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(on the cover)
Connie Fox,
Knife/Rainbow (1967),
acrylic on canvas,
60" x 75".
Photo: Hiroyuki Hamada.

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In this issue we celebrate the remarkable work of three new York artists—Connie Fox, Linda Stein, and Anita Steckel—who have been productive for decades. Painter Connie Fox has created her extraordinary abstractions since the 1950s. Now in her eighties, her energy and determination continue unabated. Fox seeks inspiration in the pristine bays and vernal woods near her home in East Hampton, New York. In a series stimulated by her frequent visits to a sandy promontory on Gardiner's Bay, she paints Sammy's Beach as studies of light and color. Fox does not fit easily into any of the major movements of post-war American art. Rather than following particular trends, she has always held a singular approach to her paintings and drawings. As author Joyce Beckenstein writes, "her shifts in style, from her early semi-abstractions and mature carnivalesque collisions, to the wizened silences now abiding the restive moods at Sammy's Beach, jelled over decades, one body of work distinctly different but consistently related to the next by virtue of their connections to nature, metaphor and intuitive abstraction." The result is decades of brilliant, vivid, and magical works.

Linda Stein's steady feminist barometer has guided her unique artistic production. Since the 1980s she has created sculptures that address power and agency for women at the same time "expand[ing] the concept of fluidity beyond gender to encompass environmental systems," according to article author Christine Filippone. From her *Blades* of the 1980s, as weapon-like constructions that challenged the existing social order, to her recent *Knights*, Stein demands that women initiate strong responses to a world in need of change. Emblematic of female warriors who combat sexism, her figures assume activist roles in their bold and varied sculptural formats. Filippone writes that her latest "wearable works," made in response to Stein's feelings of vulnerability following the 9/11 attack on her city, "have been likened to protective suits of armor," intended "to facilitate a transformation of identity."

Anita Steckel was a brave and stalwart feminist who for half a century, until her death in 2012, confronted the sexist art world with her difficult and challenging images. Already a strong voice among women artists in the 1960s, she produced a series of photomontages called *Mom Art* as her rejoinder to the burgeoning, male-dominated field of Pop Art. "Steckel believed that working with a photographic image gave her art the potential to unnerve viewers in a way that traditional painting could not," writes author Rachel Middleman. Her images are brash and disturbing, but heartfelt, often mixing nude images with political statements. In her various series, she used her photomontages to condemn the underlying racism and sexism she found in American society, by painting jarring details on found photos, such as emphasizing the phallic silhouettes of the New York skyline.

In their native Brazil, the painters Malfatti and Arsila do Amaral were pioneers of modernism. Malfatti first encountered modern art in Germany and then in New York, and both women studied in Paris. At home in the 1920s, they joined a small Brazilian avant-garde in forging a national identity that brought dynamic new ideas from Europe to bear on traditional culture. As author Gillian Sneed "demonstrates how both women articulated in their landscapes a similar vision of *Brasilidade* that was rooted in Brazil's African and Amerindian populations as

well as in vernacular and rural culture." The bucolic and the savage in the Brazilian landscape became their subjects, as Malfatti and Amaral incorporated the native Afro-Brazilian peoples into their art and introduced ethnic and racial specificity into Brazilian modernism.

At the same time Malfatti and Amaral were exploring European modernist painting, a teenage Eva Besnyö was looking through the lens of a Brownie camera in her native Hungary, developing a modernist eye. She "framed photography as an awakening of sight, not unlike what she would come to know of New Vision and New Objectivity," writes Rachel Epp Buller in reviewing a catalogue of Besnyö's work. Also among the books reviewed in this issue are two volumes on photo artist Cindy Sherman: a catalogue documenting the recent retrospective at MoMA, and a catalogue *raisonné* of her earliest (student) work. Although "the early photo-works feel decidedly rough and experimental," writes reviewer Heather Mathews, "they reveal the development of the ideas and methods that allowed Sherman to make her mark with later pictures." Reviewer Rachel Williams looks at three recent books of photographs made by the always-intriguing Francesca Woodman, here variously paired with the young artist's journal writings and letters to friends.

Christopher Lyon's examination of *Nancy Spero, Encounters* provides new insights into Spero's artistic relationships to other cultural figures, for example, that the contexts for Spero's homages to Ana Mendieta, which Lyon calls "'reenactment paintings' were installations representing female victims of violence." The art of reenactment is the primary subject of *Enacting Others: Politics of Identity in Eleanor Antin, Nikki S. Lee, Adrian Piper, and Anna Deavere Smith*, reviewed here by Jovana Stokic. Also under review is the *Sourcebook* of another reenactor, Martha Wilson, which includes her "classic" interpretation: *Nancy Reagan at the Inauguration*.

Reviewing a book on New Orleans-based sculptor L. Inebery, Deborah Frizzell describes her large kinetic outdoor installations as "responsive to transformations in the light and air surrounding them." Julie L'enfant considers a volume that gives insight into the exacting process used by sculptor Barbara Hepworth in creating life-size plaster prototypes for her late, large metal works, such as the 21-foot *Single Form*, made for the United Nations in New York. Also discussed in this issue is an exhibition catalogue on the Polish-French sculptor Alina Szapocznikow, whose intimate and often disturbing work is based on body parts cast in poly resins.

Rediscovering the significance of women who impacted their time has been a hallmark of the growing canon of art history, and two reviews in this issue offer brilliant additions. Megan Brandow-Faller looks at a book subtitled *The Forgotten Women of Vienna 1900*, which draws "case studies of five highly successful women painters and sculptors closely connected to the Vienna Secession." Reviewer Marjorie Koch looks back to the 18th century in *The Lady Anatomist*, to the remarkable work of Anna Morandi Manzolini, whose wax models, made for artists and medical students, enabled "the viewer to be amazed at the work that is the human body itself."

I look for these subjects and more in this provocative issue.

Joan Marter and Margaret Barlow,
Editors, *Woman's Art Journal*

CONNIE FOX

RECKONING WITH RECTANGLES

By Joyce Beckenstein

“My paintings are about what you can make happen in a rectangle,” says Connie Fox with a devilish smile. She knows she is touting a formalist line, one she’s repeatedly crossed for fifty-odd years. With her inventive lexicon of symbols, metaphors and implied narration, Fox walks a taut tightrope, balancing cool abstraction with intense subjectivity. When asked, “How does this dichotomy square with your formalist creed?” Fox shrugs and says, “Dig up some sod.”¹

That dig unearths a treasure trove of work by an under-sung painter who’s as authentic and unique an artist as you’re apt to find, one who willingly pays a price for her unorthodoxy. Forfeiting “iconic style” and the fame that often accompanies it, Fox deliberately undoes any emerging “signature” look. She prefers to explore paradoxes, asking “Can a hat operate as a geometric shape without losing its hatness?” “Can a grid be as open as sky and stay a grid?” Though her answers to these questions belie her ties to Surrealism and Abstract Expressionism—her major influences—her finessing of these genres explores uncharted terrain. The boundaries in a Fox rectangle are marvelously blurred places where reasoned geometry yields to intuitive gesture, where symbols lose their forms, and forms become symbols, where storytelling meanders into plots with baffling narration. Fox’s formalist quip about “what happens in a rectangle,” is thus a stunning truth; not the mockery of a mere jester, but a key to understanding both how she works, and how a complex work of art evolves.

Barry Schwabsky, art critic for *The Nation*, wrote about Fox’s uniqueness in terms of her complexity, comparing her work to a Proustian sentence. He describes this complexity in paintings as:

...coherent multiplicity. A complex painting would be one capable of including many spaces...many qualities of light, of texture, of facture, a wide gamut of colors; it would allow for descriptive representation, schematic or symbolic representation, for geometric and gestural abstraction; and these would not simply coexist, but would somehow be coordinated.... And out of multiplicity would arise the work’s sense of meaning.²

Schwabsky’s Proustian description of the elements found in a Fox painting elucidates what many art world legends more

simply say is Fox’s sheer virtuosity. A number of them, interviewed for this article, came of age with Fox during the heyday fifties and sixties of American modernism, or during the Postmodern era that followed. They know her as an artist who dances a two-step away from the crowd; the same rail thin, clear green-eyed gal from Colorado who still, at age 87, paints with unrelenting passion what flows through her on any given day.

She begins her day, as she has for decades, at Sammy’s Beach, a strand along the tidal bay, not far from the East Hampton, New York, home she shares with her husband, the sculptor Bill King. Years ago, she and Elaine de Kooning (1918–89) walked and sketched there, taking five dogs along for company. Yet for all the time spent at Sammy’s, Fox didn’t begin her extensive Sammy’s Beach series—ten large-scale paintings and seventeen drawings—until 2007. She explains:

The most significant thing I did at Sammy’s was to just be there. I walked, sat, looked. Most importantly, I swam. Why is it so important? Hard to say, but it has to do with getting “carried away” by physical energy that gives me back more than I put into it. It took thirty years of going (there) to want to do a series of paintings with reference to Sammy’s Beach—not to paint what I saw vis-à-vis the landscape. My titles are never descriptive, just ... something cryptic ... coupled with the painting for all sorts of reasons or non-reasons.

This is why *Sammy’s Beach III* (2009; Pl. 1) looks nothing like a recognizable beach. The painting consists of a cluster of magenta and iridescent-flecked black forms, here thick as sludge, there thin as soiled rain. Rising like mountains against a luminescent grid, they cradle a milky moon, wisps of delicate tendrils tickling its surface. Below they drip, like melting black glaciers, into a reflecting pool shot with dabs of color. To the lower right, a floral-shaped black spiral, aspin on a layer of ice-white, courts a glowing flash of orange on the left. This unexpected light source serves as counterpoint to all that is otherwise grim, dark, and static. This orange spark keeps the composition from sinking into an abyss. This orange cauldron is haunting and scary. Such is the nature of a Fox painting, its character defined by provocation, paradox and contradiction.



Fig. 1. Connie Fox, *Truches Bridge* (1973), oil on linen, 32" x 36". Photo: Connie Fox.

To see how all this relates to Sammy's Beach, go there and glimpse what washed in with the last tide. All that seaweed, black, oozy, and piled high on sun-streaked sand, reflects Fox's black, light-flecked mountainscape. However, whatever caught and stayed in the corner of Fox's eye the day she began the work is peripheral to how and why she made the painting. "They are notations of things I saw at Sammy's, or details from photographs taken over the years."

So are these notations from an East Hampton shoreline but a mind-click away from the dust storms roiling the midwestern heartland during the early 1930s. Born in the small town of Fowler, Colorado, in 1925, Fox lived her childhood on the edge of the "Dust Bowl," lands destroyed by severe drought that turned once arable earth to fine grit, easy prey for violent winds scooping up impotent soil by the acreful, and massing it into monstrous thunderheads. Called "black rollers," these vagrant paws tramped across entire towns, leaving in their wake a stinging skin of grimy orange fog. Fox remembers that "old ladies said the world was coming to an end, but as a child, I thought they were fascinating forms of *swishhh*." The magic and horror of that coppery sear through black blizzards lingers seventy years later in the embers smoldering through the peaks of *Sammy's Beach III*.

"These are primal memories," remarked the art critic and filmmaker Amei Wallach, who met Fox through Elaine de Kooning in the 1980s. After a recent visit with the artist, Wallach observed that:

Movement and energy are at the core of Fox's complexity. Her whole body of work can be seen as a declination of the varieties of energy as collision, energy as centrifugal force or as big bang. This energy is turbulent; it can be malevolent. And the paintings don't just describe it. They're like dispatches from within the field of energy—from within Fox's memories of being encompassed in energy. There were the Dust Bowl storms that engulfed her as a child, the water that envelops her when she swims.³

Fox who readily relates to that surround of energy, also describes a counterforce emanating from within:

When I was about five, I had a tricycle. I figured out how to take it apart and put the frame on upside down. It turned into a racing tricycle. I was seated way low and could really zoom around. It was the fun of working with materials; the direct relationship between visual information and emotion mixing together. It set early on, and was something I had to follow, like a sirens' song.⁴



Fig. 2. Connie Fox, *An Egyptian Temple For My Mother* (1988), acrylic on canvas, 60" x 75". Photo: Connie Fox.

Wallach's and Fox's energized metaphors describe the combined visual and psychic twister careening, in many guises, through decades of Fox paintings. In *White Column* (1963) it appears as a tightly coiled rope lunging from the lower foreground of the composition to its upper edge. Ten years later it courses through abstract maelstroms of color, subsuming the architectural fragments of *Truches Bridge* (1973; Fig. 1). In the 1980s, it resurfaces as a cacophony of images invited to play havoc with painterly gesture. In *An Egyptian Temple for My Mother* (1988; Fig. 2), for example, intersecting frames containing a heart, a Greek temple, and a vine-wrapped pole collide with a mash of reds, blues and, a garish yellow swirl. And, in the recent *Sammy's Beach* series, a cosmos of color, space, and form explode abstractions of earth, fire, water, and light. But what's most important, despite her allusions to nature or anything else, is Fox's consistent disregard for literal subject matter (as evidenced in her substitution of a Greek monument for her titled Egyptian Temple). Once Fox's stream of consciousness floats objects into her pictorial ring, they become compositional combatants, duking it out until she mediates a compositional draw.

Her shifts in style, from her early semi-abstractions and mature carnivalesque collisions, to the wizened silences now abiding the restive moods at *Sammy's Beach*, jelled over decades, one body of work distinctly different from, but consistently related to the next by virtue of their connections to nature, metaphor, and intuitive abstraction. Through time, these elements become richer, more densely layered, and more magnificently complex.

Fox didn't see much art until she became an artist. There were no museums in Fowler. But her loving family valued gender equality, self-reliance, and self-expression. She says, "My father assumed I could do whatever my older brother could do—he taught me to work with tools—and my mother painted tropical murals on our living room walls and bold flowers on the handmade dresses I wore to school." Those resonate in her explosive flower paintings of the 1970s, such as *Puerto Rico Red* (1970; Fig. 3).

After graduating from the University of Colorado, where she received a strong literary education, Fox studied at Art Center School in Los Angeles. "I didn't see 'real paintings' until 1949," she exclaims: "a Surrealist show featuring Magritte, Ernst and Matta, in LA." About that time, she also began reading Proust, which she is still reading, and watching films by Cocteau and the young Fellini. To earn money, she hand painted neckties and waitressed at a local luncheonette.

That's where she met Wayne Andersen, a lanky farm cowboy and high school dropout who became a well-known

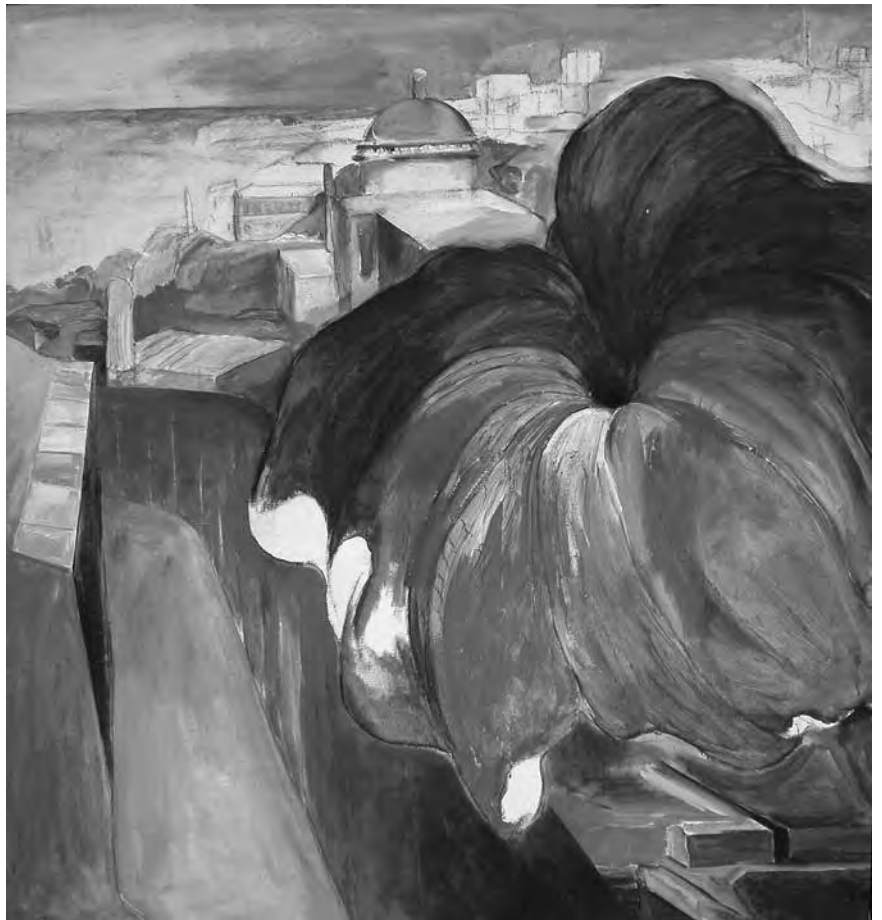


Fig. 3. Connie Fox, *Puerto Rico Red* (1970), oil on linen, 50" x 48". Photo: Connie Fox.

art historian, writer, and scholar. She was his muse. Reached for this article, Andersen made available notes for his in-progress book, "Wild Artists I've Known." Fox occupies the first chapter:

Early one evening when chatting with Connie across the bar, ... she asked if I would like to go with her and hear Alvin Lustig lecture on his work (at a bookstore in Santa Monica). I had no idea who this Lustig was, had never attended a lecture, and hadn't even been in a bookstore, but a date with Connie would give good reason for a first time for anything. Connie converted me from Hudson's *Green Mansions* to Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* ... from a van Gogh-emotional to a Surrealist-intellectual focus.⁵

Andersen proposed. Fox said "no." Instead, in 1950, she and two girlfriends took off on an eight-month, 1000-mile bicycle trip through Europe, stopping off first in New York, where Fox eyed her first Willem de Kooning painting. Europe, all rubble and still in post-war shock, was a dicey place for three young women to travel alone, but it is here that her heart throbbed in the staggering presence of Europe's great architecture, Delacroix's unexpurgated color, Cezanne's anxious geometry, Masaccio's silences, Redon's mysteries, and Michelangelo's breathtaking mastery of scale and space in the Sistine Chapel.



Fig. 4. Connie Fox, *Orange Road* (1953), oil on canvas, 33" x 49". Photo: Connie Fox.

After the quick taste of Surrealism followed by this smorgasbord of great masters, Fox, in 1951, came home to a melting-pot brewing abstraction, American style. As art critic Rose Slivka wrote, "Abstract Expressionism was America's last great spiritual movement.... In 1952 ... you could see all the exhibitions there were to be seen on a lunch hour, and still have time for lunch. What happened afterward, as Elaine (de Kooning) said, was beyond ... (everyone's) wildest dreams."⁶

Abstract Expressionism was spreading from New York to California and Albuquerque, New Mexico, where Fox headed for an MA degree at the University of New Mexico, in the spring of 1952. What she found there was "such freedom ... artists doing what hadn't been done before. Richard Diebenkorn, Agnes Martin, Adja Yunkers, Robert Mallery, and Robert Dash studied there. In 1957, Elaine de Kooning came to teach, bringing New York's energy. She's the closest thing I had to a mentor, and we became the best of friends."

In *Orange Road* (1953; Fig. 4), an early New-Mexico semi-abstract work, Fox grapples with the abstract difficulties of rendering a landscape with depth, while respecting the flatness of the picture plane. Here, two sturdy trees press against the canvas surface, an orange road advances towards, and then retreats from the viewer, and a splotch of impudent red holds the middle ground. Unlike her later works, Fox stays true to nature in *Orange Road*, using translucent washes of color as pictorial glue to weave her forms through the warp and weft of deep and shallow space. Her young daring presages her lifelong intuitive process of allowing compositional conundrums to point the way to new abstract possibilities.

Elaine de Kooning took early note: "Fox ... denies the general flamboyant tonalities of the Southwest. A magnificent draughtsman and colorist in that section of the spectrum where colors relinquish their names... Fox paints her starkly articulated mountains and trees, huddled birds and grandly isolated figures in elusive, cold umbers, ochres, blues, grays,

and whites."⁷ *Berkeley Flower* (1963; Fig. 5), another semi-abstract landscape featuring an "offish green" flower, with a moon gliding between mountain peaks, fits de Kooning's description. With its glow of warm orange light, this composition also bears an uncanny kinship to the recent *Sammy's Beach III*, with one big difference: *Sammy's Beach III* bears no verisimilitude to nature.

When questioned about her interest in semi-abstract landscapes at a time when all hell was breaking loose with nonobjective, Minimal and Pop Art, Fox replied, "I just get ideas I want to run with. As Bill [King] said, they come from a wellspring that doesn't have much to do with what other artists are doing."

This kind of independent distance from the avant-garde was not uncommon, according to Elaine de Kooning. She maintained that many of the New Mexico artists she met during her teaching stint in Albuquerque evolved differently from their New York and California brethren because of "a landscape so overwhelming that painters have to look inside. Here is strongly introspective art, stubbornly original and personal, yet not eccentric. Revealing an awareness of East-and West-Coast painting, the work of New Mexican artists reflects neither. None of the slashing brushstrokes of the former, none of the brilliant colors of the latter."⁸ These insights help explain Abstract Expressionism's impact on many who tiptoed around it.

"Elaine blew the lid off," says Fox; "her influence on me was profound. But all this energy ... where is this going to germinate and take root? It's exciting, but these energies don't



Fig. 5. Connie Fox, *Berkeley Flower* (1963), oil on linen, 30" x 40". Photo: Connie Fox.

necessarily go into paintings at the time ... they may later." The works of the eighties and nineties, for which Fox is best known, percolated for twenty years, in many ways fueled by the intellectual whorl she helped create. During her first marriage, to Blair Boyd (1954–66), Fox and her young family flitted between Berkeley, California, and Albuquerque. Some of the remarkable twentieth-century figures caught in her vortex are, like Fox, still around, going strong, and eager to share their compelling recollections about her and the mid-century American scene as they experienced it.

In a wonderful photograph (circa 1957; Fig. 6), the political activist Margaret Randall sits with Fox, Elaine de Kooning, the sculptor Herb Goldman and his wife, Jane, in a Juárez, Mexico, bar. Fox and de Kooning loved to sketch the bullfights, and would stop there during their south-of-the-border sojourns. As Randall recalls: "I was very young. The fifties were so repressive, and Connie and Elaine were diametrically opposed to the McCarthy people. The great poet Robert Creeley showed up at a party, given by Connie and Blair, with a fresh copy of Allan Ginsberg's new poem, *Howl*. He read it out loud and it turned my life around."

Randall in Mexico co-edited with Sergio Mondragón an avant-garde bilingual literary magazine, *El corno emplumado* (The Plumed Horn). Any given issue could contain works by communist writers, Catholic priests, and guerilla poets. Three editions included Fox drawings. One delicate line rendering riffs on Albrecht Dürer's 1497 *Self-Portrait* (1967). Another surreal drawing, *Penis Nose* (1967) consists of a large flower shape with a humorous ribald face set within its center. These drawings, one fine, the other densely shaded, foreshadow Fox's later experiments with drawing as both an independent media, and as a compositional element within a painting.

Sonya Rapoport, a conceptual artist and friend from the Berkeley days, knew the "California Fox" from a different, "very middle class perspective."

I went to visit Connie in this elegant neighborhood and I see this funky truck in the driveway ... glad it wasn't my street. That was the iconoclast, very un-bourgeoisie, Connie Fox. She was so professional, with a studio away from her house! I'll never forget that. Everyone was drawn to her. Elaine [de Kooning] came and stayed for weeks. Connie showed at Hanson Gallery. She opened worlds for me ... her works, wonderful surprises ... such an original way of looking at things.¹⁰

Most of Fox's works during the sixties jockey between her surreal moon- and flower-face compositions and her



Fig. 6. Photograph in Juárez bar (ca. 1957), L. to R., Connie Fox, Jane and Herb Goldman, Elaine de Kooning, Margaret Randall.

voluptuous flowers dominating cubist-like landscapes. *Steps-Shell-Moonface* (1964; Fig. 7) combines a bit of everything: mountains and flora alluding to nature, a surreal moon face, and a geometric stepped bridge. This architectural element, like the cubist landscapes, prefigures the grids that would later play a dominant role in her compositions. But the most intriguing work of this period is the vastly different *Bull/Arena* (1969; Pl. 2). Its transcendent and mystical ambiguities foreshadow the surreal and abstract-expressionist components of her mature compositions.



Fig. 7. Connie Fox, *Steps-Shell-Moonface* (1964), oil on linen, 60" x 50.5". Photo: Hiroyuki Hamada.



Fig. 8. Connie Fox, *Hatting the Jack* (2004), acrylic on canvas, 78" x 84". Photo: Connie Fox.

For decades, Fox completely forgot the existence of this large work on linen, until happenstance last summer unfolded it among rolls of early paintings. It took sleuthing to determine its origins, and to learn why so pivotal a piece spent decades in hiding. Rapoport who still has some linen Fox gave her in the 1960s, mailed a swatch to help her friend date the work. No match. But Rapoport did recall seeing a "tapestry-like painting on unstretched linen" when she visited Sewickley, Pennsylvania, where Fox had moved with her two children, Megan and Brian, and second husband, Max Braverman, in 1968.¹¹ "Her studio was in an old Pennsylvania Railroad station," reports Rapoport, impressed with "its huge rooms, high ceilings and marble toilets!" The old relic belonged to Fox's friend Diane George, an art-glass blower, who used it as a studio and to house her furnaces. She invited Fox to share her space. George not only remembered the large linen work but also reminded Fox: "That was when you discovered color!"¹²

"I took over an old waiting room with 23-foot ceilings that challenged me to work large," Fox now recalls. The enigmatic *Bull/Arena* features, in a faint flowing outline reminiscent of her Dürer drawing, the figure of a large charging bull—a metaphoric field for the central image of a smaller, more intricately rendered animal likeness. This one, softly modeled in washes of grey and cerulean, floats within a womb-like, pale yellow cloud, framed by a cobalt blue column and a distant onion-domed monument. Intrigued by the hefty animal's gravity-defying lightness, Fox says she "wanted to capture the contrasts; the way delicate legs and hooves are repeated in the

graceful elegance of the bull's powerful horns."

It's not clear if the central figure is protected within the belly of the mighty outlined beast or if it represents a vanquished creature's soul. Fox leaves such transcendent questions transcendent. A master of ambiguity, she formally extends it, using the drawn figure as a visual link to connect her precise imagery with color masses, splashed with expressionist abandon, throughout the composition's open spaces. In a Fox rectangle, anything is possible.

A string of Proustian narratives deepens this work's complexity. "I think about this marvelous beast ... beautiful and light, sailing across the sky. I also think of Cocteau's film *Beauty and the Beast*," says Fox, saddened that the fierce but fragile hairy creature morphed into a pretty prince. But more comes to mind: mighty Juárez bulls, dying with dignity, and Fox's childhood recollection of horse games played every year in Fowler; tournaments when fearless cowhands astride robust steeds raced through billows of yellow dust. Architectural elements providing structural support to the ethereal pale cloud clearly mimic the monuments Fox saw in Europe. And all those peripheral splatters of paint pay homage to Abstract Expressionism. *Bull/Arena*

is about all of these things in general and none of them in particular. "It transcends anything specific," says Fox.

Why did she forget it? Says Fox:

I think it satisfied my need to get into specific imagery and drawing—something I again hungered for much later, when it came to Sammy's Beach. But in the seventies I decided to work in different scales using intense color and spatial animation, as I did in *Pastel Rainbow* [1978]. Kandinsky influenced me, briefly. This is different from my study of Piet Mondrian, and how he related his geometry to the edges and proportions of the canvas rectangle. I still find fresh insight in his simultaneous use of complexity and simplicity.

This Mondrian connection becomes important and clearer later.

Fox lived with her children in Pennsylvania until they were grown, then, in 1980, at the urging of Elaine de Kooning and Robert Dash, she moved to East Hampton. Divorced from Braverman, independent, and bursting with renewed energy, she now embarked on a body of work so remarkable that it prompted de Kooning to purchase, then donate, *Bright and Restless as Flags* (1984) to the Albuquerque Museum. Her cover letter said: "I consider Fox a major American artist," and she praised her "highly inventive use of form and ... unique juxtaposition of scale and space."¹³

Tackling abstraction's relentless complexities in a wholly new way, gesturally, intuitively, and symbolically, Fox was on her way to becoming the Abstract Expressionist who wasn't.

Not the Man, Not the Tornado (1985; Pl. 3), a mural-sized diptych, typifies the churning of multiple energy fields that characterize the eighties paintings: water surges, wind blows, and solid geometries forfeit their bulk. An upward-twisting helix digs in, halting an aggressive horizontal from becoming an actual horizon line. Meanwhile, a wheel spins in two directions at once, and off to the right, an indigo blue grid aborts pandemonium's slide off the canvas edge. An outlined human form leaning into the foreground further sandbags chaos. Suggesting a humanity-nature theme, it revives the narrative content suggested in *Bull/Arena*.

Such is the nature of Fox's expressionist ride through the frame of a rectangle, where discord and harmony coexist like a couple wanting to stay married, but always needing to find a way to make things work. "It's a juxtaposition of alien forms that you don't think will work, but they do," noted Robert Dash.¹⁴

"Every great artist ... discloses ... leitmotifs—that appear in many embodiments, that recur in matters of inspiration as well as those of execution, in the choice of subjects as well as in the choice of color harmonies. They are elusive," wrote art historian Rene Huyghe.¹⁵ For Fox, these "embodiments of inspiration" become mutations that wildly re-invent and dislocate subject and "color harmony." Consider *Rainbow/Knife* (1984; front cover), a prototypical example of her eighties paintings. Here a spontaneous impaling of pigment, shape, sign, and symbol unfold in pictorial space with the fractured cinematic effects of Fellini's 1963 film *8 ½*, which ricochets through the time/space corridors of the director's mind as he struggles to make a film about the film he is having difficulty making.

Fox explains the anatomy of *Rainbow/Knife*, saying, "It began with my thinking about the horizontal and vertical proportion of the canvas rectangle." That proportion determined the division of *Rainbow/Knife* into two unequally sized verticals. A horizontal line implied one-quarter way down the canvas further divided the space into a succession of frames. On the right they evolve into groupings of dislodged, cross-shaped "windows," which in turn inspire a field of crucifix-like telephone poles that write this painting's elusive story.

The small shattered frames on the right teem with disjointed, geometric forms and eddying color. It's a chaotic space, but one bathed in light. To the left, in a large, dark, and macabre open space, a knife completes a large white X, a knife that halts the curve of a rainbow in its advance towards light. Fox's iconic twister unites the two spaces: It here appears as a spinning yellow coil, palpable and bold in the light of day, dissolving to liquid in the ink of night.

Each form hurled into these disparate spaces acts as a juggernaut animating a composition that blurs all reasonable perceptions. The suggestion of a cubist house in the painting's right foreground, for example, initially provides the viewer safe ground, outside the painting's inner whorl. But the unwitting outsider gets sucked in, hurled through a series of "window panes," and then catapulted to the dark side, where a cross eerily floats in the night. Thus do Fox's metaphors for day and night as light and dark, reach a crescendo in her symbolic redemption of pictorial space.

Fox explains her charged imagery with a grammar lesson: "painting is a verb, sculpture is a noun," she says. "Paintings elucidate, eradicate, and equivocate throughout ... so when it came time to finish off that big X in *Rainbow/Knife* ... I wanted to add something to give it more interest. The shape of a knife seemed right." It transformed a flat triangle into a three dimensional form, shaped like a chunk of cheese. It also tossed into the mix a narrative zinger about pain and sacrifice.

Amei Wallach refers to Fox's quixotic imagery as the work of the Trickster who "remakes experience through paradoxical intervention ... the Trickster described in Blake's poem 'Europe,' as the fairy who sings a mocking song about the five windows through which man ... experiences the world that holy men and artists transmute."¹⁶ That this is one of Fox's favorite poems and sources of inspiration is a reminder that the Trickster is but a metaphor for the disruptive play of memories and sensations flitting through an artist's consciousness in the process of making. In its smallest, most personal guise it may appear much as it did to Blake, a tiny imp poised on the petal of a "strek'd tulip." But writ large in the landscape of art history, this ecumenical jester's sleight of hand deftly wheedles eons of symbolic meaning from all imagery, even when that imagery vehemently disclaims any and all decipherable meaning.

Thus did the Trickster-as-trope for symbolic language, metaphor clenched in its cunning fist, spring it loose in the twentieth century for new masters who would, in their own way, have their way with it. Though Abstract Expressionism is an American phenomenon, its spirit owes much to this timeless rascal packing an international passport. Charles C. Eldredge, founder of the American Art Forum, noted:

The receptivity of Americans to Transcendentalism and Symbolist aesthetics was abetted by the late nineteenth century's interest in subjective states and mental process ... [and] the era's preoccupation with spiritualism ... Theosophy and other alternative creeds, ranging from Swedenborgianism to Buddhism. A fascination with psychology and aberrant personalities ... provided a heady amalgam for the generations of artists and thinkers whose conceptions would shape the new era.¹⁷

Robert Motherwell held close the imagery of French Symbolist poets and the Surrealist writings of André Breton. He helped Breton edit *VVV*, "a periodical devoted to ... poetry, the plastic arts, psychology, sociology ... the field of wonderful."¹⁸ Jackson Pollock drew inspiration from European Surrealism and the theories of Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung. And, Lucy Lippard, noting how American Minimalists, inspired by Rodchenko and Malevich found transcendence in the simplicity of form, said that: "the emptiness of silent painting or monotonal painting ... is really a form of spiritual expression."¹⁹

The Trickster as indefatigable muse also delights in tossing a few old masters into the lair of cocky young tigers. As David Anfam suggests, "for Pollock ... early mentors included ... Luca Signorelli, El Greco, Rubens.... In turn, Philip Guston



Fig. 9. Connie Fox, *Weeds 6 (Sammy's Beach)* (2010), ink and charcoal on Stonehenge paper, 30" x 44". Photo: Jenny Gorman.

engaged with Piero ... while Rothko utilized reproductions of works by Rubens. As Willem de Kooning wryly concluded, 'the idea that art can come from nowhere is typically American.'"²⁰

Harold Rosenberg, a friend of Fox, well understood Abstract Expressionist metaphor as a loose cannon, capable of firing helter skelter through painterly space. Writing about Willem de Kooning's 'symbolic abstraction' he said: "It is still the rare artist who trusts his work entirely to the intuitions that arise in the course of creating it.... A half a century of abstract art ... made it possible for de Kooning to release his metaphors from specific objects and thus enable them to strike a much broader resonance of associations...."²¹

His comment cuts a clear path to Fox, who, in common with many Abstract Expressionists, never knows what a work will look like until it says "you're done." Carried along with her personal iconography are the symbols, metaphors, and symbolist resonances of Surrealism, Abstract Expressionism, experimental film, Proust, and the European art and architecture that inspired her.

