of Franklin Roosevelt* (New York: Harper & Row, 1989), 609.

[89] Davis W. Houck and Amos Kiewe, *FDR's Body Politics: The Rhetoric of Disability* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2003), 24.

[90] Daniel J. Wilson, "A Crippling Fear: Experiencing Polio in the Era of FDR," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 72, no. 3 (1998), 476.

[91] As quoted in: Houck and Kiewe, *FDR's Body Politics, 27*.

by explaining that the impossibility of indulging in excessive physical exercise has enabled me to take far better care of my health than is the case of most men as actively engaged in business as I have been for the last four years."[92] FDR's professions of his vigorous health and the normative nature of his body in all other regards, were exemplified by his experiences with hydrotherapy.

While submerged in water, FDR regained the full locomotion of his legs. After his discovery of hydrotherapy, FDR wrote to his physician, thrilled with the results, "For the past month I have been swimming three times a week, and the legs work perfectly in the water. In every other way I am perfectly normal."[93] In the water, FDR was able bodied, and as a result, he devoted himself to hydrotherapy, ultimately investing in Warm Springs, a dilapidated resort, in Warm Springs, Georgia.[94] The temporal nature of FDR's experience of disability was best exemplified by the full mobility he regained in water, but it was a state of ability that could not be effectively presented to the public, so he developed one that could.

When FDR began preparing his reentrance into national politics in 1928, he was resolute in his determination to, "walk without crutches…I'll walk into a room without scaring everybody half to death. I'll stand easily enough in front of people so that they'll forget I'm a cripple."[95] FDR, with the aid of Helena Mahoney, a physical therapist at Warm Springs, developed a manner of walking with a cane and the aid of one of his

[92] As quoted in: Houck and Kiewe, *FDR's Body Politics, 50*.
[93] As quoted in: Houck and Kiewe, *FDR's Body Politics, 27.*
[94] Kenneth Walsh, "FDR's Old Healing Place," *U.S. News & World Reports*, May 16, 2015.
[95] As quoted in: Ward, *A First-Class Temperament,* 107.

sons or later secret service men.[96] Grasping his son's arm and a cane for support FDR could propel himself forward:

> Elliot [Roosevelt] would stand, holding his right arm flexed at a ninety-degree angle, his forearm rigid as a parallel bar. Roosevelt would stand beside Elliot, tightly gripping his son's arm. In his right hand Roosevelt held a cane. His right arm was straight and held rigid with his index finger pressing firmly straight down along the line of the cane. In this posture he could "walk," although in a curious toddling manner, hitching up first one leg with the aid of the muscles along the side of his trunk, then placing his weight upon that leg, then using the muscles along his other side, and hitching the other leg forward—first one side, and hitching the other leg forward—first one side and then the other, and so on and so on.[97]

This strategy for non-normative walking in combination with his significant upper body strength enabled him to reach a podium and deliver speeches, and thus campaign like his opponents.

Walking and standing as enactments of ability intersected with FDR's normative performativity in moments of transition. Moving between his car and his wheelchair and mounting stairs without ramps caused the paralysis of FDR's legs to become a disability.[98] These moments necessitated the aid of others, and FDR felt they made him appear weak, so he insisted they not be photographed. FDR's prohibition on photographing him in his wheelchair or being carried by the secret service is framed by contemporary history as a conspiracy to deceive the American public, but these assertions ignore FDR's private desires to present himself in what he understood to be the best light possible.

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[96] Gallagher, *FDR's Splendid Deception,* 65.

[97] As quoted in Gallagher, Ibid.

[98] Rosemarie Garland-Thomas, *Extraordinary Bodies: Figuring Physical Disability in American Culture and Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 7.

In the 1920s the handicapped were often marginalized both in public and cultural spaces.[99] Citizens perceived as disabled were relegated to care centers ill equipped to offer relief or support for the physical and psychological elements of disability or kept at home by their families. According to historian Hugh Gregory Gallagher, "to be handicapped in some visible way carried with it social opprobrium. The handicapped were kept at home, out of sight, in back bedrooms, by families who felt a mixture of embarrassment and shame about their presence."[100] Further, poliomyelitis was associated with the lowest socioeconomic classes, particularly immigrant communities. Despite the emergence of germ theory, poliomyelitis was also believed to stem from immoral behaviors, according to medical historian Naomi Rogers "germs, in lay thought, did not spread randomly; infection depended on class, ethnicity, and personal habits of individuals."[101] In light of these realities, the accusatory manner in which historians write about FDR's refusal to be photographed in transitional moments must be reevaluated.

American history glorifies its figures into flat characterizations without needs or desires, but FDR was a man with significant self-consciousness about his body. Twenty-first century historical lenses have overlooked the nuisances of FDR living as differently abled. While moving in the water, driving cars, and standing FDR had moments when his body did not visibly or actively inhibit him. Critiques of FDR's tactics reinforce binaries between disability and normativity. Disregarding FDR's understanding of himself as a healthy man and his interest in presenting the nation with the vigorous man he understood himself to be, is the linchpin in this scholastic oversight

[99] Gallagher, *FDR's Splendid Deception*, 29.
[100] Ibid.
[101] Naomi Rogers, *Dirt and Disease: Polio Before FDR* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1992) 21.

Rand's portraits provided FDR the opportunity to memorialize his body as he experienced it. Rand painted two portraits of FDR posed with his legs crossed (fig. 2 and fig. 1). Both portraits communicate the same scene of the newly inaugurated President at work at Springwood, while seated at his desk in his wood paneled library. In both portraits Rand provides access to the president from an elevated vantage point, making the viewer cognizant of her presence and control over the scenes. The two portraits differ dramatically, however, in their formulations of FDR's physicality. Rand's 1933 portrait articulates an active and vigorous physicality, portraying a body that, in FDR's own words was, "entirely normal and, in fact, in better health than I have been in years." In contrast to the pronounced physicality of her first canvas, Rand's 1934 canvas illustrates FDR's ability to transcend his body altogether, characterizing FDR as a modern statesman, dignified yet approachable.

In her 1933 (fig. 2) portrait Rand depicts FDR far younger than his fifty years of age, with a thin oval face and youthful glow that immediately draws the viewer's eye to his confrontational gaze. FDR sits, positioned toward the viewer, looking directly out. Sheets of papers are grasped within his hand, folded from ongoing use. Rand communicates the vigor of her subject through compositional structure, lively brushwork, and vivid colors. FDR's dominant figure is situated between his desk and the edge of the compositional frame, making him appear confined in the space while emphasizing his presence within it. The containment of FDR's figure also obscures the visibility of his legs. A wooden armchair, desk, and the portfolio placed across FDR's lap define the space FDR occupies. The angle and color of the portfolio create a visual extension of the table, interrupting the viewer's access to FDR's body, a strategy that

mimics FDR's control over his photographic image. The finite space, created by tightly packed furniture also implies FDR's physical agility and his ability to navigate the condensed space. Rand's loose brushwork enlivens the image, creating a sense of energy and movement, replicating the equivalencies FDR drew between his body and his rigorous campaign travel.[102] This effect is most pronounced in Rand's rendering of FDR's suit. FDR sports a light gray morning jacket and blue trousers dappled with green undertones. FDR's wrinkled suit conveys a narrative of action and mobility. His lapels fall open and dramatic creases of FDR's semi-formal attire implying a day spent actively engaged before coming to work in the study. The leather portfolio that lies across FDR's crossed legs is also suggestive of constant travel and movement.

