

folio

highlighting
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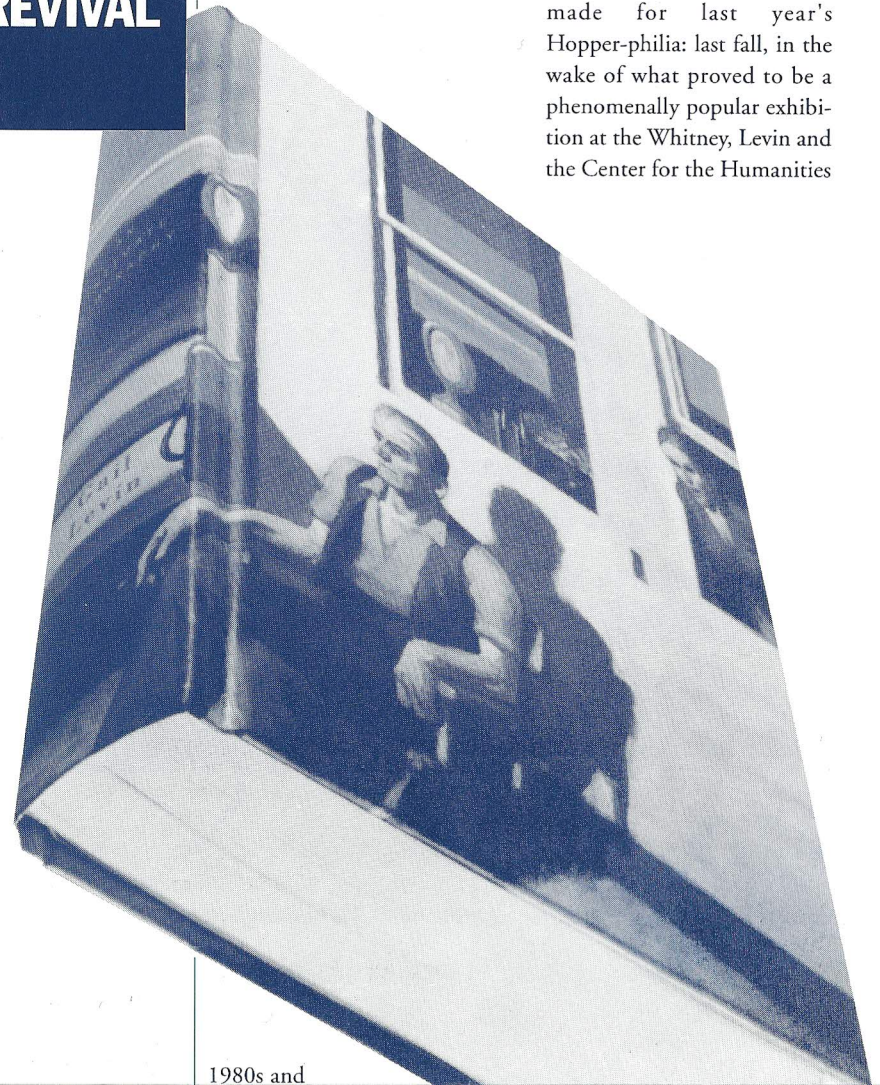
GAIL LEVIN AND THE HOPPER RE-REVIVAL

Much of what both scholars and the general public know about Edward Hopper—and that's a great deal—they have learned from Gail Levin. Levin is an art historian, professor at The Graduate School and Baruch College, and former curator at the Whitney Museum of American Art. Her work at the Whitney in the late 1970s and early

them, published in September by Universe Books.

Along the way, Levin also contributed an essay on Hopper's influence to *Edward Hopper and the American Imagination*, the Whitney exhibition catalogue published last June. Her essay accompanies a selection of original works by fiction writers, poets, and playwrights celebrating the ways in which Hopper pictured our world.

