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(Front cover) Betsy Damon, *The Living Water Garden*, Aerial (above) and Wetlands views (below), (1998), 5.9 acres, Chengdu, Sichuan Province, China. Photos: Courtesy the artist.

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Two topical issues of serious concern are addressed in this first issue of WAJ's 39th year. First is the advocating of universal access to clean water, where science and art collide as Betsy Damon likens the swirls and patterns created by water to the "rhythmic forms that we can find everywhere." Second is an issue that has driven much feminist art since the 1970s before moving recently into the popular press as a touchstone for action ... #MeToo.

In recent years, feminist-activist artist Betsy Damon has dedicated her art and organizational skills to seeking solutions to the problem of providing clean, affordable water and creating sustainable community systems worldwide "as a matter of eco-justice." On our cover is a "living water" project in China, designed by the New York-based artist. "Affirming the life-sustaining properties of water that flows, that affects everything in its path, is integrally connected" to Damon's practice, writes Christine Filippone. Also, since the 1970s, as an early adherent of the Women's Movement, Damon's activism extended equally to promoting women's rights and gay rights, as was seen in her 1977 street performance, *The 7000 Year Old Woman*, which addressed many feminist themes, including violence against women.

That same year, 1977, events surrounding a series of rape-murders that were terrorizing women in Los Angeles inspired Suzanne Lacy and Leslie Labowitz-Status to create two large-scale public performances that would bring awareness to the issue of rape to the community at large. Angelique Szymanek describes in these pages how *In Mourning and in Rage* and *Three Weeks in May* "confronted the subject of rape and the ways it is made visible within the public sphere." Responding to the exploitative news reporting about the rape-murders of the so-called "Hillside Strangler," Lacy and Labowitz-Status's staging of *In Mourning and in Rage* downplayed the misogynistic titillation by emphasizing the "quotidian reality of sexual violence, its unexceptional status as a fact of the lives of many women and girls who will never be identified publicly as victims," writes Szymanek.

Also in this issue, Christina Weyl documents just a few of the many women artists whose paths crossed at Atelier 17. Arguably the most famous printmaking studio of the twentieth century, Atelier 17 had its illustrious beginnings in Paris in the late 1920s and re-located to New York in 1940, as World War II was breaking out. Founded by British artist Stanley William Hayter, Atelier 17 attracted men and women from every continent wishing to learn the finer points of printmaking. Women artists were involved from the outset. Some names are familiar, like Louise Bourgeois, Louise Nevelson, Leonor Fini, and Buffie Johnson, but many are not, including Dalla Husband, Alice Carr de Creeft, Ellen Abbey County and others whose works Weyl presents here.

Rounding out our article section, Márcia Oliveira illuminates some intrinsic aspects of "*visagéité*" or "faciality" in paintings by the Portuguese-born, London based artist Paula Rego. Often using a literary or musical work as a starting point, Rego transforms her subjects in distinctive and

unusual ways. Her faces are never portraits, Oliveira writes, but rather "a relational space where desire and creativity meet ... the way through which the most intimate and hidden secrets of women emerge in her work—secrets related to women's bodies, abortion, resentment, the negation of masculine supremacy..."

We also present a full complement of reviews, and we thank our excellent reviewers who contributed their valued insights on the books reviewed here. We also extend our deep appreciation to our authors and our readers, to Ian Mellanby and Guy Griffiths at Old City Publishing, and to our supporters at Rutgers University.

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

Linda Nochlin (1931–2017)

We take note of the recent passing of the celebrated art historian Linda Nochlin. Her seminal 1971 essay, "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?," helped launch the Feminist Art Movement, and her many influential accomplishments and publications addressed feminist subjects as well as nineteenth and twentieth century art and culture. We don't recall a single issue of WAJ, since 1980, in which some author or reviewer did not cite this essay or another of Professor Nochlin's publications.

The following tribute to Linda Nochlin by our distinguished WAJ board members Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard speaks for many of us in our exceptional field of feminist art historians.

In the modern feminist era, Linda broke the ice. She said the words that had to be said, before anyone else could formulate them. She defined the issues for women artists in history, and she saw greatness in their struggle to succeed against the social odds. Linda turned the mystified phallus into a tray of bananas, and reduced heroic masculinism to "Van Gogh with his fits." But it was how she said the words that made the difference. She was cheeky and dismissive, erudite and playful, and from a privileged academic perch, she actually did dismantle the master's house with the master's tools. At a critical moment, Linda gave us all instant courage to dare, to question and to challenge, and to do it in style, and she inspired countless others to go further. Everything that has come since Linda broke the ice is a tribute to her lasting importance and enduring legacy: our loss is a mandate to go forward.

— Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard

FOR THE BLOOD OF GAIA

BETSY DAMON'S QUEST FOR LIVING WATER

By Christine Filippone

"Water has taught me critical lessons about myself as a human being sharing this planet.

These are lessons about inherent connections, collaboration, and relationships."

— Betsy Damon¹

Applying feminist strategies of collaboration, consciousness-raising, and activism honed through her early career in the Feminist Art Movement, artist Betsy Damon addresses human-caused water scarcity through art as social practice. Her prints, performances, installations, and eco art works made since 1991, including *The Living Water Garden* (Front cover and Fig. 1) and *Living Waters of Larimer* convey the importance of restoring sustainable systems, which, she believes, requires communities to take control of their water.² She approaches the problem from the position of eco-justice, arguing that the privatization of natural resources is incompatible with the universal right of all life to clean water. While the more prosperous in the U.S. and elsewhere have access to affordable clean water, poorer districts, often on low flood plains, are more likely recipients of toxins and pollutants through degraded pipes. Democratization requires policies and practices that stem from an understanding of humanity's biodynamic relationship with water and its role in conceiving alternatives.³

Evocative of Damon's concerns over the control and commodification of water, our current geological epoch has been preliminarily designated the Anthropocene, defined by human impact on the global environment so profound that it rivals the forces of nature.⁴ Most definitions of the Anthropocene arise from Earth systems science, which views the Earth as a total entity whose physical, chemical, and biological global-scale cycles provide the support system for life.⁵ This conception of the Earth as a total entity in constant, cyclic flux affirms the Gaia Hypothesis proposed in the early 1970s by chemist James Lovelock and biologist Lynn Margulis, which asserted that biological life, with its ingestions, excretions, and biotic



Fig. 1 (top). Betsy Damon, *The Living Water Garden: Aerial View* (1998), 5.9 acres, Chengdu, Sichuan Province, China. Photo: Courtesy the artist.

decomposition, has been essential to the maintenance of an atmosphere conducive to life.⁶ Life remains viable because the system contains servomechanisms that sense chemical and physical tendencies adverse to life, enabling adjustments to be made. Thus, if all human and nonhuman components of the Earth compose a single homeostatic system, a meta-organism or living planet, then its streams and rivers constitute its circulatory system, its blood.

Necessary for the creation of sustainable water systems, Damon has long claimed, is *living* water, which continually flows, moves, has oxygen, an open system akin to a circulatory system.⁷ Living water is sensitive and responsive, possessing the properties of life to which it also gives rise, distinct from dead or stagnant water confined in reservoirs



Fig. 2. Betsy Damon, *The 7000 Year Old Woman* (1977), Performance, New York City. Photo: Su Friedrich. Courtesy the artist.

and dammed lakes, which deteriorates.⁸ A foundational source for her concept of living water was the book *Sensitive Chaos: The Creation of Flowing Forms for Water and Air* (1965), by German scientist Theodor Schwenk.⁹ Anticipating the Gaia Hypothesis, Schwenk wrote, "Water is always on its way somewhere at some point in one of its great or small circulatory systems... Together earth, plant world and atmosphere form a single great organism, in which water streams like living blood."¹⁰ The modern origins of this organismic concept of the Earth as open system may be found in Anthroposophy and in German idealism. Issued seven years before the Gaia Hypothesis, *Sensitive Chaos* was published by the Anthroposophical Society of which Schwenk was a lifelong member. Schwenk's belief in the Earth as an open system, a complex web of interconnected processes, was informed by the spiritual science of Rudolph Steiner, founder of the Anthroposophical Society. Natural science editor of the scientific writings of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Steiner's pantheistic belief in the Earth as a physical, biochemical and spiritual unity has its roots in the work of Goethe and in that

of his friend, eighteenth-century Prussian naturalist Alexander von Humboldt, who first considered the name Gaia for his magnum opus *Cosmos*.¹¹ Evidence of the synergy (to use Buckminster Fuller's term) between Schwenk's beliefs and the Gaia Hypothesis is Schwenk's inclusion of a testimonial by James Lovelock, author of the Gaia Hypothesis, on the book jacket of later editions of *Sensitive Chaos*.