FDR's surroundings are rendered in a range of rich brown hues. The warm, golden undertones of the middle ground and the background contrast sharply with the cool gray and blue tones of FDR's suit, projecting FDR's figure forward visually. Rand maintains the viewer's focus on FDR's face through triangulations between the warm tones of his face and hands and the vivid white of his shirt and crisp paper. This repetition of formal elements forces the viewer to move throughout the tight

[102] FDR won the 1932 election in part because he used his body as a means of refuting the claims of his opponents that his physical disability made him unsuitable for the presidency. To put a stop to the "whisper campaigns" of the opposition, Roosevelt presented the country with the one thing that could truly put an end to the speculation: the physical presentation of his body. In the year leading up to the election FDR traveled the country at a grueling pace, inviting the electorate to see for themselves that his body, though hindered by the effects of polio, was capable of withstanding the pressures of office. Photographed driving cars and riding trains, FDR created an equivalency between his constant travel and his mobility. (Houck and Kiwew, *FDR's Body Politics*, 95.)

compositional space of the portrait, emphasizing the narrative of movement and action implied by FDR's wrinkled suit and portfolio.

In contrast to Rand's 1933 portrait that characterizes FDR's physical strength and depicts him as the tireless author of the New Deal, the 1934 image (fig. 1) illustrates FDR comfortable within his body in order to epitomize the modern presidency. Relaxed and accessible, Rand replicates the sense of intimacy the American people felt with the first president they welcomed into their homes for 'Fire Side Chats.' FDR gazes off, in a moment where his mind has moved beyond the time and space of his physicality. His thoughtful gaze is dramatized by sunlight hitting the side of his face and resting arm. Rand does not flatter FDR, as in the earlier portrait by making him appear younger; instead she presents the signs of age as distinguished. Through strategic changes in compositional structure, color, and pose, Rand diminishes the visual impact of FDR's physicality, a feature that could suggest to viewers the transitory nature of his disability.

The density of objects in the 1933 portrait that keep the eye moving are replaced in the subsequent portrait by a repetition of vertical lines: in the drapery, in the legs of the desk, and the pedestal upon which FDR's prized model of the *USS Constitution* rests. This repetition of line contrasts the angularity of FDR's sloped shoulders, bent arms, and crossed legs. Only FDR's head falls out of vertical sync with the rest of the image, drawing the viewer's eye back to his gaze. The president's pose appears relaxed and controlled. He sits legs crossed, angled away from the desk, turning away from the rest of his body, in a pose that despite the naturalism of Rand's rendering, would have been physically uncomfortable and difficult to maintain. The viewer's eye is

drawn from the light upon FDR's peaceful face to the sheets of white paper, lying on the desk before him and held within his hand. The notes of white draw the viewer's eye to the president's crossed legs at the center of the composition, but Rand's indistinct rendering brings the eye back to FDR's face. Rand does not obscure FDR's legs from view with a portfolio or any other objects. Alternatively, she mitigates their presence by allowing the charcoal color of his suit to fade into the desk's cast shadow. Complimentary tones in his suit and background allow him to recede and become part of the scene Rand depicts, instead of the figure that projects forward from it. FDR is not visually contained by furniture in order to convey dominance as he is in the 1933 portrait.

With these two portraits, Rand assumed the mantel of casting the presidency in a modern light, created two images of authentic character that were bold in their earnest depictions of FDR's body. The crossed legs pose is crucial to Rand's interpretations of FDR's physicality. Crossed legs is a pose that subtly demonstrates bodily control, mobility of the legs, and comfort. Due to the paralysis of his lower body, achieving this pose required maneuvering, but it was not a deception. FDR could sit this way, and was photographed doing so frequently (fig. 9 and fig. 10). Rand's portraits are some of the first to depict him this way, and are highly progressive in demonstrating the liminal nature of FDR's relationship to his body. Rand portrays FDR at peace with himself and his physicality.

For presidential portraiture the crossed leg pose was relatively nascent; only President Calvin Coolidge (fig. 11) had been memorialized for the White House in this pose before Rand utilized it. Coolidge's portrait marks a turning point in the White

House's collection of presidential portraits, when characterizations shifted from dignity defined by stiff postures and piercing stern gazes to humanized and accessible depictions of executive power.[103] Charles Hopkinson's portrait of Coolidge from 1921 depicts him staring gravely beyond the frame. Sitting rigidly in a small wooden chair and starkly lit room, the tension of Coolidge's body makes his physicality impossible to ignore. Hopkinson's portrait depicts a real body, not an idealized figurehead.

Rand's intimate portrait from 1934 encapsulates how FDR understood his physicality while projecting the civic fitness the American people expected. The progressive portrait was Rand's opportunity to shift the perceptions of her own body, and change the economic conditions of her life. But the portrait alone was not enough to build the legacy she desired—the portrait needed a place of prominence in the White House, and she knew exactly where it should go. She envisioned her able bodied portrait hanging at the heart of the White House, which she unabashedly expressed to FDR in a letter from June 14, 1934:

> My dear Mr. President, the portrait was to start for Washington today and I trust it will meet your approval. If I was consulted where to hang it I would say that it would look very well where President Harding's portrait hangs, to the left of the front door and opposite President Coolidge but I don't at all expect a voice in the matter, so probably all this opinion will amount to nothing. If you can manage it, please send me a letter, telling me what you think of the portrait. I like to be called Bay, not Mrs. Rand. I hope to go to Washington early in the fall to do a little painting. Meantime, I wish you all good luck on your trip.[104]

Once the portrait arrived FDR took the time to express his pleasure with it:

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[103] President Herbert Hoover did not sit for his White House portrait until 1956, therefore, Coolidge's portrait was the only recent canvas Rand would have been familiar with.

[104] Letter, Ellen 'Bay' Emmet Rand to Franklin D. Roosevelt, June 14, 1934, Presidential Papers, Personal Correspondence, Container 5, Box 1690, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

> This morning the portrait was unpacked and I am really thrilled by it. It is far and away the best thing that has every been done of me and I don't need to tell you how happy I am that you should be the author of it. As to 'hanging myself,' it is quite contrary to custom to have any portrait of the incumbent in the White House where anyone can see it! Therefore, we are going to hang it in the upstairs hall. What my successor will do with it, I don't care to guess. He may put it in the boiler room, but that will not be because of the portrait but rather because of the subject.[105]

Ultimately, Rand's portrait would suffer a fate far worse then being marooned in the boiler room of the White House, as her work was removed from 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue altogether. Thirteen years after arriving and only two years after being officially accessioned into one of the most prestigious portraiture collections on American soil, President Harry Truman returned Rand's portrait to the Roosevelt family. In Rand's hard-earned space, Truman placed a copy of English painter Frank Salisbury's portrait of FDR (fig. 12).

So much has been written since FDR's death about the material conditions of his body, its extraordinary complexities, and, as scholar Hough Gregory Gallagher described it, the "Splendid Deception" of ability enactment and normative performance he used to navigate public moments when paralysis became disability. In light of the historical work that has been done on the subject of FDR's paralysis, Rand's use of a model when painting both portraits could be maligned as masking FDR's body. Such an interpretation, however, fails to recognize Rand's desire to provide FDR with a portrait that honored his reality.

As an aging woman with an exceedingly complicated relationship with her own physicality and appearance (to be discussed in the next chapter in detail), Rand was

[105] Letter, Franklin D. Roosevelt to Ellen Emmet Rand, June 19, 1934, Ellen Emmet Rand Papers, Brooklyn, New York.

sensitive to bodies that did not meet cultural definitions of beauty or fitness. Despite the prejudices of her historical moment towards disability, Rand was progressive in her treatment of FDR's body as any other and the paralysis she did not see as remarkable. During the commission Rand spent considerable time with the Roosevelt family at the White House, which she detailed at length in her diaries. Rand's journals recount the meals she enjoyed (she was particularly fond of the White House breakfast), the guests she encountered, and observed that life in the Roosevelt White House was exclusively conducted on the second floor. But to Rand, FDR's paralysis, use of a wheelchair, or the help he needed to physically maneuver through the White House did not warrant comment from an artist who in other instances was not shy about her feeling about the president's politics, policies, and family.