Yet no single art historical movement can claim her.

Artist Audrey Flack accompanied Fox and Elaine de Kooning on many plein air sketching outings. A highly accomplished banjo player, she also invited Fox and King to play violin in her Bluegrass band—The Art Attacks—that she organized in the eighties. Flack, who well understands Fox's work, made this observation: "She found her vision with Surrealism and Abstract Expressionism early, and maintained it. She was like Franz Kline, who would draw a thin line, then wonder how wide it had to be to become a form. But Kline maintained this 'form' as a line. Connie adds surrealist symbolism [as she did with the knife-line in *Rainbow/Knife*]." Pointing to one of her favorite works, *Hatting the Jack* (2004; Fig. 8), Flack praises its "symbolic overtones resonating emotional content within the abstract dynamic content of the

work."²² She refers to Fox's sly manner of upending content as form and vice versa: a hat becomes a concave solid atop a flat circle; the jack, an oddity of pointy and ball-shaped parts, forgoes its upright spin to instead rocket sideways through space. These objects vie with the rambunctious vividly hued pyramids and rectangles doing the emotional heavy lifting in this piece. Flack delights in the way Fox can make memories of a child's reeling toy and an old uncle's Homburg seamlessly merge with the painting's formal elements.

"Had Connie just done abstraction she would be a second-generation Abstract Expressionist taking gesture and color to the nth degree, as artists of the sixties did," notes contemporary sculptor Lynda Benglis. A close, long-time friend, Benglis says, "Fox is a symbolic Abstract Expressionist: she's always been tied to nature and symbols. That she is doing her most creative work now is pretty amazing,"²³ she says, referring to the Sammy's Beach paintings and the

works leading up to them.

They begin in the nineties, when Fox's boisterous geometries simmer down to negotiate a new relationship. In *Postage Due* (1994; Pl. 4) they form an unruly checkerboard within a "squarish" form dominating a large rectangular canvas. Like the bull in *Bull/Arena*, a sea of washes, smears, smudges, and scratches of pigment laid on thin, lush, gentle, and rough surround it. So is there a narrative here, but it's abstracted as an opinionated tiff among egocentric orange and dark-hued rectangles. They argue over shape as space, and negative space as form. All of which matters little to a streaked geometric grouping in the middle of the large square, or to the tight-knit clique of rectangles congregated in its lower right. As Barry Schwabsky observed, "Unlike many practitioners, Connie doesn't use the grid to solve or eliminate her compositional problems—she uses it to generate them.... [They] open endless spatial possibilities undreamt-of by the formalism that was so prevalent in the sixties."²⁴

But just as Fox's gestural abstractions embrace then abandon Abstract Expressionism, so does her use of the grid bow to Mondrian as it exits his way of thinking. In *Still-life with Gingerpot I*, (1911) Mondrian used an irregular grid, and in *Gray Tree* (1911) a roughly implied one, to "unify the pictorial field of his canvas ... to [bind] the depicted surface [of the object] to the literal surface of the picture."²⁵

Fox likewise uses the grid to respect the flatness of the picture plane, but unlike Mondrian, who proceeded to pure abstraction with tightly organized arrangements of horizontals, verticals, and pure colors, Fox adopts the grid to the exigencies of each painting. Her versatility with it is remarkably inventive. "It's like the invited guest who ends up cooking most of the meal and even cleans up," says, Fox in her lilting midwestern drawl that brings refreshing American pluck to aesthetic oratory. In *Fiore di Lisi* (2006; Pl. 5) she penetrates the grid by angling some of its squares and

allowing them to intermittently drip their colors. A sepia *fleur de lis*, blowing in from the left side of the painting, recalls Fox's early flowers and Colorado thunderheads. Grid and flower are strange bedfellows, though they are far less combative than were knife and large white X in the 1980s. But *Fiore di Lisi*'s space is no less charged: here a pulsating marquee trumpets the arrival of a feathery femme fatale, destined to bring the house down.

"It surprised me to discover how the grid helps the painting breathe at the same time that it locks down the picture plane," remarked Fox, in reference to her Sammy's Beach series. In *Sammy's Beach I* (2007; Pl. 6), a grid extending two-thirds of the way down the pictorial surface defines the painting's overall structure, and serves as a backdrop for a rush of watery-blue simultaneously charging up and cascading down its façade. Fox has here successfully wedded the geometric grid to painterly gesture, but now she decides she wants more.

She wants to integrate drawing and painting, not as Jackson Pollock did, with his drawing arm one with his painterly "action," but by melding two different media, so that they appear to be born from a single source. She accomplishes this by counter-balancing the flowing blue "water spout" with the brambly texture of the mountain-like form on the left. Then Fox unites these organic and inorganic grid elements by loosing across the surface, like a kite riding the wind, a graphically drawn white diamond shape. Her orchestration of textures—acrylic, brushed on or slathered with a palette knife, varied with different thicknesses of charcoal, blended and set with heavy gel—accomplish the difficult feat of making drawing and painting indistinguishable from one another.

In 2010 Fox decided to devote a sub-series of Sammy's Beach works as drawings—seventeen large independent works on paper consisting of twelve Weeds and five Geometrics, because, she says, "drawing maintains its own feel, its own language." She nevertheless achieves painterly effects with the medium. Lithe lines and a balled tangle in *Weeds 6* (Fig. 9) float upon white paper as if gliding in air. Irregularly sized and spaced grids in *Geometric V* (Fig. 10) oscillate through deep and shallow space. Typical of Fox, these drawings perversely blur their own distinctions: What is controlled? What is spontaneously divined? Natural forms assume clean lines. Rectangles refuse lockdown in a grid. Taken together, these works on paper summarize what Fox has always been about: avowing her innate understanding that the dichotomies defining her craft are not dichotomies at all. The loose line is the yin to the ruler's sharp yang. Thus does Fox know her art as the sea knows the sky, and like nature, she deftly dissolves one layer of reality into another.

All of Fox's paradoxes explode like the most magnificent of fireworks in *Sammy's Beach X* (2012; Pl. 7). Vincent van Gogh,

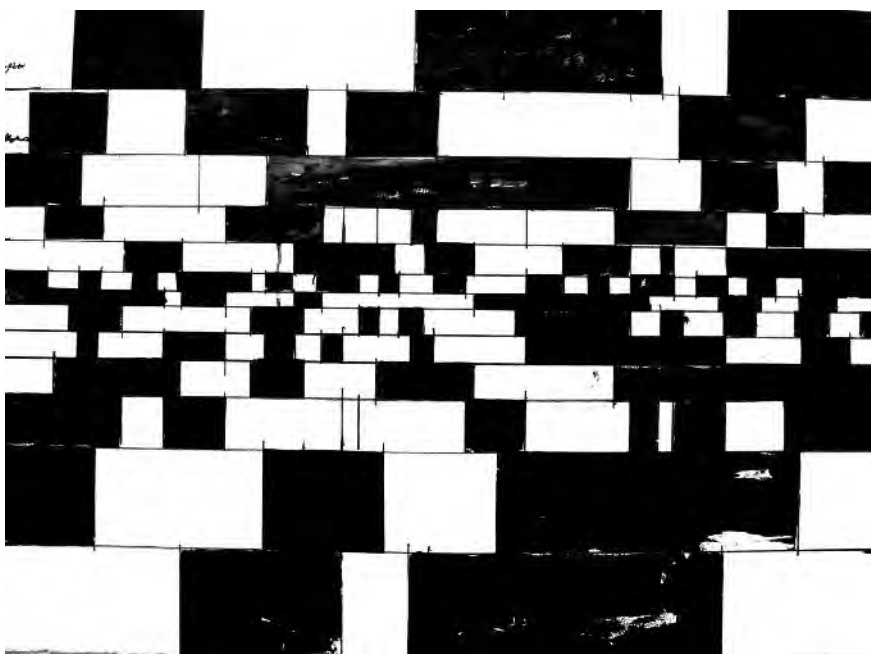


Fig. 10. Connie Fox, *Geometric V* (Sammy's Beach) (2010), acrylic and ink on paper, 22" x 30". Photo: Jenny Gorman.

who marveled at Franz Hals's "twenty-seven shades of black," would, I believe, bow just as deeply to Fox's voluptuous ebony silhouette showering sensuous veils of opalescent white, bursts and drips of crimson, lavender, pink, and—as Elaine de Kooning said—"colors that relinquish their names." All of which erupt against a grid that melts in a blaze of shimmering copper, silver and gold light.

Are we in the midst of another incarnation of fecund beachy foliage? The swish of black rollers? An encore by *Fiore di Lisi*? All of them? None of them? No matter.

If you've followed along you will recognize the joyous burst of amorphous form radiating within the iridescent light of creation. You will know its evanescently colored story. Those who haven't followed as closely needn't worry, for to rephrase Fox's no-nonsense friend, Robert Dash, Connie Fox's works don't need lots of words, just pictures. •

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Notes

1. All direct quotes by Connie Fox, except where otherwise noted, are based on taped interviews that took place between Sept. 1 and Dec. 15, 2012.
2. Barry Schwabsky, "Connie Fox and the Proustian Sentence," in *Connie Fox Paintings* (New York: Brenda Taylor Gallery, 2006), Introduction.
3. All direct quotes by Amei Wallach are based on a Dec. 1, 2012 taped interview with her about Connie Fox.
4. Connie Fox, an excerpt from a taped lecture she gave at a program organized by Molly Barnes at the Roger Moore Hotel, New York, N.Y. Sept. 21, 2012.
5. According to Wayne Andersen's website, www.wayneve stiandersen.com, the author of the anticipated publication, *Wild*

Artists I've Known, is a Professor Emeritus of History, Theory, and Criticism of Art and Architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Correspondences with Andersen, including receipt of the manuscript draft, took place by email.

6. Rose Slivka and Elaine de Kooning, *Elaine de Kooning, The Spirit of Abstract Expressionism, Selected Writings* (New York: George Braziller, 1994), introductory essay, 22–23.
7. *Ibid.*, 186.
8. *Ibid.*, 185.
9. Margaret Randall (b. 1936) is a feminist author, writer, photographer, and social activist. All quotes from Margaret Randall are based on a taped telephone conversation that took place on Oct. 24, 2012.
10. Sonya Rapoport (b. 1923) a conceptual/digital/new media artist, is considered a pioneer among those who used computer technology as a component in her art. All quotes by Sonya Rapoport are based on a taped telephone interview with the artist on Oct., 8, 2012.
11. Braverman was working as a biologist at the University of Pittsburgh. She established her studio in nearby Sewickley, and taught at Carnegie Mellon, where Elaine de Kooning also taught for a short time.
12. Diane George reminded Fox about the circumstances surrounding the painting during a telephone conversation with her in November 2012. She reminded Fox about a trip they had taken to the Barnes Museum in Philadelphia, where Fox purchased a “fat book” about Kandinsky. It was then that she began to work with color, and to experiment with her Kandinsky-inspired compositions.
13. On Dec. 14, 2012, Andrew Connors, Curator of Art, Albuquerque Museum of Art and History, confirmed by phone and by email the gift made by Elaine de Kooning. The cover letter, dated March 1986, is in the museum archives, and the painting remains in the museum’s permanent collection.
14. All direct quotes by Robert Dash are based on a taped telephone interview with the artist on Oct. 12, 2012.
15. Rene Huyghe, *Art and the Spirit of Man* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1962), 150.
16. Amei Wallach, “Connie Fox Doesn’t Think Like You Think She Thinks,” in *Connie Fox Paintings*, 18.
17. Charles Eldredge, “Nature Symbolized: American Painting from Ryder to Hartley,” in *The Spiritual in Art, Abstract Painting 1890-1985* (New York: Abbeville, 1987), 116.
18. April Kingsley, *The Turning Point* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), 304.
19. *Ibid.*, 317.
20. David Anfam, “Transatlantic Anxieties, Especially Bill’s Folly,” in Joan Marter, ed., *Abstract Expressionism, The International Context* (New Brunswick and London: Rutgers Univ. Press, 2007), 66.
21. Harold Rosenberg, *The Anxious Object* (Chicago and London: The Univ. of Chicago Press, 1964), 109, 115.
22. All direct quotes by Audrey Flack are based on a taped telephone interview with the artist on Oct. 11, 2012.
23. All direct quotes by Lynda Benglis are based on a taped telephone interview with the artist on Sept. 20, 2012.
24. Barry Schwabsky, “Connie Fox: A Different Sense of Complexity,” in *Connie Fox Paintings*, 7, 8.
25. Yve-Alain Bois, “The Iconoclast,” in Yve-Alain Bois, Joop Joosten, Angelica Zander Rudenstine, Hans Janssen, *Piet Mondrian* (New York: Leonardo Arte in association with the National Gallery of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1994), 314.

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ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS THINKING IN THE WORK OF LINDA STEIN

By Christine Filippone

Limbless, classicizing, thick-waisted female forms comprise Linda Stein's Knight Series. These tactile figures embedded with urban detritus including metal laundry tickets, spoons, chains, calligraphic plates and fragments of newsprint are currently touring the country under the title "The Fluidity of Gender." The title references the ambiguity of these figures, which possess small breasts, wide hips and stand rigidly erect with left leg thrust slightly forward in the manner of Ancient Greek kouros statues. The works are emblematic of the spectrum of gender identities, and thus subversive of stark masculine and feminine binaries in which hierarchal power relations are inevitably inscribed. Stein, an out lesbian who engages viewers in performances with her wearable sculpture and in public discourse centered on the effects of sexism and homophobia, sees her work in concert with her activism, as a tool to reveal the connections between societal stereotypes and individual lives. Her work is rooted in her deeply held feminist beliefs. Many of her sculptures function as wearable suits of armor, referencing female symbols of protection and physical and moral strength. These include the comic book heroine Wonder Woman fighting for truth and justice, the anime Princess Mononoke defending the environment against industrialization, and the Asian goddess of mercy and compassion the Bodhisattva Kannon, all portrayed in *Heroic Lineup 599* (2007; Pl. 8 and Fig. 1).¹ Scholars have appropriately described her works in the context of gender performativity and embodied subjectivity, informed by the sumptuousness of her materials, which invite a haptic or touch-centered response.²

Stein's current series, provisionally titled *I Am the Environment: My Gender, My Nature*, expands the concept of fluidity beyond gender to encompass environmental systems. In this series, she abandons urban detritus in favor of natural materials, which, she explains, address the relationships between gender, the environment, and her own identity.³ Truncated at mid-thigh and encrusted with abandoned mollusk shells, driftwood, and small stones, these works such as *Shell Homes 723* (2011; Fig. 2) extend her concern with gender and power to the social realm and to her nonhuman surroundings. At first this work may seem in productive communication with ecofeminism, which according to ecofeminist scholar Karen Warren is "the position that there are important connections between how one treats women,



Fig. 1. Linda Stein, *Heroic Lineup 599* (2007), 3-D collage with archival inks on paper, 42" x 21" x 3". Photo: Stein Studios.



Fig. 2. Linda Stein, *Shell Homes 723* (2011), shells, mixed media, 37" x 21" x 12". Photo: D. James Dee.

people of color, and the underclass on one hand and how one treats the nonhuman natural environment on the other."⁴ But there are conceptual and even spiritual aspects to these works that are not easily contained within this frame. To encompass the performative nature of her wearable sculpture used as a component of her political activism and her developing concept of the interrelationship between individual, society, and environment, often expressed in spiritual terms, I propose a reading through the lens of systems theory, particularly the concept of open systems. Associated with life, growth, and change, open systems took on political and social resonance for artists like Stein maturing in the late 1960s and early 1970s.⁵ Historically coincident with the American women's movement, the theorization of open systems in relation to

society, biology, and the environment was deployed by women artists in the early 1970s as an alternative means of conceiving social and environmental relationships.⁶ In 1972, anthropologist and cyberneticist Gregory Bateson argued that individuals, societies, and ecosystems must be conceived integrally, as a complex, interrelated system.⁷ The notion of a self-sufficient, independent self is a fallacy in this model. Art historian William Kaizen has explained that "[Bateson] redefined the self as an expanded mental field in which the subject and its objects are no longer separable."⁸ Mind itself expands to become "immanent in the larger system [of] man plus environment."⁹ In his book *Ecology of Mind*, Bateson asserted, "The total self-corrective unit which processes information, or as I say, 'thinks' and 'acts' and 'decides,' is a

system whose boundaries do not at all coincide with the boundaries either of the body or of what is popularly called the 'self' or 'consciousness.'... The network is not bounded by the skin."¹⁰

Bateson's denial of a self or a skin suggests the interconnectedness of the individual body with the social world and the environment, all of which together constitute a network or system. Intrinsic to this notion of network is a concept of self counter to the mind-body dualisms of Western thought.¹¹ The very word ecology is defined as the science of the relationships between organisms and their environments. Bateson warned that the potential collapse of this system would be the result of a Western epistemology ruled by cause-and-effect scientific rationalism, which tends to focus on elements separately in order to exert control. Man changes the environment to suit him and in so doing, upsets the balance of controlled competition and mutual dependency among the elements, leading to breakdown. Thus, in Bateson's notion of ecology, which had a formative influence on modern ecology and ecofeminism by extension, dominance and control are antithetical to a well-functioning interdependent system.

For *Shell Homes* 723, Stein collected sand-smoothed stones, drift-wood fragments and mollusk shells from the beach and applied them—horror vacui—to her cast paper figure molds. Richly tactile, these varied natural objects conform to the female figure, suggesting an integration of subject with environment. In concept, they recall the early photographs of environmental artist Alan Sonfist, including *Myself as a Tree*, *Myself as a Leaf* (1969), in which natural objects—branches and leaves—are montaged with the artist's face, suggesting an erasure of self in favor of a physical union with nature. This union with nature is also evident in his photo/performance *Myself Becoming one with the Tree* (also 1969), made the year before the first Earth Day, in which he is pictured wrapping his hands around the trunk of a tree. The environmental concerns that both artists share manifest an effacement of an independent self in favor of an integration of self with environment.

To help her think through this series, Stein made a preliminary video of ocean waves gently rolling to shore, overlaid with her musings upon her personal relationship to the sea and its yield.

I run as close as I dare without touching the foam lace boarder of sea advancing, with its retreat exposing a pockmarked skin of sand left vulnerable but rich with shells, stones, feathers and branches. I breathe in the ocean's power and physically invite it into my body, my androgynous body, my androgynous body, representing all of humanity. With my outstretched fingers I internalize the water's force into my being and cry out at the instant of the crashing waves' orgasmic explosion. I have succeeded at this intersection of sky meeting water, meeting sand in capturing and internalizing the ocean. I am the ocean Each spotted, speckled, stippled piece that I lift up and adopt, I imagine already a part of the torso I've yet to create.¹²

Here Stein conceptualizes a conjoining of natural systems, "sky meeting water, meeting sand." She also discusses the integration of the ocean with her own body, suggestive of a systemic fusion of self with ecosystem. This fusion is also inherent in her reference to her own androgynous body that "represents all of humanity." According to the feminist scholar Carolyn Heilbrun, "Androgyny, above all, allows individuals comfort in their own sex, while refusing to recognize the constraints dictated by gender."¹³ Further, literary scholar Marisa Pereyra asserts that androgyny is one of the strategies used to annul the destructive effects of the binary opposition: I – Other, in which the other is always represented by the feminine gender/sex.¹⁴ According to the (often criticized) Bem Sex Role Inventory, the androgynous person has a high degree of both feminine and masculine traits. I suggest that for Stein androgyny encompasses all variants of gender identity.

The elimination of the concept of self in favor of integration with the environment is also a hallmark of Buddhist philosophy, which Stein references in works from the Knight series such as *Heroic Lineup* 599 (Fig. 1), which incorporates images of Kannon, circumscribed by a halo at the center of the torso, a compassionate and ambiguously gendered Bodhisattva who forestalls her own passage to enlightenment in order to help others. Stein explained that her phrase "I am the ocean" was influenced by a passage in the novel *Siddhartha* by Herman Hesse, in which the protagonist undertakes a path to fulfillment that resembles the nirvana of Buddhism. After deep practice of self-denial and meditation, he describes slipping out of his self, his soul, to become one with a passing heron: "A heron flew over the bamboo forest—and Siddhartha accepted the heron into his soul, flew over forest and mountains, was a heron, ate fish, felt the pangs of a heron's hunger, spoke the heron's croak, died a heron's death."¹⁵ The restless son of a Brahmin, Siddhartha is described at the onset of the novel as "one who already knew to feel Atman [the primordial soul or self] in the depths of his being, indestructible, one with the universe."¹⁶ Buddhist philosophy discards the notion of an independent self which can dominate or be dominated, and instead seeks an enlightened existence in which dualities are replaced by the universal energy of all sentient beings.

Concern for the environment and identification with it is also a central theme of the anime film *Princess Mononoke* (2007) whose titular character is among Stein's pantheon of protectors and a subject in *Heroic Lineup* 599, where she appears in multiple across the abdomen, confrontationally wielding a spear, and again on the left thigh, mouth smeared with blood, knife in hand. Directed by Hayao Miyazaki, the film examines the unbalanced relationship between humanity and the environment. It is set in the Muromachi Period (ca. 1336–1573), wherein firearms were first introduced into Japan, ostensibly tipping the balance of power in favor of humankind. The Great Forest, entirely animated by *kami* or nature spirits referencing the threatened indigenous Shinto beliefs of Japan, is being ravaged to fuel an ironworks run by Lady Eboshi. Eboshi is a pragmatic businesswoman but also a sympathetic character who employs prostitutes to run the



Fig. 3. Linda Stein, *Violin Arc 198* (1991), wood, metal, stone, 37" x 32" x 7". Stelbourn/Stephens Collection. Photo: Stein Studios.



Fig. 5. Linda Stein, *Intrigue 175* (1988), wood, metal, stone, 67" x 27" x 23". Photo: Stein Studios.



Fig. 4. Linda Stein, *Blades Wall Rope 186* (1990), wood, metal, leather, 74" x 21" x 56". Photo: Stein Studios.

ironworks and lepers to make guns to defend it. Princess Mononoke is a spirit-possessed human child raised by the female wolf god, Moro, who, together with her wolf clan, aggressively fights to protect the forest from industrial exploitation. Princess Mononoke is imbued with spiritual power and is clearly associated with nature, though hers is a feral one. Japanese and anime scholar Susan Napier has noted the subtlety with which Miyazaki has described these primary

characters, "Overall, the female characters possess a gender-neutral, or at least deeply ambiguous, characterization compared to traditional female stereotypes, and they remain completely outside the misogynistic patriarchal collectivity that rapidly became the foundation of premodern Japan."¹⁷ Ultimately, the message of Miyazaki's film, which reflects his own beliefs, is that nature and man (and industry) must find a way to coexist in seeming systemic mutual dependency. This concept is manifest in Stein's sculptures in which natural objects, perhaps still imbued with *kami*, find new form in symbiosis with the body,

like clumps of marine mussels affixed to natural rock.

Stein's figures are inevitably objects and as such differ from works historically informed by systems theory, which calls into question the commodifiable art object, "the thingification of art," and privileges function over form.¹⁸ For example in *Rhine Water Purification Plant* (1972), artist Hans Haacke created a filtration system in which the industrial waste from the nearby Rhine River was extracted and the clean water channeled into a tank filled with healthy, swimming fish. In this process-based work, Haacke exposed a larger social problem (an industrial economy in which clean water is negligible) while incrementally improving the environment. The work gains meaning through its function. Rather than a saleable art object, it is an ecological intervention—to use Sue Spaid's term, an "ecovention"—in which the artist acts as conduit, connecting the social body to the ecological problem it has wrought.¹⁹ Still, the conceptual framework that informs Stein's object-based sculptures, her concern for the environment specifically and for protecting the vulnerable more broadly, are enacted in performative sculptures intended to connect the individual body of the wearer to the ideology of the society that shapes it.

As early as the 1980s and 1990s Stein made performative sculptures meant to be wielded, objects she imagined as relics of a past age. These ominous, sometimes weapon-like, implements reflected the dominance and violence of existing social structures; but the elaborate origin stories she invented for them conjured alternative uses derived from societies devoted to peace and equality. For example her *Blades* series of the 1990s, named for objects containing multiple, curved metal machetes, elaborate hilts akin to scimitars, and often trailing whip-like coils of rope from the handle (1991; Fig. 3 and 1990; Fig. 4), were conceived as defensive weapons meant to fortify the user.²⁰ Gender is implicit in the type of blades used; the word machete derives from the Spanish word "macho," referring at once to the gender of the presumed user of this ancient device and to its



Fig. 6. Linda Stein, *Security Knight 646* (2009), paper, archival inks, wood, metal, foam, Lucite metal extensions, 58" x 19" x 5". Photo: D. James Dee.

destructive capacity, while other materials such as looped metal cable and bits of urban detritus create a parallel between the violence of this past culture and our own. The jewels and fragments of musical instruments that also adorn these sculptures serve to subvert the deleterious function of the blades, in favor of peaceful ceremonial ones.

The Blades were preceded in the 1980s by her Ceremonial Scepters, made with wood, bone, and metal and also designed to be held in relation to the body. The artist imagined the scepters as ritual instruments, akin to mythological objects carried by gods or used by tribes in initiation rites. Severely twisted like the root of a tree, *Intrigue 175* (1988; Fig. 5), is encrusted with metal fragments and wrapped at the handle, with twine to aid gripping. Wispy feathers affixed to one end and rows of beading to the other further testify to its cultural import. Her choice of the scepter, an object that by definition



Fig. 7. Linda Stein, *Vestment 628* (2008). wood, metal, also 12" Lucite extensions resting on shoulders, 52" x 18" x 6". Photo: D. James Dee.

confers power and authority to the user, suggests that these objects, as well as those comprising her Blades and Knights series, represent the artist's inevitable assimilation of social dominance, even as she seeks alternative, relational ecologies. This yearning for a more integrated social system is evident in the stories she wrote to accompany these excavated objects. Exhibited together with the instruments, her texts described the evolution of the long-lost tribes that crafted and used them. She wrote in 1989, "Over the generations they turned from a war-like existence to a peaceful agrarian way of life in which



Fig. 8. Stein wearing Vestment 628. Photo: D. James Dee.

all members of the community were valued equals, and the natural elements were treasured as parts of a sacred whole." In this transformed, enlightened community of equals that included the natural world, her objects were used only for ceremonial purposes, "in ritualistic dance during communal fetes."²¹ The text describing *Intrigue 175* suggests that the object is imbued with a spiritual essence: "Heavy and portentous, this piece embodied the animism so central to the beliefs of this culture. The scepters, when held, seemed to come alive in the arms of the bearer."²² Thus, long before *Princess Mononoke*, Stein had utopically evoked an animistic society in which there is no separation between the natural, human, and spiritual worlds. She imagined one world in which animals, plants, rocks and geographic features possess souls or spirits in common with human beings.

Stein further exposed the relationships between the individual and social systems in wearable works that have been likened to protective suits of armor made in response to the artist's feelings of vulnerability in the wake of 9/11, a significant event in her life and work.²³ She refers to the process of donning these garments as "body swapping," intending for the work to facilitate a transformation of identity.²⁴ Works like *Security Knight 646* (2009; Fig. 6) are equipped with Velcro straps so they may be affixed at the shoulder and waist. The legs imitate scale armor, in which segmented plates overlap to suggest protection and facilitate flexible movement (Pl. 9). *Vestment 628* (2008; Fig. 7 and Pl. 10) is equipped with twelve-inch Lucite extensions that project vertically from the back of the figure and rest on the shoulders of the wearer/participant (Fig. 8). Physical aspects of the sculpture, whether the heaviness of welded metal, broadness of the hips, subtle bulge of the abdomen, or adornments, become markers of identity conveyed to the wearer. This process is evident in videos made by the artist in which participants respond

to the garments they wear, for example, from a male participant, "There is a celebratory feeling in the sense that I could be dancing with myself, and simultaneously there is this feeling that this is a tough road to hoe, being female"; "I feel like a pregnant woman... like a birth mother"; "You can feel the strength in the belly. You can feel the strength in the legs"; "Strong, powerful, beautiful."²⁵ The curious medallions, emblems and cast-off calligraphic plates welded to the suits also impart identity. The triangular plate of brass in *Vestment 628* (Fig. 9) descending from a silver-encircled tri-color (red, white and blue) medallion, affixed to the center of the breast, is reminiscent of the symbolic, alphanumeric adornments in Marsden Hartley's 1914 *Portrait of a German Officer* (Fig. 10), in which the artist simultaneously reveals and conceals his male lover's identity through enigmatic symbols like the Iron Cross contained within a gray and yellow triangle on the breast and the initials "K. v. F" (Karl von Freyburg) that may mark the man with whom he was in love but whose face we cannot see.²⁶ Like Hartley, Stein utilizes signifying markers of identity, but hers are not indices of a stable, fixed identity.

Inherent in Stein's work is the concept of gender complexity, which undermines the notion of rigidly inflexible, hierarchical gender relationships in favor of a spectrum of possible gender identities that remain always in flux.

Stein organizes collaborative performances and discussions in conjunction with her exhibitions as part of an activist impulse to encourage participants to confront their beliefs about gender, race, and homosexuality which may serve to perpetuate inequality. For example at Muhlenberg College in 2011, Stein organized what she termed a Gender Improvisational Gathering (GIG) for which she asked students from multiple disciplines to create a performance centering on masculinity or femininity while wearing her sculptures. "The goal," she explained, was "to explore sex-role stereotypes through dance or voice (skit, poem, song), to create new identities and storylines using gender-swapping verbal and body language."²⁷ Consistent with the systems imperative that the dispassionate observer (artist, scientist, viewer) is a myth, Stein is deeply involved in these activities through her work and life. She is art editor of *On the Issues Magazine*, a quarterly of progressive, feminist thinking, and she serves on the board (which also includes Gloria Steinem) of Veteran Feminists of America, a "source of information about the Second Wave women's movement for journalists, historians and other writers."²⁸ An avowed pacifist, Stein founded her own non-profit organization centered on gender justice called Have Art Will Travel!, Inc., "an arts organization encouraging constructive male/female gender roles leading to peace and equality."²⁹ The connections between feminism and queer identity for Stein are clearly rooted in inequalities manifested in many areas of social life, for example bullying in schools. She explained in a recent interview, "Gay boys and girls are harassed—harassed out of town, harassed into suicide." Events planned under the aegis



Fig. 9. Linda Stein, *Vestment 628* (detail). Photo: D. James Dee.

of her organization are usually held in conjunction with her exhibitions. One recent event featured a dance performance by third-year Juilliard student Lindsay Harwell, who had been gender variant as a child (he preferred to wear dresses) and now identifies as gay. Following the performance, Stein invited Harwell and his mother to discuss their experiences of coming to terms with his gender and to respond to questions from the audience. Stein revealed the impetus behind her organization:

There are so many variations I see as I travel, this fluidity between masculine and feminine, and whether someone has surgery or doesn't have surgery, but the point I feel is to let people be whoever their authentic self is. That's what my goal is. I'm using art to get them to talk about the issue. I think I can't separate my art from my politics from my life. It all blends together.

Raised Jewish in the Bronx, Stein's concern with gender is rooted in her personal experience as an accomplished athlete who was compelled to subvert her own ego, to show deference to male competitors. "I feel that more than being a lesbian, more than being a Jew, I feel gender held me back ... I felt I couldn't fulfill my potential." She explained, "I was an excellent athlete. I was always captain of my team. In college I was the captain of the girls tennis team, so I could play ball better than almost all the boys I went with, but I would always hit the ball in the net so the boy could win." Finally, about fifteen years ago, she resisted the compulsion to lose during a tennis game with artist Roy Lichtenstein. She realized after the initial volleys that he was the weaker player and, once again, she considered capitulating to him. She shared her thoughts of that moment, "Am I going to fake it again and hit the ball into the net and just keep it even as we play the game? At that point, I decided I have to be done with that." Beating Lichtenstein 6-Love marked the beginning of a new stage in her life in which she felt empowered to live up to her potential.

Although Stein's work is object-based, much of it is also performative, and when considered in conjunction with her



Fig. 10. Marsden Hartley, *Portrait of a German Officer* (1914), oil on canvas, 68 1/4" x 41 3/8". Metropolitan Museum of Art.

activism, it is steeped in a systems aesthetic, privileging function over form. Drawing on American superheroes, anime princesses, Bodhisattvas and mollusk-human symbiants, her figures function as totems of protection for the more vulnerable, whether women in a masculine culture, bullied queer teens or the environment. The artist also identifies with these ambiguously gendered protectors, which she uses as tools to integrate self, social world, and environment. Her sculptures are integral to her activism, which seeks to subvert dualistic power hierarchies in favor of a fluid interdependence between self and other, concepts implicit in both ecological art and Buddhist philosophy and at the core of Bateson's systems theory. •

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NOTES

1. Art historian Margo Hobbs Thompson has noted the importance of these figures in Stein's works. Margo Hobbs Thompson, "Body-Swapping, Empowerment and Empathy: Linda Stein's Recent Sculpture" *Body-Swapping Armor: New Works by Linda Stein* (New York: Flomenhoft Gallery, 2009).