Philosopher Isabelle Stengers has argued for the consideration of the term Gaia over *Anthropos*, or the Anthropocene. *Anthropos* keeps focus on the role of humankind, whereas Gaia forces consideration of ourselves in relation to the earth and its systems. Stengers noted, "The need to take into account a protagonist ... whose stability 'we' will never again be able to take for granted ... Gaia is intruding on our human-only storymaking." Putting Gaia first requires that we see ourselves in relation to the earth, whose hospitableness is subject to change irrespective of humanity's interference. Foregrounding Gaia demands "that the dream of control or mastery be given up, replaced by the need to pay attention to, care about and to learn from that with which we are bound to coexist."¹² Relevant to Damon's practice with its roots in social justice and spiritualist feminism, Stengers also asks what we in academia have been doing to assist direct activism or activist groups. Rather than helping, we have been "dismembering as illusory fictions that which empowers them to think and act." She explains in her footnote that she is thinking about the academic branch of ecofeminism that turned against the "spiritualist" activism of those who created rites empowering them to 'do the work of the Goddess.'¹³

Damon's work has been informed by her activism since the 1970s, for women's rights, gay rights, and environmental rights. She received her MFA from Columbia University in 1966, which at the time was not a particularly welcoming environment for women students. She shared with me in a recent interview that she was told by an instructor "to get the ovaries out of her painting," a comment presumably inspired by the gestural quality of her work.¹⁴ Artist Robert Motherwell, on faculty at Columbia at the time, was supportive, and for that reason suggested the now familiar refrain: that she not have children if she wanted to succeed. In spite of this warning, Damon had two children with her husband, Christian Otto, an art historian whom she left in the 1970s. After receiving her degree, she moved to Germany and began exhibiting. There she became involved in art and technology movements and saw the work of Jean Tinguely, whose work inspired her. She returned to the U.S. in 1968 and learned of the Women's Movement from Joyce Kozloff. In 1972 she attended Womanhouse, the series of feminist art installations and performances organized by Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro where, she explained, she became "completely caught up" in the exhibitions and parties.

Her consciousness raised, she began creating street art performances in New York City, including her well-known work *The 7000 Year Old Woman* (1977; Pl. 1 and Fig. 2). In preparation for the performance, Damon painted her body, face, and hair white and her lips black. With the help of a



Fig. 3. Betsy Damon, *Shrine for Everywoman*, Copenhagen (1980), Installation. Photo: Courtesy the artist.

friend, she hung 420 small bags, filled with 60 pounds of flour, from her body. The piece began with Damon squatting as a nearby friend sprinkled sand, creating the shape of a spiral on the ground in front of her as a trail for her to follow. Damon then stood and began walking along the spiral slowly, ritualistically puncturing the drooping bags with scissors, gaining through the process “a sensation of the dimension of women’s oppression.”¹⁵ The work concluded with Damon surrounded by the empty bags, now transformed into a floor sculpture, which she invited audience members to take home to perform their own rites.

The 7000 Year Old Woman addressed numerous feminist themes that would recur in her work, including ritual, violence against women, and the attainment of self-knowledge. Damon identified the figure as all women whose burden she had begun to recognize in her dreams. She described her as follows: “She is my sister, mother, my grandmothers, my great grandmothers, friends and lovers. She is my woman line of 7,000 years. She is me, the me that I know very little about.”¹⁶ The spiral or labyrinth, common in many works of the period, is a symbol in eastern philosophies of self-discovery. The ritual allowed the artist to evoke the deep sense of time in which, “The ponderous slowness combined with the intrinsic violence of the cutting and the sensuous beauty of the bags created a

constant tension.”¹⁷ Damon recalled recently that artist May Stevens was the first to recognize the work also as a mutilation image, which, unbeknownst to Stevens, had a personal significance for the artist, whose grandmother had spent time in Cuba, where she learned Santeria rituals. Following this performance she was invited to conduct workshops around the questions it raised about oppression and mutilation.

In the 1970s, Damon openly identified as lesbian, which became another cause for her activism. She found community among other feminist lesbian artists, participating in “A Lesbian Art Show” (1978), the first in the U.S., at Greene Street Gallery, curated by Harmony Hammond. She was also co-editor of the third issue of *Heresies*, “Lesbian Art and Artists” (1977), considered the first publication to focus exclusively on lesbian creative work.¹⁸ The introduction to the issue noted that its purpose was the creation of a community to counter invisibility and alienation: “This issue of *Heresies* arises out of our need to challenge the heritage of secrecy, silence, and isolation which has been a necessity for lesbians who make art. Because we have no recognizable community with a sense of history, we seek to begin one by affirming and making visible the excellence of our efforts.”¹⁹ Each of the contributors to the issue provided a statement about her life and work. Damon’s propitiously began with her lifelong interest in science but she



Fig. 4. Betsy Damon, *The Living Water Garden: Wetlands* (1998), Chengdu, Sichuan Province, China. Photo: Courtesy the artist.

also alluded to shamanistic abilities, “I usually think of myself as part scientist and part magician with certain skills that sometimes makes art.”²⁰

Damon went on to participate in “The Great American Lesbian Art Show” (GALAS) (1980) at the Woman’s Building in Los Angeles, where she performed *What Do You Think About Knives*, meant in part to address women’s fear of knives, continuing her concern with violence and mutilation against women.²¹ In her performance *Rape Memory*, a bold precursor to the #metoo movement, she haltingly attempted to share her own traumatic memory of rape, against a chorus who repeatedly inveighed, “You can’t talk, don’t say that, don’t say.” Endeavoring to interrupt, she pleaded, “I’m trying, let me, please let me talk.” After an hour she finally described a rape that happened to her when she was two and a half years old, after which people from the audience began to recall their own memories of being raped. By encouraging women to speak out and share their experiences Damon sought to offer healing through community.

Spirituality and ritual informed her performance and installation *A Shrine for Everywoman* (Fig. 3) made for the first International Festival of Women Artists held in 1980 in Copenhagen, and again in Nairobi, Kenya, in 1985, at the festival’s second iteration.²² Damon invited women to write their thoughts and stories down, which she placed in small bags, special receptacles meant to preserve them and keep them safe, like reliquaries. The bags were then hung in rows on cords, like Buddhist prayer flags, and tied at each end to tall sticks arranged in a circle. Each woman’s thoughts formed a gathering space, “a place to meditate, meet, to think, to create rituals.”²³ At the center was a mandala, a Buddhist symbol of the universe meant to mark the space as a place of community. Damon described the shrine in her accompanying catalogue, “A place to see ourselves and

discover others. A place to bag your stories, hopes, fears and visions for the survival of the plants.” Provided by anonymous women, the notes included prayers and blessings, messages of empowerment, and heartfelt expressions of thanks for the opportunity to share, including the following note from a woman from Hungary, “No one ever asked me for my story, to tell about myself. Now that I am asked I do not know where to begin. So writing this is the beginning, I think.”²⁴ The space was meant as a safe one for recovery, spiritual connection, and empowerment. The recognition of the divine in all life forms was an important component of the feminist spirituality movement, which required that nature and the body be honored.²⁵ An important aspect of cultural feminism, the alignment of spirituality with nature was also central to Anthroposophy, early forms of ecofeminism, and Deep Ecology.²⁶

Dedicated to ending sexism throughout the world, in 1981 Damon founded the international organization No Limits for Women Artists to develop female leadership and assist men in becoming strong, independent allies.²⁷ The premise of the organization is that “every oppressed group must take the lead in their own liberation.”²⁸ Damon wrote a manifesto of sorts for the organization titled “What is Creativity?” in which she asserted that creativity is the birthright of all people, but it is socially repressed and controlled by governments that fear its ability to influence political change. She equated art with activism, claiming, “The essence of activism is human beings’ caring for each other. No one who doesn’t care deeply about people is likely to put in the kind of effort and dedication it takes to become an artist. Indifference is foreign to true art; it seems clear that the nature of art is activist.” In the statement she also associates the oppression of artists with that of workers, connecting it to class.²⁹ The document concludes with the claim, “It is time to discharge all the old feelings which lead to elitism, hopelessness, isolation and helplessness. It is time to discharge our fears of each other and move on, to support and challenge each other so that we never lose sight of our true



Fig. 5. Betsy Damon, *The Living Water Garden: Living Water Drop Fountain* (1998), Chengdu, Sichuan Province, China. Photo: Courtesy the artist.

function as artists.”³⁰ She saw that the solution to the exploitation of women lay in coming together.