Clearly, Rand did not share the nation's fasciation with FDR's perceived lack of ability, so her artistic process remained the same. Rand did not treat FDR's portrait any differently. Just like all her commissions from busy public figures, Rand employed models to sit in for clients who could not be bothered to sit properly. She worked on his facial features during live sittings and returned to her studio to paint the figure from a live model. Sometimes she used a paid model, and other times she cajoled one of her sons or her sister to sit for her. In the case of FDR's portraits, she used all three. Painting versions of a person that mirror their lived reality is the job of a portrait artist. In order to remain faithful to FDR's experience of his own body, Rand used all the tools available to her.

A permanent legacy in the White House would elude Rand because she depicted FDR in a manner that contradicted how history needed to reimagine his body. Rand's

intimate portraits depicting FDR as he understood himself ceased to resemble the author of the New Deal when collective memory assigned his body exclusively to his wheelchair. Rand captured the fluidity between ability and disability, paralysis and normativity, that defined FDR's lived reality, but her radical portrait could not transcend what the twenty-first century needed from FDR's memory. Historical memory demanded the figuration of FDR be an extraordinary leader despite his paralysis. Gazing out lost in thought with a hint of a smile, Rand painted FDR as she knew him—capable of both living in and transcending his body.

CHAPTER THREE
Power Plays

> The portrait sitting was potentially important for the future, for the artist, Mrs. Emmet Rand of Salisbury, Conn., and New York City, blocked in the first lines of what is planned as the official portrait of the President. The work will require several months for completion, depending on the time the President can spare for sittings. It is planned that the painting will be finished by the end of year. When approved by the Fine Arts Committee of Washington the portrait will be ready for hanging in the White House, where future generations may study the features of the author of the 'new deal'.[106]

As the *New York Times* noted in 1933, the presidential body is both a physical entity and a symbol of the nation. Control over its representation is always fraught with controversy and conflicting interests, and perhaps at no other time in American history was this truer than in the case of FDR, "author of the new deal." In addition to traditional attention and meanings attached to presidential bodies, FDR's paralysis due to poliomyelitis, was used against him by his political adversaries who argued that his disability made him unfit for the presidency. In response, FDR closely controlled representations of his body, prohibiting photographers to shoot him in moments when his paralysis became a disability, in order to project an image of physical—and therefore political—fitness. Rand's portrait was intended for display in the White House and therefore belonged, in a sense, to the American public, forcing both artist and sitter to contend with how the nation expected their president to appear.

FDR won his first election, in part, because he personified hope and optimism. The American people responded to his wide grin as a sign of change from the failed

[106] "Roosevelt Enjoys A Rainy Holiday," *New York Times*, August 22, 1933.

policies and stern grimace of President Herbert Hoover.[107] FDR's magnetic smile captured the hearts of the American people (fig. 13); the nation awoke almost daily to a new photograph of their president beaming from the pages of newspapers. During the early stages of Rand's first canvas, she sketched FDR with his infamous smile, a seemingly obvious choice. Yet, FDR insisted his image, which would hang in the White House along side the thirty-one stoic portraits of his predecessors, communicate gravitas instead of levity and Rand complied, shifting away from a grin for a more pensive look. In the media this small alteration, one that occurred before Rand ever put paint to her canvas, became the public story of the portrait. Rand immediately understood this as a distraction, threatening the narratives of work and the painterly authority she wished to project. Rand attempted to redirect the dialogue surrounding the portrait, but her efforts were undermined by the public's obsession with FDR's absent smile.

This chapter explores the ways Rand engaged the media, manipulated their attentions, and was forced to contend with the press's fascination regarding FDR's desire to be painted as unsmiling. Rand's attempts to control the narrative were also challenged by the public comments made by AER and SDR. For all three women, jockeying for control over the representation of FDR's body was also a means of asserting power. To Rand the portrait was a chance to assert her professionalism to a national audience; for AER and SDR, FDR's portrait was an opportunity to demonstrate their cultural authority as tastemakers and protect their political agency.

[107] John Kasson, "Smile Like Roosevelt," *The Little Girl Who Fought The Great Depression: Shirley Temple and 1930s America* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2014), 42.

FDR and Rand both used the production of the portrait to promote their individual desires about their bodies' professional statures. For FDR, announcing the commission of his official White House portrait shortly after the end of his 'First 100 Days,' solidified the connection between the portrait and his legacy as the author of the New Deal in the minds of the American public. Rand embraced the production of the portrait to advertise herself to potential clients and assert her status as a female portrait painter. Both of their performances were on display on September 3, 1933, when *The Hartford Courant* published the first nationally circulated photograph of Rand seated before FDR at Springwood, ran under the headline "Roosevelt Poses For Official White House Portrait" (fig. 5).[108] Rand sits staring thoughtfully at Roosevelt with a large palette in her arms and brushes grasped within her hands. Turned away from the camera and toward FDR, Rand poses as if pausing to consider her next brush stroke on the first canvas from the White House commission. Seated at his desk, FDR stares beyond the compositional frame of the photograph, avoiding our gaze and allowing the eye of the viewer to be met by the gaze of his painted figure.

The publicity for FDR's portrait was not the first time Rand attempted to frame her body, her profession, and her expertise for public consumption. As a female portrait artist, she was distinctly aware of the importance of positioning herself as a professional, rejecting the stigmas of amateurism often used during the first half of the twentieth century as a degradation of female skill and artistry. The same calculated control Rand exerted over her canvases was also employed over her persona as a professional female portrait painter.

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[108] "Roosevelt Poses for Official Portrait," *The Hartford Currant*, September 3, 1933.

Rand presented her body to the art market and the general public previously in two highly mediated canvases that portray her professionalism. Both self-portraits functioned as promotional tools, demonstrating for potential clients her skill and the seriousness with which she approached her commissions. *In The Studio* (fig. 14, ca. 1910) proclaims Rand's knowledge of canonical images from the history of art by evoking the compositional structure of Diego Velazquez's *Las Meninas* (fig. 15, ca. 1656). Like Velazquez, Rand places her own body and canvas in a painting of a young girl; Velazquez, however, incorporates himself into the actual scene, whereas Rand reveals herself as a reflection in a massive gilded mirror. Velazquez depicts himself as a grand master, hierarchically demonstrating his significance by placing his towering figure over all the others, including the reflection of the Spanish monarchs, King Philip IV and Queen Mariana. Rand communicates her professional stature through the vastness of her studio, rather than dominating physicality. She fulfills Virginia Woolf's decree that female creativity requires, "a room of one's own," by showing off her light-filled studio, appointed with fine furnishings and towering ceilings. (The studio was at 64 Washington Square in New York City and was just one floor below Cecilia Beaux's).[109] Rand characterizes herself as a painter by standing before her canvas wearing the traditional blue robes and white smock indicative of her profession. Her figure is diminutive and her features are blurred but her presence is nonetheless commanding. The viewer enters the picture and therefore Rand's studio, on her terms. We see what Rand sees, but our immersion in the picture is mitigated by the sumptuous surface of her canvas. Thick impasto magnetizes her playful transitions between light and shadow,

[109] Rand, *Dear Females*, 114.

and surface and reflection. Rand declares her professionalism by demonstrating her painterly dexterity. The success of the image was widely acknowledged by critics, winning a Gold Medal from the Panama-Pacific Exposition of 1915 in San Francisco, California.[110]