2. Joan Marter, "Regarding Stein's Knights and Glyphs," *The Power to Protect: Sculpture of Linda Stein* (New York: Flomenhoft Gallery, 2006); "Power and Protection: Japanese/ American Crossroads and the Impact of 9/11 on the Sculpture of Linda Stein: A Conversation with Linda Stein by Helen Hardacre," *The Power to Protect: Sculpture of Linda Stein* (New York: Flomenhoft Gallery, 2006); Ann Vollmann Bible, "Ruptures of Vulnerability: Linda Stein's Knight Series," *Journal of Lesbian Studies* vol. 14 (2010): 154-73; Margo Hobbs Thompson, "Body-Swapping, Empowerment and Empathy: Linda Stein's Recent Sculpture" *Body-Swapping Armor: New Works by Linda Stein*; Jann Matlock, *Vestiges of New Battles: Linda Stein's Sculpture After 9/11*, *Feminist Studies*, 33:3 (Fall 2007): 569-90; Christina M. Penn-Groetsch, "Gladiators, Amazons, and Superheroes: Gender and the Recent Work of Linda Stein," *The Fluidity of Gender: Sculpture by Linda Stein* (Mt. Vernon, Iowa: Luce Gallery, Cornell College, 2010).
3. Interview with Linda Stein, April 23, 2012, in New York City. All quotes from the artist not otherwise cited are from this interview.
4. *Ecofeminism: Women, Culture, Nature*, ed. Karen J. Warren. (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana Univ. Press, 1997), xi. Ann Vollmann Bible briefly noted the applicability of ecofeminism to Stein's work as it acknowledges the physical body. Bible, "Ruptures of Vulnerability: Linda Stein's Knight Series," 171. Ecofeminism has long been out of favor due to its rather limited interpretation as essentialist. Ecofeminist theorist Greta Gaard recently addressed this concern and proposed instead a "new ecofeminism" which "examines the socially constructed association among women (sex), femininity (gender) and nature, the domination of each of which, as Carolyn Merchant has pointed out, has "shared roots in the logic and science of capitalism." See Greta Gaard, "Ecofeminism Revisited: Rejecting Essentialism and Re-Placing Species in a Material Feminist Environmentalism," *Feminist Formations*, 23:2 (Summer 2011): 26-53; and Carolyn Merchant, *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology and the Scientific Revolution* (New York: Harper, 1990). Gaard's support of a materialist feminist environmentalism in concert with social constructionist accounts, per the article's title, is meant to undo the nature/ culture divide that is inadvertently reaffirmed in strict social constructionism. But the reaffirmation of the material, biological body appears to leave little room for the spiritual concerns in Stein's work. See also *Material Feminisms*, ed. Stacy Alaimo and Susan Hekman (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana Univ. Press, 2008).
5. For a discussion of systems theory as scientific validation for social and institutional critique in the works of artists, see Donna M. De Salvo, Johanna Burton, Mark Godfrey, Boris Groys, *Open Systems: Rethinking Art c. 1970* (London: Tate Modern, 2005); William Kaizen, "Steps to an Ecology of Communication: Radical Software, Dan Graham, and the Legacy of Gregory Bateson," *Art Journal* (Fall 2008): 87-107; Luke Skrebowski, "All Systems Go: Recovering Jack Burnham's 'Systems Aesthetics'" *Tate Papers: Tate's Online Research Journal*, (2006); Edward Shanken, "Art in the Information Age: Technology and Conceptual Art" *Leonardo*, 35:4 (2002): 433-38; Jack Burnham, "Steps in the Formulation of Real-Time Political Art," in Hans Haacke, *Framing and Being Framed: 7 Works, 1970-75* (New York: New York Univ. Press, 1975), 135. Importantly, artists like Agnes Denes and Hans Haacke created ecological art works informed by systems theory.
6. For discussion of the ways in which the concept of open systems became a tool for social critique for artists in the context of the social revolution and women's movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s, see Christine Filippone, "Science, Technology and Utopias in the Work of Contemporary Women Artists," (Ph.D. diss., Rutgers University, 2009).
7. Stein is not personally familiar with Bateson's systems-based ecology, but it was deeply influential to modern ecology, and to environmentalism by extension. Nancy Slack, *G. Evelyn Hutchinson and the Invention of Modern Ecology*, (New Haven and London: Yale Univ. Press, 2010), 235
8. Kaizen, "Steps to an Ecology of Communication: Radical Software, Dan Graham, and the Legacy of Gregory Bateson," 87
9. Ibid., 93. Bateson often likens the all-encompassing concept of "Mind" to God, albeit a non-denominational one. "This larger Mind is comparable to God and is perhaps what some people mean by "God," but it is still immanent in the total interconnected social system and planetary ecology." Gregory Bateson, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind: Collected Essays in Anthropology, Psychiatry, Evolution and Epistemology*, (Northvale, NJ and London: Jason Aronson, Inc.), 326
10. Bateson, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*, 319.
11. Kaizen, "Steps to an Ecology of Communication," 93
12. Linda Stein, *Beach*, 2:03 min. video, 2012.
13. Carolyn G. Heilbrun, *The Last Gift of Time: Life Beyond Sixty* (New York: Random House, 1997): 136. See also Heilbrun, *Toward a Recognition of Androgyny* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, Inc., 1973).
14. Marisa Pereyra, "La alteridad y sus múltiples representaciones: el modo utópico como dinámica del deseo en La nave de los locos de Cristina Peri Rossi" (The other and its multiple representations: the utopian mode as dynamic of desire in *The Ship of the Fools* by Cristina Peri Rossi), *Latin American Essays. MACLAS Vol. XVII* (2004): 63-72. See also Kari Weil, *Androgyny and the Denial of Difference* (Charlottesville: Univ. of Virginia Press, 1992).
15. Herman Hesse, *Siddhartha* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1962): 20. *Siddhartha* was first published in German in 1922 and in English in 1951.
16. Ibid.
17. Susan J. Napier, *Anime: from Akira to Princess Mononoke* (New York: Palgrave): 182.
18. Burnham, "Steps in the Formulation of Real-Time Political Art" in Haacke, *Framing and Being Framed*, 135.
19. Sue Spaid, *Ecovention: Current Art to Transform Ecologies* (green museum.org; Contemporary Arts Center; ecoartspace, 2002), 1.
20. The artist refers to them as machete blades. Hardacre, *The Power to Protect: Sculpture of Linda Stein*, 20.
21. Ibid., 46.
22. Ibid.
23. Marter, "Regarding Stein's Knights and Glyphs," 5. Margo Hobbs Thompson, "Body-Swapping, Empowerment and Empathy: Linda Stein's Recent Sculpture," offers an insightful discussion of the wearable nature of Stein's works.
24. Christina M. Penn-Groetsch noted the performative nature of Stein's work, referencing Judith Butler, "There is no gender identity beyond the expression of gender: this identity is performatively constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be the results." Quoted in Penn-Groetsch, "Gladiators, Amazons, and Superheroes: Gender and the Recent Work of Linda Stein," 6. See Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1999).
25. Linda Stein, *Body-Swapping* (Preview 684), 4 minutes 25 seconds.
26. Jonathan D. Katz and David C. Ward, *Hide/Seek: Difference and Desire in American Portraiture* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Books, 2010), 26.
27. Press Release, Have Art: Will Travel! Inc., announcing *The Fluidity of Gender: Sculpture by Linda Stein*, 2012.
28. <http://www.ontheissuesmagazine.com/2012spring/index.php>. Accessed July 26, 2012.
29. <http://haveartwilltravel.org/>. Accessed July 26, 2012.

ANITA STECKEL'S FEMINIST MONTAGE

MERGING POLITICS, ART, AND LIFE

By Rachel Middleman

Nothing about feminist artist Anita Steckel (1930–2012) was conventional. Throughout her career, until the time of her death, she pushed the boundaries of acceptable imagery and decorum in art, engaging her audiences with visual representations of personal, political, and social injustices. Drawing inspiration from the history of art and adopting a Dada-like photomontage aesthetic, Steckel juxtaposed references to art and politics with a mix of sexuality, violence, and humor. She often incorporated found photographs into her work as a method of disrupting viewers' perceptions about their world and raising doubts about society as a rational endeavor. Since creating her first publicly recognized series, *Mom Art*, in 1963, Steckel insisted that certain issues should be made visual through art, even when it hindered her career to do so. In the early 1970s, in response to the attempted censorship of her work, Steckel founded the Fight Censorship Group and became active in the feminist art movement. Recently, she gained further recognition for this work in the 1970s through exhibitions and publications dedicated to the history of feminist art, most notably *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution*, organized by the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles in 2007.¹ This essay draws together not only Steckel's work from the 1960s and 1970s, but her late work, after 2000, to emphasize her ongoing commitment to socially engaged art. If collage and montage are the cohesive factors in her oeuvre, she adapted these methods at every turn to address changing contemporary issues.

For *Mom Art*, a photomontage series, Steckel added her own painted touches to historical photographs and reproductions of famous works of art, transforming the images into social critiques of racism, war, and sexual inequalities. The series teems with provocative images created by altering found photographs, including a Madonna suckling a black baby and a boardroom of businessmen with Hitler mustaches. Almost fifty years later, Steckel's outrageous imagery and political content continue to shock. For example, in a series made during the George W. Bush years of the Iraq war (exhibited in 2008), media photos of the former president with added exaggerated phalluses alongside images of



Fig. 1. Anita Steckel, *Return of the Wet Nurse*, Mom Art series (1963), oil on photograph, 15 1/2" x 12 1/2". Photo: Courtesy Anita Steckel Estate.

Condoleezza Rice in lingerie suggest political corruption and the insidious relationships among government officials at home and in the Middle East.²

For Steckel's final series, created just before her death at age 82, she turned to photographs from her own past. She reworked these photos from her family album to create visual and emotional memories of the defining moments and people in her life. Unlike Mom Art or the Bush series, this work was introspective and profoundly personal, inviting speculation about the relationship between an artist's stage in life and her artistic production. Coming to terms with the narrative of one's life and wanting to leave a legacy behind seem like natural concerns for an aging artist. And, yet, in this last series there was no sign of Steckel's softening her approach, as she turned her biting critical commentary toward her own history.

Anita Steckel (born Arkin) grew up in a poor household in Brooklyn with immigrant parents from Russia. With an abusive mother and an often absent father who struggled with a gambling problem, Steckel was glad to leave home after finishing early at the High School of Music & Art, an alternative public school in Manhattan. As a young single woman, Steckel had some unusual and formative experiences, including dating actor Marlon Brando, working on a Norwegian freighter that traveled to Brazil, Uruguay, and Argentina for two months, and a one-year stint on the West Coast, where, while working as a dance instructor, she won a competition and was crowned "Mambo Queen of Southern California." Back in New York, she continued her art education at Cooper Union, Alfred University, and the Art Students League, where she studied with the American painter and draftsman Edwin Dickenson. In 1970, she moved into Westbeth Artists' Housing, a community in the West Village of Manhattan, where she lived until her recent death.³

The Mom Art series (completed after separating from her husband, sculptor Jordan Steckel) cleverly employed nudity and gendered imagery to tackle some of the major political issues of the 1960s, including civil rights, women's liberation, and the Vietnam War.⁴ The series title was in conscious opposition to the term "Pop art." She used the play on words ("pop" as short for "poppa") to draw out the gendered aspect of Pop art, something that would only later be seriously discussed by art historians and critics.⁵

Steckel's one-woman exhibition of Mom Art at Hacker Gallery in New York in 1963 gained critical notice for its witty political commentary and use of the collage aesthetic. The *New York Post* praised its originality, and *Esquire* magazine published a two-page spread with color illustrations.⁶ Steckel explained the significance of her photomontage technique:

No matter how upsetting is the subject matter of a painting, we feel relatively safe. We know it isn't really real. But paint an image into a photograph, which we are conditioned to believe is an unquestioned reality—then there sets up an uneasiness of another sort. A little more disquieting, a little harder to disbelieve. The whole question becomes the uneasiness of what is real and what is not.⁷



Fig. 2. Anita Steckel, *College Boy*, Mom Art series (1963), oil on photograph. Photo: Courtesy Anita Steckel Estate

Steckel believed that working with a photographic image gave her art the potential to unnerve viewers in a way that traditional painting could not. With her delicately blended painted additions to original photographs—commonly presumed to be objective records of the real world—Steckel's montages hint at ideological messages lurking in the images and reveal beliefs that shape our reality. As described by Rosalind Krauss, Dada photomontage of the 1920s was "understood as a means of infiltrating the mere picture of reality with its meaning."⁸ Steckel's work similarly used the medium to communicate what she perceived as social and political truths: seemingly objective or innocent images are



Fig. 3. Anita Steckel, *The Company Picnic*, Mom Art series (1963), pencil, ink, and oil on photograph. Photo: Courtesy Anita Steckel Estate.



Fig. 4. Anita Steckel, *Annual Banquet of the Lampshade Manufacturers of Argentina*, Mom Art series (1963), oil on photograph. Photo: Courtesy Anita Steckel Estate.



Fig. 5. Anita Steckel, *Fat Man: Death Grows Fat on War*, Mom Art series (1963), oil on photograph. Photo: Courtesy Anita Steckel Estate.

transformed into anti-establishment “interpretations of reality” that critique racism, war, and sexual discrimination.⁹ Mom Art drew on Dada strategies of photomontage explicitly for their political potential. Therefore, although art critics and curators connected Pop art to a Dada legacy in the early 1960s, the Mom Art series was, indeed, strikingly different from the work made by such artists as Tom Wesselmann, Roy Lichtenstein, and Andy Warhol, which was known for its coolness, superficiality, and lack of criticality.¹⁰

In several Mom Art pieces, Steckel addressed racism by meticulously painting black figures standing around, behind, or even enveloping the white bodies in original portrait photographs, exposing racial issues that have long and profoundly affected life in the United States. In *Return of the Wet Nurse* (Fig. 1), Steckel added a black female figure, breast exposed, reaching down to intimately hold the well-dressed white woman posing for the original portrait. A harried look has been painted on the white woman’s face; her mouth is down-turned, and the whites of her eyes show as she peers toward her right shoulder at the apparition of the black woman surrounding her. Steckel’s interventions create a new narrative for the original portrait, putting on display what the upper-class white figures would have presumably wanted to deny—their intimate relationships with the black figures. These pieces speak to the complicated history of race in America, one of both segregation and familial closeness. Presumably, many of the well-dressed protagonists in the photos relied on the labor of these “others.”

Taking a different strategy, *College Boy* (Fig. 2) and *The Company Picnic* (Fig. 3) appropriate images from the history of

art to condemn structural racism in society. In *College Boy*, a black male dressed in a suit is nailed to a large white cross against the backdrop of an American flag. Steckel’s imagery is superimposed on what looks like an appropriation of a Flemish Crucifixion. Said Steckel, “Even though he goes to college and wears the right clothing, in America the black man gets crucified in one form or another.”¹¹ For *The Company Picnic*, an image of a tapestry designed from an Antoine Watteau painting is turned into an indictment of slave ownership, segregation, and lynching. Steckel transforms the



Fig. 6. Anita Steckel, *The Beginner*, Mom Art series (1963), oil on photograph. Photo: Courtesy Anita Steckel Estate.

idealized garden of the wealthy into a racially and sexually charged scene, with black male and white female figures interacting beneath a noose hanging prominently from the trees. These photo-collages likely challenged viewers in 1963 to question how far they had come on the issue of race. Furthermore, her treatment of these photographs anticipates recent scholarship that deconstructs “whiteness” as a privileged and invisible racial category in the U.S.¹² Steckel’s insertion of the black figures in these works did not introduce the issue of race into the scene, but rather exposed its presence in the original images.

Other Mom Art pieces make shocking anti-war statements. In the *Annual Banquet of the Lampshade Manufacturers of Argentina* (Fig. 4), she applied Hitler hair and mustaches to a group of men photographed at a formal dinner, referring to that country’s collaboration with Nazi Germany and its willingness to give safe haven to Nazis who fled Europe after the war to escape prosecution. With these silly toothbrush mustaches and a title alluding to the horrifying practice of making lampshades from human skin, Steckel connected an initially innocuous photograph of businessmen to the Third Reich. Seated at the far end of the table, a collection of phallic members underscores the union of the male gender and power. Steckel again illustrated a correspondence between male power, war, and death in *Fat Man: Death Grows Fat on War* (Fig. 5) by depicting the robust man in military uniform with a smiling skeletal face. *The Beginner* (Fig. 6), perhaps the most



Fig. 7. Anita Steckel, *Das Wunderkind*, Mom Art series (1963), oil on found photograph. Photo: Courtesy Anita Steckel Estate.

humorous and threatening of these anti-war images, transforms a portrait of a young boy into a Nazi protégé simply by adding coiffed bangs and a toothbrush-Hitler-mustache to the child’s innocent face. With this move, Steckel harnesses the “aggression implicit in every use of the camera”¹³ and directs it towards the past horrors of war and the men who will continue to promote it.

One of the most vivid aspects of Steckel’s social commentary in the Mom Art series was her mixing of nude imagery with political messages, as gender and sexuality are prevalent themes throughout the series. *Das Wunderkind* (Fig. 7), in particular, shows a nascent feminist awareness in its juxtaposition of a portrait of a baby girl with adult signs of sexual suggestiveness. The long, bare, womanly legs, fitted with red high-heeled shoes and resting against a fabric bordered with lace signify femininity in the popular imagination. In addition, the baby holds a martini and has a cigarette hanging from her mouth. The delightful incongruence of a child with these attributes is at once humorous and thought provoking, raising questions not only about the superficiality of these markers of femininity and class but also about the psychology of gender.

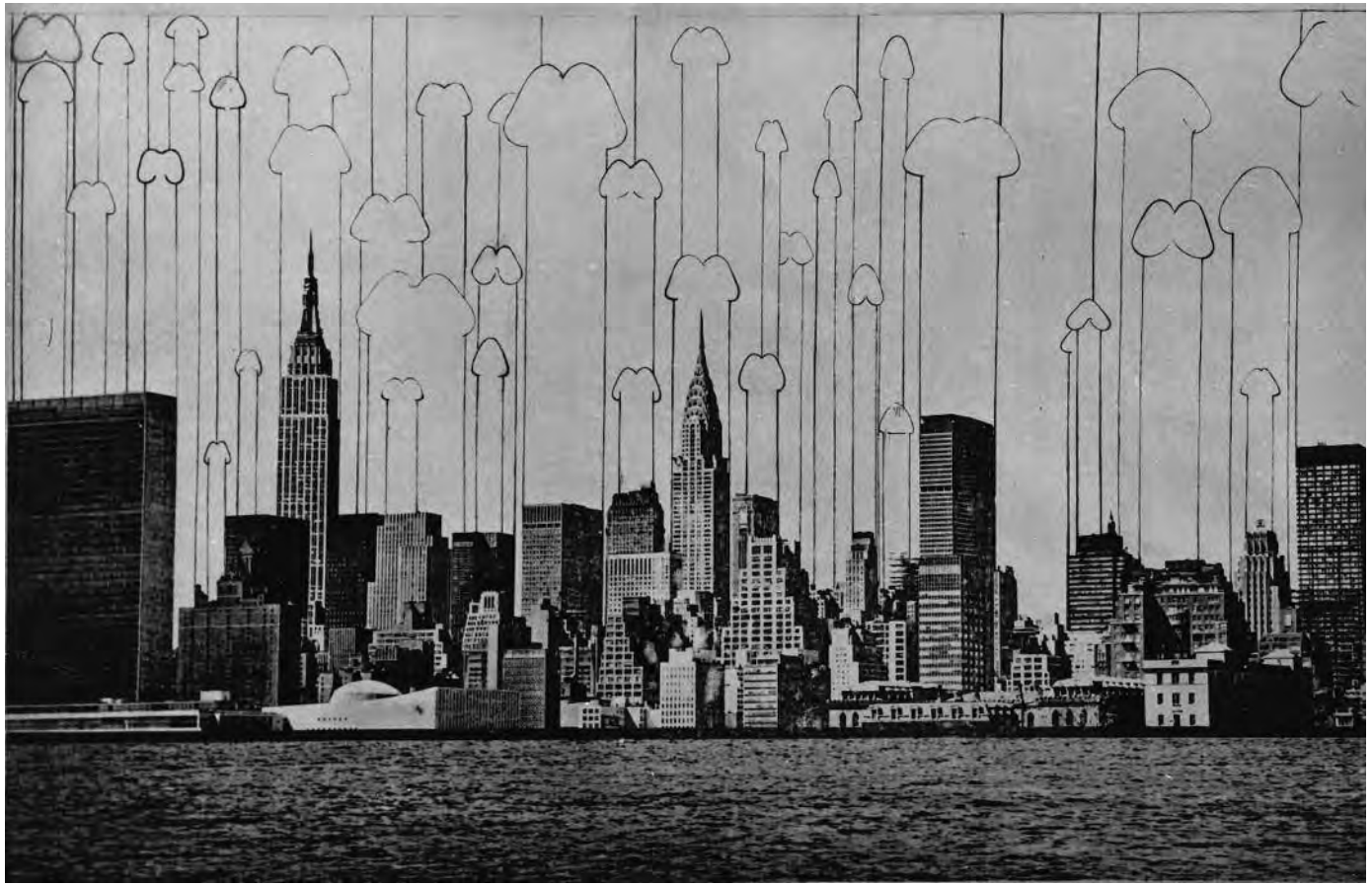


Fig. 8. Anita Steckel, *Untitled*, New York Skyline series (1970-1980), mixed media, 6' x 9'. Photo: Courtesy Anita Steckel Estate.

Steckel never intended for the viewers of Mom Art to rest easy in detached contemplation. Rather, by exploiting the multiple meanings of images through the use of photomontage, she sought instead to raise awareness about how issues of racism, sexism, and war, had relevance to everyday life.

Like many of her contemporaries, Steckel's dissatisfaction with the position of women in society led her to join the feminist art movement in the early 1970s. Even when her subject matter was not directly about women's liberation, she faced backlash as a female artist creating any kind of socially critical and sexually suggestive or explicit work. Many female artists felt their work was denied any significance, and they had little hope of becoming "professional" artists, a status given more easily to men.¹⁴ After personal experiences of sexual harassment with a collector and museum curator,¹⁵ and despite the conflation between her art and her person, Steckel continued to create work that used sexuality in its critique.

In 1973, in response to the attempted censorship of her solo exhibition "The Feminist Art of Sexual Politics" at the Rockland Community College art gallery in Suffern, New York, Steckel founded the Fight Censorship Group. Having been warned by a female faculty member that, if she showed work with sexual content, she likely would not be offered a teaching position at the college, Steckel decided against self-censorship and brought every piece of sexual art she had.¹⁶

Most noted in the media were the large-scale montages of her New York Skyline series, depicting phallic symbols dominating the city skyline.

Based on found photographs of New York printed onto six-by-nine-foot canvases, the New York Skyline series (begun 1970) included, as one example, a piece that vertically stretched the silhouette of the Manhattan cityscape with outlines of penises extending from the tops of buildings (Fig. 8).¹⁷ This and other works employing phallic symbols expressed a frank visual message about male dominance over economic and political power in contemporary American society. As a counterpoint, Steckel also included in the Rockland exhibition her Giant Woman series (1969-72), which included works like *Giant Woman on Empire State* (1969-72), in which a nude rides the iconic structure high above the crowded metropolis, claiming her own power over the landscape with the sweeping gesture of her arm. In *Just Waiting for the Bus* (1969-72; Fig. 9), a giant nude with Steckel's face, casually posed on the city's sidewalk, looks out at the viewer, hand-on-hip, chin confidently raised. Earlier versions of this piece, as well as others in the series, had an anonymous female face; however, using a self-portrait helped to personalize the statement, putting into visual form the feminist motto "the personal is political."¹⁸

In a gesture similar to calling her earlier series Mom Art, she chose the title Giant Woman in opposition to the diminutive



Fig. 9. Anita Steckel, *Just Waiting for the Bus*, Giant Woman series (1969-1972), ink and oil on photograph, 36" x 48". Photo: Courtesy Anita Steckel Estate.



Fig. 10. Anita Steckel, *Untitled, Revisions on a Photo Album* series (2011-2012), colored pencil and photograph on watercolor paper, 30" x 22". Photo: Courtesy Anita Steckel Estate.

term "little woman."¹⁹ The production of the series of three-by-four-foot montages began with drawing and painting directly onto found photographs. She then had them re-photographed, flattening and integrating the composition further by merging it onto a single surface. The conversion into black and white made the pieces look more "journalistic," she thought, and adding color, would have been merely cosmetic, a superficial add-on to a powerful image.²⁰ In the feminist journal *Chrysalis*, art historian Ruth Iskin highlighted Steckel's use of collage as a feminist aspect of the Giant Woman series, writing, "Collage provides Steckel with a means of addressing and using available (male) traditions of culture while giving them a feminist twist—allowing her to introduce her own point of view of those traditions while using them."²¹ By inserting female nudes Steckel intervened in the New York cityscape and, by extension, patriarchal America.

The debates about obscenity and the place of political activism in art that arose around Steckel's exhibition at Rockland Community College exemplify the issues surrounding the reception of women's sexual-themed art in the early 1970s. When some called for closure of the exhibition on the grounds that it was pornographic,²² the Whitney Museum of American Art, *Art News*, and the Women in the Arts foundation, among others, sent messages of support for Steckel's exhibition,²³ recognizing that her work navigated the difficult territory in representation between the pleasure of eroticism and the critique of patriarchal power. During the 1960s, the growing popularity and acceptance of contemporary erotic art and literature had led to the public defense of art against charges of obscenity, and to the separation of erotic art from low-brow categories such as pornography.²⁴ Now, in the 1970s, Steckel and other women artists injected feminist politics into the realm of erotic art. Art critics came to terms with the reality that women were making sexual art, which looked different from work of the past and seemed to break from traditions of erotic art as defined by male artists.²⁵

On March 8, 1973, a group of women artists gathered in Steckel's Westbeth studio for the first meeting of the Fight Censorship group.²⁶ Steckel opened the discussion with a statement that began:

We believe sexual subject matter should be removed from the "closet" of the fine arts where it resides in small portfolios, small works, off the walls, in private collections, etc.! We believe sexual

subject matter includes many things: political statements, humor, erotica, sociological and psychological statements—as well as purely sensual or esthetic ‘art’ concerns—and of course—the primitive, mysterious reasons none of us know.²⁷

Among the artists at that first meeting were Louise Bourgeois, Martha Edelheit, Joan Glueckman, Juanita McNeely, Joan Semmel, Anne Sharp, and Hannah Wilke, all of whom were creating sexual imagery of some type. The Fight Censorship Group made appearances at local schools and on public television, educating people about women’s sexual art and its significance.²⁸ A core group of artists, including Bourgeois, Edelheit, McNeely, Semmel, Steckel, and Wilke also sought publicity through articles in both feminist and mainstream publications that featured their work collectively.²⁹

Steckel’s advocacy work with the Fight Censorship Group and the episode at Rockland Community College aligned her closely with the feminist art movement. She participated in exhibitions at the Women’s Interart Center³⁰; and her work was referenced in all the major feminist art publications.³¹ Arlene Raven, founder of the Feminist Studio Workshop at the Los Angeles Women’s Building, chose Steckel’s *New Mona Takes the Brush* from the Giant Woman series to illustrate her 1972 essay on feminist art, “The Archaic Smile.”³² A celebratory image symbolizing the movement, the piece reworks the *Mona Lisa*, placing against the backdrop of New York City the iconic female figure, now armed with her own paint brush and boldly revealing her right breast.

While Steckel’s work exemplifies the transition of women’s sexual art from “erotic art” to “feminist art,” her contribution goes beyond that to encompass her lifelong dedication to addressing critical social issues as she experienced them throughout her career. She continued to create and exhibit socially relevant series during the 1980s and 1990s, before, in her final years, turning inward to examine her personal history with the same unflinching eye.

Steckel’s last series, *Revisions on a Photo Album* (2011–12), comprises twenty-one montages on photographs from her personal album. The photographs span her life from birth to adulthood, as she seems to work through her feelings about each stage in her history. The images include formal portraits and casual snapshots of people that shaped Steckel’s life, including her parents, ex-husband, boyfriends, friends who have passed away, and her mentally disabled daughter.

After having the photographs enlarged onto heavy watercolor paper, Steckel blended pencil drawings with the prints, imbuing the images with additional layers of meaning. Steckel appears in many of the pictures, along with faces of her family and friends from different periods in her life. Viewing this autobiographical series, one cannot help experiencing a sense of loss and time passing, the “that has been” that Roland Barthes describes,³³ and yet Steckel does not allow for nostalgia or pathos to overwhelm viewers. Instead we see the return of the repressed—those feelings and realities about the past that are repressed by the static, discrete photographic image but that exist in Steckel’s memories. Her act of releasing these



Fig. 11. Anita Steckel, *Untitled*, *Revisions on a Photo Album* series (2011–2012), colored pencil and photograph on watercolor paper, 30" x 22". Photo: Courtesy Anita Steckel Estate.

memories onto the picture, making them visible not only to herself but to others, communicates something akin to a catharsis.

Some of the scenes created in the montages are disturbing, particularly those involving Steckel’s parents. In one striking piece, the artist as a young child sits between her father and her mother (Fig. 10). Pencil creates atmospheric swirls around them and hints of bright color sketched on the figures give the piece the look of a children’s coloring book. Although Steckel is smiling, in this not-so-happy family portrait her mother’s body is pierced with arrows from head to toe, and small graphite drops of blood fall from each wound. The banjo that Steckel holds bears the phrase “Let’s Bleed Mom.” While the image of her mother might conjure up Freudian associations, it is, in fact, Steckel’s response to the violence and emotional trauma she experienced at her mother’s hand. The difficulty in rationally comprehending a mother who harms her child corresponds with the surreal additions to the photograph, namely the cartoon-like wounds on the mother’s body. The highly personal montage speaks to the artist’s lingering psychic pain from her childhood.

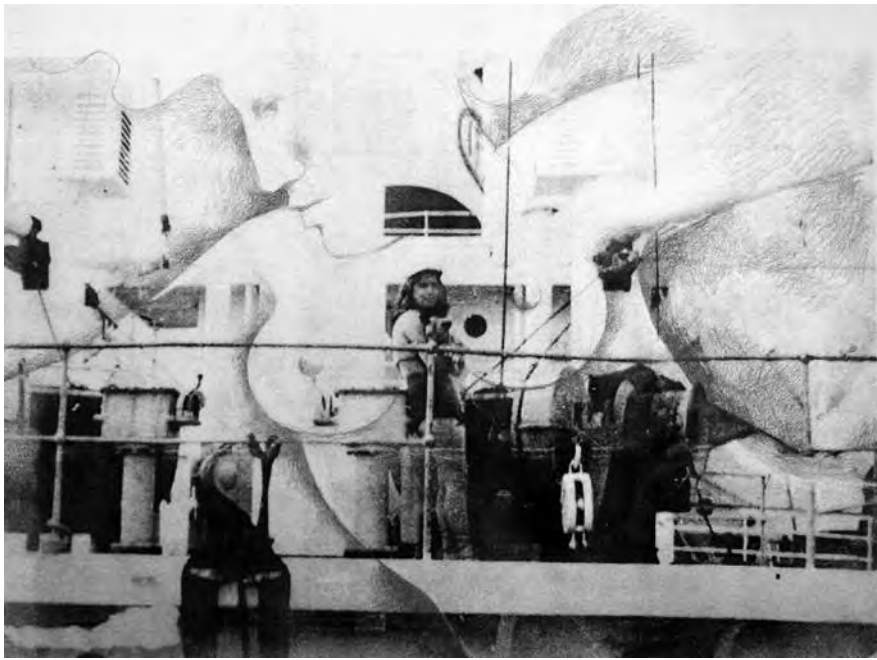


Fig. 12. Anita Steckel, *Untitled*, Revisions on a Photo Album series (2011-2012), colored pencil and photograph on watercolor paper, 30" x 22". Photo: Courtesy Anita Steckel Estate.

In another piece (Fig. 11), a young, very pretty Steckel poses for the camera wearing a short sleeved, button-front dress with a corsage on her lapel—a photo taken on her middle school graduation day. Smiling proudly, she is flanked by her mother and aunt, here transformed into a nude and an eerily smiling skeleton, respectively. According to Steckel, her aunt represented a materialistic way of life—"bourgeois" as she put it—something that Steckel avoided at all costs.³⁴ Meanwhile, her mother's enjoyment of the occasion of her daughter's graduation seems stolen along with her clothing, as if Steckel wanted to repossess that moment of pleasure from the mother who had made her early years miserable with verbal and physical abuse. In this piece, we also see the return of two motifs from earlier series, the skull representing a threat among the living, and the curvaceous nude female body, used here to make the subject appear vulnerable.

Comparing this series to earlier ones, one can see Steckel's interests moving from social, public, outward concerns to more personal ones. However, this introspective series resonates with earlier themes. We see the loss of childhood innocence, as in *Das Wunderkind* and *The Beginner* from the Mom Art series, returning in montages of a young Steckel surrounded by the adults who harmed her. Not all of the imagery in *Revisions on a Photo Album* is crushingly tragic, however. There are moments that recall the Giant Woman series, in which we see the power relationship shift in favor of Steckel, where she uses the female nude to invoke a protective strength. One particular portrait of Steckel in her pre-teen years shows her looking at the viewer with a confident, knowing glance. Added to the photographic image, surrounding the young girl with reassurance, are female nudes. In another (Fig. 12), we see Steckel sitting on the deck of the freighter she worked on, with a nude angel superimposed

across the entire image. This journey was a transformative one in which Steckel stood up to threats of physical violence from the only other woman working on the ship (Steckel recalled that she was the girlfriend of the captain, both former Nazi conspirators). Her refusal to be physically harmed again, after surviving an abusive childhood, inspired the entire crew to protest the captain's leadership and have him removed. Steckel described the incident as "victory at sea by a twenty-year-old-girl."³⁵

Throughout her career, use of collage and montage with found images was a central strategy that served Steckel's artistic and political agenda very well. Through her final series, she continued her resolution to depict realities of power relationships, this time in relation to her own personal experiences as a woman and an artist. Manipulating photographs, she turned the tables on the oppressors, bringing out into the open the injustices latent in the still images. In the words of Lucy Lippard, collage was a

particularly feminist aesthetic because it "willfully takes apart what is or is supposed to be and arranges it in ways that suggest what it could be."³⁶ Steckel's re-visualization of the historical record, indeed, reclaims power for the powerless, stimulating our hopeful imaginations of what could be. •

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Notes

I thank Anita Steckel for the many hours she spent answering my questions and sharing her work with me before she passed away in March 2012. Any quotations not otherwise cited are from these conversations. I am grateful to have known such a passionate, intelligent artist and good friend.