One of the means by which No Limits for Women Artists fostered caring and connection among its members was a required daily ten-minute telephone conversation with a partner. Each would receive equal time to speak about her art, what she had accomplished that day, what had interfered with the artmaking process, what she hoped to accomplish the following day. Writer Terry Wolverton noted how powerful these calls were for her: “Suddenly there was someone else on the planet who cared that I was creating, and I began to feel more urgency about my work.”³¹ Soon, Damon began to associate the sense of connection she facilitated in No Limits for Women Artists with the properties of water. During a 1982 cross-country camping trip with her children, she noticed dry riverbeds caused by damming, where the rounded, water-smoothed stones reminded her of desiccated bones in the desert. She began to recognize the relevance of water’s containment to her activist work, which addressed women’s isolation by organizing interconnected networks to beget healing. She explained in a recent interview, “Water nourishes everything in its path. It doesn’t discriminate. It’s the cooperative element in the earth.”

Affirming the life-sustaining properties of water that flows, that affects everything in its path, is integrally connected to her social practice, which she describes in her forthcoming book, *The People’s Water*.³² Her book aims to persuade a general audience of the urgency of human-caused water scarcity. She describes her book as “a call to action” for which collaboration and cooperation are necessary.³³ It includes a toolkit, a do-it-yourself, step-by-step guide for environmental and other activists, to enable communities to take charge of local waters.³⁴ She asks readers to take advantage of community diversity, which encompasses class, race, religion, skills and knowledge to begin to make change, arguing, “Just as nature is strongest when it is diverse and complex, our communities are most innovative and powerful when everyone is included.” Successful social practice for her occurs through sustained effort in one location, typically one’s own neighborhood. She is wary of the term ‘social practice’ because she believes it is too often misapplied to projects in which artists of note engage in one-time projects, often outside their own communities, which rarely produce sustainable change.³⁵

Process and consciousness-raising, learned from her early feminist activism, is central to Damon’s residency projects around water. She begins discussions with groups by allowing those typically in the minority to speak first, asking for those who identify with the global majority (black and brown persons) to raise their hands. These individuals, she explains, are usually not designated as leaders, so here they are given an advantage. She asks them to divide into their like groups and discuss their culture. Afterward she brings all participants together to discuss the environment. She then has them regroup to discuss which environmental issue they believe is most pressing. Grouping them this way is intended to provide safety, a technique learned from her early work at Womanhouse, Lesbian Art and Artists, and in her installation *A Shrine for Everywoman*.



Fig. 6. Betsy Damon, *The Living Water Garden: Children Playing in Flow Forms* (detail) (1998), Chengdu, Sichuan Province, China. Photo: Courtesy the artist.

Damon’s eco-art projects have always begun with a process of gathering knowledge of the local site by forming relationships with the community. Visiting her son in China in 1991, she met a biologist who had just completed research on a Tibetan water site called the God Water, where the waters are known to heal digestive problems and tumors. Chinese medicines are often prepared with water, and particular water sources were believed to enhance the healing properties of medicinal herbs.³⁶ Two years later, she received a Jerome Fellowship to visit the site, Fei Shi (Jade Lake), a mineral water site twenty minutes from Song Pan in Northern Sichuan, which had been turned into a water-bottling facility by Chinese investors. She drank the water and felt transformed, and realized she had discovered “living water.” The bottling company was obtaining water from the site for its healing properties, but they were packaging it in plastic bottles, which eliminate those properties. The presence of the bottling plant also disconnected the local Tibetans from the site, which they believed was integral to their health and well-being. It became clear to her that the industrialized world had become disconnected from its water sources.³⁷



Fig. 7. Theodor Schwenk, illustration of the properties of water and wind. Reproduced in Theodor Schwenk, *Sensitive Chaos*, 1965.

Just prior to her journey to the God Water, she was invited to attend a conference on the environment in Chengdu. At the conference she talked about her activist art around water in the U.S. and the effects of water on the body. The audience of scholars and engineers understood these connections in a way that those in the U.S. had not. The interest of the people she met and their knowledge of the water, which was so different from what she encountered in the U.S., inspired her to conceive *The Living Water Garden* (Fig. 4).

Located on the Fu and Nan rivers in Chengdu, *The Living Water Garden* was built on the site of an ancient river diversion system (front cover and Fig. 1). A giant sculpture in the shape of a fish (a symbol of regeneration in Chinese culture), the work is a fully functioning natural water treatment plant, a living environmental education center and a refuge for wildlife and plants, which cleans 250 cubic meters of water daily. This

amount of water is not enough to affect the river water quality as a whole; its purpose is teaching and inspiration and thus connecting the viewer to a natural resource that may otherwise go unnoticed.

Built with the help of wetland experts, landscape architects, a hydraulic engineer, city officials and community members, *The Living Water Garden* features a seven-stage biological water cleaning process. Water is first pumped uphill by waterwheels into a settling pond, which constitutes the eye of the fish (Pl. 2 and Fig 5). Atop the iris of the eye is a water fountain sculpted to simulate a water drop seen through a microscope. The water then spills over the lungs of the fish, comprised of sculptural water catch basins she calls *flow forms* (Pl. 3 and Fig. 6), which aerate and cleanse the water, creating undulating patterns that also mimic the rhythm of cascading water. Developed by Anthroposophist John Wilkes in the 1970s, this sculpted form uses a figure eight flow pattern to fold oxygen into the moving water and assist organisms in breaking down pollutants. Wilkes's work was inspired by Schwenk's study of the properties of naturally purified water achieved by the vortex principle.³⁸

In *Sensitive Chaos*, Schwenk examines water and air as equivalent fluids that share the same rhythmic form (Fig. 7).³⁹ He wrote, "In the time of Goethe, natural philosophy still gave water its place as the bearer of all living formative processes. People experienced the fluid element to be the universal element, not yet solidified but remaining open to outside influences, the unformed, indeterminate element, ready to receive definite form; they knew it as the 'sensitive chaos.'"⁴⁰ Schwenk reproduced photographs and diagrams of the complex patterns of water and air, which were influential for Damon. She urges readers of her book: "Think of the stones you love, they were created by water, the rhythmic forms that we can find everywhere—from a fern to a piece of wood." She reproduces Schwenk's drawings in her book and has since created her own drawings illustrating the correspondence between the properties of water with other

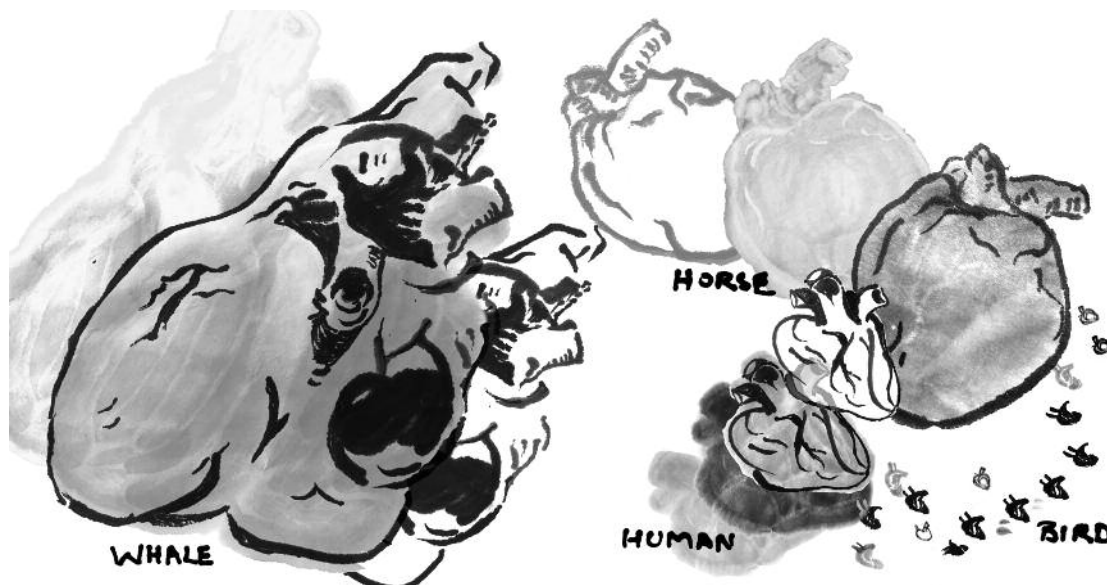


Fig. 8. Betsy Damon, *Water creates quantum coherence* (2018), sumi ink on rice paper, 18" x 12". Courtesy the artist.