In 1927, Rand chose herself as the sole subject for her canvas (fig. 16). Rand depicts herself as a painter of character and veracity, rejecting ornament and glamour. Her self-portrait declared to future clients and the art market that she would eschew flattery in favor of earnestness, painting herself with unflinching realism. Rand does not cave to the temptations of vanity, representing herself without adulation. Lines of age mark Rand's face and piercing grey eyes peer behind round horn-rimmed glasses. With her auburn hair pulled under a straight brimmed hat and her body obscured by a shapeless painter's robe, Rand embodies professionalism. Rand refused to present her aging body in a manner conforming with societal prescriptions for presenting the female form. She places her body flush with the surface of the canvas and her palette projects toward the viewer, giving us no choice but to confront her gaze. Looking directly out beyond the frame, her exacting stare critically examines her own visage, but she simultaneously places her viewer under the same examination, transforming them into her sitter. Rand places herself before a neutral background, enlivened by a schema of

[110] The critical reception of *In the Studio* was largely positive. One critic described the canvas as a masterpiece, "'Miss Eleanor Peabody', a little light-haired girl holding a black cat, seated before a great mirror that rests on the floor and reflects the painter at work on the picture in her studio. This picture is a masterpiece and exhibits Miss Emmet's sympathetic tenderness for childhood" ("Portraits by Ellen Emmet at Macbeths" *The Craftsman* 19 (1911): 530.) Another critic lauded Rand's "ease in her study of youth and childhood" ("In the Galleries," *The International Studio* 42 (1911): 90.)

light and shadow. Written boldly at the top left of her canvas, is the ultimate mark of her profession, her signature.

These painted precedents certainly inform the decisions Rand made concerning the press for her FDR portrait. Rand performs the role of the female portrait painter with gravitas, rejecting glamour and femininity for severity in the press photograph that accompanied the production of the portrait (fig. 5). Concealed under a shapeless painting smock and hat Rand nullifies her body, obscuring any defining characteristics. Her hardened face and pinned back hair leave only the sliver of a delicate ankle to alleviate the ambiguity of Rand's sex. That is not to say that Rand's body is without presence. She does not shrink from the frame. Instead, seated on a stool, Rand towers over both FDR at his desk and his painted image; her massive smock and palette expand her body to occupy more compositional space than the president. In contrast to FDR, whose gray suit allows his body to fade into his surroundings, the vivid white of Rand's robes project her forward. Austere and visually dominant, Rand presents herself as a professional painter focused and in control, even when her sitter is the most powerful man in the world.

The unfinished portrait that Rand and FDR were photographed with in the fall of 1933 did not end up in the White House, but was instead purchased by SDR in 1939. So when Rand completed her second canvas in the spring of 1934, she was photographed with it, this time in her New York studio. On April 11, 1934, the *Athol Mass Transcript* published a photograph of Rand pretending to paint an absent FDR

(fig. 17).[111] Sporting the same painting robes and hat, Rand exactingly recreates her earlier photo-op with the president. Her serious expression and outfit are identical to the 1933 image; only the portrait has changed. The presentation of her body in the press in this singular fashion obscured the fact that the public had originally seen another canvas. Repetition also served to make her an easily recognizable figure, inseparable from her profession.

Due to FDR's enthusiasm for portraits of himself, these kinds of staged portrait sittings occurred on a number of occasions throughout his presidency. The seriousness with which Rand approached the photo-ops is indicative of how she wanted to be perceived before the American public, especially when compared to other artists who were obliged to participate in similar media spectacles. Society portrait painter Natalie Van Vleck was photographed with her portrait of FDR eight months before Rand was first asked to do so (fig. 18). For Van Vleck, the heiress to the Colgate-Palmolive-Peet Company fortune, portrait painting was a passionate interest but not a profession.[112] Wealthy, classically beautiful, and youthful, Van Vleck's presentation of herself and her art differed from Rand's in critical ways.[113] In contrast to Rand's serious countenance, Van Vleck approached the staged scene with gaiety. Grinning, Van Vleck holds a paintbrush to her completed, framed portrait, there is no palette nor paints in sight, signaling to the viewer that the scene unfolding in the photograph is a farce. Fashionably dressed and with perfectly coiffed hair, Van Vleck exudes femininity and

[111] "Official Portrait of President Roosevelt," *The Athol Mass Transcript*, April 11, 1934.

[112] "Natalie Van Vleck Dies, Noted Artist," *The New York Times*, August 27, 1950.

[113] "Artist Paints as Roosevelt Works," *The Cornell Daily Sun*, January 23, 1933.

glamour. As a foil to Rand's identity performances, Van Vleck highlights the choices that Rand makes in representing herself. Serious instead of cheerful, dower instead of fashionable, Rand downplayed her femininity and physicality in order to position herself as an established professional painter not a passionate hobbyist or society painter.

Rand allowed herself to be photographed because it accomplished her professional goals, but her diaries reflect a profound ambivalence about physically putting herself in the national spotlight, especially when she could not hide behind her painting smock and palette. In order to raise her profile on the national art market, Rand organized additional media events surrounding the president's portrait. She facilitated a month-long exhibition of the portrait at the City Museum of New York through her niece's husband, the Museum's director, Harding Scholle. In addition, Rand arranged aprivate viewing of the portrait for the First Lady in her New York studio. From the correspondence between AER and Rand, it is apparent that the artist was shrewd in her attempts to maximize the publicity the completion of the portrait garnered. Rand arranged the private viewing for AER as well her attendance, at the public unveiling of the portrait at the City Museum of New York, all of which received national media attention.[114]

At the unveiling of the portrait in 1934, Rand had to trade the accouterments of a professional painter for formal attire. She presented the nation with her painting of FDR standing alongside AER, SDR, and Harding Scholle (fig. 19). Rand wore an ankle length fur-trimmed coat and a hat with a large bow, which obscured her body and face

[114] Letter, Ellen " Bay" Emmet Rand to Eleanor Roosevelt, March 29, 1934. Container 9: General Correspondence, R-Miscellaneous, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

almost entirely from view. Aging and more comfortable performing the role of artist than upper-class woman, the experience of presenting herself without the concealments of her robes and palette was apparently traumatic for Rand. When Rand woke up on April 10, 1934 and discovered her own face staring back at her from the front pages of the *New York Times* and the *Herald Tribune,* she turned to her diary in horror, writing:

> The first shock I got today was my picture in both the Herald Tribune & Times both pictures was so ugly that, I could not shake it off but just felt hideous all day, in spite of which, I bought a new dress, or suit, trying to get some self respect. I suppose my looks are getting so offensive to me that I can no longer laugh it off. I have been idle today consequently. Rather bored & depressed I don't enjoy shopping, it starts out to be rather fun & then a terrible depression suddenly strikes me & my one idea is to rush home.[115]

Rand's intimate revelations highlight the price she was willing to pay to achieve her professional goals. Rand sought fame and fortune putting herself in the untenable position of revealing her body to her own emotional peril. Transcending the trope of the female modernist painter as a sexualized body, Rand's empowerment faltered at the moment her face became attached to her name. The private humiliation Rand suffered from her figure being made public echoes AER's absolute refusal to sit for a portrait. Both woman lived public lives and their ambitions and professional drive forced them to confront the punishing confinement women faced in visual representation. The unforgiving gaze of the media was an unrelenting torture Rand and AER endured for the limited power and agency it secured.