1. Richard Meyer, "Hard Targets: Male Bodies, Feminist Art, and the Force of Censorship in the 1970s," in Cornelia Butler, et al., *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution* (Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art, 2007). Also see Richard Meyer, "Artists Sometimes Have Feelings," *Art Journal* 67 (Winter 2008): 38–55. I thank Richard Meyer for introducing me to Steckel and sharing his research on Steckel and the Fight Censorship Group with me.
2. "The Groszest Bush: Goodbye and Good Riddance" at Mitchell Alpus Gallery, New York, 2008.
3. Steckel had her first solo exhibition in 1961 at Hacker, New York, and throughout the course of her career, her work was regularly shown in museum, gallery and university exhibitions. She received the National Endowment for the Arts Individual Artist Grant in 1983 and the Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant in 2005. Solo exhibitions in New York City include Kozmopolitan Gallery, 1969; 10th St. Gallery, 1972; Westbeth Gallery, 1972 and 1973; Hansen Gallery, 1977; Razor Gallery, 1979; Underground Gallery, 1989; and Mitchell Alpus Gallery, 2001, 2005, 2006, 2008, and 2009. She was included in numerous museum and gallery group exhibitions from 1965 to 2010.

4. The Mom Art series included at least 28 collages and montages; the whereabouts of many are currently unknown.
5. See Lucy Lippard, "Household Images in Art," in *From the Center: Feminist Essays on Women's Art* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1976); and Cecile Whiting, *A Taste for Pop: Pop Art, Gender and Consumer Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1997).
6. Jerry Tallmer, "In the Art Galleries," *New York Post* (August 11, 1963); "Mom Art," *Esquire* 60 (Oct. 1963): 134–35.
7. "Mom Art," 134–35.
8. Rosalind E. Krauss, "Photographic Conditions of Surrealism" (1981) in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1984), 103.
9. *Ibid.*, 113.
10. Steckel was influenced by Dada throughout her career, and in her later years produced collage series that directly appropriate Dada works, including the Duchamp Series (1997–2005) and the Bush Series (2005–2008). It should be noted that Duchamp's first retrospective exhibition took place in 1963 (the same year as the Mom Art exhibition) at the Pasadena Art Museum (now the Norton Simon Museum). For a survey of the critical response to Pop Art in the 1960s, see Steven Henry Madoff, ed., *Pop Art: A Critical History* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1997).
11. Anita Steckel, interview with the author, Jan. 28, 2007, New York, NY.
12. "Whiteness" entered into the academy as an area of study in the 1990s. For an overview of scholarship in this field, see Mike Hill, *Whiteness: A Critical Reader* (New York: New York University Press, 1997).
13. Susan Sontag, "In Plato's Cave," in *On Photography* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1977), 7 (originally published as "Photography," *New York Review of Books* 20 [Oct. 18, 1973]).
14. For an excellent summary of the discrimination against women artists during the period, see Lucy Lippard, "Sexual Politics, Art Style," *Art in America* 59 (Sept./Oct. 1971): 19.
15. Anita Steckel, interview with the author, Jan. 28, 2007, New York, NY.
16. Anita Steckel, interview with the author, March 17, 2009, New York, NY; and Meyer, "Hard Targets."
17. Steckel began the series in 1970 when she had the New York skyline silk-screened onto multiple canvases. She then painted on the surface of these silkscreen prints. She continued to produce works for the series into the late 1970s.
18. Carol Hanisch, "The Personal is Political," in *Notes from the Second Year: Women's Liberation* (New York Radical Women, 1970). Retrieved from <http://carolhanisch.org>.
19. Anita Steckel, interview with the author, Oct. 30, 2008, New York, NY.
20. Anita Steckel, interview with the author, Jan. 28, 2007, New York, NY.
21. Ruth Iskin, "Anita Steckel's Feminist Fantasy: The Making of a New Ideology," *Chrysalis* 3 (1977): 93.
22. "Picture Exhibit a Revealing Study," *New York Daily News* (Feb. 13, 1972). The most vocal opposition to the exhibition was a Rockland County legislator, John Komar.
23. According to Steckel's archive, supporters were Lawrence Alloway, Lawrence Campbell, and James Bishop of *Art Worker's News*. According to the school newspaper, support also came from Charles Frankel, a former employee of the Secretary of State for Cultural Affairs; John Baur, Whitney Museum; Henry Raleigh, Dean of Fine and Performing Arts at SUNY New Paltz; Paul Brach, Dean of the Art School of California Institute of the Arts. "To Seek and To See," *Outlook*, (February 14, 1972). Reports of the support for her show are also found in Taplin R. Clinton, "Art world backs feminist's exhibit," *The Record* (Feb. 9, 1972) and Suzanne Frank, "Anita Steckel at Rockland College," *Arts Magazine* 46 (March 1972): 56.
24. The Supreme Court decision on June 24, 1957 in the case of *United States v. Roth* laid the groundwork for easing censorship of sexual material by requiring that it must be "utterly without redeeming social importance" in order to be found legally obscene. Beginning in 1964, established galleries organized exhibitions of erotic art and mainstream art magazines discussed the genre. Examples of erotic art exhibitions include "Contemporary Erotica," Van Bovenkamp Gallery, New York (1964); "The Arena of Love," Dwan Gallery, Los Angeles (1965); and "Erotic Art '66," Sidney Janis Gallery, New York (1966). Examples of art criticism on the topic of erotic art include Barbara Rose, "Filthy Pictures," *Artforum* 3 (May 1965): 21–25; Alfred Werner, "Nudest of Nudes," *Arts Magazine* 41 (November 1966); and *Art and Artists* (November 1966) (issue on erotic art and censorship).
25. For more on the reception of sexual art made by women artists in the 1960s and 1970s, see Rachel Middleman, "A New Eros: Sexuality in Women's Art before the Feminist Art Movement," (Ph.D. diss., Univ. of Southern California, 2010).
26. In addition to Meyer's cited essays, the Fight Censorship Group has been referenced in Joanna Frueh, Cassandra L. Langer and Arlene Raven, eds., *New Feminist Criticism: Art, Identity, Action* (New York: Icon Editions, 1994); Carol Jacobson, "Redefining Censorship: A Feminist View," *Art Journal* 50 (Winter 1991); Margaret Walters, *The Nude Male: A New Perspective* (London: Paddington Press, 1978). Attendees at the first meeting were Louise Bourgeois, Ray Brooks (not an artist), Martha Edelheit, Joan Glueckman, Juanita McNeely, Joan Semmel, Anne Sharp, Hannah Wilke, and an unidentified woman, "Renee." From cassette recording of the meeting, March 8, 1973. Archives of Anita Steckel.
27. "Statement on Censorship by Anita Steckel (woman artist)" dated March 8, 1973, Archives of Anita Steckel; also published in the *Village Voice*, "Press of Freedom" section (March 29, 1973).
28. For example, two discussion panels were held at the New School for Social Research in New York: in October 1973, "The New Female Sexuality in Art" with Judith Bernstein, Louise Bourgeois, Joan Glueckman, Eunice Golden, Martha Edelheit, Juanita McNeely, Barbara Nessim, Joan Semmel, Anne Sharp, and Steckel; and in 1975, "Pornography vs. Eroticism" with Bourgeois, Golden, Wilke, Semmel, and Steckel, moderated by Nancy Spero.
29. Maryse Holder, "Another Cuntree: At Last, a Mainstream Female Art Movement," *Off Our Backs* (September 1973); Maryse Holder, "The New Sexual Art of Women," *Changes* 86 (1974), reprinted in Frueh, Langer, and Raven, eds., *New Feminist Criticism: Art, Identity*; Lynda Crawford, "Women in the Erotic Arts," *Viva: The International Magazine for Women* 1 (January 1974): 74–83; Dorothy Seiberling, "The Female View of Erotica," *New York Magazine* 7 (February 11, 1974): 54–58; "Il sesso visto dalle donne," *BolaffiArte* 5 (March 1974): 68–71.
30. Steckel participated in at least two group exhibitions at the Women's Interart Center: *Games* (1974) and *Women Artists' Sketch Books* (1978). The center was opened in 1972 by Women Artists in Revolution (W.A.R.), formed in 1969.
31. See for example, Lorraine Gilligan, "Anita Steckel," *Womanart* 2 (1977): 23–24; Ruth Iskin, "Anita Steckel's Feminist Fantasy: The Making of a New Ideology," *Chrysalis* 3 (1977): 93–95; "Interview with Anita Steckel (Excerpts) *Women Artists Newsletter* 3 (summer 1977): 9; Joan Semmel and April Kingsley, "Sexual Imagery in Women's Art," *Woman's Art Journal* vol. 1, no. 1 (1980): 1–6.
32. Arlene Raven, "The Archaic Smile," in *New Feminist Criticism: Art, Identity, Action* (New York: Icon Editions, 1994).
33. Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, Richard Howard, trans. (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1981).
34. Anita Steckel, interview with the author, Oct. 21, 2011, New York, NY.
35. Anita Steckel, phone interview with the author, Jan. 22, 2012.
36. Lucy Lippard, *The Pink Glass Swan: Selected Essays on Feminist Art* (New York: New Press, 1995), 25.

ANITA Malfatti AND TARSILA DO AMARAL

GENDER, *BRASILIDADE* AND THE MODERNIST LANDSCAPE

By Gillian Sneed

In many ways, the history of Brazilian modernism parallels the history of the development of *Brasilidade*, the Portuguese term for Brazilian cultural and national identity. Indeed, the Brazilian modernist movement, launched in the early 1920s, was closely linked to the people's pursuit of autonomy. The country gained independence from Portugal in 1822, and a collective desire to define national identity was reinforced when Brazil became a sovereign Republic in 1889.

By the first decades of the twentieth century, Brazilians were eager to distance themselves culturally from their colonial heritage. During this period of intense nation building, the Brazilian leadership and intellectual elite promoted nationalism as a strategy to resist both the legacy of colonialism and European influences. Even so, their relationship with European culture was tense. The emerging avant-garde strove to achieve the modern social and technological advances already well under way in Europe; they supported industrialization, economic progress, and artistic evolution because they believed such advances would enable Brazil to compete economically and culturally on the global stage. Hence, the Brazilian modernizing movement was not just a process of seeking an authentic *Brasilidade* but rather of creating an entirely new cultural paradigm from scratch.¹

Landscape painting came to be understood as a mode of establishing and expressing national identity—especially in the Latin American context.² During the colonial period, European traveler-artists produced images of the Brazilian landscape and its native people, not just to scientifically catalog the region, but also to construct representations of native people and cultures that would bolster the colonial agenda of promoting immigration and economic exploitation.³ The nineteenth-century European traveler-artists' Romantic landscapes and *costumbrista* studies influenced younger, homegrown Latin American artists to express their own "national aspirations" by crafting their own images of their homeland.⁴ By the second decade of the twentieth century, a new generation of Brazilian artists was eager to assert *Brasilidade* through the novel language of modernism, some by painting the Brazilian landscape.



Fig. 1. Anita Malfatti, *Ritmo (Torso)* (Rhythm [Torso]) (1915–16), charcoal and pastel on paper, 24" x 18 3/8". Collection of the Museu de Arte Contemporânea da Universidade de São Paulo (MAC-USP). Photo: Asa 18 Produções Culturais. Image courtesy of Instituto Anita Malfatti.

Two of the most significant Brazilian modern artists to exploit landscape painting's potential to articulate *Brasilidade* were Tarsila do Amaral (1886–1973) and Anita Malfatti (1889–1964), the only two women in the Grupo dos Cinco (The Group of Five), a group of five São Paulo-based artists and writers who during the 1920s promoted modernist art and literature.⁵

Despite the two women's close friendship and intertwined personal and artistic relationships, most art historical studies of them have examined them independently. While Malfatti is generally considered the instigator of Brazilian modernism, her later work is framed as uniformly conservative and uninteresting; in contrast, Amaral, whose artistic innovations came five years after Malfatti's, is regularly positioned as the most significant Brazilian modernist painter of the period.

Situating the two artists' work in a complex and dynamic relationship to one another allows a critical reevaluation of Malfatti's and Amaral's landscapes from the 1920s to the 1940s. In fact, the tendency towards a more folkloric style was evident in the later work of Amaral as well as Malfatti's. An examination of both demonstrates how both women articulated in their landscapes a similar vision of *Brasilidade* that was rooted in Brazil's African and Amerindian populations as well as in vernacular and rural culture.

Anita Malfatti, born in São Paulo, was the second child of an Italian railroad engineer, Samuel Malfatti, and a German American, Eleonora Elizabeth "Betty" Krug.⁶ A congenital atrophy of the right arm and hand was only partially corrected by surgery at the age of three. Thanks to a governess who trained her as a child to use her left hand for writing and drawing, this disability did not prevent her from becoming an artist. After four years of private art lessons with her mother, Malfatti travelled to Germany in 1910, where she studied with Lovis Corinth, and was introduced to works by the French Symbolists and Post-Impressionists at the great Sonderbund exhibition in Cologne in 1912. When she returned briefly to Brazil in 1914, she presented her first solo exhibition, at a local department store, which went largely unnoticed.⁷

The following year, her family sent her to New York, where she enrolled at the Art Students League, studying life drawing, composition, and etching.⁸ In the summer of 1915, she took an excursion to Monhegan Island, Maine, to study art with the American landscape painter, Homer Boss.⁹ She considered this fruitful time in her artistic formation "the greatest period of her life."¹⁰ She began painting colorful, violent, distorted portraits and promptly enrolled at Boss's Independent School of Art in New York, where she took anatomy and design courses with Boss, and rubbed elbows with the artists associated with the school, including Isadora Duncan, Marcel Duchamp, Maxim Gorki, and Jean Crotti. Following another summer on Monhegan Island with Boss and his students, she returned home to São Paulo.

The portfolio she brought back reflected the modernist techniques she had been absorbing in New York. Her family was displeased when they saw her Cubo-Expressionist nude studies and portraits, such as *A Boba* (The Silly Woman) (1915–16; Pl. 11), depicting a mentally disabled woman seated in front of an abstracted background, executed in a vivid palette of bright yellows, blues, and greens; and Expressionist



Fig. 2. Anita Malfatti, *Tropical* (1916), oil on canvas, 29 7/8" x 40 1/8". Collection of the Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo Archive, São Paulo. Photo: Asa 18 Produções Culturais. Image courtesy of Instituto Anita Malfatti.

landscapes painted in sweeping strokes of bold colors.¹¹ Despite her family's reservations, she was encouraged to show her work by a group of Paulista journalists and intellectuals, led by the painter, Emiliano Di Cavalcanti. Toward the end of 1917, in a rented room on Rua Líbero Badaró, she exhibited this work along with a selection of works by other artists she'd met in New York.¹² Malfatti hoped to avoid controversy, wanting to introduce the public to new artistic currents, rather than incite shock.¹³ She carefully selected fifty-three works for the exhibition, omitting, for example, her male nudes, such as *Ritmo* (Torso) (Rhythm [Torso]) (1915–16; Fig. 1), a confident and expressive pastel depicting a male gymnast seen from behind done in bold oranges, blues, and blacks. Instead, she opted for less controversial works such as *Tropical* (1916; Fig. 2). Completed shortly after her return to Brazil, it demonstrated a more muted palette and less abstract motifs than *A Boba* (also omitted from the exhibition).¹⁴ Malfatti's show nonetheless sparked outrage.¹⁵ Paulista audiences, who had yet to be introduced to Impressionism, much less to Post-impressionism, Fauvism, Expressionism, or Cubism, were scandalized, and the exhibition was widely derided.¹⁶

There were defenders—including Oswald de Andrade, the young journalist and poet who had brought Marinetti's "Futurist Manifesto" to São Paulo a few years earlier. Even so, the negative reception of her work so disturbed Malfatti that she sank into a depression. When she began painting again, she returned to a more conservative style: conventional portraits and landscapes depicting folkloric scenes and rural life, such as *As Lavadeiras* (The Washers) (1920; Fig. 3), an Impressionist-inflected scene in a colorful palette. She also began studying with the academic still-life painter, Pedro Alexandrino, in whose studio she met and befriended Tarsila do Amaral, three years her senior.

Like Malfatti, Amaral had a privileged upbringing. She was born into a wealthy coffee-growing family on a farm in Capivari, in the interior of the state of São Paulo.¹⁷ In 1906, at age twenty, she was married to her mother's cousin, André Teixeira Pinto, who fathered her only child, Dulce. He did not share her passion for books, music, and art, and the marriage suffocated Amaral. Women of the bourgeoisie were not expected to abandon unhappy marriages or to pursue higher education, but Amaral separated from her husband in 1913 and moved to São Paulo to study art; her stunned family agreed to care for her daughter.

For three years, beginning in 1916, Amaral studied with several teachers, including Alexandrino. She and Malfatti also attended figure-drawing sessions (with nude models) in the studio of the German painter, Georg Fischer Elpons. In 1920, Amaral went to Paris, where she took classes at the Académie Julian and studied with Émile Renard, under whose tutelage she produced a series of Impressionist paintings.¹⁸ She corresponded regularly with Malfatti, reporting on her discovery of the new art movements.

I have already been to the Grand Palais at the Autumn Salon: look, Anita, almost everything tends towards Cubism or Futurism.... Many Impressionist landscapes, others are Dadaist in style. You must certainly already be familiar with Dadaism, but I only came to know it now.... I disagree with exaggerated Cubism or Futurism. The general public still does not accept these things here. I spent a lot of time in front of the most extravagant paintings, only to hear comments such as "That's a mystery! What is that? The artist himself doesn't even know," etc.¹⁹

That November, almost three years to the day after her traumatic 1917 show, Malfatti mounted her second exhibition, in the Clube Comercial de São Paulo. She showed her new conservative paintings that celebrated the daily lives of the rural women in the Brazilian countryside. Her work, described as more "feminine" and nationalistic, received tepid praise.²⁰

For her third exhibition, in Santos, in February 1921, Malfatti returned to a modernist style.²¹ She wrote to Amaral, "I'm returning to very modern things, because these are the kinds of things that fill my soul with happiness."²² She also mentions her new friends, a coterie of male modernists, including Menotti del Picchia, Mário de Andrade, and Oswald de Andrade.²³ Indeed, while Amaral was making Impressionist paintings in Paris, Malfatti's new friends were busy organizing the legendary *Semana de Arte Moderna*, the week of modern art, literature, and music events held in February 1922 in the Municipal Theater of São Paulo. Coinciding with the centenary celebration of Brazil's independence, the *Semana* was aimed at introducing Brazil to international modernism, while also underscoring the country's regional heritage. It was organized by Di Cavalcanti and Mário de Andrade, and featured readings by Mário, Oswald, and Ronald de Carvalho, as well as music by Heitor Villa-Lobos, sculpture by Victor Brecheret, and paintings by Vicente Rego Monteiro, Di Cavalcanti, and Malfatti.



Fig. 3. Anita Malfatti, *As Lavadeiras* (The Washers) (1920), oil on wood, 13 3/4" x 16 7/8". Collection of Jacqueline Strasburguer and Pedro Paulo Camargo. Photo: Asa 18 Produções Culturais. Image courtesy of Instituto Anita Malfatti.

When Amaral returned to Brazil a few weeks later, she was introduced to the group through Malfatti, and together with del Picchia, Mário, and Oswald, they formed the Grupo dos Cinco. Malfatti and Amaral frequented one another's studios, shared ideas and approaches to painting, and sometimes even painted the same subjects side by side, as is the case with two depictions of the same floral still life (1922; Pls. 12 and 13).²⁴ Notably, Amaral's composition, which includes a chair and flowered wallpaper in the background, is executed in softer colors and with tepid brushwork reminiscent of Malfatti's earlier Impressionist works. In contrast, Malfatti's approach is bolder, more closely cropped, with thicker paint, more expressive brushwork, and a richer palette. Indeed, while Malfatti had gained the respect of her colleagues as an established modernist, Amaral was not yet recognized as a fully realized artist.²⁵ In surveying Amaral's work from this period, it is apparent that her paintings, which are more expressive than her Impressionist works from Paris, clearly demonstrate a formal influence from Malfatti.

When Amaral left again for Paris in December 1922, Oswald followed her, and the two became romantically involved (despite her still being married). During a yearlong stay, she studied with André Lhôte, Fernand Léger, and Albert Gleizes, and began to combine "cool Cubist aesthetics with the contemporary preoccupation with machine imagery and industrialization."²⁶

1923 proved to be Amaral's breakout year. Influenced by the Parisian avant-garde's predilection for primitivism, she produced her first major Cubist-inspired work, *A Negra* (1923; Pl. 14) a Cubo-Primitivist depiction of a semi-abstracted black female figure, which according to the Brazilian writer Alexandre Eulalio, epitomized "Tarsila's voyage back to the center of her country."²⁷ Amaral became more visible within the social scene of the Parisian avant-garde. She rented a



Fig. 4. Anita Malfatti, *Veneza, Canaletto* (Little Venice Canal) (1924), oil on canvas, 20 3/8" x 24 7/8". Collection of the Museu de Arte Brasileira, FAAP Collection, São Paulo. Photo: Asa 18 Produções Culturais. Image courtesy of Instituto Anita Malfatti.

studio with Oswald near Place Clichy and attended the Ballet Russe, the opera, poetry readings, and Dada and Surrealist manifestations. As Amaral's reputation grew, her relationship with Malfatti became strained.

Malfatti arrived in Paris eight months after Amaral, on a scholarship from the Pensionato Artístico do Estado de São Paulo.²⁸ Malfatti remained in Paris for five years living off her scholarship, while Amaral traveled back and forth between Paris and Brazil numerous times (often in the company of Oswald) during the same period.²⁹ Their friendship cooled: while Amaral was undergoing a period of intense artistic development and enjoying a lavish and active social life among Paris avant-garde, Malfatti was more isolated and her means more modest.³⁰ Ultimately, they were competing for "which of us is the best?" each one hurting the other with the evidence of which one was superior. In this case, this year [1923], it was Tarsila."³¹ Amaral wrote to her family, "In our first meeting in the hotel, [Anita] gave me the notion that instead of a friend I had a rival."³² Three years later, Mário wrote to Tarsila, "Have you guys seen Anita yet?... Look, don't forget to arrange things to make everyone friends again. I don't like all this bickering."³³

Malfatti began producing landscapes on her travels throughout Europe, such as *Veneza Canaletto* (Little Venice Canal) (1924; Fig. 4) and *Porto de Mônaco* (The Port of Monaco) (1925–26), that demonstrate a more delicate brushwork and attention to naturalistic color and the effects of light. "Now courage, prepare yourself," she wrote to Mário in 1924. "I'm classical now! As a futurist, I'm already dead and buried."³⁴

Fig. 5. Tarsila do Amaral, *Veneza* (Venice) (1923), oil on canvas, lost. Photo: Arquivo Giuseppe Baccaro. ©Base7.



Mário disapproved of this direction, and his unfavorable comparisons of her work to Amaral's new Cubist-influenced pieces, irritated Malfatti. While Amaral's subjects, such as *Veneza* (Venice) (1923; Fig. 5) and *Pont Neuf* (1923), may have been similar to Malfatti's—pleasing vistas of European city and waterscapes—Amaral's execution was more experimental, bearing the imprint of her Cubist teachers: Fernand Léger, in the simple tubular forms of the Venetian boats and buildings, and André Lhôte, in the fracturing and faceting of the Pont Neuf.

When Amaral and Oswald returned to Brazil in 1924, they brought with them the Swiss-French poet Blaise Cendrars. In an interview with the *Correio da Manhã* newspaper, Amaral, whose newly minted reputation as a fêted modernist preceded her, stressed her desire to revisit to her roots: "I am deeply Brazilian and I'm going to study the taste and the art of our country folk."³⁵ After attending Carnival in Rio, the threesome travelled into the Brazilian interior during Holy Week, visiting several small

towns in the Minas Gerais region. Inspired by the tropical vegetation, country houses, homemade altars, and colors of the folk decorations, Amaral drew incessantly. She later recalled, "In Minas I found the colors I loved when I was a child, the *capaíra* (rural) colors. I was ... taught they were ugly and unsophisticated ... but later I retaliated against this oppression."³⁶

This quest for authenticity initiated Amaral's *Pau-Brasil* (Brazilwood) style, in which she combined naïve painting with Cubism. It was inspired by the ideas expressed by Oswald in his March 1924 "Pau-Brasil Manifesto," which aimed to fuse the primitive and folkloric with modern science and industry.³⁷ In works such as *Mamoeiro* (Papaya Tree) (1925; Fig. 6) and *Pescador* (Angler) (1925; Pl. 15), Amaral depicts rural life and the tropical environment in her signature style of smoothly contoured cartoon-like shapes in a palette of soothing blues and greens. Using a new language combining modernism and industrialism—inspired by smooth, hard machine parts—she synthesizes the fantasy of an idyllic rural life as quintessentially and authentically Brazilian. She described these paintings as "beautiful, clean, [and] lustrous like a Rolls leaving the factory."³⁸ As she moved toward assimilating European stylistic influences, making them her own, she eclipsed Malfatti as the face of modernist painting in Brazil.

Her marriage finally annulled, Amaral married Oswald in 1926, and they returned to Paris with Dulce and Andrade's son Nonê. Two solo exhibitions in Paris, in 1926 and 1928, were widely praised, followed by successful solo shows in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo in 1929, and group exhibitions in Paris and New York in 1930.³⁹

Back in Brazil, Malfatti showed her work in São Paulo in February 1929.⁴⁰ She claimed that her stylized portraits and figurative groupings demonstrated her engagement with the 1920s "Return to Order" of the School of Paris.⁴¹ Even her former supporters found the work too conservative.⁴² A critic for the *Diário Nacional* described the work as "very poorly made paintings, of unimportant themes, and nothing else."⁴³

It is important to understand the relationship between *Brasilidade* and the Brazilian landscape. From the time of the European discovery of Brazil, its vast landscape was seen as both Edenic paradise and savage wilderness.⁴⁴ By the late nineteenth century, Brazil's own national identity was bifurcated: on the one hand was an exotic terra incognita inhabited by indigenous people, on the other was its cities and urban non-black middle class. In the early twentieth century, the Amerindian served as a figure of fascination, and during the post-independence period, indigenous people came to represent the nation-state itself.⁴⁵ Indeed, both the native people and the rural landscape were used as symbols of authentic Brazilian identity, part of the project of post-colonial identity formation. Such discourse was produced from a masculinist



Fig. 6. Tarsila do Amaral, *Mamoeiro* (Papaya Tree) (1925), oil on canvas, 25 1/2" x 27 1/2". Mário de Andrade Collection/Visual Arts Collection of Instituto de Estudos Brasileiros USP, São Paulo. Photo: Romulo Fialdini. ©Base7.

and ethnocentric point of view, exploiting an idealized image of the noble savage while preventing the actual political participation of women, blacks, and indigenous people.⁴⁶ Similarly, the desire to legitimate the emerging nation was accomplished through gendered discourses that equated the indigenous woman's body with the fertile, uncultivated land.

This kind of paradoxical discourse constructed around race, gender, and the landscape is evident in a comparison of Malfatti's *Índia* (Indian Girl) (1917; Pl. 16), with Amaral's *A Negra*. While it is significant that Malfatti was the first to assert modern *Brasilidade* by equating a nude indigenous woman with the luxuriant and fertile Brazilian jungle, Amaral's Cubist-inflected depiction—related to a memory of her "black nanny" during her childhood on the farm—demonstrates a more sophisticated articulation of her own unique style.⁴⁷ Even so, despite their admirable attempts to give visibility to Brazilian women of color, both artists nonetheless presented exoticized representations which trade in stereotypes and may seem problematic, considering their shared white, upper class, cosmopolitan backgrounds.

In 1928, Amaral began a new body of work, the *Antropofagia* series, influenced by Oswald's "Manifesto Antropófago." *Antropofagia* is based on the idea that the Brazilian artist must devour foreign influences, digest them, and convert them into something new and authentically Brazilian.⁴⁸ A line drawing based on Amaral's painting, *Abaporu* (1928), accompanied the manifesto in the first issue of the *Revista de Antropofagia*.⁴⁹ This depiction of a distorted giant seated in a simplified tropical

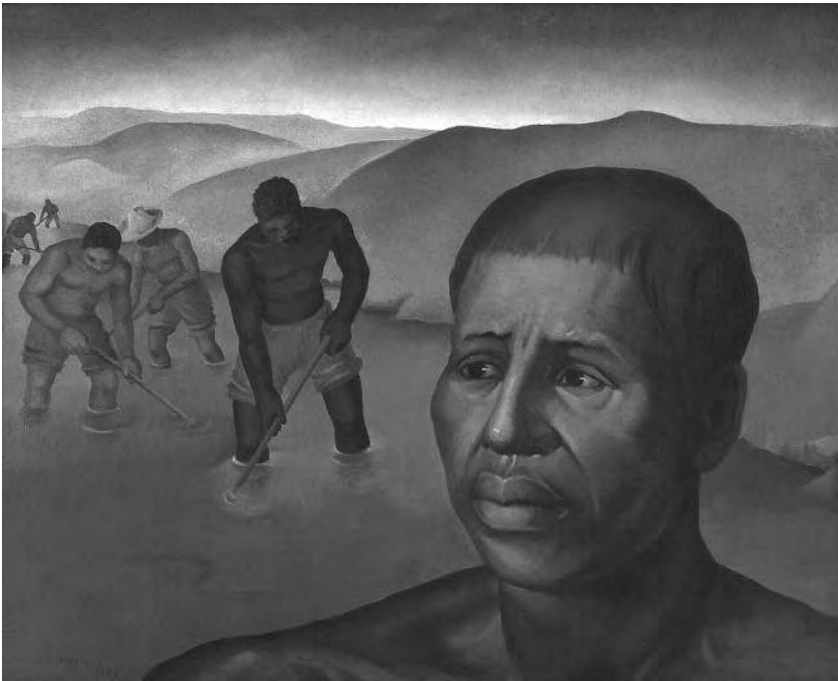


Fig. 7. Tarsila do Amaral, *Trabalhadores* (Workers), (1938), oil on canvas, 31 7/8" x 39 1/4". Collection of Banco Central do Brasil, Brasília. Photo: Romulo Fialdini. ©Base7.

landscape reveals a shift in her preoccupation with the village landscapes of her *Pau-Brasil* period to images of primordial figures in nature, most of which can be understood as indigenous or mixed race women. *Antropofagia* (1929), another work from this period, depicting two primordial figures intertwined before a verdant jungle backdrop of thick leaves and cacti, represents a synthesis of *A Negra* and *Abaporu*. Equating indigenous bodies with the lush Brazilian landscape, it articulates the ideals of modern *Brasilidade*. It also reveals Amaral's emerging interest in exploiting her subconscious and dreams, a result of her contact with Paris Surrealism, which replaced Cubism as the main stylistic influence in her work.

The U.S. stock market crash of 1929 caused coffee prices to plummet, resulting in financial instability for many Brazilians, including Amaral.⁵⁰ During this period, she also ended her relationship with Oswald, following his affair with the young writer Patricia Galvão (known as Pagu). Amaral's works of this period, including *A Lua* (The Moon) (1928) and *Composição* (*Figura só*) (Composition [Lonely Figure]) (1930; Pl. 17) portraying figures in nocturnal landscapes, are among the emotionally darkest of her oeuvre. Here her expression of *Brasilidade* is more personal: she herself is the woman lost in an obscure and alien place.⁵¹

In 1930, Getúlio Vargas rose to power through a coup that resulted in a right-wing

dictatorship that lasted until 1945. Vargas's populist regime advocated nationalism, industrialization, and social welfare, and effectively altered the artistic climate. Artists also influenced by the rise of Mexican Muralism focused on social concerns. Amaral's *Trabalhadores* (Workers) (1938; Fig. 7), for example, portrays one worker's face in extreme close up, set against a surreal landscape of verdant hills while several laborers behind him are up to their knees in the murky water. Similarly, Malfatti's *Colheita de Algodão* (Picking Cotton) (1940–41; Fig. 8) depicts laborers of color—here female cotton pickers—set against a brown landscape dotted with white cotton plants. By employing the trope of the racialized worker toiling heroically in the landscape, both paintings exemplify this social realist trend,

which lauded rural laborers and aligned them with nationalist propaganda.⁵² Also like social realism generally, both works are more naturalistic in style, though Amaral's still reveals residues of Cubism, in the faceting of the face in the foreground, and Surrealism, in the dreamlike setting.

During this period, multiple competing artistic clubs formed to provide support to artists, and popular and regional art movements began to emerge, some led by untrained local artists.⁵³ The rumblings of this transformation had begun as early as 1926, with Gilberto Freyre's "Regionalist Manifesto," opposing modernism in favor of regionalism and traditional values.⁵⁴ By the mid-thirties, the Grupo Santa Helena, later the



Fig. 8. Anita Malfatti, *Colheita de Algodão* (Picking Cotton) (1940–41), 43 3/8" x 59". Private Collection, São Paulo. Photo: Asa 18 Produções Culturais. Image courtesy of Instituto Anita Malfatti.



Fig. 9. Anita Malfatti, *Paisagem Interiorana* (Interior Landscape) (1940), oil on canvas, 18 1/8" x 21 5/8". Collection of Tatiana e Afrísio Viera de Lima Filho, Brasília. Photo: Asa 18 Produções Culturais. Image courtesy of the Instituto Anita Malfatti.

Família Artística Paulista, was formed to resist intellectualism in art. Most of the members were working class Italian immigrants who were self-taught artists and more concerned with craft than with innovation.⁵⁵ Malfatti felt a deep affinity with their stylistic approach, joined the group, and participated in three exhibitions with them in the late thirties.⁵⁶

Paralleling the artists' renewed interest in regionalism, Brazilian writers also focused on rural life in the small towns and farms in the *sertão* (the country's vast interior backlands) of the northeastern Minas region and in the southern Rio Grande do Sul region.⁵⁷ Regional lifestyles and traditions were seen as more authentically Brazilian than life in the European influenced cities. Regionalism and regional types emerged in the cultural imaginary as representative of *Brasilidade*.⁵⁸

Most importantly, the *sertão* came to symbolize the value of racial mixing as central to *Brasilidade*.⁵⁹ Freyre's hybridic theory of "Lusotropicalism" posited that miscegenation was the central trait of all Brazilian people, and that the feudal agrarian system was the device that nurtured this "harmonious" mixing of the

racess.⁶⁰ While the cities were seen as Brazil's link to the developed world and the U.S., the countryside was understood as the source of *Brasilidade*.