Fig. 9. Betsy Damon, *Living Waters of Larimer: A Fresh Infrastructure*, Larimer Neighborhood, Pittsburgh, PA (2013). The Larimer Community Garden is built and maintained by the Larimer Green Team. Garden plots are allotted each season to residents to grow plants of their choice.

natural phenomena including the forking of arteries into veins, tree trunks into branches, and rivers into tributaries. In her drawing *Water creates quantum coherence* (2018; Fig. 8), depicting a series of vertebrate hearts, she likens the rhythmic, curvilinear form to the meandering properties of water, recalling the morphology of Schwenk and before him Goethe. Like Steiner and Schwenk she sees connections between exterior forms and interior ones, which for the Anthroposophists were primal, even spiritual in nature, organized by hidden forces. Damon also finds the origin of these patterns and structures at a more basic level. She was asked in a 2009 interview whether there is consciousness at the molecular level to which she responded: “Lovelock and many others would agree with that. Gaia. You can tune your heart to the waves. There are actual relationships between your heartbeat and what’s happening in certain watery environments.”⁴¹ Thus the modern scientific philosophy of organicism, originating with Alexander von Humboldt and woven through Anthroposophy is an important underpinning to contemporary understandings of eco-justice.

Living Waters of Larimer: A Fresh Infrastructure, Pittsburgh, PA (2013; Figs. 9 and 10) grew from Damon’s work in the local community in Larimer, a predominantly African American neighborhood and among the poorest in Pittsburgh. Named for a railroad magnate, the land was sold to finance Pittsburgh’s coal, steel, and gas industries and suffered from white flight and urban renewal (a.k.a. housing projects) in the 1960s.⁴² The area was prone to pervasive and sometimes catastrophic flooding, while its wetlands and lakes were empty.

Damon came to Pittsburgh on a Heinz Foundation residency grant with the Mattress Factory, where, concurrent with the residency, she created the installation *Water Rules Life: Seeking Lost Rivers in Pittsburgh* (Pl. 4), included in the 2012 exhibition “Feminist And...” curated by Hilary Robinson. For the installation she replicated a miniature river replete with stones to enable one’s crossing, and at the far side, viewers



Fig. 10. Betsy Damon, *Living Waters of Larimer: A Fresh Infrastructure*, Larimer Neighborhood, Pittsburgh, PA (2013). Community planning meeting. Photo courtesy of the artist.

were invited to share their thoughts regarding water and its life-sustaining properties.⁴³ It was an immersive experience including a walk-through topography of the city of Pittsburgh, flow forms, and videos revealing “the heart-mind-water connection.”⁴⁴ Because she identified buried pipes as one of the problems with the system, the installation asked viewers to “imagine a Pittsburgh with her waters revealed.”

To understand how water behaves in the city, she initiated conversations with storm water remediation organizations, local green businesses, environmental artists, and citizens around the city’s water management problems. “We brainstormed businesses that could be formed from collecting this much water. We thought about park amenities and greenways, converting streets to parks where children play in water features, some driven by their own movement, spinning or jumping.”⁴⁵ “I asked people what they imagined for their community, what they wanted to happen there.”⁴⁶ The community planned to create self-sustaining urban gardens, orchards, medicinal gardens, hydroponic farms, fountains, and water features in playgrounds. Funding for the project, unfortunately, functioned along traditional models of economic development, which did not prioritize the community’s needs. Their solution, therefore, was not carried out to its fullest potential. Despite the setbacks, Damon recognizes an incremental success in the fact that the participants came away from the project more knowledgeable and more hopeful. She still works with members of the Larimer community on small projects, including a community garden with structures that integrate rainwater capture and cleaning infrastructures.⁴⁷

Had it come to fruition, *Living Waters of Larimer*, like *The Living Water Garden*, would function as a visible public example of water's flexibility, while empowering the community with control over their water, leading to a healthier local ecosystem. Damon is continuing these strategies in a project with the Lakota people at the Standing Rock Indian Reservation, who staged impressive opposition over the past two years against the Dakota Access Pipeline, to clean up the waters polluted by uranium mines built in the nineteenth century, which spilled half-life radioactive material. She has already organized the necessary stakeholders including indigenous activists, community leaders, and scientists. The next step is to put the project in their hands, the people's hands.

In *Living Waters of Larimer* and *The Living Water Garden* and in her current project with the Lakota, Damon continues to implement strategies of consciousness-raising and community-building inspired by feminism, using principles of connection learned from water. Her social practice dedicated to eco justice is consistent with the philosophical approaches of ecofeminism, deep ecology, and strands of posthumanism that afford essential rights to nature, or Gaia. These ideas have already been put into practice. Ecuador passed the first Constitution in 2008 granting essential rights to Nature, which reads: "Nature or Pachamama, where life is reproduced and exists, has the right to exist, persist, maintain and regenerate its vital cycles, structure, functions and evolutionary processes." Under this framework, Nature becomes a subject of rights and, the constitution continues: "any person will be able to demand the recognition of the rights of nature before public organisms."⁴⁸ In 2010, the United Nations General Assembly explicitly recognized "the human right to water and sanitation and acknowledged that clean drinking water and sanitation are essential to the realisation of all human rights," which was supported by 122 countries.⁴⁹ Perhaps unsurprisingly, the U.S. abstained from voting. Regardless, Damon continues her quest to release the blood of Gaia: "Water comprises the miraculous molecules that shape and sustain all life on earth. Water is the connective tissue of all living systems. It forms the veins of the earth, the blood vessels in the human body."⁵⁰ •

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Notes

1. Betsy Damon, *The People's Water*, draft manuscript, August 18, 2017, 7. I am grateful to Damon for sharing this draft, along with numerous documents of her early career. I am also grateful to Annemarie Voss Johnson for first bringing Damon's work to my attention.
2. Betsy Damon, Resources: Saving Living Systems Sacred Water Sites, China, Keepers of the Water, <http://www.keepersofthewaters.org/Proj02ResNoFlash2012.cfm> (Accessed Jan. 21, 2018).