If Rand was upset about her photograph for the portrait, she was equally distressed about the press dialogue around the portrait. Roosevelt's decision to be

[115] Diary, April 10, 1940, Ellen Emmet Rand Papers, Brooklyn, New York.

depicted without his famous smile spiraled from a private difference of opinion between an artist and a sitter to a media sensation with the publication of an article by the United Press in the *Berkley Daily Gazette* on February 27, 1934:

> President Roosevelt does not want his official portrait, which will hang in the White House, to show him with his practically omnipresent smile. Mrs. Bay Emmet Rand painted the portrait, with a smile on the President's face, last summer. The President wanted the smile erased. When the mouth was changed, no one liked the picture, and so Mrs. Rand continued working on it, Mrs. Roosevelt revealed. Mrs. Roosevelt will see the latest changes when she is in New York Thursday. The Jo Davidson head, which is the President's favorite sculpture of himself, shows a very serious mouth.[116]

It is not clear when AER made the comments the article references nor is there evidence in Rand's diaries that the second series of changes to the mouth of the portrait actually occurred, but AER's words had the desired effect, undermining Rand's artistic authority and directing the discourses away from Rand's accomplishment and toward AER's own vision of how she wanted her husband to be depicted. The report also misconstrued the facts, exaggerating the significance of the incident by claiming that Rand had painted FDR with a smile versus merely making a preparatory sketch showing his smile. This issue over the tone of the portrait became the focus of the media announcements. The media was too consumed by the idea Rand originally showed FDR with a smile, to perceive that the final portrait was an entirely new canvas from the one the president and Rand originally posed with in the summer of 1933 (fig. 5). Headlines ran after the unveiling exclaiming: "Roosevelt Smile Barred From Painting;" "Wife and Mother Admire 'Unsmiling Portrait;'" "Roosevelt's Mother and Wife

[116] "Smile Erased at Roosevelt's Desire," *Berkley Daily Gazette*, February 27, 1934.

Like His Smileless Portrait;" "President Painted Without His Smile;" "Roosevelt's Oil Painting Shows a Stern Visage;" and "Mustn't Show Smile."[117] Rand attempted to redirect the discussion of her portrait away from the president's stern countenance before it was revealed to the public by recounting her experience painting FDR. Rand's comments were published in the *New York Times* on March 2, 1934:

> So ended the artistic furor following the President's announcement that he did not want to be painted with a grin… Mrs. Rand said last night she felt the discussion had been a little foolish, but was glad everyone seemed pleased by the finished work. 'The President was a very good subject, a very willing sitter,' Mrs. Rand said. 'All told, we had about eight sittings, both in Washington and Hyde Park. Sometimes he received callers and conferred during sittings, but I liked that. It made for a more natural expression. He was really very patient about it. Most of the sittings were from an hour to an hour and a half.'[118]

Rand dismisses the issue of the smile outright, redirecting the conversation to her time with the president and making it clear that she was welcomed not only to the public space of the White House but the private home of the Roosevelt family and received upwards of eight hours of the president's time. In fact, according to her diaries between August 1933 and February 1934, she spent over twenty hours with the FDR. The issue of time Rand spent with the president was not her only misleading statement. Rand asserts that FDR's reception of callers and conduction of business was not a hindrance to her, but an opportunity to capture his genuine character. Yet, FDR's refusal to pose and the constant interruptions of his staff were an incredible frustration to Rand. But to

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[117] "Roosevelt Smile Barred From Painting," *New Britain Connecticut Herald*, April 10, 1934. "Wife and Mother Admire 'Unsmiling Portrait,'" *Columbia South Carolina Record*, April 25, 1934. "Roosevelt's Mother and Wife Like His Smileless Portrait," *Albany New York Knicker Press*, April 10, 1934. "President Painted Without His Smile," *Holyoke Massachusetts Transcript*, April 10, 1934. "Roosevelt's Oil Painting Shows a Stern Visage," April 10, 1934. "Mustn't Show Smile," *Knoxville Tennessee*, April 10, 1934.[117]

[118] "Roosevelt Canvas Approved by Wife," *New York Times,* March 02, 1934.

the press she brilliantly reframed her experiences, suggesting she enjoyed the intrusions and that they aided her in capturing an authentic image instead of being a hindrance to her process. The implications of her statements are two-fold. Rand communicates to future clients through her press statements that as an upper class woman, accustom to painting powerful men, she does not disrupt these spaces, because she belongs in them. By asserting that the most powerful man in global politics could continue his daily business while having his portrait taken in only eight sittings, Rand makes it clear to any potential client that commissioning a portrait from her is not a demand on their invaluable time, but an excellent use of it.

By Rand's orchestration, the approval of the portrait and therefore FDR's representation, became the domain of AER and her mother-in-law. The portrait ultimately won the approval of AER and SDR, but their comments at the unveiling indulged the media's obsession with FDR's decision to be portrayed without his iconic smile and were widely reported upon across the nation's news outlets. On April 10, 1934 the *New York Times* announced AER and SDR's attendance at the official presentation at the City Museum of New York. The article stated:

> The President's wife and his mother saw and approved again yesterday his unsmiling portrait as it was placed on exhibition for a month at the Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Avenue and 103rd Street. Both had seen the picture since its completion without the smile to which President Roosevelt had voiced his objection. Mrs. James Roosevelt, his mother, told the artist, Mrs. Ellen Emmet Rand, who met them at the museum: 'I like it very much. I like it better without the smile.' 'It's a very good picture," said the President's wife. 'It looks like the President and is very dignified, suitable to hang in the White House.'[119]

[119] "President Without His Smile," *New York Times*, April 10, 1934.

The *New York Times* did not run AER and SDR's full comments, limiting their address of the smile issue to the words of the president's mother. In actuality, both AER and SDR spoke regarding the portrait's absent smile in comments published by smaller news outlets. "It's a very good painting," commented AER.[120] "It is very dignified and suitable to hang in the White House. He's not smiling, but he looks alive," AER said.[121] SDR replied, when asked what she thought of the portrait, "I like it much better without the smile, we all know his lovely smile, but I like the picture better without it." At the surface, these comments read as complementary, but AER and SDR were shrewd socially and politically. Had they wanted to change the narrative regarding the portrait and celebrate Rand's work with effusive comments, they could have, instead they fueled the "smile" fire and ultimately their comments suggest a kind of verification that Rand did not need. The first lady and the president's mother were arbiters of taste, and their comments to the press solidified this position. Attesting to the nation that they knew what was appropriate for the White House, not the public, who wished for a smiling presidential portrait, or Rand, who had attempted to create one.

The controversy over FDR's portrait and his absent smile boils down to a conflict between two women and their proximity to a body—the presidential body. Rand and AER each had much to gain or loose from perceptions of FDR's body and wielded their power as public figures to objectify him for their own ends. For AER, FDR's smile was the grin of seduction. The magnetism that had made AER the First Lady of the United States had also broken her heart and led to deceit in her marriage. AER's remarks to

[120] Roosevelt Smile Barred From Painting," *New Britain Conn. Herald*, April 10, 1934.

[121] Ibid.

the press reveal a preoccupation with FDR's representation and her concern that his image communicate the gravitas appropriate for his office. A reflection on him was also a reflection on her, as her position, First Lady, was entirely defined by him. If the public did not perceive FDR was a serious leader then AER's own position and person was undermined, jeopardizing both her ambitions for future projects and her political and social capital.