Even cosmopolitan artists and intellectuals now viewed the rural population as more authentic and principled; as modernism gave way to populism under the Vargas regime, the *sertão* came to represent an ideal "homeland" not corrupted by the insidious mass consumer culture of the cities.⁶¹ Significantly, both Malfatti and Amaral would reflect these social trends in their work.

By the 1940s, Malfatti was focused almost exclusively on scenes depicting fields and poor neighborhoods, inspired by her visits to places such as São Miguel Paulista, Embu, and Itanhaém.⁶² While her landscapes of the early forties were devoid of figures, by the middle of the decade, she began including mixed-race people in her scenes, settling on a naïve style which successfully navigates her multiple interests in vivid color and Expressionist brushwork tempered with recognizable scenes of folkloric ways of life, as in *O Samba* (1945), depicting a group of rural people dancing in an outdoor setting. She had finally resolved her life-long internal struggle between modernism and naturalism when she announced her desire to "*pintar a seu modo*" (paint her own way).⁶³ Demonstrating an interest in local "primitive" painters, she made the acquaintance of an artist named Emídio Souza from Itanhaém, a municipality in the state of São Paulo located in southeastern Brazil.⁶⁴ In a 1949 retrospective at the Museu de Arte de São Paulo, her works included subjects such as parties, dances, processions, marriages, and landscapes. A reviewer wrote that the artist:



Fig. 10. Tarsila do Amaral, *Pueblito* (Morro da Favela II) (Little Town [Favela Hill II]) (1945), oil on canvas, 15 3/8 x 19 1/4". Collection of the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Neuquén, Argentina. Photo: Fotografia, Horacio Mosquera - Gentileza MNBA Neuquén.

faces a sweet nation that she interprets through a continuous movement to the past. Dumbstricken are her sleepy houses of Itanhaém, while its children huddle around the bandstand or on the side of the road.... It seems to me that Anita Malfatti managed to apprehend this Brazilian climate of eternal waiting that lyrically places it between other countries that don't have more time to dream. It is a wait without desperation.⁶⁵

Following a trip to the Soviet Union, Amaral continued to develop her social realist style during the thirties. Works such as *Operários* (Factory Workers) (1933) and *Segunda Classe* (Second Class) (1933) portray the harsh realities of the workers' lives, although her agenda was likely more humanist than political.⁶⁶ In 1936, she became a columnist for the *Diário de São Paulo*. She stopped painting for a time, and when she began again, in the spirit of the times, she adopted a more folkloric style. A reviewer of her 1950 retrospective at Museu de Arte Moderna, wrote: "[She is] the most Brazilian of painters here, who represents the sun, birds, and youthful spirits of our developing country, as simple as the elements of our land and nature.... Tarsila's life is a mark of the warm Brazilian character and an expression of its tropical exuberance."⁶⁷

Coming full circle, Malfatti and Amaral's works of the forties have similarities, for example, Malfatti's *Paisagem Interiorana* (Interior Landscape) (1940; Fig. 9), and Amaral's *Pueblito* (*Morro da Favela II*) (Little Town [Favela Hill II]) (1945; Fig. 10). Although Malfatti's rudimentary portrayal of village life is executed with loose brushwork in a palette of muted earth tones and Amaral's, in a crisper style and in a lighter palette, there are striking compositional similarities, and both demonstrate an enthusiastic engagement with naïve folkloric subjects and techniques.

Amaral's style became less experimental during her later period, and scholars have all but ignored Malfatti's work after the twenties. I believe, however, that their later folkloric works result in compelling expressions of post-colonial Brazilian identity that are worthy of attention. They also attest to the fact that stylistic parallels in their work continued well beyond the period leading up to *Semana de Arte Moderna*. As Brazilians, the vernacular culture of the *sertão* and the native cultures of indigenous and Afro-Brazilian peoples always held a special, if problematic, fascination for both artists. As modern women navigating complex discourses around gender, race, and national identity, which had not yet been fully articulated, their images of the people and landscapes of their homeland provided models for grappling with their own identities. Indeed, by their example, they opened the door for a future generation of Brazilian artists, such as Lygia Clark and Hélio Oiticica, who would continue to search for genuine—and unapologetically contemporary—expressions of *Brasilidade*, gender, and sexuality in the coming decades. •

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Notes

1. Leslie Bary, "The Tropical Modernist as Literary Cannibal: Cultural Identity in Oswald De Andrade," *Chasqui* 20, no. 2 (1991): 12.
2. See Dawn Ades, "Nature Science and the Picturesque," in *Art in Latin America: The Modern Era, 1820–1980*, ed. Dawn Ades (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1989), 63–99, and Stephen Daniels, *Fields of Vision: Landscape Imagery and National Identity in England and the United States* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1993).
3. See Darlene J. Sadlier, *Brazil Imagined: 1500 to the Present* (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 2008).
4. Stanton L. Catlin, "Traveller-Reporter Artists and the Empirical Tradition in Post-Independence Latin American Art," in Dawn Ades, ed., *Art in Latin America: The Modern Era, 1820–1980*, (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1989), 60.
5. It is customary in Brazilian art historical literature to refer to these artists by their first names: Tarsila and Anita; this is how they are widely known in Latin America. However, in keeping with English language scholarly practices, I refer to each artist by her last name throughout this essay.
6. Unless otherwise noted, biographical information on Malfatti is taken from Marta Rossetti Batista and Anita Malfatti, *Anita Malfatti: no tempo e no espaço* (Sao Paulo: Editora 34, 2006), and Luzia Portinari Greggio, *Anita Malfatti: 120 Anos de Nascimento* (Rio de Janeiro: Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil, 2010), 17, 26–27, 52, 62, 82–83, 102–03.
7. Greggio, *Anita Malfatti*, 17.
8. Katherine Manthorne, "Art School as Contact Zone: Latin American Artists and their Teachers," in Deborah Cullen, ed., *Nexus New York: Latin/American artists in the modern metropolis*, (New York: Museo del Barrio, 2009), 49.
9. Boss was a member of the "Fifteen Group," former students of Robert Henri, including Edward Hopper, who had rebelled against traditional academic styles of the National Academy. See Susan S. Udell, *Homer Boss: The Figure and the Land* (Madison: Elvehjem Museum of Art, Univ. of Wisconsin-Madison, 1994).
10. Manthorne, "Art School as Contact Zone: Latin American Artists and their Teachers," 49.
11. Her godfather is reported to have exclaimed: "Não foi para isto que paguei seus estudos!" (This isn't what I paid for your studies for). Greggio, *Anita Malfatti*, 26. All translations by the author unless otherwise noted.
12. The other artists showing works were Floyd O'Neale, Sara Friedman, and Abraham S. Baylinson. "Exposição de Pintura Moderna - Anita Malfatti," *Encyclopaedia Itaú Cultural Visual Arts*, http://www.itaucultural.org.br/aplicexternas/enciclopedia_ic/index.cfm?fuseaction=marcos_texto_ing&cd_verbete=4978; last modified March 7, 2006, accessed Jan. 25, 2013.
13. Batista and Malfatti, *Anita Malfatti: no tempo e no espaço*, 65.
14. *Ibid.*, 195.
15. Marguerite Itamar Harrison, "Between Exhibitions: Anita Malfatti and the Shifting Ground of Modernism," *Ciber Letras: Journal of Literary Criticism and Culture* 8 (2003), <http://www.lehman.cuny.edu/ciberletras/v08/harrison.html>; accessed Jan. 25, 2013.
16. In his disparaging critique of the exhibition, the critic José Monteiro Lobato wrote: "... seduzida pelas teorias do que ela chama arte moderna, penetrou nos domínios de um impressionismo discutibilíssimo, e pôs todo seu talento a serviço duma nova espécie de caricatura. Sejamos sinceros: futurismo, cubismo, impressionismo e tutti quanti não passam de outros ramos da arte caricatural." (... seduced by the theories of what she calls modern art, she penetrated into the domain of a highly debatable impressionism, and she put all of her talent to the service of a new kind of caricature.

- Let's be frank: futurism, cubism, impressionism, and all the others don't surpass the other branches of caricature art.) José Monteiro Lobato, "A Propósito da Exposição Malfatti," *O Estado de S. Paulo*, Dec. 20, 1917, quoted in Greggio, *Anita Malfatti*, 26. Lobato's review was later republished under the title "Paranoia ou mistificação." See Lobato, *Urupes* (São Paulo: Companhia Editora Nacional, 1918), and Lobato, *Idéias de Jeca Tatu* (São Paulo: Editoria Brasileira, 1919).
17. Unless otherwise noted, biographical information on Tarsila do Amaral is from the artist's niece, art historian Aracy Amaral's *Tarsila: sua obra e seu tempo* (São Paulo: Ed. 34, EDUSP, 2003), and Carol Damian, "Tarsila do Amaral: Art and Environmental Concerns of a Brazilian Modernist," *Woman's Art Journal*, vol. 20, no. 1 (1999): 3–7.
 18. Damian, "Tarsila do Amaral," 3.
 19. "Já estive no 'Grand Palais', no salão do Outono: olha, Anita, quase tudo tende para o cubismo ou futurismo.... Muita paisagem impressionista, outras dadaístas. Conheces, certamente, o Dadaísmo. Eu, porém, vim a conhecê-lo agora. ... não estou de acordo com o cubismo exagerado e o futurismo. O público em geral ainda não aceita aqui essas coisas. Estive muito tempo diante dos quadros mais extravagantes para ouvir os comentários: 'C'est un mystère! Qu'est-ce que c'est cela? – L'artiste meme n'en sait rien ... etc.'" Tarsila do Amaral, *Letter to Anita Malfatti*, Oct. 26, 1920, quoted in Amaral, *Tarsila: sua obra e seu tempo*, 48, 51.
 20. For instance, critic Nestor Rangel Pestana, who also had attended her first exhibition at the Casa Mappin Store in 1914, wrote: "Quando a senhorita Anita Malfatti fez a sua primeira exposição em S. Paulo tivemos oportunidade de louvar-lhe um belo futuro. O seus trabalhos não eram, como em geral as produções femininas, obra de 'moças predadas' que se dedicam à pintura por passatempo ou para aplicá-la às almofadas de seda e aos vasos de barro. Havia neles um vigor de execução e uma seriedade de aplicação que denunciavam um temperamento verdadeiramente artístico." (When Miss Anita Malfatti did her first exhibition in São Paulo, we all had the opportunity to praise her for having a good future in front of her. Her works were not, as is common among feminine productions, the works of "wasted girls," who are dedicated to painting as a hobby or for the application of art to silk cushions and clay pots. Her works had in them a force of execution and a seriousness of application that betrayed a truly artistic temperament). Nestor Rangel Pestana, *O Estado de S. Paulo*, Nov. 29, 1917, quoted in Batista and Malfatti, *Anita Malfatti: no tempo e no espaço*, 259.
 21. *Ibid.*, 247.
 22. "Estou voltando às coisas muito modernas, pois são estas tais coisas que me alegam a alma." Anita Malfatti, *Letter to Tarsila do Amaral*, São Paulo, Sept. 14, 1921, quoted in Amaral, *Tarsila: sua obra e seu tempo*, 58–59.
 23. Note: Mário de Andrade and Oswald de Andrade have the same surname but were not related. To avoid confusion, they are referred to throughout this essay by their first names.
 24. Amaral, *Tarsila: sua obra e seu tempo*, 70.
 25. *Ibid.*, 72. Art historian Maria de Fatima Morethy Couto points out in her essay on the two artists that Amaral was initially more appreciated by the male members of the Grupo dos Cinco for her beauty and charm than her artistic talent. See Maria de Fatima Morethy Couto, "Caminhos e Descaminhos do Modernismo Brasileiro: O 'Confronto' Entre Anita e Tarsila," *Esboços* 19, n. 27 (2012).
 26. Damian, "Tarsila do Amaral," 4–5.
 27. Alexandre Eulalio, *A Aventura Brasileira de Blaise Cendrars* (São Paulo: Edições Quiron Ltd., 1978), 72, quoted in Holliday T. Day and Hollister Sturges, *Art of the Fantastic: Latin America, 1920–1987* (Indianapolis: Indianapolis Museum of Art, 1987), 69.
 28. Greggio, *Anita Malfatti*, 12.
 29. For details, see the "Timeline" in *Catalogue Raisonné Tarsila do Amaral*, <http://www.base7.com.br/tarsila/>; accessed Jan. 30, 2013.
 30. Batista and Malfatti, *Anita Malfatti: no tempo e no espaço*, 313.
 31. "Que no fundo ainda se consideravam nos termos um tanta colegiais de 'Qual de nós duas é a melhor?' a cada qual magoando-se com a preponderância daquela mais em evidência. Nesse caso, nesse ano, Tarsila." Amaral, *Tarsila: sua obra e seu tempo*, 118.
 32. "Ela me deu, no nosso primeiro encontro no hotel, a noção de que em vez de uma amiga tenho uma rival." Tarsila do Amaral, *Letter to her family*, Sept. 29, 1923, quoted in *ibid.*, 119.
 33. "Vocês já viram Anita? ... Olhem, não se esqueçam de arranjar as coisas pra ficarem todos camaradas outra vez, não gosto dessas briguinhas muito não." Mário de Andrade, *Letter to Tarsila do Amaral*, April 21, 1926, quoted in *ibid.*, 233.
 34. "Agora coragem, aprompte-se ... Estou clássica! Como futurista morri e já fui enterrada." Anita Malfatti, *Letter to Mário de Andrade*, 1924, quoted in *ibid.*, 6.
 35. "Timeline," *Catalogue Raisonné Tarsila do Amaral*, <http://www.base7.com.br/tarsila/>; accessed May 20, 2011.
 36. Amaral, *Tarsila: sua obra e seu tempo*, 135.
 37. Oswald de Andrade's "Pau-Brasil Poetry" manifesto refers to the mixed heritage of Brazil as well as to the contrast between its tropical landscape and industrial culture. *Pau-Brasil*, or Brazilwood, the major export crop during the colonial period, became a symbol for this movement.
 38. Tarsila do Amaral, *Letter to Joaquín Inojosa*, Nov. 1925, quoted in Day and Sturges, *Art of the Fantastic*, 68.
 39. Damian, "Tarsila do Amaral," 5–6.
 40. The artworks that she brought back with her from Europe were held in customs for six months, delaying her ability to exhibit them right away. Batista and Malfatti, *Anita Malfatti: no tempo e no espaço*, 363.
 41. Greggio, *Anita Malfatti*, 90.
 42. The *Diário Nacional*'s review specifically named several works in the exhibition, including *No Balcao*, *Puritas*, and *Plein Air*. The review in *A Gazeta* mentions *Puritas* and *Ressurreição de Lázaro*. "A exposicao de pintura Anita Malfatti," *Diário Nacional*, Feb. 2, 1929, and *A Gazeta*, São Paulo, Feb. 2, 1929, quoted in Renata Gomes Cardoso, "Anita Malfatti em Paris, 1923–1928," in *Anais do XXVI Simposio Nacional de Historia* (São Paulo: ANPUH, July 2011), 11–13.
 43. "... quadros muito mal feitos, de assuntos sem importancia e nada mais..." "A exposicao de pintura Anita Malfatti," *Diário Nacional*, February 2, 1929, quoted in Cardoso, "Anita Malfatti em Paris, 1923–1928," 11.
 44. Sadlier, *Brazil Imagined*, 7.
 45. *Ibid.*, 133.
 46. Cristina Ferreira-Pinto, *Gender, Discourse, and Desire in Twentieth-Century Brazilian Women's Literature* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue Univ. Press, 2004), 10–11.
 47. Damian, "Tarsila do Amaral," 4.
 48. Meaning "cannibalism," this term was appropriated from the history of the Tupinambá Indians, who were known for devouring their European enemies in order to incorporate their strength into their own bodies.
 49. Ades, "Modernism and the Search for Roots," in Ades, ed. *Art in Latin America: The Modern Era, 1820–1980*, 134. The 26 issues of the *Revista de Antropofagia* were published in two phases (or "dentições") during 1928–29.
 50. The financial setback would eventually result in her being forced to mortgage her farm at Santa Teresa do Alto. "Timeline," *Catalogue Raisonné Tarsila do Amaral*, <http://www.base7.com.br/tarsila/>; accessed May 20, 2011.
 51. According to Aracy Amaral: "Em 1929–30 o artista revelou-se sobretudo subjetivamente relacionada com a paisagem." (In

- 1929–30 the artist revealed herself to be above all subjectively related with the landscape.) Aracy Amaral, "O Surreal em Tarsila" *Mirante das Artes São Paulo*, n. 3 (1967): 24.
52. Aracy Amaral, "Stages in the Formation of Brazil's Cultural Profile," trans. Kim Mrazek Hastings, *The Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts* 21 (1995): 22.
53. For instance, in Nov. 1932, Lasar Segall and Gregori Warchavchik established the Sociedade Pro-Arte Moderna (SPAM) to support modern art in Brazil. The very next day Flávio de Carvalho and Di Cavalcanti founded the Clube dos Artistas Modernos (CAM) to oppose SPAM's purported elitism. In addition to avant-garde exhibitions that showcased the artwork of children and the mentally handicapped, CAM held concerts, debates, and conferences, and sponsored talks on proletarian art. Malfatti and Amaral participated in both groups and showed in their exhibitions. Ades, "Modernism and the Search for Roots," 136; and Carlos Alberto Cerqueira Lemos, Jose Roberto Teixeira Leite, and Pedro Manuel Gismonti, *The Art of Brazil* (New York: Harper & Row, 1983), 230.
54. *Modernidade: art brasilien du 20e siècle*, Musée d'art moderne de la ville de Paris, Dec. 10, 1987–Feb. 14, 1988, 86, quoted in Ades, "Modernism and the Search for Roots," 136.
55. Lemos, Leite, and Gismonti, *The Art of Brazil*, 235, 237.
56. Greggio, *Anita Malfatti*, 90.
57. Sadlier, *Brazil Imagined*, 149. Sadlier quotes social critic Afonso Arinos's 1917 text "A unidade da patria," saying, "[I]t is not the cultured class that keeps Brazil united, but rather the common people."
58. *Ibid.*, 150.
59. Mary Lombardi, "The Frontier in Brazilian History: An Historiographical Essay," *The Pacific Historical Review* 44, no. 4 (1975): 456.
60. Freye published this theory in 1933. See Sadlier, *Brazil Imagined*, 191.
61. Karen Goldman, "Rural and Urban Brazil in Cinema Novo and Beyond," in Catherine Fowler and Gillian Helfield, eds., *Representing the Rural: Space, Place, and Identity in Films About the Land*, (Detroit: Wayne State Univ. Press, 2006), 154.
62. In 1945, after the deposition of Getúlio Vargas, she held a solo show in São Paulo at the Instituto dos Arquitetos, comprising portraits, regional landscapes, and flowers. See Batista and Malfatti, *Anita Malfatti: no tempo e no espaço*, 438, 440, 444.
63. *Ibid.*, 425.
64. *Ibid.*, 428.
65. "Depois, na segunda sala, é uma Anita acomodada e serena diante de um nacional meigo que ela interpreta num contínuo movimento passado. Pasmadas são suas casas adormecidas de Itanhaém e suas crianças ao redor do coreto ou de beira de estrada. É uma espécie de Brasil de recorte de janela de trem, esse que sente a pintora. Um Brasil com alguns traços a um tempo ingênuos e desesperados de ex-votos. [...] Parece-me que Anita Malfatti conseguiu apreender esse clima brasileiro de eterna espera que o coloca liricamente entre outros países que não têm mais tempo de sonhar. É uma espera sem desespero" Helen, "Anita Malfatti de ontem e de hoje," *Folha da Manhã*, June 5, 1949, quoted in *ibid.*, 450.
66. Damian, "Tarsila do Amaral," 7.
67. Flávio de Carvalho, *O Estado de S. Paulo*, Dec. 31, 1950, quoted in *ibid.*



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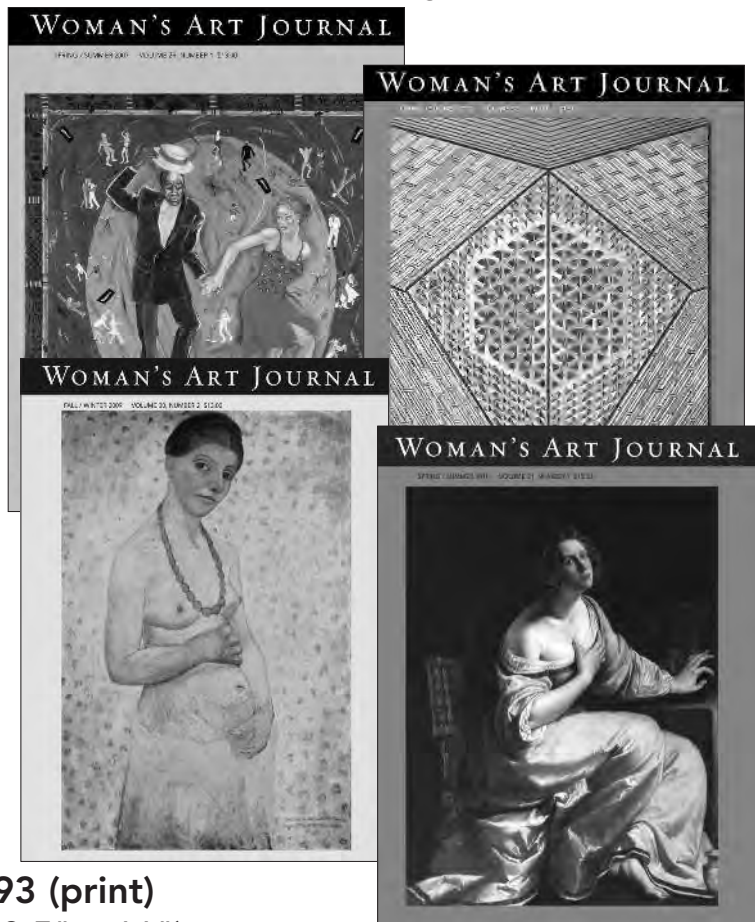
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Cindy Sherman: The Early Works Catalogue Raisonné

by Gabriele Schor
Hatje Cantz, 2012

Cindy Sherman

by Eva Respini, Johanna Burton,
Cindy Sherman, with John Waters
The Museum Of Modern Art, 2012

Reviewed by Heather E. Mathews

Cindy Sherman's recent retrospective exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York (February 26–June 11, 2012) offered institutional confirmation of the importance of her three decades of innovative photographic work. The exhibition was accompanied by a beautifully illustrated catalogue. Parallel to the MoMA event, a separate catalogue raisonné of Sherman's early work was published. While similar in their scale, the two volumes have different objectives: the former provides a critical overview of Sherman's work, its context, and its reception, while the latter functions as a documentation, almost an archaeology, of Sherman's earliest experiments with photography.

Cindy Sherman: The Early Works chronicles the artist's production from 1975 to 1977, when she was still a student in upstate New York. These early photo-works feel decidedly rough and experimental, but at the same time they reveal the development of the ideas and methods that allowed Sherman to make her mark with the later pictures. Gabriele Schor, director of the Sammlung Verbund, Vienna, writes in her introduction of her own fascination with these early pieces, eight of which the Sammlung purchased.

Schor introduces the artist with a brief description of Sherman's high school years and her relevant coursework while a student at Buffalo State University, including photography and film production. Her short stop-action film *Doll Clothes* (1975; Fig. 1) reveals the playful, creative engagement with clothing and appearances that remained central to her work. The chronological organization of the



Fig. 1. Cindy Sherman, *Untitled (Doll Clothes)* (1975), 11 black-and-white still photographs mounted on board. Photo: Sammlung Verbund, Vienna.

illustrations, paired with a biographical sketch, feels at times like a yearbook, especially given the playful nature of much of Sherman's early work.

It was Sherman's involvement with the Hallwalls exhibition space in Buffalo that provided her the support to develop her ideas about photography, film, and performance. Schor describes a tight-knit group of young artists, collaboratively organized exhibitions, and staged events that engaged with ideas current in the art world of the late 1970s. Visiting artists from New York City, among them Lynda Benglis, Dan Graham, Bruce Nauman, and Hannah Wilke, as well as critics such as Lucy R. Lippard, added a more established presence to the experimental nature of Hallwalls. According to Schor's narrative, these figures deeply influenced Sherman in her development and led to her first exhibitions in New York. *Murder Mystery*, shown as part of an exchange between Hallwalls and Artist's Space in 1976, was an installation of photographic figures, all played by Sherman, acting out a campy drama across the walls of the gallery (31). *The Early Works* includes numerous fold-out illustrations of this and other complex, episodic works, demonstrating Sherman's fondness for stereotype and parody.

While the early works detailed here are striking, the prose is somewhat choppy. Short sentences at times read like a laundry list of points that lack a larger message, an aggregation of facts without interpretation. This is particularly evident in the very brief section on early influences, which recounts Sherman's interest in the work of Benglis, Wilke, Eleanor Antin, and Adrian Piper. The truncated descriptions of these artists' works serve here only as context for Sherman's own development, as is appropriate in this case; nevertheless, they read as highly selective and a bit cursory. In spite of these occasional style issues, the volume is extraordinarily useful. It presents us with a less-familiar aspect of the artist's production, which can now be readily referenced in larger analyses, whether of Sherman's oeuvre or of other photo-based work emerging at the end of the 1970s. Schor's volume is a great resource in terms of establishing the trajectory of Sherman's artistic development. The artwork on its own, in its engagement with the body, the self, and the photographic mode, is extremely engaging.

Published in conjunction with a major retrospective exhibition, *Cindy Sherman* treats the artist's entire career.

Eva Respini, in her opening critical essay, traces the artist's development and the recurring themes within her work, and examines Sherman's reception over time. Addressing Sherman's early serial pieces, Respini sketches out the Buffalo and Hallwalls years and briefly cites Antin and Wilke as important influences in this first "serious" work. The *Untitled Film Stills* series (1978–80), which Respini calls "an August Sander catalogue for the media age" (21), receives significant attention—linked to earlier photographic performance, such as that of Marcel Duchamp and Claude Cahun, and examined in terms of their use as examples within the articulation of postmodernism in the work of Douglas Crimp, Craig Owens, and others. Here Respini describes Sherman's engagement with media culture as linking her to earlier conceptual art, but also as creating a solidarity with other artists—particularly women artists—working in similar ways.

The *Untitled Film Stills* also ushered in feminist investigation of Sherman's work, provoking a consideration of the construction of female identity, which underlies much of the early writing on the artist. The subsequent *Centerfolds* (1981) seemingly emphasized the male gaze through their close cropping and saturated colors. In reviewing these two now-iconic examples of Sherman's apparently feminist approach, Respini notes that Sherman's own understandings of her work "often conflict with the scholarly debates about feminism and the role of women" (32), and that the artworks, and Sherman's own descriptions of her intent, have helped to expand and complicate the discourse within contemporary art. This is particularly true of the grotesque *Disasters* series (1986–89), in which the intact body is replaced by rotting food, prostheses, blow-up dolls, and apparent bodily waste, as well as the *Sex Pictures* (1992). Here the artist mimicked pornography by piecing together bodies using mannequins, creating pictures that "challenge fetishized sexuality" (36) in their distinctly mechanical and unappealing construction, and Respini offers an insightful contextualization of the *Sex Pictures* in their contemporary moment.

Sherman's use of herself continued in

the *History Portraits* (1988–90), or *Old Masters*, in which she referred to (and in a few cases, recreated) iconic images from art history. Artificiality remains important in this series, as the prosthetic breasts and mustaches necessary to create the figures are left clunky and obvious. The artist worked from reproductions, stressing general ideas, that is, the "representational systems" that are "part of our cultural history" (43). These works, and the recent *Society Portraits* (2008), continue to emphasize the constructed nature of identity and of stereotype. Respini's overview of the phases of Sherman's career is a helpful timeline tracing the development, influences, and context of the artist's production.

Johanna Burton explores in more depth the significance of Sherman's bodily presence in the portrait series, in particular the recent *Hollywood/Hamptons* (2000–02) work, raising questions about the nature of the portrait and the importance of empathy. Burton asserts that the pieces "succeed or fail...based on who is viewing them" (58), that it is the connection with the viewer, itself based in empathy, that makes the picture. Reviewing the reception of Sherman's work, Burton notes that it is only after the artist disappeared from view in the *Disasters* and the *Sex Pictures* series that empathy became an issue of critical interest. Burton examines Sherman's most recent works, murals composed with architectural and landscape backdrops, and superimposed, oversized portraits of middle-aged women. Here, she sees a continuation of the abstraction that Sherman has always practiced: a representational distance between the image and its subject. In its complex relationship to its subjects and to its viewers, Sherman's work draws our attention to "the ambivalent process of meaning making with its many coauthored subject positions" (66). Burton's analysis offers viewers a nuanced, informed interpretation of this complex body of work.

The text portion of the MoMA catalog concludes with a conversation between Cindy Sherman and John Waters. While their dialogue never

follows any idea very deeply, the artist and filmmaker refer to numerous themes laid out in the two preceding essays, addressing them in a casual and entertaining way. In the scope of this catalogue, the interview is a compelling supplement to the observations and arguments presented by Respini and Burton. Waters's questions—about Sherman's sources for the *Untitled Film Stills* or the *Sex Pictures*, her technique, her childhood—help to materialize the artist, to make Sherman present, more identifiable, more understandable. Their conversation also sets up the images that follow.

Opening with a close-up from Sherman's *Untitled A-E* of 1975, the plates are organized in a loosely chronological way, with series grouped together, punctuated by notable work from other points in the artist's career. For example, the second and third plates are from the *Clowns* and the *Disasters* series, respectively, after which the catalogue moves into the *Untitled Film Stills*. The pairing of these two later, highly keyed and somewhat grotesque images with the black-and-white B-movie aesthetic of the earlier series highlights the variety to be found in Sherman's oeuvre. While the *Centerfolds*, *Disasters*, *History Portraits*, and *Sex Pictures* series are presented together, this is not a complete record of Sherman's production.

Nevertheless, the MoMA catalogue is comprehensive, a collection representative of the shifts in idea, theme, and technique throughout the career of the artist. It includes several examples from Sherman's most recent work, which, as Waters concludes in the interview, "looks like something nobody has seen before" (79). And yet, as Burton asserts, at least part of the strength of Cindy Sherman's artwork is the feeling of familiarity it evokes: we have all seen this before. •

Heather E. Mathews is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Art and Design at Pacific Lutheran University, where she teaches courses in modern and contemporary art.

Martha Wilson Sourcebook: 40 Years of Reconsidering Performance, Feminism, Alternative Spaces

edited by Martha Wilson
Independent Curators International, 2011

Reviewed by Erin Devine

What kinds of questions does an artist ask herself in the process of creating new work? To what visual or written source materials is she drawn, and do such influences change over time? Are there writings that she recognizes as emblematic summaries of her work and career?

Martha Wilson Sourcebook serves as an exegesis of the artist's collected personal archives over the last forty years. The subtitle encapsulates her most prominent roles: performance artist, feminist, and director of a long-running alternative space in New York. Wilson became an artist around 1971, during the dominance of the conceptual art movement. Once a doctoral student of English literature, Wilson's performative works, live as well as documented in photographs and video, have included textual components. Wilson herself is an avid archivist who has scrupulously kept decades of written and visual proof of the history, exhibitions, and projects of Franklin Furnace, the alternative space she founded in 1976. This can, perhaps, attest to the compulsory breadth of *Sourcebook* documents, such as the Franklin Furnace opening announcement, nostalgically typed on letterhead. Now the oldest independent, non-profit visual arts organization in New York, Wilson is both a respected arts administrator and artist, although her performative works—or “body art,” as she prefers (9)—have been given cursory critical attention.

Wilson is recognized as a pioneer of both second-wave feminism and performance art during their formative era of the 1970s. However, as Jayne Wark argues in a 2001 article that Wilson added to *Sourcebook*, this recognition has been achieved mostly through the passing of Wilson's name in anthological mentions without the actual “tedium” of cumulative critiques of her work. Wark cites that the first real critical attention given to Wilson's work was in



Fig. 1. Martha Wilson, *Nancy Reagan at the Inauguration* (1985), Original Performance: Exit Art, N.Y. Originally published in “On the picket-reception line with ladies against women,” by Virginia Cholesterol (with Mrs. Theodore William Banks), *Heresies: a feminist publication on art and politics* (1985). Courtesy Martha Wilson.

Lucy Lippard's *From the Center: Feminist Essays on Women's Art* (1976), and that not much was written after to build upon this originating analysis. Lippard also gave Wilson her first “break” by including her in “c. 7,500” (1973–74), a travelling exhibition of women artists to which Wilson fondly pays respect with reproductions of all the included pieces.

Sourcebook is divided by the three subject headings of the subtitle—performance, feminism, and alternative spaces—with brief introductory commentary by Wilson. But topics often overlap, and there is also the occasional connection from one piece of material to the next, like the arrangement of works in an exhibition by both visual and ideological similarities. Following the Wark article, there is a two-page excerpt from Howardena Pindell's discussion of artists' periodicals as an alternative space, recalling Wilson's original intent for Franklin Furnace to be a bookstore for artists' books. With a striking visual illustration of accumulated periodical covers spread across the pages like a centerfold, the reader may become aware of *Sourcebook* as a similar text by an artist, the collective impact of texts on the understanding of an artist's oeuvre, and the alternative use of texts as art. Following the image and text of Carolee Schneemann's iconic *Interior Scroll* (1974), Wilson's less known work of 1975,

Truck Muck Fuck, is included in its full textual format as a chronicle of the artist's psychological and physical memory of her hitchhike and sexual encounter with a truck driver in Canada.