3. Betsy Damon, "Knowing Water," https://www.sherricornett.com/uploads/1/1/0/5/11058647/betsy_damon_knowing_water.pdf (Accessed Jan. 17, 2018).
4. Will Steffan, Paul Crutzen, John McNeill, "The Anthropocene: Are Humans Overwhelming the Great Forces of Nature," Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences *Ambio* 36, no. 8 (Dec. 2007).
5. Ibid. See also *The Anthropocene and the Global Environmental Crisis: Rethinking Modernity in a New Epoch*, eds. Clive Hamilton, François Gemenne, Christophe Bonneuil (New York: Routledge, 2015).
6. James Lovelock, *A New Look at Life on Earth* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2000), x. Developed in the 1960s, Lovelock's Gaia hypothesis was inspired by his work for NASA on the Martian atmosphere. It is held as a foundational source, along with the work of Gregory Bateson, for the philosophy of deep ecology, which looks beyond shallow anthropocentric environmentalism to argue that the environment should be respected and assigned rights beyond its utilitarian purposes. Deep ecology has much in common with ecofeminism, especially the rejection of any form of hierarchal classification. See also James E. Lovelock, "Gaia as Seen Through the Atmosphere" *Atmospheric Environment* 6:8 (1972): 579–80.; James Lovelock and Lynn Margulis, "Atmospheric Homeostasis By and For the Biosphere: The Gaia Hypothesis" *Tellus* 26:1-2 (1974): 2–10.
7. For discussion of Damon's understanding of water as an open system, see Christine Filippone, *Science, Technology, and Utopias: Women Artists and Cold War America* (New York: Routledge, 2017).
8. Richard Whittaker, "An Interview with Betsy Damon," *Works & Conversations* (Dec. 25, 2009), n.p. (<http://www.conversations.org/story.php?sid=222> (Accessed Sept. 3, 2017).
9. Damon, *The People's Water*, 18. Damon explains that he had reproduced drops of water, images of living and dead water, in a microscope. The healthy water contained healthy bacteria, which themselves are life forms needed to sustain life.
10. Theodor Schwenk, *Sensitive Chaos: The Creation of Flowing Forms in Water and Air* (Forest Row, Sussex: Rudolph Steiner Press, 1965), 14. The term "sensitive chaos" comes from the Romantic German poet Novalis, who identified water's behavior as *das sensible chaos*, or sensitive chaos. Frederick Ruf, *The Creation of Chaos: William James and the Stylistic Making of a Disorderly World*, SUNY Series in Rhetoric and Theology, (Albany: SUNY, 1991), 41.
11. Humboldt initially considered the title Gāa (Gaia) for *Cosmos*. Andrea Wulf, *The Invention of Nature: Alexander Humboldt's New World* (New York: Vintage, 2015), 7. Goethe's *Metamorphosis of Plants* (1790) is an important precursor to the biological organicism of Ludwig von Bertalanffy, which undergirds open systems. Goethe believed, along with Humboldt, that the internal structure of plants and animals possessed an ur-form or archetypal form from which subsequent species evolved in response to their environment. Steiner was the natural science editor of Goethe's scientific writings in the early 1880s, and served as editor at the Goethe archives in Weimar during 1888–96. He wrote two books about Goethe's philosophy: *The Theory of Knowledge Implicit in Goethe's World-Conception* (1886), and *Goethe's Conception of the World* (1897).
12. Isabelle Stengers, "Accepting the reality of Gaia: A Fundamental Shift?" in Hamilton et al, eds., *The Anthropocene and the Global Environmental Crisis: Rethinking Modernity in a New Epoch*, 137. Stengers also considered whether the term the Capitalocene, forwarded by Jason Moore, is more appropriate. See for example, *Anthropocene or Capitalocene?: Nature, History, and the Crisis of Capitalism* (KAIROS), ed. Jason Moore (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2016).
13. Stengers, "Accepting the reality of Gaia: a Fundamental Shift?," 142.
14. She said every year a female student would have her work attacked viciously by the faculty. Author's interview with the artist, Brooklyn,

- NY, October 19, 2017. All subsequent unattributed quotations and notes from the artist are taken from this interview.
15. Quoted in Josephine Withers, "Feminist Performance Art," in *Power of Feminist Art: The American Movement of the 1970s History and Impact*, eds. Norma Broude and Mary Garrard (New York: Harry Abrams, 1996), 164.
 16. Betsy Damon, "The 7000 Year Old Woman" in *Lesbian Art and Artists Heresies* 1 no. 3 (Fall 1977), 11.
 17. Ibid. For an exhibition of this work in the show *Claiming Space* at the Katzen Center at American University in 2008, Damon wrote in the wall text: "Some saw her as the multi-breasted powerful Goddess... I saw her as everywoman, my grandmother, mother, sister. Years later I discovered she was all of the above, both powerful Goddess and self-mutilating woman." J. W. Mahoney, *Art in America* 96, no. 6 (June/July 2008), 201.
 18. Harmony Hammond, *Lesbian Art in America: A Contemporary History* (New York: Rizzoli, 2000), 41. Quoted in Tara Burk, "In Pursuit of the Unspeakable: Heresies' Lesbian Art and Artists" *Women's Studies Quarterly* 41, nos. 3 & 4 (Fall/Winter 2013), 63.
 19. "Editorial," *Lesbian Art and Artists, Heresies*. n.p.
 20. Betsy Damon, "Statement" in *Lesbian Art and Artists, Heresies*, 2.
 21. GALAS, inspired by the Lesbian Art Project initiated by Harmony Hammond, was a yearlong project planned to bring national recognition to lesbian art and artists, featuring the work of ten artists who had been visible as lesbians in their careers. Terry Wolverton, *Insurgent Muse: Life and Art at the Woman's Building* (San Francisco: City Lights, 2002), 91.
 22. The first festival was held at the Glyptotek Museum in Copenhagen in conjunction with the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women. See the International Festival of Women Artists Collection and Focus International Collection, The National Museum for Women in the Arts <https://nmwa.org/learn/library-archives/archives-women-artists/manuscripts#International%20Festival> and https://nmwa.org/sites/default/files/shared/4.3.4.2-focus_international_collection.pdf (Accessed Jan. 20, 2018).
 23. Betsy Damon, *A Shrine for Everywoman*, commemorative catalogue of the two shrines made sometime after the festival in Nairobi. Provided by the artist. No publication information.
 24. Ibid.
 25. Jennie Klein, "Feminist Art and Spirituality in the 1970s," *Feminist Studies* 35:3 (Fall 2009), 581.
 26. When asked whether she drew connections between her feminist and environmental concerns, Damon responded, "You mean Eco-feminism and deep ecology? Of course." Phone conversation with the artist, July 15, 2015. Damon added, "Women have an innate connection and difference, because we create life. But I hate to be put in boxes."
 27. Santoro, "A Conversation with Betsy Damon: Environmental Art as a Life of Action." Bloom, Sept. 6, 2016. <https://bloom-site.com/2016/09/06/a-conversation-with-betsy-damon-environmental-art-as-a-life-of-action/> (Accessed Jan. 28, 2018.) Damon wrote in an email exchange with the author, Jan. 28, 2018, that she founded No Limits for Women Artists in 1980. No Limits along with her organization Keepers of the Waters are supported by her non-profit organization Institute for Releasing Initiative.
 28. The document outlining the goals of No Limits for Women Artists that Damon shared with me indicates that the basis for No Limits is Re-evaluation Counseling.
 29. In "What is Creativity," an unpublished document from 1973, Damon notes, "The systematic mistreatment of artists in our society, mistreatment which stems from fear of the enormous potential power of art for change, bears close resemblance to the systematic oppression of the working class."
 30. Ibid, 6.
 31. Terry Wolverton, *Insurgent Muse: Life and Art at the Woman's Building* (San Francisco: City Lights, 2002), 160.
 32. Damon, *The People's Water*, unpublished mss.
 33. Ibid., 10.
 34. An important precedent for these DIY toolkits was the *Whole Earth Catalogue*, founded by Stewart Brand in 1968.
 35. The problem with real social practice, Damon explained, is that the type of day-to-day incremental work needed to empower communities (for example, the kind of maintenance work named by artist Mierle Laderman Ukeles, whose work Damon admires, does not include the kind of spectacle that attracts foundation funding. She won't take funding from corporate foundations because they have made her alter the project to their interests. Unpublished Interview with the Author.
 36. Damon, "Knowing Water," n.p.
 37. Damon, "Resources: Saving Living Systems, Sacred Water Sites, China," n.p.
 38. The vortex principle was first introduced by Rudolph Steiner in the 1920s in his biodynamic agriculture. Similar to organic agriculture, biodynamic agriculture calls for the treatment of animals, crops, and soil as interrelated tasks in a single ecological system.
 39. Schwenk wrote, "This book is intended as a contribution towards this kind of recognition of the nature of fluid elements. It is concerned mainly with water, the representative of all this is liquid in animate and inanimate nature, but also with streaming air.... Therefore, in hydrodynamics both are regarded as 'fluids'. The qualities they have in common and those that distinguish them from one another will give insight into their real nature." Schwenk, *Sensitive Chaos*, 10–11.
 40. Ibid., 9.
 41. Richard Whittaker, An Interview with Betsy Damon: Living Water, Dec. 25, 2009. n.p. <http://www.conversations.org/story.php?sid=222> (Accessed 9/3/12).
 42. Larimer's daughter married into the Mellon family; the land was sold by the Mellon family.
 43. Alisia Chase, "The Best Set of Politics Humanity Has Known thus Far" Review, *Afterimage* 40.4, (2013), 32.
 44. <http://www.keepersofthewaters.org/Proj01WRL2012.cfm> (Accessed Jan. 21, 2018).
 45. Damon, *The People's Water*, 54. It was Damon's role to support the community and function as liaison to the local government. She was responsible for bringing the community's solutions to the local Mayor and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).
 46. Betsy Damon, "25 Years on Water," *Women Eco Artists Dialogue* (<https://directory.weadartists.org/betsy-damon-25-years-on-water>) (Accessed Jan. 25, 2018).
 47. Santoro, "A Conversation with Betsy Damon: Environmental Art as a Life Action."
 48. Rights of Nature Articles in Ecuador's Constitution. Article 71, Constitution, Ecuador, 2008. <https://therightsofnature.org/wp-content/uploads/pdfs/Rights-for-Nature-Articles-in-Ecuador-Constitution.pdf> (Accessed Jan. 5, 2018).
 49. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. http://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/human_right_to_water.shtml (Accessed Jan. 16, 2018).
 50. Betsy Damon, *The People's Water*, Center for Humans & Nature. <https://www.humansandnature.org/the-people%E2%80%99s-water> (Accessed Jan. 20, 2018).