Similarly to AER, Rand also sought to secure her professional status through control over FDR's White House portrait. From her depictions of FDR's body, Rand sought financial and artistic agency, aiming to garner new clients and a lasting artistic legacy with her portrait. Rand may have told the *New York Times* that FDR did not look "just right" without his smile, but her interest in depicting FDR smiling was not so magnanimous.[122] When Roosevelt began his first presidential campaign in 1932, Rand found the public's adoration of him baffling. The radiant smile, that the American public found so endearing, Rand found repugnant. Rand identified FDR's signature grin as the calculated expression of an aristocratic man desperate to relate with the American people, which she expressed with dramatic flare in her dairy on the day of FDR's first presidential election.[123] When Rand sketched FDR grinning, she probably could not conceal the conceited nature of his smile. Once the drawing was rejected, Rand painted FDR not as the objectionable man she saw him as but as the magnetic leader of the free world he demanded to be depicted as. Unwilling to allow FDR to limit her artistic agency, she created an image of FDR's body that highlighted her own, even in its

[122] "Roosevelt Canvas Approved by Wife," *New York Times,* March 02, 1934.
[123] Diary, November 8, 1932, Ellen Emmet Rand Papers, Brooklyn, New York.

absence. Rand objectified FDR for her own gains, communicating to the viewer her proximity to the president of the United States and her control over his representation through her canvas and the media.

The publicity surrounding Rand's portrait of FDR for the White House demonstrates Rand's considerable agency as a businesswoman, which until now has gone entirely unnoticed by art historians. The smile controversy that arose around the portrait is a critical moment in the history of the painting, illuminating how the portrait was strategically employed as a means of public identity performance for all involved. Rand may have brushed off the controversy surrounding FDR's unsmiling portrait as "foolish" to the press, but the issue was far from trivial and instead highlights the personal and professional stakes for Rand, FDR, and AER. The plays for power that transpired in the press between them were indicative of both their individual and collective absorption with the media and its unyielding judgments about their bodies. Seeking visibility on their own terms, they placed themselves before the critical lens of the media while attempting to simultaneously shield themselves physically and metaphorically from its gaze. As president, FDR had some control over his representation simply through the power of his office. Access to his body, in the form of interviews and photographs, was a tool of manipulation over the White House press and other journalists—granting and denying access when it was to his benefit.[124]

AER and Rand did not enjoy the same luxury. AER's political and social agency was dependent on her fulfillment of her role as the First Lady. Ceremonial functions, social obligations, and charitable causes forced her before the press almost weekly.

[124] Pressman, "Ambivalent Accomplices," 337.

With national newspapers constantly commenting on her appearance and wardrobe choices, she used her intellect and her voice to distract from her personage. FDR's White House portrait forced AER before the press, so she deflected with criticism thinly veiled as approval, feeding the media's frenzy regarding the portrait's stern appearance. For Rand, who was less accustomed to having her image splashed across newspapers, the turn of the media's attention to her body was devastating to the artist whose subjectivity was defined in part by the obstruction and concealment of her figure. Willing to build an artistic legacy at the detriment of her personal comfort, Rand endured the trials of presenting herself before the nation, attempting to cement her status as a professional artist in the minds of the American public. The efforts of Rand and AER to usurp the portrait's unveiling for their own ends ultimately failed when the smile issue was seized by the media and became a narrative that ultimately belittled both women. The media created a spectacle over a traditionally popular storyline—fighting between women. The tensions between Rand and AER created the impression that these accomplished women were easily consumed by trivial matters. Despite Rand's attempts to shift the narrative, the media's framing of the issue reflected poorly on both of them. As serious professional women with significant ambitions, their attempts to manipulate the opportunities FDR's portrait garnered for publicity to best suit their goals were diminished by the media's gender biases.

Epilogue

In 1947 President Harry S. Truman removed FDR's favorite likeness of himself from the White House. Truman's removal of the Rand portrait violated FDR's wishes and remains the only instance of a president removing the portrait of another executive from 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue.[125] Truman replaced Rand's portrait with a replica of Frank Salisbury's 1945 Roosevelt portrait (fig 19). Technically, this replacement was permitted because FDR paid Rand for the commission privately, and therefore government funding was not spent on the canvas.[126] Truman also consulted AER regarding his replacement of Rand's portrait with Salisbury's replica, and she graciously acquiesced, asking that the Rand work be sent to her youngest son, John A. Roosevelt. Truman wrote to John A. Roosevelt after Rand's portrait arrived in California:

> I am glad the picture arrived in good shape. I discussed the matter of the portrait of your father with you mother and she decided if we could get the Salisbury portrait to go into The White House that you aught to have this one. It was a pleasure to send it to you.[127]

From Truman's letter it appears as if a small negotiation occurred between AER and Truman regarding the conditions for the replacement of Rand's portrait. AER's poised acceptance of Truman's plan disguised her ambivalence regarding the situation, which she revealed years later in her syndicated column, "My Day."

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[125] At this time it is unclear why Truman chose to remove the portrait from the White House.

[126] Meschutts, "Portrait of Franklin. Delano Roosevelt,"17.

[127] Letter, Truman to John A Roosevelt, June 4, 1947, letter sold at Christies special sale, "The Roosevelt Era: Selections From the Roosevelt Family," quotation from object description. Accessed, March 13, 2014. Http://www.christies.com/lotfinder/lot/roosevelt-eleanor-truman-harry-president-typed-le-1990409-details.aspx?from=searchresults&intObjectID=1990409&sid=c2a17385-2cfd-4a7a-8d9a-7f9a7ccf1e0e

> Mr. Salisbury has done a number of copies himself of his own portrait of my husband, and one of these copies was chosen by President Truman to be the portrait of my husband to remain in the White House. My husband had had a friend and a great American artist, Bay Emmet Rand, paint the portrait that he left in the White House, but President Truman preferred Mr. Salisbury's portrait, as do many other people, and with my consent the change was made. My youngest son then became the owner of the Bay Emmet Rand portrait as a gift from President Truman. At present this portrait hangs in the old house at Hyde Park, and it is one of the portraits that I like best.[128]

AER's column hints toward her dismay with Truman's defiance of FDR's wishes for his legacy, but in 1947 when Truman approached her, far more of FDR's legacy was in jeopardy than just his White House portrait.

Prior to his death, FDR conceived and designed the first presidential library. In consultation with scholars and lawyers FDR designed the space that would house his historical legacy. The Franklin D. Roosevelt Library opened on July 4, 1940, at his family estate in Hyde Park, New York. He had planned to participate in the arrangements of his personal papers but died before that could occur.[129] AER zealously defended FDR's wishes for his presidential papers to be preserved at the FDRL, but ensuring FDR's dreams of the first Presidential library at Hyde Park required Truman's assistance. It appears AER agreed to the removal of Rand's portrait as part of much larger negotiations concerning FDR's legacy. On May 16, 1947, AER wrote to Truman, three days after agreeing to his plans for Rand's portrait:

> Dear Mr. President:
> Because of the various things I have heard, I am sending you this note.

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[128] *My Day Project*, George Washington University, November 21, 1959. Accessed, March 13, 2015: http://www.gwu.edu/~erpapers/myday/displaydoc.cfm?_y=1959&_f=md004595.

[129] Lynn Bassanese,"The Franklin D. Roosevelt Library: Looking to the Future," Government Information Quarterly 12, no. 1 (1995): 105.