Weaving in and out of the artist's own statements, articles on her work and that of women addressing similar issues, copies of article clippings, and typed letters, *Sourcebook* presents its reader with the unevenness by which artists percolate ideas and formulate projects. A reader familiar with the performance piece *Nancy Reagan at the Inauguration* (Fig. 1), in which Wilson took on the identity of the former first lady giving an imaginary address to the crowd on that evening in January 1985, will appreciate the reproduced, carded script of the performance, laden with the artist's penciled scribbles and alterations. However, it is not clear why Wilson kept a copy of the 1988 *Time* magazine cover “Astrology in the White House” with a floating photographic portrait of Nancy Reagan in the center, or how the article/image is related to this earlier piece.

Yet this can be appreciated as insight into the process of character formation for a performance work, or a visual reminder of the era in which it was made. Similarly, there is a fascinating letter from the late Senator Jesse Helms, who applied pressure to Wilson and Franklin Furnace for information on the artists supported by the space during the

Culture Wars of the late 1980s and early 1990s. The Sourcebook series proposed by Independent Curators International, launched with this volume, has the potential to be a valuable contribution to researchers and artists interested in primary texts, although its intent is predicated upon the subjective viewpoint of a specific artist rather than an overarching, topical collection. That this is the first in the series attests to the high regard

Wilson maintains. Perhaps it also will be an impetus for more critical analyses of Wilson's artistic work, which Wark calls "embodied performative acts...open to contemporary readings of the politically transgressive potential of gender performativity" long before Judith Butler invented the term "gender performativity" (87). Wilson has been undervalued and underrepresented for work that addressed identity formation at

least a decade before it became the common theoretical currency of feminist and contemporary art. If this first volume of the Sourcebook series achieves any significant praise, one hopes it will be for the recovery of Martha Wilson's artistic due. •

Erin Devine, PhD, is an artist and independent scholar based in Washington, D.C.

Lin Emery

by Philip F. Palmedo
introduction by John Berendt
Hudson Hills Press, 2012

Reviewed by Deborah Frizzell

Lin Emery (b. 1926) is renowned for her kinetic metal sculptures activated by nature's elements, such as wind and water (aquamobiles), and man-made elements such as magnets (magnetmobiles) and motors. She works primarily in aluminum, stainless steel, or bronze, and her sculptures are often polychromed or polished. Lithe and subtle, her kinetic structures suggest biomorphic or anthropomorphic presences in which several shapes or planes approach one other, come into close proximity, alight, and then depart from each another, repeating the cycle in wave after wave of syncopated movement. Yet her sculpture, no matter the scale, retains a unitary integrity, constituting a cohesive structural system. Emery calibrates tension and compression, corresponding to the muscles and bones of human and animal bodies, the bending and twisting combinations of basic push and pull forces in a classic contrapposto, implying that matter aspires to connection. Her sculptures like *Pastoral* (2009; Fig. 1) move with grace and elegance, revealing the purest examples of elemental structure. Outdoor or indoor, public and private, these installations are responsive to transformations in the light and air surrounding them; they are about fluid movement and change, reminding us that everything is in flux in the micro-and-macro realms. The tiniest



Fig. 1. Lin Emery, *Pastoral* (2009), polished aluminum, 135" x 108". Photo: Courtesy Arthur Roger Gallery.

interactions of shapes moving in various combinations accrue to create a complex sculptural entity, materializing the invisible mechanisms of nature. Emery's sculpture captures the essence of Edward Lorenz's "Butterfly Effect"—how the flapping of butterfly wings affects the atmosphere, so that over time, it could cause a tornado. It is no wonder that a physicist, Philip F. Palmedo, has taken an interest in Emery's substantial contributions to the kinetic sculpture movement.

Since 1998, Palmedo has written three other monographs on contemporary sculptors—Richard McDermott Miller, Bill Barrett, and Joel Perlman—whose work abstracts form from nature while addressing the body's movement in space.¹ This newest effort is a handsome

publication with beautiful color reproductions of Emery's oeuvre spanning six decades, from her early years working in the modernist sculptor Ossip Zadkine's Paris studio, to recent projects created in her beloved New Orleans. (This culturally sophisticated and multi-ethnic city, with gritty roots in the shipbuilding industry, has supplied Emery with access to raw materials and technical expertise.) An ardent admirer of Emery's sculpture and an intelligent reader in the history of art, Palmedo follows the trajectory of the artist's life story in conjunction with the development of her sculptural language in a chronological flow. Palmedo offers schematic historical contexts for Emery's modernist influences in the sculpture of Constantin Brancusi, Naum Gabo, Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, and Isamu Noguchi. He reviews Emery's basic aesthetic links to as well as her conceptual differences from the kinetic works of Alexander Calder and George Rickey. While Calder's abstract mobiles have playful, organic qualities related to Surrealism, Rickey's geometric forms and machinelike engineering hark back to Constructivism. Emery mingles these stylistic resonances in her large-scale kinetic sculpture, embodying lyrical qualities in sublimated form through geometric reduction; she concentrates the quality of movement generated by her constructions. In addition, Palmedo examines Emery's fascination with learning new technologies and experimenting with materials as well as her prescient awareness of the ways in which technology can transform subjective perceptual experiences.

Palmedo emphasizes Emery's ability to match such aesthetic sculptural concerns as proportion, scale, size,

configuration, and surface, to the capacity of her materials to withstand stress and endure the corrosions of time and the environment, while engaging a range of expressive, even romantic qualities. For Emery, a particular building method is not merely a manufacturing process but a creative one, not simply a procedure but a discipline. Her components are always in motion, often omnidirectional, with modules that build outward from one or more foci, highlighting the rhythms of nature. Most important, Emery's installations are accessible to a diverse audience, attracting and holding the attention of children and adults, artists and physicists! Because she represents

and interprets the forms and forces of nature, these typically invisible forces are felt as immediate, bodily experiences, as natural effects, even though they are highly choreographed. Emery creates objects and environments designed to encourage and nurture observation.

Although this monograph has laid the groundwork for future study of Emery's work, more remains to be done. Emery's oeuvre, her practices, and the reception of her work in relation to her predecessors and peers in the kinetic art movement and within modernism generally, ideas having to do with seriality, systems, symmetry, and pattern in the early 1960s and 1970s, are yet to be fully explored. Emery's

experimentations in kinesis and bodily movement, the modulation of light, atmosphere, and water have been in the forefront of modernism, and deserve rigorous art historical analysis. •

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Notes

1. See Philip Palmedo's *Voices in Bronze: The Creation of a Sculpture by Richard McDermott Miller* (1998), Bill Barrett: *Evolution of a Sculptor* (2003), and Joel Perlman: *A Sculptor's Journey* (2006).

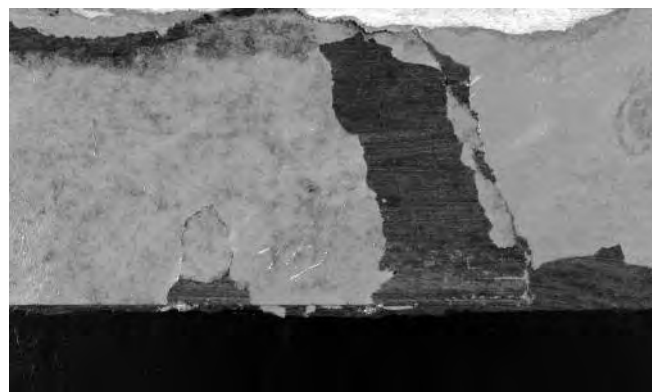


Fig. 1 (left). *Higashimatsushima*, Miyagi Prefecture, Japan (2011). Photo: Masaru Hoshino. Fig. 2 (right). Kumiko Shindo, 3-11-2011-1 (2011), found book cover, torn paper, acrylic, 5 15/16" x 8 7/8".

Aftermath of a Catastrophe: An Artist's Soulful Heart

by Kumiko Shindo
Tokyo, 2011

Reviewed by Donna Stein

As climate change accelerates, internal forces of nature wreak havoc around the globe. In the past decade alone there have been numerous examples of significant natural disasters: the European Heat Wave (2003), Indian Ocean tsunami at Aceh (2004), Hurricanes Katrina (2005) and Sandy (2012), Sichuan earthquake (2008), and in 2011 the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami.

Aftermath of a Catastrophe: An Artist's Soulful Heart, by Japanese artist Kumiko

Shindo, is a deeply felt artist's book dedicated to "all the people who lost their lives on March 11, 2011 in the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami." The earthquake registered a magnitude of 9.0. The death toll was 15,867, with 6,109 injured and 2,909 still missing. Unlike Tokyo, Tohoku was a more traditional area. In this historic center, people lost everything, not just family members, animals, farms and houses, but the beauty of their area and its cherished history. Nothing can replace their loss.

Shindo created fifteen small collages, made in a flurry of work over three weeks, which read like a storyboard, expressing the artist's complex feelings about the tragedy in her home country. Her simple text accompanying the imagery describes the need to remember

the tragedy and expresses her belief that art has the power to heal. Three photographs (Fig. 1) by Masaru Hoshino, a friend who owns an employment agency for doctors and traveled to the devastated area, bracket the experience of the abstract imagery.

Shindo, who lived for many years in Southern California, was visiting there when the disaster struck. Distraught, she endured many days of waiting before getting word that her friends and her family in Yokohama were all right. Her mother pleaded with her to remain safe in the United States, but within a week, she flew back to Tokyo.

The reunion with her family was very emotional. People were panicked, afraid they wouldn't be able to get food and coping with intermittent electricity,

the result of the nuclear meltdown at Fukushima. Food prices rose because transportation was difficult, and many products were in short supply, especially those vegetables normally grown in the area of the earthquake.

People in Japan were shocked by the extent of the destruction and loss of life, akin to the trauma, pain, and fear Americans experienced after 9/11. Shindo repeatedly watched the videos on television showing the massive wave, trying to imagine and comprehend the scale of the disaster. Every day for more than a year, the newspapers published biographies and photographs of people who had lost their lives.

Like other Japanese people who learn not to express their sadness and to hold in their emotions, Shindo felt the need to do something for both those who were lost and those who survived. "About a month after returning home, my hands

began without my head knowing what I was doing." In her studio she had a stash of books she had purchased years before in California that caught her eye, all with red and black bindings. She used the textured covers of the books as the source for her papers and imagery.

Shindo worked feverishly. First, she tore off the book covers, pulling apart the layers of paper to emulate the intensity of the tsunami, all the while thinking of the fear the people who lost their lives must have experienced. Then, she carefully tore the inside thinner papers, praying for the sufferers to recover from their losses. "I felt really small and began to work on a small scale." Details were very important. Much of Shindo's work is photographically based and figurative, but here everything is abstract, although referential to the landscape (Fig. 2). She thought about Matisse, who painted flowers during the World War II years. In

the forefront of her mind were June Wayne's tsunami prints and tapestries that they had often talked about together.

When the series was complete she put them away in a drawer. Months later during the summer, when the factories near her studio were still quiet and there was very little commerce, she heard the cicada's loud, mournful song. She went back to her collages, laid them out on a table and decided to publish this book.

In Japanese, *kuyou* means praying for your ancestor's soul. This book is a form of *kuyou*, dedicated to the Japanese people, all members of Shindo's extended family. •

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Nancy Spero, Encounters

by Joanna S. Walker
Ashgate, 2011

Reviewed by Christopher Lyon

Nancy Spero (1926–2009) did not want to be on the sidelines of the art world. She was volcanically angry for much of her career about being overlooked, and the rejection of an artist by the art establishment is a key theme of her dark masterwork *Codex Artaud* (1971–72). Though she joined some picket lines, she was not a rebel throwing stones from the other side of the barricades. She kept an unwavering focus on achieving *presence* in the history of art, and in the institutions that represent it. She insisted that her artistic voice, as embodied in her work, and by extension the voices of all women, must be heard. To be taken seriously as professionals was the goal of Spero and the other founders of A.I.R., the first cooperative gallery in the U.S. to show the work of women exclusively, and that aim continued to inform her activities through the crucial decade of the seventies—Spero's "classic" period—as

she expanded her vision beyond her own situation and gradually built an extraordinary body of work that culminated in her 1983 self-organized multi-gallery "retrospective" in New York, which finally put her on the critical map.

Spero's determination to be recognized professionally and to be seen as a painter, with all that implies for a historical assessment of her work, has implications for anyone who would write about her. One is challenged, in effect, to define and assess Spero's achievement in the largest terms. Joanna Walker's contribution to the study of Spero must be welcomed, as adding a thoughtful voice to the project of placing Spero in history, but Walker's focus on "encounters" with three figures of marginal significance for an understanding of Spero's art—Ana Mendieta, the poet H.D. (Hilda Doolittle), and dancer Isadora Duncan—leads us away from the center of Spero's achievement. Far too much of the book is spent in detailed analyses of work by these other individuals that tell us little or nothing about Spero's art. I will focus here on the Mendieta connection—of the three she has the greatest relevance to

Spero—with some attention to H.D., important for one major work by Spero, *Notes in Time* (1979). Walker's inclusion of Duncan says more about the author's determination to shoehorn Spero into formulaic structure than it does about Spero's project.

Walker's approach further marginalizes Spero's art in presenting it as defined by feminism: "It was Spero's commitment to feminism especially which made the most significant impact on her art" (2). As a simple statement, that might seem uncontroversial, and Spero stoutly defended feminism to the end. But, having been attacked, by younger feminist theorists, as an "essentialist" in the 1980s, she was acutely aware of the impact that simplistic categorization of her art could have on the perception of it. Late in her life she often objected to being slotted as a "feminist artist." As Spero said, wryly, "Feminist means it's marginalized" (316).¹

Walker's statement also is historically misleading. It ignores the critical role played by existential thought, which both Spero and her life partner Leon Golub often mentioned as the most formative early influence on their art. It marginalizes whole bodies of

major work by Spero—the Paris Black Paintings, the War Paintings, and the Artaud works—that mostly precede Spero’s active engagement with feminism. That seems to have occurred around 1970, as it did with so many American women. This is not to say that Spero was not an independent and thoughtful witness to women’s struggles all her life, but in her work through the end of the Artaud period (that is, until 1972), she clearly expresses her struggle in terms of herself as an individual, and with a focus on her identity as an artist. Gender issues often surface in her pieces of that time, but they are psychological and individualized, especially in her engagement with her “double,” Antonin Artaud, and they have to do with complex notions of sexual identity and archetypes. By 1973, she began to broaden her horizons to encompass other women’s pain and striving, and in 1974 she made the critical decision to represent only women in her art, moving beyond the personal to the collective; this moment saw the birth of her “stock company” of representative types of women, which eventually would grow to more than 400 figures.

As Walker acknowledges, her book is not a monograph in the ordinary sense. Based on the author’s Ph.D. dissertation, “Nancy Spero: An Encounter in Three Parts: Performance, Poetry and Dance” (University College London, 2008), it is a set of three fairly self-contained essays, preceded by an introduction that describes the author’s own encounter with Spero, initiated in 2004. Walker cites the “radical political nature” of Spero’s art and the work’s “anarchic spirit” as justifications for “stretching” the conventions of the monograph (2). But she has stretched it beyond the arena in which Spero chose to compete: visual art, and specifically painting. Performance, poetry, and dance are pervasive metaphors in Spero’s art, but—excepting some late dabbling in the performance arena—are not arts that Spero actually engaged in. Spero focused her efforts on the creation of a distinctive form of painting, which she called *peinture féminine*—a female art emanating from a female consciousness

and with a female subject—which ought to be considered separately from her activity in support of *women’s art* (including her own).

The great difficulty in studying Spero was gaining a clear sense of her art’s chronology and even being able to see in reproduction a representative sample of the work.² One can’t escape the suspicion that a more extensive familiarity with Spero’s production might have allowed Walker to see the work in a more objective way, but the deeper problem with the book is her attempt at personalizing, indeed dramatizing, what she takes to be Spero’s key “encounters” with feminist forebears.

The first of these is Ana Mendieta, who is made to represent performance art. Mendieta was of course much younger than Spero, and Walker goes through some contortions to explain how Spero could be thought to have been influenced by Mendieta and thus engaged in an activity somehow analogous to Mendieta’s work. The key works by Spero that are discussed are the three homages to Mendieta made by Spero in 1991, 1993, and 1995. These were reenactments, the first time not by Spero herself but by her assistant, of Mendieta’s 1982 *Body Tracks* performance at Franklin Furnace, witnessed by Spero, which was in turn a reenactment of a 1974 performance done in Iowa by Mendieta.

The Homage to Mendieta pieces by Spero (the first titled *Hommage*) are completely anomalous in her production, if thought of as examples of “performance art.” Indeed, Walker calls this episode a “highly unusual incident in Spero’s practice” (30). But they are not, strictly speaking, performance art; the latter two were staged for a documentary video, but not performed for an actual audience. There is a crucial distinction to be made between the sheets preserved from Mendieta’s performance, later given to the Rose Art Museum, and Spero’s wall paintings, which were temporary and survive only in photographs. Paradoxically, the Mendieta pieces are indexical remnants; Spero’s temporary works are paintings—icons, in that they were metonymic portraits of Spero, in the form of homages to Mendieta.



Fig. 1. Nancy Spero, *Homage to Ana Mendieta* (1993), ink on wall, temporary installation, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Courtesy of the Estate of Nancy Spero.

The contexts for these “reenactment paintings” were installations representing female victims of violence. The first *Hommage* was executed close by a wall installation of Spero’s work *The Ballad of Marie Sanders* (1991), which combines Brecht’s well-known poem of that title with the image of a bound naked woman, from a photograph found on a member of the Gestapo. Similarly, the 1993 Whitney Biennial *Homage to Ana Mendieta* (Fig. 1), this time done on the wall by Spero herself, was seen near a wall painting of another iconic female victim, the partisan Masha Bruskina, from a photo made shortly before her execution by the Nazis.

Spero’s reenactments of Mendieta’s dramatic *Body Tracks* may be understood almost as acts of penance. Having helped introduce Mendieta to Carl Andre, Spero felt a sense of responsibility after Ana’s tragic death. What is really interesting about these works, though, is that Spero made them not only in memory of Ana, but as metonymic portraits of herself: just as with Artaud’s writings, they take an index and make it an icon, a vehicle for a displaced self-portrayal. Where Ana’s death naturally reinforces a reading of the bloody tracks as representing a body falling, Spero “rescues” the images by

treating them not as the residue of a performance but as paintings. Understood this way, the works' interpretations become richly ambiguous: the hands equally can be read as reaching upward, in supplication or yearning, or as defining a shape. The hands of Spero can be seen as metonymically representing the artist-as-double, a key motif in her work, and as evidence of her torture, by rheumatoid arthritis, which twisted and knotted her fingers, and also as demonstrating her determination to transcend the physical limitations of her body.

The richness of each individual's work gets flattened in forced attempts to find common ground for comparison and contrast. Mendieta's *Body Tracks* is described by Walker as "actually an intentional mimicry of the subjective painterly gesture," synonymous for Spero and Mendieta, according to Walker, with "an inflated masculinity" (37). But Mendieta's work is much richer than this; to take just one instance, the version of *Body Tracks* in which the hands begin widely separated and converge as they descend resembles the outline of a tree, recalling the works by Mendieta in which she melds her body with a tree trunk, enacting a oneness with nature. (Spero painted a version of this "tree" motif in her 1993 Whitney Biennial *Homage* installation.)

There are deeper groundwaters feeding both Spero's work and that of Mendieta—whom Spero met, after all, some four years before the 1982 *Body Tracks* performance. An obvious shared connection, which Spero would have seen instantly, was the younger artist smartly updating Spero's archetypal figures of women, for example in Paris Black Paintings such as *Great Mother Birth* and *The Prostitute* (1962 and 1963, respectively). Walker mentions a 1992 text by Spero that interprets Mendieta's art as the representation of an archetypal female form, but doesn't make the connection to Spero's Paris production. Erich Neumann's 1955 book *The Great Mother*, which deeply influenced Spero, is mentioned by Walker only in her discussion of H.D., but not with regard to Mendieta, whose work derives from the Jungian worldview that Neumann's book repre-

sents. Walker also mentions, dismissively, Yves Klein's *Anthropometries* ("ostentatious pastiche of the idea of the corporeal gesture" [37]), but these too very likely had a significant impact on Spero, who was living in Paris at the time they were created. These paintings on paper on a mural scale, by an artist who was Spero's exact contemporary, anticipate her distressed prints of the female figure.

It is a matter of concern that Walker inaccurately describes Spero's working practice and the physical format of key works and sometimes has a shaky grasp of the work's chronology. She mentions Spero "scraping away" obsessively the surfaces of the Black Paintings, which she places in the "late 60s" (50); actually, almost all of them were made between 1960 and 1964, with a couple completed in the following two years. These works were repeatedly painted over and then scumbled and rubbed until they became (in Spero's words) "grayer and grayer and grayer," but they were not scraped—that was Leon's technique.³ Similarly, Walker describes the *Codex Artaud* as a "scroll, ... cinematic in its spatial dimensions" (44). While it is true Spero referred to it as a "scroll work," it is nothing like Walker's description; it is in fact a series of discrete panels of a great variety of dimensions, some composed vertically, some horizontally.

Walker makes too much of the contrast between the supposedly impersonal and machinelike bulletin typewriter texts seen in *Codex Artaud* and the hand-drawn figures. Spero was a brilliant, if utterly idiosyncratic, graphic designer, and the typewritten texts are funky and extraordinarily expressive, with the sorts of layouts that we would call concrete poetry if we saw them in print instead of collaged to a sheet containing drawings. A long disquisition on the "signature trace" depends on what Walker sees as a "Rorschach blot" (50) in the first panel of the *Codex Artaud*. But this is fanciful: a Rorschach blot is by definition bilaterally symmetrical, which the portion of *Codex I* she refers to is not. *Codices I, II, and III* each incorporate a painted sheet; it seems to have been simply a compositional device, abandoned in subsequent codices, but

revived and employed wholesale in the colorful works of the 1990s.

Attention to the place of H.D.'s *Helen in Egypt* in Spero's work is welcome—H.D. is perhaps the most important voice in *Notes in Time* (1976–79), which is arguably Spero's greatest single work (it is now in MoMA's collection). H.D. provides the verbal representation of Helen, who is never represented as a figure; she is the absent center of *Notes in Time*. Walker observes that Spero's "artistic and ethical objective over the course of her career was to recover the silenced female subject of history and mythology" (71). This is almost right but crucially misses the target: Spero's goal was not to recover woman as the subject of history but, much more ambitiously, to recreate her as the protagonist of the present. Helen inhabits not the violent world of Troy but "Egypt," which represented in Spero's imagination the parallel world of woman as protagonist, watched over by the goddess Nut, tutelary deity of Spero's art.

Spero was not an archaeologist, as Walker calls her, delving into the past, but a theater director "casting" figures from every culture, past and present, in a dance taking place right now. She had almost as little interest in the sources of her "stock company" as a casting director would have in the childhoods of actors showing up for a cattle call. Spero was not attempting, as Walker writes, to "set the record straight" (77). Spero was uninterested in the "record," understood as a verifiable historical reality; the point of Spero's intervention was to project an alternative reality for the present—it was a fundamentally political exercise, if you will, or at the very least a philosophical thought experiment: what if the default gender for those with power (and for artists!) were female?

H.D. remains a minor figure in Spero's pantheon: there are ninety-six separate quotations in *Notes in Time*, of which H.D. accounts for just seven by my count, one in panel 6 and the rest in panels 14 and 15, roughly 7 percent of the texts. There is also a relatively insignificant follow-up work, seemingly composed of outtakes from *Notes in*

Time, titled *H.D. Fragments* (1979), which Walker implausibly supposes to have preceded the much more ambitious *Notes in Time*.

Much of this chapter is devoted to extended analysis of H.D.'s production, which sheds little light on Spero. One error must be addressed, though: Walker believes that Spero was led to embrace the idea of "hieroglyphs" as a description of her figures "after her encounter with H.D." (98), and that this encounter laid the foundation for Spero's eventual "rejection" of verbal language in her work (the claim is repeated on page 131). In reality, Spero had a fascination with Egyptian culture that reached back to some of her earliest surviving work: her sculpture *Mummified* (1950) and the intriguing *Canopic Heads* (1956). More to the point, hieroglyphs, both ones invented by Spero and an actual one, the scarab, appear in *Codex VII* of *Codex Artaud* (1971), long before any evidence in Spero's work that she had read H.D.

Walker's discussion of Spero's relation to Isadora Duncan hinges on a confusing claim: "Between 1981 and 2001 Spero created a series of paper and installation works which she entitled *To the Revolution* after a dance composed and performed by Duncan" (132). But Duncan was apparently not on Spero's mind when she made the work that gave the series its title, as she indicated in a 1986 interview with Jon Bird:

In 1983 [*sic*] I started a series with the title "To the Revolution." I was in a protest show against the Whitney Museum's exclusionary policies, of postcard-size works where I included a print of a woman's upper body with her hands above her head holding a snake. I was going to call this "Woman with Snake" but the curator suggested "To the Revolution" after a dance by Isadora Duncan. I used this as a generic title because I wanted to continue depicting woman as activator, to get away from this "lack"—the loss and castration of the tongue.⁴

Walker thinks that the work in question

actually must have been created in 1981, as several important pieces titled *To the Revolution* have that date, but then how would the curator (Jo Anna Isaak) have participated in naming the work? And why do we think Duncan in fact created a dance of that title? It seems not be mentioned in her autobiography or other writings about her, including the Sewell Stokes biography cited by Walker. As Walker admits, "there is at the centre of this proposed encounter between Spero and Duncan a major absence or slippage of evidence and information" (134). But to Walker "this confusion does not matter" as she is determined to see some kind of "productive encounter" between them (134). A footnote is still more revealing, to the point of being comical: Walker sits down with Spero in 2006 and they watch Karel Reisz's 1968 biopic *Isadora*, which Spero is "adamant" in claiming that she has not seen before. And yet, Walker says, Spero is aware of how Duncan's story ends—as if that demonstrated that Spero must have seen the film. But what sentient person of a certain age is not aware of the manner of Isadora's tragicomic demise?

There is a great deal that could be said about Spero's "choreography" of her figures and, generally, her "directing" of her stock company. But it needs to be decoupled from this meaningless comparison and contrast with Duncan. There are some terrific insights in this book, but they have to be excavated. To take one small example, Walker suggests that the placement of figures high up on the wall in Spero's Hellerau installation near Dresden (1998), one of the artist's most evocative works (and still in part surviving, thanks to Suzanne Altmann's efforts), can be thought of as the visual equivalent of a series of high-pitched sounds, based on the theories of Jacques Dalcroze, who taught at Hellerau in the heady experimental days before World War I. This and many other of Walker's insights might be put in the service of a judicious critical account of Spero's art, freed from preconceived, ideologically driven notions and given authority by careful looking and patient investigation of the work itself.

Christopher Lyon is Executive Editor and director of digital publishing for The Monacelli Press and the author of *Nancy Spero: The Work* (2010) and co-author of *The Art and Spirit of Paris* (Abbeville, 2003). •

Notes

1. Interview with Nancy Spero, August 2001; in Christopher Lyon, *Nancy Spero: The Work* (Munich and New York: Prestel, 2010).
2. The primary goal of the publication *Nancy Spero: The Work*, on which I worked closely with Spero until her death, was to gather and present chronologically such a representative selection of her art.
3. Interview with Spero, December 2007; in *Ibid.*, 48.
4. Quoted in *Ibid.*, 252.

Alina Szapocznikow: Sculpture Undone, 1955–1972

by Elena Filipovic and
Joanna Mytkowska
The Museum of Modern Art,
New York, 2012

Reviewed by Dagmara Budzbon-Szymanska

Alina Szapocznikow (1926–72) was one of the most famous sculptors in Poland and one of the most innovative artists of her time. *Alina Szapocznikow: Sculpture Undone*, the first major English publication dedicated entirely to her art, constitutes an important foundation for further interpretations of her oeuvre.¹ It accompanied a significant exhibition of her works organized by WIELS Contemporary Art Centre in Brussels, the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw and New York, and the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles.

Born in Poland in 1926 to a Jewish family, as a teenager Szapocznikow was sent to the concentration camp of Bergen-Belsen, via Auschwitz. After the war she studied art in Prague and then Paris, returning to Poland in the early 1950s, after being diagnosed with tuberculosis. Szapocznikow quickly



Fig. 1. Alina Szapocznikow, *Cendrier de Célibataire I* (1972), colored polyester resin and cigarette butts, 4 9/16" x 4 15/16" x 4 5/16".

gained recognition in her homeland and was initially committed to the ideals of Socialist Realism, but her art soon became more personal and feminine. In 1963 the artist moved back to Paris, where she created the most important works of her life and exhibited widely, becoming a protégée of Pierre Restany. Her art became engaged with the subject of her own body, which remained central to her work until the end of her life. She experimented with new materials, including polyester resin and polyurethane foam, which allowed her great freedom and spontaneity in working with body imprints. Szapocznikow was diagnosed with breast cancer in 1969 and died three years later, leaving behind an enormously intimate and disturbing body of work.

Sculpture Undone opens with Cornelia Butler's essay on the role of Surrealism and Pop art in Szapocznikow's art. She also discusses the artist's involvement with political feminism. In 1962, three years before César made his famous phallic sculpture *Thumb* (1965), Szapocznikow made her first body imprint, a plaster cast of her own leg. This led to more sophisticated experiments with body imprints, which at some point became "mashed up with industrially made car parts" (34) and other ready-

made. Through works like *Man with Instrument* (1965) and *Goldfinger* (1965), Szapocznikow showed growing interest in Surrealism and Pop art. Her use of ready-mades and imprints of her own lips and belly to create domestic objects such as lamps and cushions made her one of the few female artists to use Pop as an artistic language.

Although she is often considered a feminist by Western art historians, Szapocznikow never became associated with political feminism. Western notions of feminism were virtually useless when applied to Eastern Europe, as artwork depicting the body was not permitted under the Com-

munist regime. Feminism as such did not exist in Poland during Szapocznikow's lifetime and has been adopted only recently. Szapocznikow did, however, address issues of female sexuality and body awareness. Her disturbing, sexualized works with their openness in addressing the theme of gender constitute an important chapter in feminist art, both in Poland and internationally.

Elena Filipovic concentrates her essay on Szapocznikow's *Photoscultures* series (1971), one of the very few photographic works ever created by the artist. It consists of twenty photographs of chewing gum which had been chewed by the artist and then placed on a stone ledge. It is the first example of Szapocznikow's interest in conceptual art, later developed in the unpreserved series of sculptures *Cendriers de Célibataire* (1972), now known only from photos. The first of these works, *Cendrier de Célibataire I* (Fig. 1) was an installation made of an ashtray cast from the artist's mouth, chin, and neck embedded with real cigarette butts. Numbers III and IV, consisting of the cigarette butts pressed into a stick of butter, were models for an experimental piece that the artist intended to make for an exhibition that was to be organized the following year.

Szapocznikow's endeavor to record objects using photography was motivated by her deep desire to register the ephemeral existence of things, writes Filipovic, the same motivation which led the artist to make imprints of her own body. Filipovic compares the spontaneity and rapidity of photography with polyurethane foam and refers to the indexical quality of both mediums, which made them perfect tools for casting the human body. "The viscous, quick drying and experimental materials she used ... could retain an eerily fleshlike luminescence as well as a tentativeness and fragility that more traditional ... materials could not" (71). The unsettling *Herbier* (*Herbarium*) (1972) series of sculptures, where "skin-like layers of the polyester cast from Szapocznikow's son's different body parts are flattened and attached to polychromed wooden panels, is the culmination of the artist's desire to cast the real body" (72).

From about 1966 Szapocznikow started incorporating photos into her sculptures, a rare and unusual practice at that time. In the *Grande Tumeur* and *Souvenir* series (1969–1971) she embalmed in resin images of death camps and Holocaust victims and attached them to her sculptures next to images showing Hollywood stars and herself as a little girl. These installations in which Szapocznikow for the first time openly talked about the Holocaust and her personal experience during the war are yet another example of the artist's desire to immortalize the fleeting moment and emotions through art.

This desperate need to preserve a transitory instant is also strongly visible in many drawings made by Szapocznikow, which are analyzed in Allegra Pesenti's essay "Traces of Passage." Although the artist considered herself a sculptor, her works on paper were a fundamental part of her sculptural practice in the same way her sculptures were concentrated on her own body. Pesenti's analysis of her drawings reveals "four main stylistic phases, each one marked by a gradual transformation of the figure from a whole and integral entity through to an elated presence" (93). The first period is characterized by academic study and observation of the

human body, so characteristic for young artists and in total accordance with the Socialist regime. Around 1955 the figures from her drawings became a sort of interpretation of her sculptures and her artistic ideas and not merely preparations for them. It was also at this time that the artist was experimenting with printmaking and executed an intriguing series of monotypes. This shifted to a decomposition of form in 1962, when Szapocznikow started to make casts of individual parts of her own body. Just like in her sculptures, the subject of death became more apparent, and the forms used by her became more alien, with “cancerous growths infiltrating them” (102). The final phase of Szapocznikow’s drawings is marked by transparency and weightlessness. The artist introduced watercolor to her images, immersing her figures in color, and “allowed her strange and disproportioned characters to collide in a dream-like state” (96). Draftsmanship, concludes Pesenti, “served [her] as an immediate and primal mode of artistic production,” and her drawings “bear witness to one of the most original minds of the twentieth century and to the intensity of her passage through art” (104).

In the last essay of the catalogue, Joanna Mytkowska discusses the reception of Szapocznikow’s work in Poland, where the artist is considered almost a legend, and outside its borders, where she is still very little known. Mytkowska argues that three aspects of Szapocznikow’s biography are crucial to understanding her art: the Holocaust, rarely mentioned by the artist but addressed in *Souvenir* and other works; her experience of illness (tuberculosis, loss of fertility, cancer); and lastly the artist’s position as Other—a Jew never truly accepted by the Polish society, a Pole living outside of her home country, and a woman striving to succeed in the male-dominated art world.

Mytkowska analyzes the public reception of Szapocznikow’s work both during her life and after her death. From the mid-1950s the artist exhibited widely in major Polish galleries, and after her move to Paris she participated in many international exhibitions, some of them very prestigious, like “Art

Concepts from Europe” (1970) and “Operazione Vezuvio” (1972), both organized by Restany. A major show at the Musée d’art Moderne de la Ville de Paris immediately following her death was, unfortunately, hardly noticed by the public. A huge retrospective organized in 1975 by her first husband, Ryszard Stanisławski, was shown in several Polish museums and consolidated the artist’s position in her home country but was completely unavailable to western audiences. In Poland Szapocznikow’s work became “immobilised by adulation as the great artist” and for a long time “did not provoke controversy nor inspire reflection” (127).