SHIFTING FOCUS

WOMEN PRINTMAKERS OF ATELIER 17

By Christina Weyl

In 1938 and 1939, Atelier 17—the avant-garde printmaking workshop founded in Paris in the late 1920s by the British expatriate Stanley William Hayter—published two portfolios, *Solidarité* and *Fraternity*, to benefit children displaced by the Spanish Civil War (1936–39).¹ The list of participating artists reads like a Who’s Who of influential modernists: Hayter, Pablo Picasso, Joan Miró, André Masson, John Buckland-Wright, Yves Tanguy, Joseph Hecht, Wassily Kandinsky, Roderick Mead, Dolf Reiser, Luis Vargas, and Dalla Husband. Wait. Rewind. Who was Dalla Husband? And how did she find her way into this eminent group?

Husband (1899–1943) is the odd man out—pun intended—as the lone female artist. Even within the available scholarship on Atelier 17, her name is seldom mentioned, yet she was central to the workshop’s earliest years. She was one of the two women who first approached Hayter about printmaking instruction, leading to the founding of the studio. She produced and exhibited prints in Paris in the 1920s and 1930s, and she and Hayter were romantically involved during the latter part of that time.² A committed supporter of the Spanish Republic in its fight against the fascist forces of General Francisco Franco, Husband likely insisted on participating in these portfolios. Though her contribution to *Solidarité* was an abstraction, many of her editions depicted the trauma and human suffering of war. *Refugees* (ca. 1937–39; Fig. 1), shows a grief-stricken mother and father walking away from the body of their child, cradled in the arms of a female figure whose billowing cape suggests an otherworldly presence. In Husband’s print for the portfolio *Fraternity* (1939; Fig. 2), two menacing airplanes survey a line of abstract figures—innocents who walk amid rubble and destruction.

Husband’s involvement in these portfolios alongside the giants of interwar Paris offers an introduction to the overlooked history of women artists at Atelier 17. These early female workshop members have been consistently

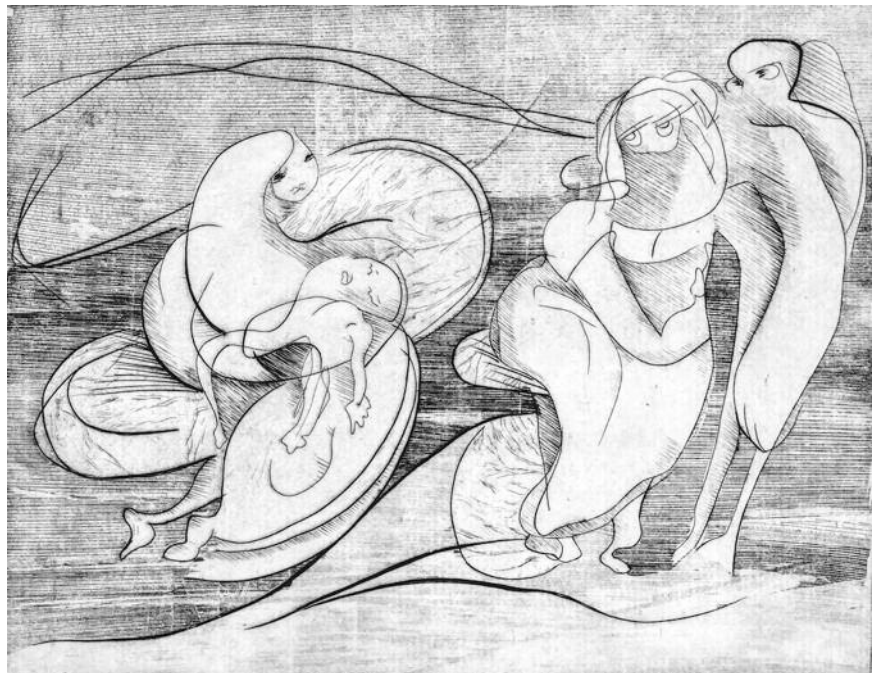


Fig. 1. Dalla Husband, *Refugees* (ca. 1937–39), engraving, etching on paper, 5 1/2" x 7 1/16". Winnipeg Art Gallery, Acquired with the assistance of a repatriation grant from the Government of Canada through the Cultural Property Export and Import Act. Photo: Ernest Mayer, Courtesy Winnipeg Art Gallery.

marginalized in published accounts of Atelier 17. For a 1977 exhibition honoring the workshop’s fiftieth anniversary, curator Joann Moser assembled a list of hundreds of participants drawn from archives, exhibition catalogues, reviews, Hayter’s own Rolodex, and prints in his collection, but all too often there was no information beyond a name.³ Who are these artists and where did they come from? What ambitions drew them to the workshop, and how did experimenting with modernist printmaking shape their careers? And, most importantly, what was the character of the art they made afterwards? This essay examines many of these women and their connections to Atelier 17, while suggesting some common threads that bind them together. Some, such as Nina Negri (1909–81) and Sue Fuller (1914–2006), were key contributors to the studio’s technical developments; for others, including Anne Ryan (1889–1954) and Ellen Abbey Countey

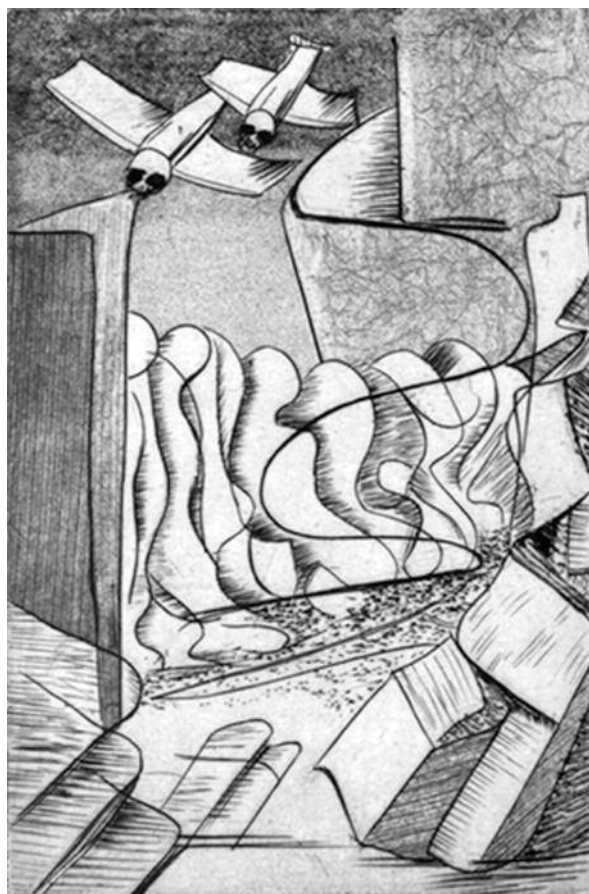


Fig. 2. Dalla Husband, untitled from the portfolio *Fraternity* (1939), engraving and aquatint, 4 7/8" x 2 7/8". The Baltimore Museum of Art, Gift of Sidney Hollander.

(1923–2017), Atelier 17 played a significant role in their professional or personal lives long after their official affiliation ended.