> I know that it was my husband's wish and intention that all of his papers should eventually be in the library at Hyde Park. He particularly did not want them left in the Archives in Washington or in the Library of Congress because he felt that concentration in one place was very unwise. He also felt that they would be more available to historians in the library at Hyde Park and I am sure they will be. I hope you will not mind my telling you this, but I feel so strongly that in this one particular I would like to see his wishes carried out, that I am expressing what I have heard my husband say over and over again.[130]

Truman responded to AER's concerns for the future of FDR's papers, on May 31, 1947:

> You perhaps are not familiar with the facts-Brewster, Ferguson, and a few of the Republican chairmen in the House are extremely anxious to conduct a fishing expedition through the private files of President Roosevelt and that I am trying to prevent with all the power that I have. There are certain confidential communications which passed between him and some of the heads of states which should not be published at this time. This is particularly true of the correspondence between him and Mr. Stalin…It is my intention, as soon as the Republican Congress has exhausted its investigative program, to have all the papers of the late President placed in the Library at Hyde Park where he wanted them.[131]

In the years following FDR's death his papers became political fodder, and like AER, it appears Truman wanted them out of Washington, D.C. and away from his presidency. FDR envisioned his library as a space for scholars, but it evolved into a living memorial to his life and work, as well as AER's and their children's.[132] In the years after his death the library's collections expanded rapidly from the documents of FDR's political life to a multifaceted collection of manuscripts, photographs, films, sound recordings, art objects, and memorabilia from the entire Roosevelt family.[133]

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[130] Letter, Eleanor Roosevelt to Harry Truman, May 16, 1947. Franklin Roosevelt Presidential Papers, Personal Correspondence, Container 5, Box 1630. FDRL, Hyde Park, New York.

[131] Letter, Harry Truman to Eleanor Roosevelt May 31, 1947. Franklin Roosevelt Presidential Papers, Personal Correspondence, Container 5, Box 1630. FDRL, Hyde Park, New York.

[132] Bassanese,"The Franklin D. Roosevelt Library: Looking to the Future,"107.

[133] Ibid.

John A. Roosevelt donated Rand's portrait to the FDRL in 1964, where it resided until 2001 when the library underwent renovations and the portrait was crated. In 2004 Rand's grandson Peter Rand visited the FDRL to conduct research and asked to see his grandmother's portrait of the president. He was informed that it was not available for viewing, and left without suspecting anything was amiss.[134] Six months later, the FDRL approached Peter Rand to inform him that the portrait was missing.[135]

The Inspectors General's office of the National Archives and Records Administration conducted an investigation into the portrait's disappearance. The resulting report categorized the portrait as missing, suggesting the portrait may have been stolen or that work crews had accidentally sent it to the landfill.[136] On February 23, 2011 the Archives' Inspector General, Paul Brachfeld, implied to the *Washington Post* that the portrait had been stolen, by suggesting he knew who took Rand's painting.[137] A private source from within the National Archives system reveals, however, that the Inspector General's comments were intended to protect the agency from further scrutiny because the portrait was sent out with the trash—a fact the FDRL and the National Archives had known all along. The egregious negligence that resulted in the destruction of Rand's portrait is symptomatic of a larger problem within the FDRL, and more generally the National Archives, regarding the unilateral treatment of historical objects. The National Archives system makes no distinctions between the parts of material history under its protection, designed to treat a memorial pin, a letter signed by the

[134] Rutledge, "Missing FDR Painting from New York Library a Mystery."
[135] Ibid.
[136] Ibid.
[137] Lisa Rein, "Reclaiming America's Stolen Property," *The Washington Post*, February 23, 2011.

Founding Fathers, or an oil painting, as the same kinds of historical archival materials. Had Rand's portrait been understood as more than a historical document, or as a historical document with particular needs, it may have not have been so badly mistreated.

Rand's only FDR portrait to remain permanently in a museum collection is her first canvas, purchased by SDR in 1939. The portrait is currently on display in the living room of Springwood, now managed by the National Parks service. Displayed on an easel next to a grand fireplace, the portrait is prominently situated where SDR originally placed it (fig. 20).

The fate of Rand's last FDR portrait, an unfinished bust portrait, has remained elusive. On January 29, 1947 Rand's third portrait of FDR was discovered among the possessions of her studio, stored after her death in 1941 in the attic of her Salisbury, Connecticut home.[138] Upon its discovery, Helen Hackett, an art dealer and old friend of Rand's, purchased the portrait from her estate and arranged for its public display at the Babcock Gallery.[139] It is unclear how the portrait made its way to the walls of President Johnson's Cabinet Room, but on April 15, 1966, *Life* magazine published a photograph of Johnson speaking with his economic advisors under the watchful eye of Rand's vibrant portrait (fig. 21).[140] Rand's reclamation of her lost place in the White House, however, was short-lived. Months after the photograph was taken, the portrait was put on sale at Milch Gallery in New York. The Smithsonian considered purchasing the

[138] "1933 Portrait of Roosevelt is Discovered," New York Herald Tribute, January 29, 1947.

[139] Ibid.

[140] "Inflation?," *Life Magazine*, April 15, 1966, 82.

portrait, but the sale fell apart and with it Rand's last chance for a lasting legacy at the White House.[141]

The loss of Rand and her FDR portraits to the canon of American painting is indicative of a much larger crisis regarding the historical treatment of women and specifically female artists. As a middle-aged female portrait painter with significant career aspirations, the erasure of Rand from cultural memory is symptomatic of intersectional prejudices of gender, genre, and ambition. Rand's life work and legacy encompassed eight hundred portraits of the most prominent Americans of her time, and while the prestigious men she painted have not faded from historical memory, Rand has.

History's disregard for Rand as an aging woman, who aligned her body with her profession instead of her gender, speaks to the superficial values that continue to blur the art historical lens. This bias allowed Rand's radical interpretations of FDR's physicality to go unnoticed for over half a century and ultimately led to their destruction. The treatment of Rand's FDR portrait as a historical document, versus as an art object, with significant artistic value, highlights an overarching ambivalence towards the creative value of portraiture not only within the FDRL and the national archive system, but American art history. Hopefully, by correcting the historical timeline of Rand's three FDR canvases, the effects of the narratives that diminished her achievements can begin to recede.

[141] Ellen Emmet Rand, Curatorial File, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

Portraiture's ability to satisfy the personal desires of both artist and sitter has long been overlooked, and with it one of the most prolific practitioners of the twentieth century. In order to maintain her class standing and her portraiture practice that depended on her social status, Rand worked tirelessly in pursuit of her professional ambitions. A desire for fame, a determination for fortune, and hundreds of portraits were not enough, however, to solidify the legacy Rand aspired to. This project is only one small step in recovering Rand and her work to a place of prominence among important American artists, but it is a necessary intervention in the systematic discriminations that continue to define art historical practice.

APPENDIX ONE
Figures

Figure 1. Ellen Emmet Rand, *President Franklin D. Roosevelt*, 53 ½ X 42 ½ inches, 1934. Location Unknown.

Figure 2. Ellen Emmet Rand, *Franklin D. Roosevelt*, 58 ¼ X 39 inches, 1932. Springwood National Park, Hyde Park, New York.

Figure 3. Ellen Emmet Rand, Franklin D. Roosevelt, N.D.

Figure 4. Ellen Emmet Rand, *Anna Roosevelt Cowles*, 1905, Location Unknown.

Figure 5. “Posing for Official White House Portrait,” *The Hartford Courant*, September 3, 1933.

Figure 6. The Franklin D. Roosevelt Memorial, Washington, D.C.

Figure 7. The Franklin D. Roosevelt Memorial, Washington D.C.

Figure 8. Stephen Lorant, *Franklin D. Roosevelt,* International Center of Photography, New York. Circulated Wide World Photos, October 1928.

Figure 9. FDR sitting with his legs crossed for the broadcast of a Fireside Chat. Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

Figure 10. *Joseph Stalin, FDR, and Winston Churchill in Teheran, Iran*. November 29, 1943. Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

Figure 11. Charles Hopkinson, *Calvin Coolidge*, 55 1/8 x 50 3/8 inches, 1932. White House Collection, Washington D.C.