More than books, though, made for last year's Hopper-philia: last fall, in the wake of what proved to be a phenomenally popular exhibition at the Whitney, Levin and the Center for the Humanities

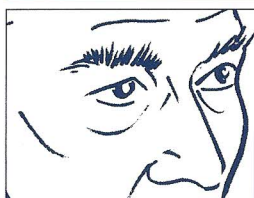


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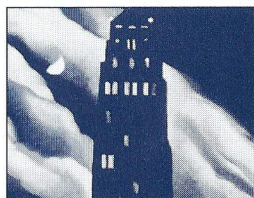
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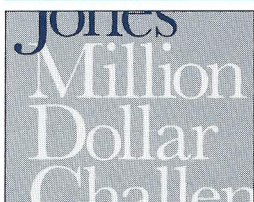
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introducing **folio**

"The most universal quality is diversity," Montaigne wrote of human opinion. The same could be said of scholarship at the GSUC. The work carried out across 32 doctoral programs, 23 research centers and institutes, and over a dozen campuses—interdisciplinary or specialized, basic or applied, on Milton, monetarism, or mesons—reflects more than a commitment to the highest scholarly standards. It reflects support for a remarkable range of interests, methods, and perspectives.

Last fall the breadth and depth of GSUC research was recognized when the National Research Council ranked one-third of our rated programs in the top 20 nationwide for scholarly quality. Our music program ranked fourth. For any school, it was an excellent showing. For a public graduate school facing tight budgets, it was a triumph for a gifted faculty and the consortial partnership that draws them together.

We have created this publication to highlight GSUC research to colleagues, friends, and alumni. Published occasionally, it will profile individual projects and scholars, conferences and center activities, books, and other milestones. It will also take proud note of our doctoral alumni; we hope readers will keep us informed of alumni achievements. The first issue of **folio** highlights the humanities; the natural and social sciences will have each have a turn in the next two issues.

We hope that **folio** can convey the excitement of universally diverse scholarship carried out by faculty and students at the GSUC and of the accomplishments of those, including many of our readers, who completed doctoral studies here. It is a leaf from the collective notebook of the city's own research university.

in a series of influential books—*Hopper's Places*, *Edward Hopper: The Art and the Artist*, *Edward Hopper: The Complete Prints*, and *Edward Hopper as Illustrator*—turned a spotlight onto the master realist, whose work had been eclipsed by Abstract Expressionism and other non-representational movements. It also established Levin as the leading authority on Hopper's life and work.

Last year, after a decade of study and preparation, Levin again put Hopper front and center with three books, a conference, a lecture tour, and a slew of media appearances. First, W.W. Norton and the Whitney published *Edward Hopper: A Catalogue Raisonné*, in which Levin provides a comprehensive examination of Hopper's oil paintings, watercolors, and illustrations. Levin had in fact completed the massive (three volumes with 1,500 illustrations plus a CD-ROM) catalogue for the museum in 1984 and waited 11 years for its release (and a tie-in retrospective exhibit). In the meantime, she wrote *Edward Hopper: An Intimate Biography*. Drawing for the first time on the diaries of Jo Hopper, Edward's wife and model—herself a talented painter—it has been widely praised for providing new insight into Hopper's art as well as his tumultuous marriage. Between galleys, Levin put the finishing touches on a third volume, *Poetry of Solitude: A Tribute to Edward Hopper*, an illustrated anthology of poems and the paintings that inspired

put on a major Hopper conference at The Graduate Center, a standing-room-only event drawing scholars, writers, and the public. Levin herself toured museums, universities, and art schools from coast to coast and in between to lecture on Hopper. Overall, she says, the reaction has been thrilling. "You're always happy when students respond," Levin says. "This has been like having an infinite classroom."

Levin knows, perhaps better than anyone else, that the subject of all this attention could be as difficult in person as he was compelling on canvas. Far from touching up Hopper's image, Levin—especially in the biography—has shown how insensitive and even demeaning he was to his wife, how beset by depression, and how prone he was to feelings of isolation and alienation. These feelings are so often found in his works that he has been called the "poet in paint of loneliness."

Levin says, though, that learning more about Hopper's dark side only increases her admiration. "Seeing the intensity of his own struggle," she says, "I have an even higher regard for his art." Thanks to her, so do we all. **f**