The causes of these women's disappearance from the historical record are diverse. Hayter was not a fastidious record-keeper and maintained no central archive, so it can be hard to locate the prints of particular Atelier 17 participants and the information pertaining to their association with the workshop. Also, given the limited demand for modernist prints and the Atelier's vision of printmaking as a vehicle of self-discovery, Atelier 17 artists rarely pulled complete editions, preferring to pursue variant effects in successive proofs by changing the marks, inkings, and papers. Many prints, furthermore, were lost when artists fled Paris during World War II. Finally, there are the social and economic pressures that have always weighed more heavily on women and have truncated many artistic careers: lack of resources, lack of support, family responsibilities, and critical indifference or hostility.

Though Husband's name may have been lost in the telling, the general story of Atelier 17's founding is repeated in many histories of twentieth-century art: sometime around 1927, two women approached Hayter about purchasing his prints and were so impressed they returned a few days later to inquire



Fig. 3. Edith Fletcher, *Bison* (ca. 1927–28), etching, dimensions unknown. Courtesy Carla Esposito, Rome.

about formal instruction. The details given about these women are fuzzy and often contradictory—sometimes it's "two Canadian women," or "two American women," or "a couple of young artists;" usually they are nameless, though sometimes Alice Carr de Creeft is mentioned, as her decade-long marriage to the Spanish sculptor José de Creeft guaranteed some name recognition.⁴ To set the record straight here, the two young artists were Gladys Dalla Husband, a Canadian, and Alice Robertson Carr (later Carr de Creeft, 1899–1996), an American.

They were contemporaries, born exactly seven months apart. Although Husband was a native of Winnipeg, Manitoba, and Carr de Creeft originated in Roanoke, Virginia, they had lived only 350 miles apart in Vernon, British Columbia, and Seattle, Washington, respectively, before colliding in Paris. Both had some prior artistic training: Carr de Creeft had studied sculpture at the Art Students League with A. Stirling Calder and at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago with Albin Polasek; Husband had worked locally with Jennifer Topham Brown.⁵ After receiving a substantial inheritance from her paternal grandmother, Husband arrived in Paris in October 1924; Carr de Creeft followed two years later.⁶ It is not known how they came to meet, but their paths may have crossed at one of the many art academies in Paris. Carr de Creeft worked with Antoine Bourdelle at the Académie de la Grande Chaumière and also pursued private study with Édouard Navellier, an animalier (specialist in animal sculpture), and with her eventual husband, José de Creeft, from whom she learned direct carving. Husband's early years in Paris are hazier: Hayter later suggested she had trained with Fernand Léger at his Académie Moderne, but this is unconfirmed by archival sources.⁷ As English speakers abroad, Husband and Carr de Creeft could also have met through mutual friends or a chance encounter in Montparnasse, near where they both lived, and bonded over their shared background in the Pacific Northwest.⁸

We assume that Husband and Carr de Creeft learned about Hayter through a public exhibition. He had been in Paris since



Fig. 4. Alice Carr de Creeft, untitled (ca. 1927–28), etching, dimensions unknown. Courtesy Nina de Creeft Ward.

the spring of 1926, and after a brief stint at the Académie Julian augmented by private study with the American printmaker Mary Huntoon (1896–1970) and Polish engraver Joseph Hecht, he exhibited two prints and a painting at the Salon d'Automne in November.⁹ In December of that year Hayter married Edith Fletcher (1900–74), a New Yorker who had come to Paris the previous January, and with her exhibited again at the Salon d'Automne in 1927—she showed two prints and a painting, and he two paintings and two prints.¹⁰ The following year was a fruitful one for both: each exhibited two paintings at the Société des Artistes Indépendants in January, and in June they held a joint show at the Sacre du Printemps gallery.¹¹ Fletcher Hayter's portion of the exhibition included twenty-three etchings of animals—deer, elephants, lions, bears and more—making it clear that she, too, had studied with Hecht, a masterful animal engraver (*animalier-burinateur*).¹² In fact, both artists exhibited prints of bison (1927–28; Fig. 3), his standing and hers lying down. Hecht had made a number of bison prints in 1927, and it is likely he assigned the subject as a teaching exercise.¹³

Given her ambitions as an animalier, Carr de Creeft was probably attracted to the Sacre du Printemps exhibition because of this focus. In his introductory essay for the exhibition catalogue, the noted French critic André Salmon stressed the connection between Fletcher Hayter's animal etchings and French naturalists, praising the plasticity of her etched lines and her ability to convey the character of her subjects.¹⁴ Carr de Creeft's focus on animals carried through to the prints she made under Hayter's tutelage. One of the only known prints from this period features a young boy attempting to halt an unmanageable goat (c. 1927–28; Fig. 4). Its linear, realistic style echoes that of Hayter, Fletcher Hayter, and of course their teacher, Hecht.

Though 1927 is often listed as the founding date of Atelier 17, the timing of the June 1928 exhibition and its probable role in prompting the inquiry from Carr de Creeft and Husband suggest it actually happened later. The earlier date was repeated by Hayter in interviews and appeared on promotional materials as well as on the studio's official



Fig. 5. Leonor Fini, untitled (two veiled women) (ca. 1932–34), etching and engraving, 7 1/4" x 6 11/16". Courtesy Estate of Leonor Fini.

letterhead (though most of this material was printed after the move to New York City in 1940). Hayter, however, was notoriously bad with dates, and another version of the studio's letterhead, used roughly from 1945 to 1950, gives 1928 as the founding year. Further, a letter Hayter wrote in 1939 to the director of the Brooklyn Museum also cites 1928, and Helen Phillips, Hayter's second wife, noted that the studio's printing press had never been located in the apartment-studio on Rue de Moulin Vert where he lived in 1927, rather it was first installed in his home and studio at 23 Villa Chauvelot, to which he moved in 1928.¹⁵

Husband exhibited regularly in Paris throughout the 1930s, but in late 1939 she left to join a group of Canadian artists working in Mexico and died there, unexpectedly, in 1943. Carr de Creeft continued to focus on sculpture, but as a realist working in an era of abstraction, her reputation was limited. Other women who attended Atelier 17 during these years achieved greater prominence. Hedda Sterne (1910–2011), famous as the only woman in a 1951 photo of the "Trascibles" (the avant-garde artists who protested the Metropolitan Museum's juried 1950 exhibition "American Painting Today" as regressive), was sporadically in Paris in the 1930s and appears on Moser's list of Paris participants. Though no prints dating to that time have been found, Sterne was fascinated with printmaking and created monotypes in the late 1940s in New York.¹⁶ Leonor Fini (1907–96) came to the workshop shortly after arriving in Paris in 1931, likely at the encouragement of Max Ernst, then her lover, or one of her other Surrealist

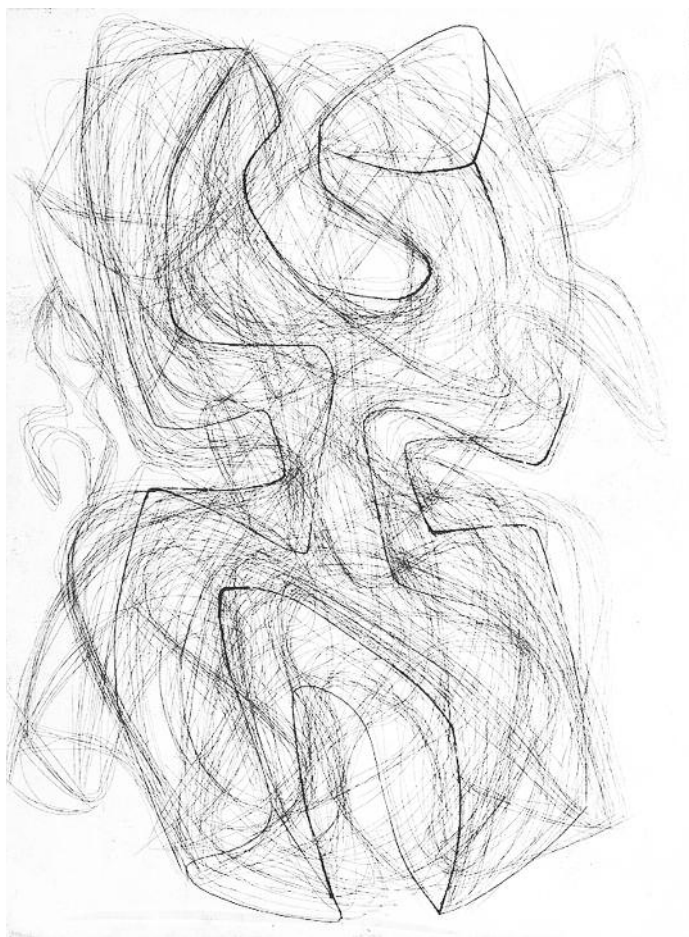


Fig. 6. Helen Phillips, untitled, state 2 (1936), drypoint and engraving, 7 13/16" x 5 13/16". Courtesy Carla Esposito, Rome.