As Mytkowska explains, “the understating of art history had undergone a radical revision in Poland after 1989 when the corrupt official language was rejected and the search began for a more authentic one” (127). With the introduction of new modes of analysis it became clear that Szapocznikow’s work “could be fruitfully addressed through feminist analyses of gender and the body” (127). The first exhibition to show Szapocznikow’s art in this new context was organized by Zachęta National Gallery of Art in Warsaw in 1998. It drew significant attention to biographical aspects of her art, especially to her illness, and initiated a dramatic growth in research and reinterpretation of her work.

Recognition of the artist outside of Poland was triggered by two important shows: “PRYM,” at the BWA in Zielona Góra, Poland, and “Flesh at War with Enigma,” at the Kunsthalle Basel (both 2004), which “juxtaposed Szapocznikow’s works with those of contemporary artists, thus regaining for them an autonomous power of expression outside their immediate historical context” (130). It was after these shows that Centre Pompidou in Paris purchased the Photosculptures series, and other important museums became interested in her work. Her sculptures were also exhibited at the Dokumenta 12 in Kassel, Germany, and a year later at the Frieze Art Fair in London.

In 2009 the newly established Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw organized an exhibition and a conference, “Awkward Objects,” which juxtaposed works by Szapocznikow and her contemporaries—including Eva Hesse, Louise Bourgeois and Pauline Boty—with whom Szapocznikow did not have the experience of artistic exchange, thus providing a vast international context for the artist’s work and “establishing connections between her work and the discourses that were shared by several of the most radical women artists of that decade” (132). As Mytkowska summarizes,

the multiplicity of possible interpretations generated through the conference and the exhibition brought back life and fullness to Szapocznikow’s work and promoted interest internationally in articulating her position with art history (133).

Sculpture Undone is an excellent and beautifully illustrated introduction to Alina Szapocznikow’s oeuvre. As the first English language book dedicated to the artist, it could not possibly exhaust all topics around her life and work. It offers, however, a very solid foundation for further studies on this intriguing Polish artist. Szapocznikow still awaits her place in the pantheon of the most important female sculptors, and *Sculpture Undone* is a great step forward in this process, as it makes her oeuvre more accessible and understandable for both scholars and the general public. •

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Notes

1. The artist was featured in a recent issue of WAJ. See Amy Chmielewski, “Alina Szapocznikow and Her Sculpture of Plastic Impermanence,” *Woman’s Art Journal*, vol. 32, no. 1 (2011): 39–47.

Enacting Others: Politics of Identity in Eleanor Antin, Nikki S. Lee, Adrian Piper, and Anna Deavere Smith

by Cherise Smith
Duke University Press, 2011

Reviewed by Jovana Stokic

In this study on racial difference and identity in contemporary art, the art historian Cherise Smith does not shy away from an autobiographical stance—she purposefully identifies herself as the daughter of middle-class, mixed-race parents, whose white mother was mistakenly recognized as “that black girl who’s trying to pass for white” (2). The central question of the complexity of racial identity is thus formulated in the following manner: Is agency constituted by a person who is capable of shape-shifting by putting identity-signs into play and his or her audience’s willingness to interpret those signs? Consequently, Smith asks the same question by exchanging the notion of personhood with the concept of authorship. She dedicates thorough analysis of the complex strategies devised by four female artists—Eleanor Antin, Nikki S. Lee, Adrian Piper and Anna Deavere Smith—who, during the course of the last four decades have negotiated the relationship between the politics of identity and art within the U.S. historical context vis-à-vis the civil rights movement, feminism, multiculturalism, and ultimately, the questionable “post-identity” era (244). (In fact, author Smith eloquently argues against conflating the philosophies of “the politics of identity” and “identity politics” and gives a discursive genealogy of the terms. Further, she investigates the ramifications of “identity politics art.”) Thus positioned, this study claims to offer a productive intersection of self and history that is traced in the performative works of these female artists.

Focusing on the enacting of the other as a core strategy in the performances of Piper, Antin, Smith, and Lee, the author is right to insist on the irreducibility of

the artist body to a mere vehicle in the discursive formation of artistic identity. The artist body is the locus of their performative actions, and its unruliness, its flesh-and-blood quality, and the permeability of its boundaries disrupt the smooth ideological transmission. All four have invented complex visual strategies of identification that expand the realms of their personhood by crossing racial, gender, and class boundaries. Cherise Smith dedicates her efforts to deciphering them within their specific historical contexts and situating them within a contemporary Anglo-U.S. art historical context. Although she is capable of resisting some of the seductive strategies, of Antin and Lee in particular, it should be noted that she purposely rejects any kind of normative aesthetic value judgments. In her desire to grapple with the instability and polyvalent meanings of the four artists’ performances, she renounces the notion that pleasure, beauty, and glamour could be deployed by female artists as potent means of ideological resistance. These elements, manifestly used in the orientalized seductiveness of Eleanora Antinova (1980-81), the flamboyant character invented by Eleanor Antin, open themselves to a different register of playful meanings beyond racial otherness. This is where Smith’s analysis of Antin’s performance of blackness, as characterized in her chapter title, “The Other “Other,”” shows the limitation of the method focused on politics of identity. A teasing tension achieved by the elaborate masquerade and rhetoric of the poses conveyed in the staged self-representations by Antin speaks about a seductive potential of female self-representations that goes beyond the artist’s somewhat misplaced critique of the otherness as blackness.

The same tension in the realm of representation is achieved by Piper’s aggressive staging of the Mythic Being (1973-75), by the reverse technique of transgendered abject self-expansion. Namely, Piper’s own body outperformed the male body. The strongest artworks discussed in this study, representations related to the personae created by Piper and Antin,

work precisely because their images are potent as images proper. We as viewers are lured by their power, their playful and aggressive absurdity, their—often abject—beauty. As much as any art historical analysis should not deprive readers of the assessments of these works’ radical potential to convey their message of resisting colorblindness, or heteronormativity, it should not overlook the discussion of the employment of visual pleasure as one of the most potent ways of claiming power over the self-image. Piper and Antin were successful in their respective representational strategies because their performative models managed to both trigger and entice viewers, pushing them away and bringing them closer at the same time. For example, in her staging of the fictional black ballerina Antinova, Antin employed a notion of glamorized female beauty that was not reactionary or limiting but empowering, especially considering the artist’s age. Author Smith acknowledges that Piper used the politics of identity to empower herself, to assume the authority of creating images—art making as an institution. Smith continues to argue that Antin (and other artists) did this “sometimes without regard for how her own power might subordinate her ‘other’” (77).

Smith deliberately chose to focus on the strategies used by the artists of othering—or “enacting the other” in relation to their racial identity, without elaborating on the processes they used to create representations that would show a complex femininity formation—articulated via a multiple and relational feminine subjectivity. The relational feminine subject can and should embrace equality within difference, and it is something Smith recognizes in Antin’s rejection of the essentialist notion of identity, her proposal of “radical simultaneity of self and other” (134). At the same time, she accuses Antin of maintaining a postmodern hierarchical positioning, where the historic link between blackness and otherness is reinforced, and “black people’s diminished place in American society and culture” fortified (134).

Anna Deavere Smith’s monopoly-

logue titled *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992* (1993) presents that artist's strategy of employing empathy while taking on multiple identities across gender, class, ethnicity, and race. Her other-oriented acting offers a way to abandon the traditional self-based technique of expressive representation. These subjects that are turned into representations by Smith the artist, in Cherise Smith's view, fail to show how difference matters and ultimately tend to privilege the author-editor without destabilizing the racial stereotypes.

In Korean-born Nikki S. Lee's Project series (1997–2001), she represents herself as a member of different cultural groups—yuppies, tourists, swing dancers, hip-hoppers, and drag queens. Lee's chameleon-like staging of herself-as-other, as in *The Yuppie Project, 5* (2001; Fig. 1), to blend in with these groups is then recorded for the camera as an artwork, repackaging the politics of identity in a post-identity context. As the artist can “pass” as a member by using mimicry, she is effectively stylizing the iconography for the sake of image-making. It is easy to agree with Smith's evoking of Hal Foster's argument that this can be read as “narcissistic self-refurbishing” (273).¹¹ Ethically inane, self-absorbing representations do not even have to mask the lack of commitment to disturb the hierarchy and hegemony of subject positioning. Then again, these are not visual social experiments but works of art that can sometimes involuntarily be hilariously perceptive about the worlds they represent. Thus, Lee is not positioning herself as an ethnographer but as an image-maker who appropriates a documentarian mode of



Fig. 1. Nikki S. Lee, *The Yuppie Project, 5* (2001), Fujiflex print. Courtesy Sikkema Jenkins and Co.

representation. These depoliticized models of representation of identity are easy to dismiss as post-identity discourse that privilege the image maker. Smith continues to argue that although Lee's project lies in underscoring authorial power through her identifications, it is remarkable and significant in “its subversion of persistent identity-based hierarchies” (231). She concludes:

Yet, the post-racial and postidentity discursive environment in which Lee produces is discrete form Piper's, Antin's, and Smith's discursive milieus, for it is adamant that the dynamics governing how identity affects one's material circumstances have shifted dramatically. Ironically, because Lee's *Projects* emphasizes how dependent she is on the privilege her intersectional (national, ethnic, gender, racial, and sexual) identity provides, they contradict the very post-racial and postidentity ideology they are said to service (231).

Charise Smith's strategic intervention into the art historical scholarship consists of interjecting into the narrative of women artists' discourse since 1970 the discussion of artists' enactment of the other as material for constructing and negotiating an empowered self-image. Following Smith's own autobiographical transparency, one should conclude that the most productive meeting of self and history occurred when these self-representations were enacted, and interpreted. It turns out that “enacting others” for these female artists has meant primarily achieving artistic autonomy—a performative way of identity making. •

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Notes

- 1 Hal Foster, “The Artist as Ethnographer,” *The Return of the Real: The Avant-Garde at the End of the Century*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996), 179–80. As quoted in Smith.



Woman's Art Journal
archives are available online
from JSTOR



Francesca Woodman

by Corey Keller
Distributed Art Publishers, 2011

Francesca Woodman's Notebook

by Francesca Woodman and
George Woodman
Silvana Editoriale, 2011

Francesca Woodman Roma 1977-1981

by Francesca Woodman, Giuseppe
Casetti, and Francesco Stocchi
AGMA Publishing, 2012

Reviewed by Rachel Marie-Crane
Williams

Francesca Woodman was a gifted photographer who in 1981, at the age of 22, leapt to her death. More than thirty years later, she continues to intrigue. Between the time she got her first camera and her untimely suicide, she produced roughly 800 photographs; these images and her life have been slowly revealed and explored through a series of exhibitions, books, films, and scholarly texts. Three new publications illuminate her photographs, artist's books, and videos; each in its own way tries to tackle meaning within her images and life.

In 2011 Corey Keller, Associate Curator of Photography at The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, put together a stunning exhibition of Woodman's work, featuring 180 pieces, including selected video works and one of Woodman's books. The eponymous catalogue documenting the exhibition includes essays by Keller, Julia Bryan-Wilson, and Jennifer Blessing. It also features a brief foreword by Neal Benezra, the museum's director, and fine reproductions of the work contained in the exhibition. The photographs are assembled as different chronological chapters in Woodman's life, which played across the geographies of Rhode Island, Italy, New Hampshire, and New York. For readers who want to know more about Woodman, it is a treasure.

Keller's well-written and -researched essay places Woodman's work at the

intersection of the corporeal, Surrealism, literature, and performance, and within the context of the "hybrid and diverse" photographic practices that were beginning to bloom in the 1960s and 1970s (Keller 174). Keller thoroughly explores the context of photographic education during Woodman's time at the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD), and addresses the tension that critics and historians have wrestled with over Woodman's wavering status as a student and a professional artist. Discussing not only the interplay of the biographic and artistic while also examining Woodman's inspirations, Keller helps explain how those influences can be read in her work.

As both the creator and at times the subject of her images, Woodman seemed fascinated with the corporeal, and Keller addresses her use of props, spaces, and bodies, both hers and others'. Characterizing works such as *House 4, Providence, Rhode Island, 1976*; (Fig. 1), he states that, "Despite her perpetual presence in the photographs, she is always on the verge of disappearance" (Keller 178). Woodman used her body to pique desire or depict pain and pleasure. Most often the nude or partially nude bodies—including her own—in her photos are not framed as particular or individual; they are not fixed to any unique identity. Keller writes,

Woodman rarely photographed men, but the few pictures she did make are fraught, and are infrequently discussed or exhibited.... perhaps in turning her camera on a male subject, Woodman frustrates tidy theories about her work as a prolonged feminist inquiry into the overlapping arenas of female subjectivity and objecthood, and injects the question of her own sexuality far less theoretically into the work (Keller 178-79).

This relationship between object and subject is fraught with ambiguity because Woodman's own body was so young and beautiful; she was elusive as a specific subject. This makes some of her work a type of self-portraiture in

which there is a sense of instability and fleeting meaning that slips just beyond our grasp.¹

One of the most influential moments in Woodman's short career was her time in Rome as part of RISD's European Honors Program. Keller aptly summarizes how this locale influenced Woodman and mentions in particular the Libreria Maldoror, a book store and gallery specializing in Surrealism. She was drawn into an intimate circle of Italian friends that continued to influence her deeply even after she left Rome.²

After Rome, and her graduation from RISD, Woodman experimented with diazotype prints. Keller attributes this shift in her methods to a lack of income and a need to explore work that was less personal and subjective. He also explains in vague detail Woodman's stay at the McDowell Colony in Peterborough, New Hampshire. While Woodman produced a number of images during this time, she seemed to struggle with the natural surroundings.

One of the jewels of Keller's compilation is the historiography provided by Julia Bryan-Wilson, which nimbly traces the ways in which scholars like Peggy Phelan have tried to nail down meaning and form in Woodman's work. Bryan-Wilson's interest is "how Woodman's images themselves actively enable—and with their ambiguous bodies and open-ended narratives, perpetually destabilize—their own multiple histories of sense-making and oeuvre construction" (Keller 188). For Bryan-Wilson as for many others, Woodman remains an enigma, and these histories are incomplete and unsatisfying. While not decisively labeling Woodman as a feminist artist, Bryan-Wilson suggests that it is impossible to pin down meaning in her work, but makes a strong case for the idea that multiple feminisms provide polyvalent ways to better understand Woodman.

Jennifer Blessing's well-crafted essay discusses six student videos produced by Woodman at RISD. Blessing describes the relationship between still and moving images in Woodman's

work (and the work of other artists), seeing Woodman's photographs and videos as temporal performances with elusive narratives. Woodman's work is appealing because of the spectacle of naked bodies and our desire to see them and examine them. Woodman frustrates that desire with her blurring and disrupting of the full image. Blessing concludes:

The dialectics embodied in the work extend our perceptions of it; we see it as a student's documentation of ephemeral performances for the camera, while at the same time experiencing each as a resolved work of art: and we see the work as joyful play of a prodigious talent and the lament of suicide (Keller 2003).

Giuseppe Casetti and Francesco Stocchi compiled *Francesca Woodman Roma 1977-1981* to commemorate an exhibition of Woodman's work in Rome in 2011 at Casetti's Il Museo del Louvre, a combination bookshop, gallery, and idiosyncratic archive. The book is filled with photographs, postcards and letters to her friends in Rome, jottings, and ephemera left by Woodman between 1977 and 1981. The experience of reading the book is like cracking open a lost shoebox of salvaged memories; the images and text offer the reader a very personal look at Woodman and her relationships with friends. The artifacts are presented in total, with their torn edges, yellowed and folded pages, inky fingerprints and quirky, barely discernible handwriting in both English and Italian. The many images include Woodman's famous calendar photographs along with various items she procured at a local market in the piazza Vittorio. Readers can closely examine the individual postcards she designed for an exhibition of her photographs at the Maldoror bookshop and the opening for which she never appeared.³

The other aspect of Woodman that we can glean from the letters that are



Fig. 1. Francesca Woodman, *House 4, Providence, Rhode Island, 1976*, gelatin silver print, 5 3/4" x 5 3/4". © George and Betty Woodman.

tenderly pressed onto these pages is her struggle to discover who she was, whom she loved, and what it means to be an artist. Particularly revealing are her sweet letters to Edith Schloss, a well-known artist, writer and critic based in Rome who died in 2011. The last few pages of the book reproduce an original manuscript by Schloss in which she describes her relationship with Woodman and says of her photographs, "they are modern, uneasy fairytales, made by a young woman with wings on her feet and eyes open to wonder, full of a fierce poetry" (Casetti 118).

Detailed footnotes contextualize the images and objects that appear on the pages of *Francesca Woodman Roma 1977-1981*. The unique contents of this book provide insights into the character of Woodman and the importance of the time she spent in Italy. It is best read slowly, as it takes time to digest, and like going through an archive, it is best done in small bits that you can savor.

Francesca Woodman's Notebook is a slim volume presented in an oversize clamshell box. The heavy paper is printed with matte ink, except for the photographs by Woodman, which are semi-glossy. It is a reproduction of one of six artist's books created by

Woodman using reclaimed though well preserved and delicately yellowed Italian notebooks from "100 years ago" (*Notebook* n.p.). The original pages, filled with elegant hand-penned Italian script,⁴ are overlaid with images by Woodman on acetate, with additions of her own hand-written short messages. The seven photographs in this notebook produced by Woodman seem to tell a coy but oblique tale of waiting, desire, and sensuality, leaving the reader with more questions than answers. One can't help but see the images as a sequence connected through the words lightly inscribed by Woodman with a quill pen. Her father, George Woodman, has written an explanatory afterword, with an informative description and interpretation of this artistic palimpsest.

By experiencing these three books, readers have an opportunity to understand better the meaning behind Woodman's images and her life. For some, her youth and death are divorced from the meaning in her photos. For others they are impossible to ignore and add another murky layer to any attempt at interpretation. Either way, Woodman and the work she produced continue to fascinate, as if holding answers to questions scholars and viewers will continue to ponder. •

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Notes

1. See Claire Raymond, *Francesca Woodman and the Kantian Sublime* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2010).
2. See Isabella Pedicini, *Francesca Woodman. The Roman Years Between Flesh and Film* (Rome: Contrasto, 2012).
3. Ibid.
4. George Woodman explains in the afterword that the original text in the notebook contains notes about another book, "With references to Babylon, Hammurabi, dimensions of buildings..." etc. (n.p.)

In Her Own Words: A Primary Sourcebook of Autobiographical Texts by Women Artists, From the 19th and 20th Centuries

edited and published by Wendy Slatkin,
2010

Reviewed by Lisa Farrington

Wendy Slatkin's decision to self-publish *In Her Own Words* has certainly benefitted the scholarly community in that the enlightening writings of the women artists included therein are now in print and readily available. While not an ideal choice for scholarly texts, self-publishing does provide an outlet for esoteric research which may not be of particular interest to publishers whose main concern is marketing, and whose judgments are not always spot-on. By the same token, the book may also have suffered from a lack of the rigorous vetting by outside scholars (required by most scholarly presses), which might have compelled some format adjustments. Divided into three parts—19th Century, 1900–1940, and 1975–2000—*In Her Own Words* features excerpts from letters, diaries, and journals by Elisabeth Vigée-Lebrun, Harriet Hosmer, Rosa Bonheur, Julia

Margaret Cameron, Berthe Morisot, and Marie Bashkirtseff in Part 1; Paula Modersohn-Becker, Kathe Kollwitz, Georgia O'Keeffe, and Frida Kahlo in Part 2; and Alice Neel, Judy Chicago, Faith Ringgold, Louise Bourgeois, and Niki de Saint Phalle in Part 3. The selection seems somewhat arbitrary (puzzling is the inclusion of Cameron as the only photographer and Bashkirtseff, who is better known as a diarist than a visual artist); but Slatkin points to the accessibility of published writings as a major determinant in this regard. Also, there is a noticeable gap in the chronology, which does not include any writings from 1945 to 1975. Slatkin explains the breach: "The period between 1945 and 1970 was a very difficult time for women artists, who became virtually invisible in the art world" (277). The author's statement, while arguably true (at least to some extent), does not mean, however, that women artists did not work (or record their experiences in writing) during these years; and writings from these decades would surely have fleshed out the text. The inclusion of these and other not-yet-published writings (from the Archives of American Art or the Hatch-Billops Collection, recently donated to Emory University, for example) might well have set *In Her Own Words* apart from, and above, other similar

publications. Nevertheless, the words of the artists who are included have much to offer, as does the book as a whole.

What does, indeed, set Slatkin's anthology apart from other primary source books of its ilk is the author's thoughtful contextualizing of each writer's words (including lucid yet concise biographies for each, and well-grounded discussions of artistic style and evolution); her introduction of literary theory, which clarifies for the reader the nature and function of autobiographical writings; and her own brand of literary criticism, which is smart and works well, particularly in its elucidation of each artist's approach to narrative. Slatkin has also carefully vetted her material, choosing insights from outstanding theorists (Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, for example); excerpts from artists' writings that are most telling about the social and professional limitations which they have had to face; and other writings that expose the artists' innermost thoughts about their creative work and their personal and professional experiences—reminding us of just how important artists' voices can be to a full understanding of their lives and art. •

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Barbara Hepworth: The Plasters, The Gift to Wakefield

edited by Sophie Bowness
Lund Humphries and the Hepworth
Wakefield, 2011

Reviewed by Julie L'Enfant

Barbara Hepworth (1903–75) is a central figure in modernism. With her former schoolmate Henry Moore, she became part of the most avant-garde groups in Britain, along with Ben Nicholson, Jacob Epstein, Paul Nash, and Matthew Smith, and a major figure in international circles of abstract artists with Utopian ideas.

A central tenet of modernist sculpture was direct carving of stone or wood, as opposed to the traditional process of modeling in clay as a first step in the production of a stone or metal sculpture to be finished by skilled artisans. Hepworth learned traditional modeling in clay at the Leeds School of Art and the Royal College of Art, but she also learned Italian carving techniques, in partnership with her first husband, John Skeaping, during her year of study in Rome. With direct carving, the artist is connected to every stage of creation—a rejection of the separation of worker and end product that typified the industrial age. Since sculptors of that era were usually not trained in this kind of carving, results were often rough and

unrefined (perhaps thereby even more "authentic").¹ Yet Hepworth's early work was refined indeed, with sensitive renderings of biomorphic or geologic forms distinguished by their clean, uncluttered forms related closely to nature and the mystery and spiritual power of ancient art.

Toward the end of her career, however, Hepworth began to produce metal sculpture. Half of her output from 1956 until her death in 1975 was metal. Was this a departure from her principles of direct carving and truth to materials? This book sets out to answer that question by examining the plaster prototypes for the artist's late metal works: how Hepworth used this material, her exacting techniques, and

their translation, under her close supervision, into finished bronzes.

The book is edited and largely written by the art historian Sophie Bowness, who is the artist's granddaughter and a trustee of the Hepworth estate. (Her father is Sir Alan Bowness, director of the Tate Gallery from 1980 to 1988, and himself a distinguished scholar of Hepworth's work.) The occasion for the book is the opening of the Hepworth Wakefield, a new building designed by David Chipperfield Architects to house the Wakefield Gift, forty-four prototypes for Hepworth's late sculptures in bronze.

The Wakefield Art Gallery, one of the many important municipal museums in Britain's industrial North, was founded in 1923, and developed with an eye to the creation of a collection of modern art of international stature. The new museum is part of a larger effort to develop an old warehouse area in this Yorkshire town into an arts district. More generally, it helps establish Yorkshire, also the location of the Yorkshire Sculpture Park and the Henry Moore Institute in Leeds, as an important center for modern British sculpture.

Today, Hepworth is usually associated with Cornwall and St. Ives, where she moved just before World War II with her second husband, Ben Nicholson, and their young triplets (one of whom was Sophie Bowness's mother, Sarah). In 1949 she bought Trewyn Studio there. Around Hepworth and Nicholson grew a circle of artists, among them the ceramist Bernard Leach, himself a pioneer in St. Ives, Peter Lanyon, and Naum Gabo. The Tate St. Ives opened in 1993.

Notwithstanding her identification with Cornwall, Hepworth was born in Wakefield, which is in the old West Riding. This district of Yorkshire borders on Brontë country, and as a girl Hepworth often drove across the moors with her father, a civil engineer. Because she did not return to Wakefield after her art training, she was not really known professionally when first invited to exhibit at the gallery in 1944. Six years later, then director Frank Atkinson organized a Hepworth retrospective at the Wakefield gallery as part of the

Festival of Britain, and it continued to exhibit and collect her work. It is particularly fitting, then, that the plasters find their home in Wakefield.

Plaster is a familiar material in sculptural practice. Rodin, for example, used it in the traditional way, to make molds from his clay models to produce maquettes for larger bronzes. Hepworth used plaster in a way that allowed her to carve it directly and have it cast in forms that were far more flowing and open than traditional modeling and casting permitted. Thus she did not abandon her credo of direct carving. In effect, she expanded the notion of "truth to materials" to embrace two different materials, plaster and bronze. For Hepworth, the late bronzes had as much spiritual authenticity as her earlier work. "Vitality is not a physical, organic attribute of sculpture—it is a spiritual inner life," she had written in a 1937 essay for *Circle: International Survey of Constructive Art*. "A vital work has perfect co-ordination between conception and realization" (8).

The prototypes were full sized (she did not believe in doing small work to be translated into another material *and* another size). All but eight of the forty-four prototypes are plaster (five are aluminum and three wood). In the central essay and forty-four catalogue entries Sophie Bowness documents Hepworth's studio practice and process of creation, from beginning ideas to final form, with authoritative text and a rich array of photographs. (Jackie Heuman, former Head of Sculpture Conservation at the Tate, conservator and gallerist, contributed information on techniques and conservation.) Hepworth used high-grade dental plaster, building up preliminary forms on armatures, which were usually metal but occasionally wood. She then carved the plaster with her carving tools and surform planes. The material could actually be worked wet or dry (Fig. 1). (This process can be seen in several films on Hepworth.) The plasters were then cast in bronze, using the sand casting method.



Fig. 1. Hepworth at work on a plaster in the Palais de Danse, April 1964. Photo: Paul Schutzer.

Hepworth, always systematic, fully explored the potential of plaster, which she had called "a dead material" in a 1952 monograph (36).² She created texture on plaster to make it personal and vital, occasionally even using a hatchet or axe. Sometimes the forms emphasized tool marks, other times these were eliminated. Often she painted the plaster to indicate exactly how the patina should look. (She worked with several foundries, her favorite being Morris Singer of London and Basingstoke.) As a result, the prototypes often look like finished works of art. Hepworth required that the foundry either return the prototypes or destroy them. She did not sell them, but occasionally exhibited them as independent works of art during her life.

Although the Gift includes prototypes for sculptures of all sizes, Bowness's essay emphasizes four monumental commissions: *Meridian*, Sculpture for State House (1958–60), in High Holborn, London; *Winged Figure* for the John Lewis department store in London (1961–63); *Single Form* (Fig. 2) for the United Nations building in New York (1961–64); and *Theme and Variations* for a building society in Cheltenham, England (1969–72).



Fig. 2. Hepworth with the plaster *Single Form* at Morris Singer, May 1963. Photo: Morgan-Wells Plates.

The prototype for *Winged Figure* is the only one from among these four major commissions that survives and is the central piece in the Gift. The ethos of the company, based on partnership of workers and management through common ownership, particularly interested the artist. Bowness traces the project from early sketches through the construction of armatures (first wooden, then aluminum) to the final aluminum cast. Another particularly interesting commission examined in depth is *Single Form*, the twenty-one-foot bronze on the plaza of the United Nations Building in New

York. A memorial to her friend Dag Hammarskjöld, this monolithic form embodied UN ideals of international cooperation and world peace. As in all of her monumental outdoor sculpture, Hepworth was deeply concerned with structural complexities, introduced to her early on by her father. Text and photographs document the complex structure of the armature and final bronze and give new insight into the how the timeless simplicity of modernist sculpture is achieved.

The volume includes several other essays that will be of particular interest to museum professionals. Frances Guy, Head of Collections and Exhibitions at the museum, discusses the financing of the Hepworth Wakefield, which included the Art Fund and the

Lottery. Architect David Chipperfield discusses the evolution of his modernist design of irregularly shaped concrete boxes, with attention to the use of natural and artificial light. Project director Gordon Watson recounts its development from 1996 until the start of construction in 2007. Jackie Heuman contributes a valuable essay on the conservation of the prototypes.

Barbara Hepworth: The Plasters is an invaluable contribution to the scholarship on Hepworth. Complementing the excellent essays are illustrations throughout, both color and black-and-white, that

crystallize the authors' insights into the artist's processes and working methods. A number of the works have been discussed in earlier publications.³ But no previous publication has given the prototypes for Hepworth's late metal works this kind of attention. Readers who are not familiar with Hepworth would do well to begin with her inspiring pictorial autobiography, published in 1985, and the fine volume by Penelope Curtis and Alan G. Wilkinson, *Barbara Hepworth: A Retrospective*, written for the major exhibition at the Tate Gallery Liverpool in 1994. But anyone with real interest in the thought and working methods of this important modernist sculptor should study this fine book by Sophie Bowness, who is now at work on the catalogue raisonné of Hepworth's work. •

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Notes

1. On direct carving, see Penelope Curtis, *Sculpture 1900-1945: After Rodin*, Oxford History of Art (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1999), 73-104.
2. Barbara Hepworth, *Barbara Hepworth: Carvings and Drawings* (London, 1952), "1931-1934" section.
3. An example is *Conversation with Magic Stones* (1973), which appears in *Barbara Hepworth: Works in the Tate Gallery Collection and the Barbara Hepworth Museum Tate Lives*, by Matthew Gale and Chris Stephens (1999).

The Memory Factory: The Forgotten Women Artists of Vienna 1900

by Julie M. Johnson
Purdue University Press, 2012

Reviewed by Megan Brandow-Faller

Surmising the perils of separate women's art institutions, an anonymous reviewer for one of Austria's leading feminist periodicals quipped in 1916 that "the best success

that one might wish of them is that they might no longer be necessary."¹ Julie Johnson's meticulously researched study of women artists in Viennese modernism lends support to the idea that corrective exhibitions, institutions, and monographs serve to ghettoize women artists from the art historical canon. *The Memory Factory* flies in the face of feminist art historical inquiries stressing women's difference and embeddedness within separate institutions to argue that "women artists were not part of a separate sphere, but integrated into the

art exhibitionary complex of Vienna" (4-5). Drawing case studies of five highly successful women painters and sculptors closely connected to the Vienna Secession—Tina Blau (1845-1916), Elena Luksch-Makowsky (1878-1967), Broncia Koller (1863-1934), Helene Funke (1869-1957),² and Teresa Feodorowna Ries (1874-1956)—Johnson refutes the historiographical tendency to lump women artists into an aesthetic "room of their own," seeking explanations for women artists' canonical exclusion in "a new center ... whose themes have not

always fit into the dominant narrative structures of art history" (111). Such an approach, Johnson maintains, is not useful, for the art historical "mothers" that she spotlights were leading practitioners of the dominant strategies of modernism. Indeed, painters like Funke and Koller often transmitted French Post-Impressionistic influences ahead of their male colleagues, in a more purely autonomous manner than Klimt and other allegorical painters, while exemplifying the Vienna Moderns' interest in psychological interiority and nascent abstraction in the decorative. Johnson considers these artists' erasure from the art historical record highly jarring, given that their life and work embodied textbook examples of misunderstood modernist forerunners: e.g., stylistic innovation, run-ins with conservative authorities, as well as acclaim abroad in advance of recognition at home. Similarly, Johnson shows how artistic personalities like the flamboyant Russian sculptor Teresa Ries created more than one *succès de scandale*. For instance, a well-known anecdote tells of Ries's delightfully provocative life-size marble sculpture of a witch sharpening her toenails before the Sabbath attracting comment from conservative Emperor Franz Josef. Today, however, Ries's work remains buried in the basement of the Vienna City Museum Depot, a poignant comment on the necessity of active scholarly intervention to combat the invisibility of women artists' works. Indeed, in light of Ries's and other artists' Jewish backgrounds, Johnson's work serves to remind the reader that fin-de-siècle Vienna is not a safe historical landscape divorced from the exigencies of two World Wars and the *Anschluss*. On the contrary, as the final chapter on the post-1938 erasure of these artists' lives and legacies reveals, the seemingly innocent territory of Vienna 1900 intersects with Austria's turbulent relationship with National Socialism and the Holocaust more directly than scholars and the public have previously acknowledged.

Historiographically and theoretically, *The Memory Factory* is as ambitious and complex as the book's richly documented endnotes. The author's methodology

draws more from the arsenal of memory and *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* ('coming to terms with the past') studies than traditional feminist art historical inquiry. As such, Johnson privileges not only formal visual analysis, which indeed she does masterfully, but contextualized readings of nonvisual sources such as feuilletons, artist biographies, and humorous texts. Historiographically, *The Memory Factory* represents an important contribution to the Schorske dialogue on Viennese modernism. In his classic collection of interdisciplinary essays *Fin-de-siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture*, cultural historian Carl Schorske attributed a blossoming of modern art, culture and literature to the disillusioned 'sons of liberalism' who abandoned Late-Imperial Austria's increasingly antagonistic political reality to find meaning in an aesthetic culture of feeling.³ For Schorske and his followers, the heroic trio of Klimt-Schiele-Kokoschka exemplified a generational struggle that exploded in Klimt's well-known walkout from the conservative Austrian Artists Guild to found the Vienna Secession in (1897), an artists' union dedicated to the philosophy of *Ver Sacrum*, the idea of art as a sacred spring to rejuvenate modern life. Making women artists visible in the Schorske dialogue on Viennese modernism, a body of literature which has, according to the author, "inadvertently reinforced the silencing of women's pasts" or promoted false notions that women could not exhibit publicly whatsoever, represents an important corrective in Johnson's study (3). Building on the pioneering studies of Sabine Plakolm-Försthuber, Johnson's book numbers among the first English-language works on women artists in the circles of the Vienna Secession.⁴

Johnson, however, casts her net more broadly than just Vienna, rethinking women artists' non-participation in the shaping of international modernism as defined by Clement Greenberg. As Johnson duly notes, Greenberg's Franco-centric definition of modernism does not fit the Central European (particularly Viennese) context, which tended to retain narrative elements and the decorative, a form of "nascent abstraction [which] came to be seen as the opposite of

Modernism" precisely because of its frilly feminine connotations (11). Here, the Viennese architect and cultural critic Adolf Loos's famous dictum comes to mind, that "[w]herever I abuse the everyday-use-object by ornamenting it, I shorten its life span.... Only the whim and ambition of women can be responsible for the murder of such material."⁵ Johnson's point is, thus, that imposing a Franco-centric definition of modernism on Vienna marginalizes women's participation in a distinct brand of modernism, never as autonomous or self-critical of its medium as Greenberg would have liked.