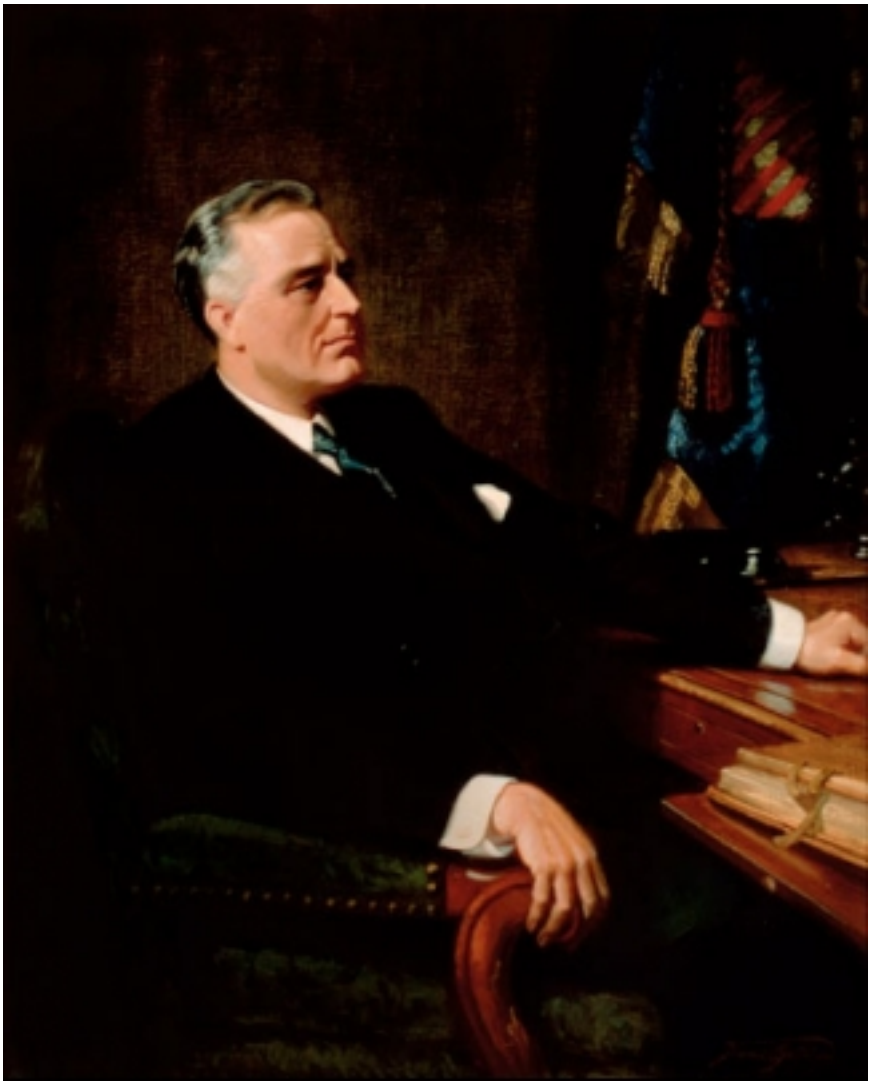

Figure 12. Frank Salisbury, *Franklin Delano Roosevelt*, 50 1/4 x 40 3/8 in, 1947. White House Collection, Washington D.C

Figure 13. *Franklin Delano Roosevelt*, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Hyde Park, New York.

Figure 14. Ellen Emmet Rand, *In the Studio*, 44 ¼ X 36 ¼ inches, 1910. The William Benton Museum, Storrs, CT.

Figure 15. Diego Valazquez, *Las Meninas*, 125 X 109 inches, 1656. Museo Nacional Del Prado, Madrid, Spain.

Figure 16. Ellen Emmet Rand, *Self-Portrait*, 30 X 24 inches, 1927. National Academy Museum, New York, NY.

Figure 17. “The Official Portrait of President Roosevelt,” *The Athol Mass Transcript*, April 11, 1934.

Figure 18. “Natalie Johnson Van Vleck Painting Roosevelt,” AP Photo, January 18, 1933.

Figure 19. “President’s Wife and Mother View Portrait,” AP Photo, April 10, 1934.

Figure 20. Living Room at Springwood, The Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt National Historical Site, Hyde Park, New York

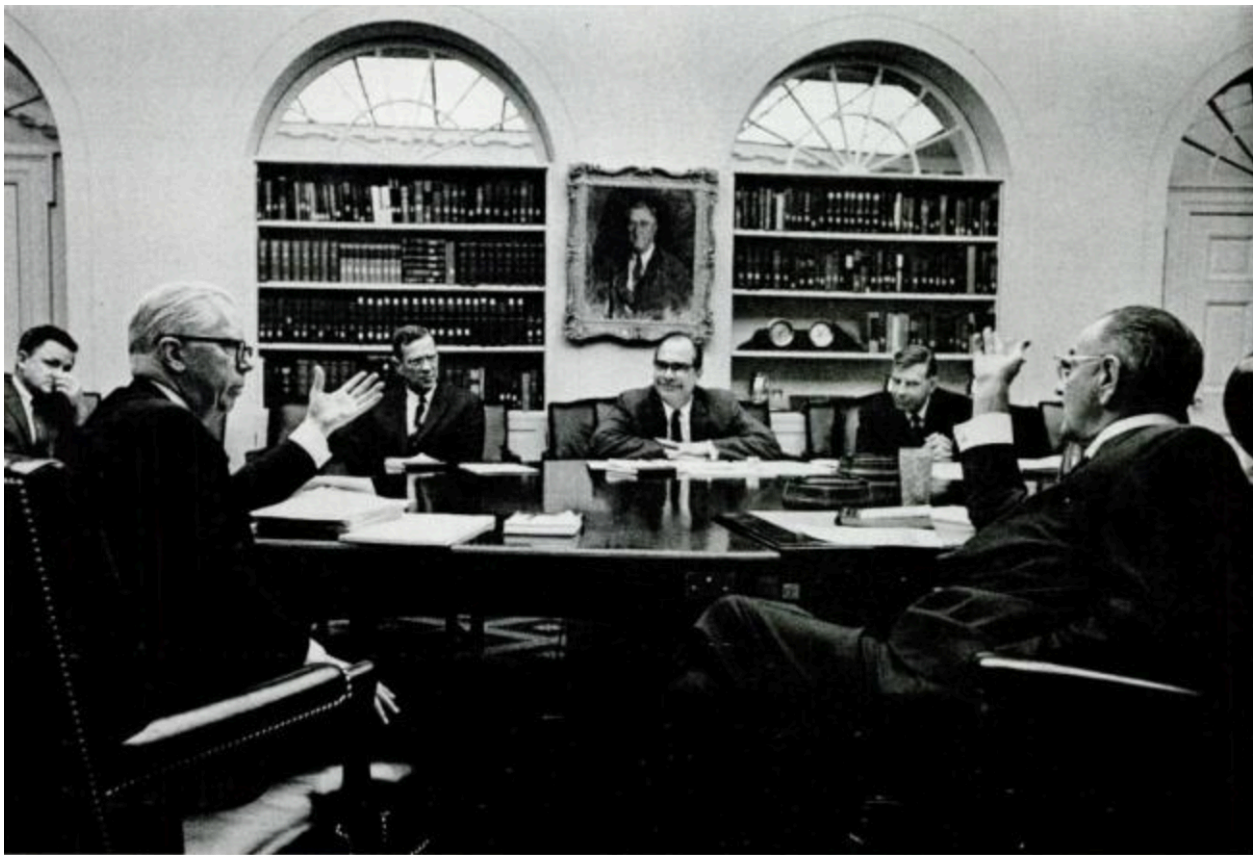

Figure 21. *White House Cabinet Room*, 1966. *Life*, April 15, 1966.

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