A broader critique in Johnson's work, with as much relevance today as in 1910, when the Association of Austrian Women Artists curated a landmark historical retrospective of women artists' works (which dwarfed Linda Nochlin and Ann Sutherland Harris's more famous 1977 retrospective), is how the seemingly straightforward story of modern art as presented in the "white cube" space of museums has only served to reify women's omission and the modernist band-of-brothers myth. As Johnson correctly insists,

Too often, the work is expected to rise to the surface on its own, but curators (and art dealers) who serve as the gatekeepers of art museums and gallery spaces have rarely acknowledged that the space itself can enhance or alter the work of art itself (13).

In a scathing critique of an interview with curator Kirk Varnadoe, Johnson points a finger at MoMA's exclusion of women artists from its 1986 rendition of the "Vienna 1900" show.⁶ Clearly, the issue is not quality but, as Johnson accurately surmises, a lack of active scholarly and institutional intervention in preserving the memory of women artists, an issue only compounded by the wartime destruction of works and sources.

The book's first five chapters spotlight the women artists named above, documenting their public exhibition records and their posthumous erasure from the limelight, which Johnson



Fig. 1. Tina Blau, *Spring at the Prater* (1882), oil on canvas, 85 1/4" x 114 9/16". Austrian Gallery Belvedere.

frames in terms of their exclusion from paternalistic mythologies of father-son plots. Chapters Six and Seven briefly examine women's art institutions, focusing on the critical reception of the Association of Austrian Women Artist's 1910 "Art of the Woman" retrospective. The last chapter, "1900–1938: Erasure," takes strides to retrieve Vienna 1900 from a historiographical no man's land distant from the mid-century cataclysms, to trace the stories of women artists in exile and under National-Socialist persecution.

Johnson hits her stride in the formal visual analysis in the early chapters titled "Writing, Erasing, Silencing: Tina Blau and the (Woman) Artist's Biography," "Broncia Koller and Interiority in Public Art Exhibitions," and "Teresa Ries in the Memory Factory." She uses the example of Austrian Impressionist Tina Blau to lay the foundations of her argument that the Vienna Secession's construction of identity was self-serving and paternalistic. Blau possessed all the qualities one might hope for in a modernist forbearer: the stylistic innovation found in her brushwork capturing the transitory qualities of light and color, her confrontations with conservative authorities, and her early success abroad. The

story of Blau's most famous canvas *Spring at the Prater* (1882; Fig. 1), now hanging prominently at the Austrian Gallery Belvedere, proves her point. Almost rejected and then skied at the 1882 *Künstlerhaus* exhibition for its daring impressionism and profusion of light, only the comments of the French Minister of Fine Arts salvaged the picture from oblivion, to be eventually purchased for the imperial collections. Johnson makes a convincing case that Blau was selectively excluded from the Vienna Moderns' ancestor cult because male Secessionists could not swallow the idea of an "Old Mistress" as their artistic foremother, writing that "the Secessionists ... never figured themselves as wrestling with or being heirs to mothers" (29). That Blau was doubly "other" in fin-de-siècle Vienna, i.e., as a woman and a Jew, further problematized matters, particularly after Austrian institutions, including the Women's Academy that she co-founded, were co-opted by the National Socialists. Johnson argues that Blau, during her own lifetime, as a successful public artist fetching high prices, consciously avoided connecting her work to negative stereotypes surrounding the feminine in art.

Johnson masterfully compares the outputs of Koller and Helene Funke to

the works of their male colleagues, demonstrating how women artists often served to disseminate the latest developments in French Post-Impressionism among the Vienna moderns. In her discussion of Koller, a Jewish painter who sided with the progressive Klimt Group after it seceded from the Vienna Secession in 1905 and was inaccurately memorialized as a "painting housewife" due to her interest in interiority and active role as patron, Johnson's analysis is at its most original. In a manner reminiscent of feminist interpretations of nineteenth-century French Impressionism, in which scholars traced stylistic points of similarity and departure among male and female artists, Johnson traces Koller's influence on younger artists including Egon Schiele and Erwin Lang. For instance, while Schiele's *Portrait of the Painter Hans Massmann* (1909) is typically read as nodding to Klimt's *Portrait of Fritza Riedler* (1908), Johnson's side-by-side comparison posits the close connection of its staging and stylized background to Koller's *My Mother* (1907), unveiled at the 1908 *Kunstschau* exhibition. Johnson makes similar arguments regarding Koller's role in transmitting Van Gogh-esque influences to a younger generation of modernists. Ironically, Koller's work was more "modern" (by Greenberg's definition) than that of her male colleagues. Yet, unlike traditional feminist inquiry (e.g., Linda Nochlin's famous re-reading of images of leisure and work in Morisot's paintings), Johnson stresses that "finding a new aesthetic or center is hardly necessary" for Koller because her work reflected themes of psychological interiority, acknowledged by the Schorske school as an important leitmotif of Viennese modernism (112). Ultimately, Johnson shows how women artists were integrated into mainstream male institutions, their works influencing and influenced by their male colleagues, and, moreover, in Koller's case, serving as an organizational mediator after the postwar fissure of the Viennese institutional landscape.

In limiting her discussion of Austrian women's artist leagues to the prewar period, Johnson focuses on feuilletonistic reactions to the 1910 "Art of the Woman"

show, implying that the leagues ran out of creative gas after World War I. In fact, Austria's women's art movement reached its zenith in the interwar period, propelled by the institutional parity achieved by Vienna's *Frauenakademie* in 1919 and the founding of a female Secession that mirrored the very disagreements about the value of the applied and fine arts and in particular the role of *Raumkunst*, or installation art, driving a rift between the Klimt Group and rump-Secession at the end of its "heroic" period.⁷ Overall, perhaps it would have been useful to position the chapters on women's art institutions at the beginning of the work, for if women artists were as fully integrated into mainstream artistic life as Johnson's case studies would have us believe, then this begs the question of why separate institutions were even necessary. Clearly, while Johnson is correct in countering false notions that women artists lacked altogether the possibility to exhibit their works publicly, it is also true (as the author acknowledges) that women artists could not become regular members in the primary exhibition leagues until after World War II.

All in all, *The Memory Factory* constitutes a tremendous breakthrough on chronicling women artists in Vienna 1900, rethinking many of the dominant paradigms of feminist inquiry and reframing the early-twentieth century as "hardly a monolithic culture of repression" (14). It is as rich in documentation as it is in theory, secondary literature, and

high-quality black-and-white and color illustrations of both well-known and marginalized works by women artists. Johnson's groundbreaking work raises many new questions not only relevant to studies of Viennese modernism, but to scholars interested in women and modernism more broadly. •

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Notes

1. VII. Ausstellung der Vereinigung bildender Künstlerinnen Österreichs," *Der Bund XII* no. 2 (February 1917): 14.
2. Chapter Four, "Rediscovering Helene Funke: The Invisible Foremother," was originally published in *WAJ*, vol. 29, no. 1 (2008): 33–40. See also Helga H. Harriman, "Olga Wisinger-Florian and Tina Blau: Painters in 'fin de siècle' Vienna." *WAJ*, vol. 10, no. 2 (1989/1990): 23–28.
3. Carl Schorske, *Fin-de-siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (New York: Knopf, 1980). Since the publication of Schorske's compelling essays, scholars have revised and expanded aspects of his "failure of liberalism" paradigm, pointing to Schorske's neglect of imperial patronage, the particularly Jewish character of Viennese modernism, and women's contributions as artists and muses. See also James Shedel, *Art and Society: The New Art Movement in Vienna 1897-1914* (Palo Alto: Society for the Promotion of Science, 1981); Allan Janik and Stephen Toulmin, *Wittgenstein's Vienna* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973); Steven Beller,

Vienna and the Jews: A Cultural History (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1989); Emil Brix and Lisa Fischer, *Die Frauen der Wiener Moderne* (The Women of the Vienna Moderns) (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1997).

4. The author of numerous book chapters and articles on women artists, Plakolm-Forsthuber's best-known work is her *Künstlerinnen in Österreich, 1897-1938* (Women Artists in Austria, 1897-1938) (Vienna: Picus, 1994).
5. Adolf Loos, "Ornament und Erziehung," in *Trotzdem: Gesammelte Schriften* (Collected Writings) (Vienna: Prachner, 1997), 177. My translation.
6. Suggesting that the necessary evil of corrective studies is still imperative, far too little has changed since 1986, as I argued in reviewing the Neue Galerie's 2011 "Vienna 1900: Style and Identity" show. See Megan Brandow-Faller, "Vienna 1900: Style and Identity" (exhibition Review) *West 86th: A Journal of Decorative Arts, Design History, and Material Culture*, vol. 19, no. 1 (Spring-Summer 2012): 137–41.
7. Applied Artist and designer Fanny Harlfinger-Zakucka provocatively raised the notion of a separate feminine aesthetic in founding the Wiener Frauenkunst in 1926, a radical offshoot from the Association particularly emphasizing women's connection to the decorative, applied arts and the importance of *Raumkunst*, boldly declaring that "we are of the opinion that works made by women's hands bear the stamp of their female origins in and of themselves." Preface to the catalogue of the "Verband bildender Künstlerinnen und Kunsthandwerkerinnen exhibit, Wiener Frauenkunst, in Wie Sieht die Frau?," May 17–June 29, 1930 (Vienna: Jahoda & Siegel), 7.

The Lady Anatomist: The Life and Work of Anna Morandi Manzolini

by Rebecca Messbarger

The University of Chicago Press, 2010

Reviewed by Marjorie Och

The Institute of Sciences in the Palazzo Poggi, Bologna, houses a remarkable collection of wax anatomies created in the eighteenth century by artist-scientists renown for their work during their lifetimes but seldom considered by art historians

today. Ercole Lelli, Giovanni Manzolini, and Anna Morandi Manzolini (1714–74), the subject of Rebecca Messbarger's critical study and biography, were contemporaries, rivals, and partners in the art of making reproductions in wax of the human body and body parts for both the amazement of the public as well as medical instruction. This illuminating and thought-provoking account of Morandi's life and work raises important questions for scholars of visual culture and encourages this reader to think more deeply about how artists learned about the human body, what eighteenth-century viewers saw

when they looked at fine art, and the complex ways artist-partners worked.

Luigi Crespi, an eighteenth-century biographer of Bolognese artists, established the narrative of Morandi's career, and his account has been repeated by following writers, that is, until Messbarger. According to Crespi, Morandi was gifted but entirely dependent on her husband's personal tutoring and professional success in his production of anatomical wax models. Morandi's husband, Giovanni Manzolini, was fourteen years her senior and an established artist in Bologna when they married in 1740. It is

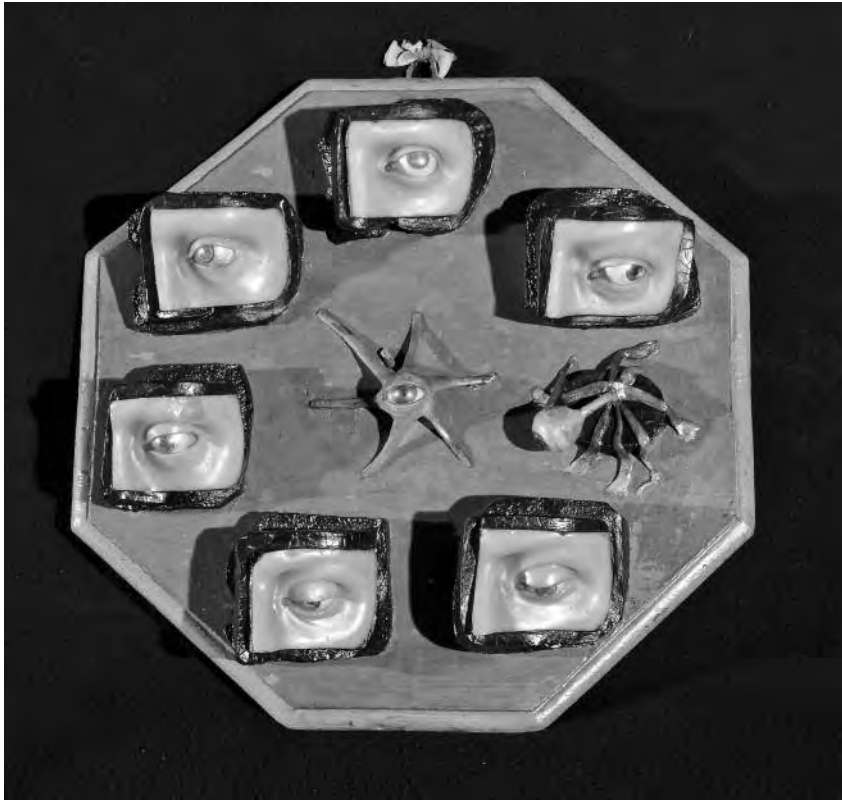


Fig. 1. Anna Morandi, Panel illustrating the eyeball and representing the extrinsic muscles (18th c.). Photo: Courtesy Museo di Palazzo Poggi, Bologna

no surprise that this account of a female artist subservient to her husband and workshop master would be questioned today. Indeed, Morandi was twenty-six at the time of her marriage. While little is known about her life before her marriage, Morandi's personal collection of Latin texts on anatomy and medicine; her own detailed writings based on her dissections of human cadavers, and her business skills on which she had to rely following the early death of her husband in 1755, which left her a single mother with two children to support; to say nothing of her artistic abilities, all suggest an education that was both humanist and practical. The more we learn about artists' wives, the more we realize that male artists frequently sought marriages that were not only financially and socially rewarding, but were also partnerships in business if not in actual production. That Morandi so smoothly came to work at her husband's side—literally at his side at the dissection table—further illuminates the practice of art production within families in the early modern period.

The lack of information about Morandi's early life allows Messbarger to build a context for the artist's life and work in Bologna, a city that historically took great pride in its women scholars and artists. The picture that Messbarger creates for her readers of eighteenth-century Bologna is one of a city with a university depleted of its former excellence. She suggests that it was General Luigi Ferdinando Marsili, of a prominent Bolognese family, who breathed new life into Bologna's scholarly communities in the early eighteenth century with his foundation of the Institute of Sciences, which united both the Academy of Sciences and the Clementina Academy of Art. The Institute not only brought together the sciences and the arts, it placed a renewed emphasis on "'experiment, classification, and exposition'" (5). A generation later Morandi exemplified the new focus on the practical and experimental that Marsili had established as the core of the Institute's philosophy. The Clementina, on the other hand, was a conservative society

that continued the great Bolognese traditions of the late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries established by the Carracci family. Ercole Lelli, the leading Bolognese anatomist at the time of Morandi's rise to prominence, adhered to this conservative approach and saw his work as addressing the needs of artists looking for models. It is against that backdrop of an idealized art that Morandi can be seen infusing a methodical observation and scientific inquiry into her recreations in wax of the structure and systems of the human body.

Perhaps more important to Morandi than Marsili was the Bolognese nobleman Prospero Lambertini, the future Pope Benedict XIV. Before his rise to the papacy in 1740, Lambertini returned to Bologna in 1730 as cardinal archbishop from his position as custodian of the Vatican Library. He supported Marsili's plans for the Institute of Sciences and wanted to see Bologna once again a center of learning admired throughout Europe. For Lambertini it was medical science, particularly the study of anatomy, that set Bologna apart from other cities. He established the first chair of surgery at the Institute and authored several decrees advancing anatomical studies. Of particular relevance here was his reinterpretation of Pope Boniface VIII's Bull of 1299 that essentially prohibited the use of Christian bodies for dissection. Lambertini's 1737 decree, "On the Anatomy to Be Done in Public Schools," included a directive to Bolognese clergy to encourage their parishioners to donate bodies of deceased family members for the purpose of anatomical research. This offered the possibility of having cadavers of types of individuals seldom before examined by anatomists, who previously could only study the remains of condemned criminals. For Morandi and her husband a generation later, this decree assured a steady flow of material for their wax models.

Critical to Lambertini's plan for Bologna's revival as the center for medical arts in Europe was the anatomy museum in the Institute, where life-size wax anatomical figures were to be

displayed to the public. Ercole Lelli was commissioned by Lambertini to create these, including the life-size *écorchés*, or flayed human bodies made from wax, wood, and actual human bones, that showed the muscles and skeleton beneath the skin. The fully fleshed figures are presented as idealized bodies of Adam and Eve, with Adam gazing heavenward while Eve's face is downcast in submission. The final male and female figures, full skeletons, were made from selected bones of numerous cadavers; they hold scythes that reinforce a narrative reading of Lelli's work as a comment on the transitoriness of life. The museum's purposes were several: to present the work of the Institute to the Bolognese public, to attract the attention of Italians and Europeans to Bologna's medical accomplishments, and, for Lelli, to offer Bolognese artists an opportunity to study the human body in a manner that was far superior to standard studio practices. Lelli was assisted in his work by Manzolini, who resigned in 1746, claiming he had not received due credit for his skills and accomplishments. Shortly thereafter Manzolini together with his wife, Anna Morandi, opened a rival wax modeling studio and school of anatomy in their home, where medical students came for instruction.

Within their home studio and laboratory, Morandi and Manzolini dissected over a thousand cadavers, with Morandi presenting lectures during dissections to students and distinguished visitors. That Morandi, a woman, was so actively involved in dissection surprised many, as did her knowledge of the parts and systems of the human body. After her husband's death, Morandi continued her scientific work, and her reputation spread with requests for commissions from throughout Europe as well as the Russian court of Catherine the Great.

Morandi's work was distinguished in significant ways from that of Lelli. Rather than seeing artists as a major audience, Morandi placed herself within the medical community of Bologna. In contrast to Lelli's quasi-narrative figures, Morandi's wax anatomies are stripped of narrative, allowing the viewer to be amazed at the work that is the human body itself. The grand poses

and symbol-laden figures of Lelli seem both trite and overstated when the viewer comes face to face with what appears to be a mirror reflecting a part of ourselves we thought we knew but now realize we had never really seen. For example, Morandi's studies of the eye appear on an octagonal blue ground that was hung before the viewer (Fig. 1). On this blue field—as if numbers on the face of a watch—are eight human eyes. Six of these are framed by a partial nose, brow, and upper cheek made of wax, then further framed by waxed cloth, making each eye appear to be peering out through a large keyhole. The viewer's sensation that these eyes are staring is heightened by the fact that each is looking in a different direction. The other two eyes have no supporting flesh or bone; rather, we see what Morandi saw during dissection—the working eye supported by muscles, here taut against the blue surface of this mirror-like ground. These eyes, one gazing directly at the viewer, appear even more animated than the other six, in spite of their isolation from the human face. This is artistically an extraordinary composition, but after the initial shock of wonder subsides, the viewer realizes how accurate these eyes are, and how critical they must have been for medical instruction.

Messbarger convincingly argues for Morandi's place within Enlightenment science, and not, as Crespi and most later biographers suggested, merely as the dutiful wife of one of Bologna's premier wax anatomists. Messbarger supports this claim through her analysis of Morandi's extensive notes and letters, a

careful examination of the wax models, and the writings of many contemporaries. Morandi was one of several women in eighteenth-century Bologna who engaged in scientific disputes. The areas of her expertise—the developmental anatomy of the skeleton, the reproductive systems of men and women, as well as the sensory organs—were much debated at the time, and Morandi made corrections to erroneous ideas established in the medical community through her hands-on knowledge and observation from dissections.

More than a biography, this rich narrative outlines the religious, political, cultural, and scientific life of eighteenth-century Italy, specifically Bologna. Rebecca Messbarger, associate professor in romance languages at Washington University in St. Louis, explores these contexts to suggest how a female artist-scientist could succeed in spite of the prejudices and sanctioned restrictions against a woman professional. Anna Morandi and her remarkable work—so beautifully illustrated in *The Lady Anatomist*—demands the attention of art historians and scientists of various research interests. There is much for us to learn here, not the least of which is the importance of these scholarly communities to one another, both historically and today. •

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Eva Besnyő: Photographer, 1910 – 2003 Budapest – Berlin – Amsterdam

by Marion Beckers and
Elisabeth Moortgat
Hirmer, 2011

Reviewed by Rachel Epp Buller

Budapest – Berlin – Amsterdam. Photographer Eva Besnyő embraced a transnational identity before the term was common. This recent catalogue of Besnyő's work, which accompanied a monumental exhibition mounted by the Verborgene Museum in the Berlinische Galerie, explicitly links art and geography, tracing her artistic development in each new home city.

Born and raised in Budapest, Besnyő discovered her passion for photography at age fifteen with a Kodak Brownie camera, going on to study with photographer József Pécsi three years later. Pécsi introduced his young student to modernist photography, and Besnyő considered her first encounter with the work of Albert Renger-Patzsch a life-changing experience. Having combed archives and family papers for information about Besnyő's life and work, authors Marion Beckers and Elisabeth Moortgat frequently use the artist's own words to punctuate their historical discussions. Besnyő herself framed photography as an awakening of sight, not unlike what she would come to know of New Vision and New Objectivity: "When I walk around with my camera I see things. With a shopping bag I walk straight past everything" (205). During her time with Pécsi, she not only learned the ropes of professional portrait photography but also began to explore these new ways of seeing, with a particular focus on diagonals and shadows that presaged her later work.

In part due to the influence of Renger-Patzsch, Besnyő moved to Berlin in 1930 and began in earnest to explore the forms and perspectives that would align her with modernist photography. She aestheticized corners of everyday

life through her camera, pulling out unusual lighting, complex shadows, and unexpected viewpoints (1931; Fig. 1). Although she only remained in Berlin for three years, Besnyő gained broad professional experience working for Peter Weller, whose commissions ranged from portraits and advertising to urban scenes of reportage.

Besnyő relocated to the Netherlands in 1932, where she spent the remainder of her career, and was quickly welcomed into circles of photographers and other artists. Although she did not abandon her formal aesthetic explorations, in Amsterdam Besnyő also began to engage in her work with cultural politics. She joined the Union of Labor Photographers, accepted commissions to document working conditions, and, late in life, joined the Dolle Mina feminist group and photographed their actions. She earned her widest exposure during these years as well, participating in Edward Steichen's "Family of Man" exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, in 1955.

In keeping with the tradition of their work for the Verborgene Museum, Beckers and Moortgat have produced a hefty, thoroughly researched, and beautifully illustrated volume on the work of a heretofore overlooked woman artist. Expanding upon their 1992 publication on Besnyő,¹ they skillfully contextualize Besnyő's work, giving the photographs rich historical and art historical grounding. The dual-language



Fig. 1. Eva Besnyő, *Untitled (Berlin)* (1931). Bauhaus-Archiv, Berlin.

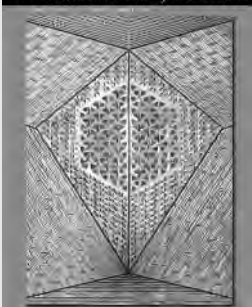
German-English publication ensures accessibility to a wide audience and brings well-deserved attention to an international artist.

Rachel Epp Buller is Assistant Professor of Art at Bethel College. Her recent publications include *Reconciling Art and Mothering* (2012) and *Mothering Mennonite* (2013). She is currently at work on a book about German artist Alice Lex.

Notes

1. Marion Beckers and Elisabeth Moortgat, eds., *Eva Besnyő. Photographien 1930-1989*. (Berlin: Das Verborgene Museum, 1992).

WOMAN'S ART JOURNAL



Errata — Missing photo credits

Since publication of the article on Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian, in *WAJ* vol. 33, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2012), we were made aware that Rose Issa Projects, London, should have received credit for these photographs:

Front cover (detail) and Plate 4: *Variations on the Hexagon* (2006)

Plate 3: *Geometry of Hope* (1975)

Page 3, Figure 1: Monir Farmanfarmaian in her studio, New York City.



Pl. 1. Connie Fox,
Sammy's Beach III (2009),
acrylic on canvas, 80" x 72".
Photo: Hiroyuki Hamada.



Pl. 2. Connie Fox,
Bull/Arena (1969),
acrylic on linen, 78" x 97".
Photo: Hiroyuki Hamada.



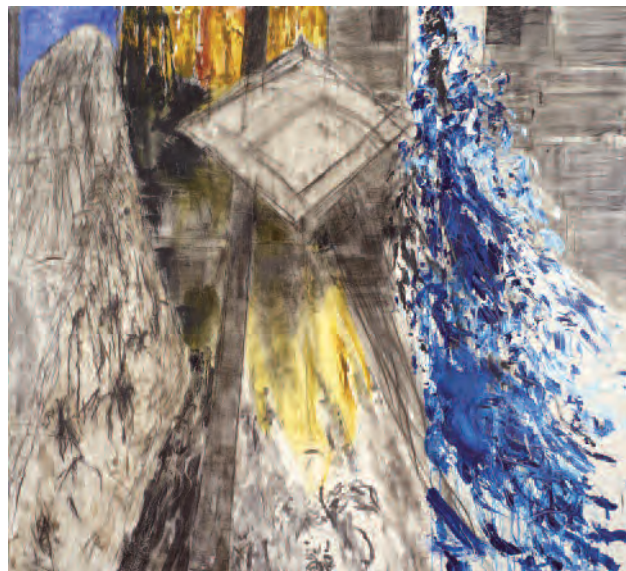
Pl. 3. Connie Fox, *Not the Man, Not the Tornado* (1985), acrylic on canvas, 100" x 180". Photo: Connie Fox.



Pl. 4. Connie Fox, *Postage Due* (1994), acrylic on canvas, 72" x 90". Photo: Connie Fox.



Pl. 5. Connie Fox,
Fiore di Lisi (2006),
acrylic on canvas, 60" x 70".
Photo: Hiroyuki Hamada.



Pl. 6. Connie Fox,
Sammy's Beach I (2007),
acrylic on canvas, 60" x 88"
Photo: Hiroyuki Hamada.



Pl. 7. Connie Fox,
Sammy's Beach X (2012),
acrylic on canvas, 80" x 72".
Photo: Hiroyuki Hamada.



Pl. 8. Linda Stein, *Heroic Lineup 599* (2007),
3-D collage with archival inks on paper.
42" x 21" x 3". Photo: Stein Studios.



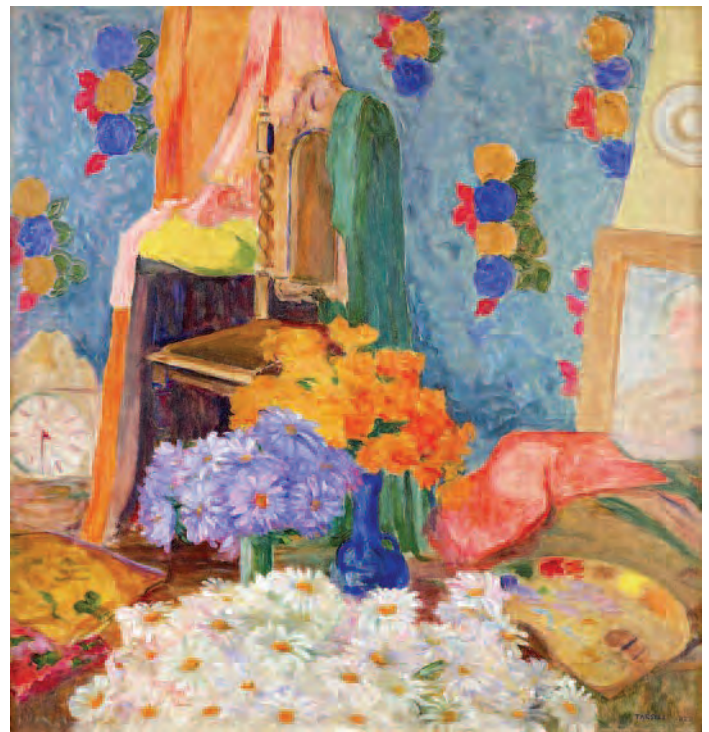
Pl. 10. Linda Stein, *Vestment 628* (2008). wood, metal, also 12" Lucite
extensions resting on shoulders, 52" x 18" x 6". Photo: D. James Dee.



Pl. 9. *Security Knight 646* (detail),
paper, archival inks, wood, metal,
foam, Lucite extensions.
Photo: D. James Dee.



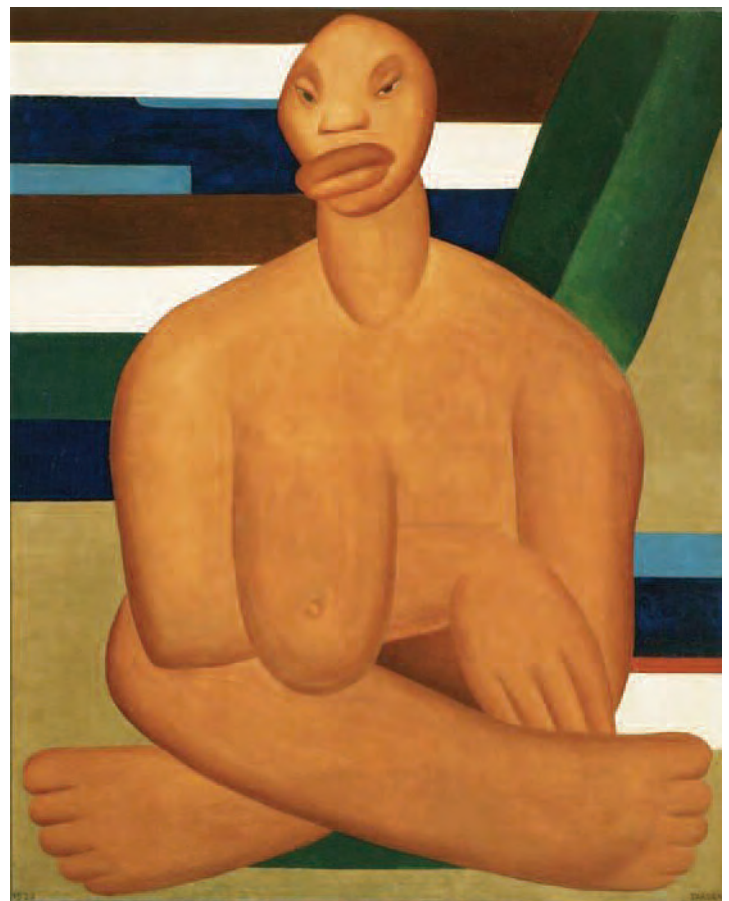
Pl. 11. Anita Malfatti, *A Boba (The Silly Woman)* (1915–16), oil on canvas, 24" x 19 7/8". Collection of Museu de Arte Contemporânea da Universidade de São Paulo (MAC-USP). Photo: Asa 18 Produções Culturais. Image courtesy of Instituto Anita Malfatti.



Pl. 12. Tarsila do Amaral, *Margaridas de Mário de Andrade (Mário de Andrade's Daisies)* (1922), oil on canvas, 39 3/8" x 37 3/4". Private collection, São Paulo. Photo: Romulo Fialdini. ©Base7.



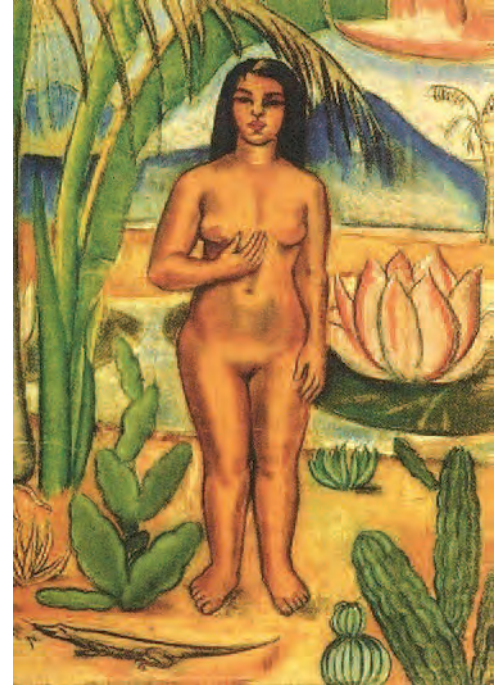
Pl. 13. Anita Malfatti, *As Margaridas do Mário (Mário's Daisies)* (1922), 20 1/4" x 20 7/8". Collection of Instituto de Estudos Brasileiros – USP, São Paulo. Photo: Asa 18 Produções Culturais. Image courtesy of Instituto Anita Malfatti.



Pl. 14. Tarsila do Amaral, *A Negra (Black Woman)* (1923), oil on canvas, 39" x 31". Collection of Museu de Arte Contemporânea da Universidade de São Paulo (MAC-USP). Photo: Romulo Fialdini. ©Base7.



Pl. 15. Tarsila do Amaral, *Pescador* (Angler) (1925), oil on canvas, 25 15/16" x 29 1/2". Collection of State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia. Photo: Vladimir Terebenin, Leonard Kheifets, Yuri Molodkovets. ©State Hermitage Museum.



Pl. 16. Anita Malfatti, *Índia* (Indian Girl) (1917), pastel on paper, 23 5/8" x 18 1/8". Collection of Gilberto Chateaubriand/MAM-RJ Collection, Rio de Janeiro. Photo: Vicente de Mello.



Pl. 17. Tarsila do Amaral, *Composição (Figura Só)* (Composition [Lonely figure]) (1930), oil on canvas, 32 1/2" x 50 3/4". Collection of the Instituto São Fernando, Rio de Janeiro. Photo: Romulo Fialdini. ©Base7.

The Fluidity of Gender: Sculpture by Linda Stein
is a 5-year touring exhibition/lecture/performance
traveling to more than twenty-two United States
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