Fig. 7. Jeanne Bieruma Oosting, *Dragon* (1936), engraving, 8 11/16" x 8 11/16". Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. Courtesy Otteline van Verschuer and Frans van Verschuer.

acquaintances, such as Salvador Dalí or Paul Éluard, both of whom were friendly with Hayter. She produced about ten plates, all stylistically similar to the cartoonish, automatic drawings and paintings she was making during this period, combining animals and humans in enigmatic situations.¹⁷ In one etching, two women wearing intricately faceted dresses are on a tufted circular carpet (c. 1932–34; Fig. 5); one holds a veil over her sitting companion's face—softground is used cleverly here to represent the material of the object depicted—while three white birds emerge from the veil.

Helen Phillips (1913–95), who would become Hayter's second wife, was introduced to the workshop by Dickson Reeder and Flora Blanc, two American artists working in Paris. A native of Northern California, Phillips arrived in Paris in the summer of 1936, having received the prestigious Phelan Traveling Fellowship from the San Francisco Art Association. She befriended several Americans and often dined with Reeder and Blanc. One day, while at Chez Rosalie, a café down the street from 17 Rue Campagne-Première (Atelier 17's final studio address in Paris and the source of its name), they were joined by Hayter, taking a break between classes.¹⁸ Phillips agreed to attend the next night's class and found herself attracted to the sculptural qualities of engraving (she had

studied direct carving in San Francisco with Robert Stackpole). The experience of incising copper with the burin sharpened her understanding of positive and negative spaces, and altered the way she dealt with sculptural volume. Looking at the trajectory of her sculpture, it would appear that engraving altered her sensibility, leading her to open up the forms of her early, blocky direct carvings and to develop sinuous, twisting limbs in her later cast and polished bronze works. One of her first intaglio plates features a headless stick figure (1936; Fig. 6)—a recurring form that she described as “two joined wishbones”—amid swirling drypoint lines that suggest motion and even dance, which was a motif that would occupy her when she returned to printmaking in the 1950s after a decade-long child-raising hiatus.¹⁹ Her 1950s prints are deeply sculptural and brilliantly model simultaneous color printmaking, one of Atelier 17's signature techniques (1953; Pl. 5).

In 1934, Atelier 17 began to hold regular group exhibitions through which the activities of women members can be traced. Five of the eight shows held between 1934 and 1939 had printed catalogues with object checklists or lists of participating artists, and we can glean the rosters of the remaining three from Hayter's letters and newspaper reviews.²⁰ (Artists active in the Atelier also showed in the city's annual salons in the late 1920s and early 1930s, though the works appearing there were usually paintings, sculptures, and drawings rather than prints). To participate in the Atelier 17 shows, artists paid a small fee to the hosting gallery—for example, participating in the 1935 exhibition at the Galerie Pierre cost each artist 100 francs (roughly \$85 today)—which would hopefully be offset by



Fig. 8. Nina Negri, *Composition Lunaire* (1935), engraving, aquatint, and softground etching, 8 11/16" x 12 1/2". The Baltimore Museum of Art: Purchased in Memory of Charlotte Boyle by Nancy Struever, her Friends, and the BMA Docent Group of 2007; and Print and Drawing Acquisition Fund. Photo: by Mitro Hood.

sales.²¹ The number of artists in these shows, and the proportion of women, increased over time, from just one in nine (Dalla Husband) at the Leicester Galleries in 1934, to ten out of twenty-six at Guggenheim Jeune in 1939.

As a group, these women reflected the stylistic diversity of the workshop as a whole. Hayter consistently stated that he was not a professor and the workshop was not a place for novices to learn elementary principles. Rather, he was offering an introduction to advanced printmaking techniques that could stimulate an individual's innate expressive tendencies, regardless of subject matter.²² The involvement of the Dutch realist Jeanne Bieruma Oosting (1898–1994) is indicative of the stylistic range Hayter's approach embraced. Her work was almost always figurative—in 1970 she established the Jeanne Oosting Stichting (Foundation) to recognize excellence by figurative artists with a concentration on animals, insects, and reptiles. Nonetheless she exhibited consistently in Atelier 17 group shows, beginning with a 1936 exhibition at the Kunstzaal De Gulden Roos in Maastricht. Like many workshop regulars, Oosting exchanged prints with Hayter. Two examples of her work from his collection are now at the British Museum: an engraving of shells and another of a dragon in flight (1936; Fig. 7).²³

Despite the active presence of realists such as Oosting, it is clear that Surrealism and abstraction were dominant among both men and women working with Hayter. Like Husband, the Argentinian-born Nina Negri (1909–81) and the Swedish Siri Rathsmann (1895–1974) followed the principles of automatism. Negri's impressive *Composition Lunaire* (1935; Fig. 8) skillfully combines engraving, aquatint, and softground etching in an eerie nocturnal scene; the print's organic forms resemble an animal skull tilted on a diagonal with other menacing bone fragments resting nearby. Rathsmann's prints are very rare, but a group recently located with a New York art dealer suggests her skill with the engraver's burin and her curiosity with color printing.²⁴ The earliest one, dating to 1931, creates a surreal seaside landscape with the sun shining through craggy cliffs and winds swirling ominously at right (Pl. 6). Her hand-application of gouache highlights the importance of color to vanguard experimentation at Atelier 17. Apparently, Hayter and Negri were some of the first members to test new methods for achieving color printmaking, well before his perfection of simultaneous color printmaking in the mid 1940s.²⁵ Negri, Rathsmann, and Husband exhibited their prints regularly with Atelier 17 in the 1930s, and also in other forums such as the Association Artistique les Surindépendants. Negri was the only



Fig. 9. Buffie Johnson, untitled (ca. 1939), etching, dimensions unknown. Courtesy Jenny Johnson Sykes and Carla Esposito, Rome.



Fig. 10. Ana Rosa Marcos de Ycaza, *A Tinieba* (1948), etching, aquatint, and soft ground etching, 10 7/8" × 6 7/8". Museum of Modern Art, New York, purchase. Digital Image © Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA/Art Resource, NY.

artist other than Hayter to show prints in the Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme (1938). The careers of these three women merit further scholarly attention.

The declaration of war between France and Germany in September 1939 spelled the temporary end of the Paris-based Atelier 17. (Hayter revived it in New York in 1940 and reopened it in Paris in 1950). Many of its artists left Paris, and a number moved on from printmaking altogether, yet their experience with Hayter often remained an important touchstone. The American, Buffie Johnson (1912–2006), who later became known for her proto-feminist research on the Great Goddess, was in Paris from the spring of 1937 until October 1939, and made prints at Atelier 17 sometime before the workshop's exhibition at the Galerie de Beaune.²⁶ Many of these no longer exist—casualties of Johnson's hurried departure—but an example preserved in Hayter's personal collection gives a sense of Surrealism's influence on her work (c. 1939; Fig. 9): an enigmatic masquerade of figures are arranged on a stage (note the curtain, three footlights and flowers thrown at their feet), but who they are and what drama they are enacting remains a mystery.

Johnson maintained friendships with many of the artists she met at Atelier 17 in Paris—she received holiday cards from Julian Trevelyan, Roger Vieillard, and Anita de Caro—and her brief return to printmaking in the late 1940s reveals an

awareness of what was happening at Atelier 17's New York workshop.²⁷ Her solo show at Betty Parsons Gallery in the spring of 1950 featured several woodblock monotypes, thickly inked and printed on black paper (c. 1950; Pl. 7), which bear a striking resemblance to the black paper woodcuts that Atelier 17 member Anne Ryan (1889–1954) had been showing in New York since 1946. Though their woodcuts differed in subject and character—Ryan's mostly feature religious subjects, portraits, still lifes, circus imagery, and geometric abstractions in bright hues (1949; Pl. 8), while Johnson's are muted and represent primal forms—Johnson's use of black paper seems an unmistakable nod to Ryan. The two artists met most likely through their mutual friend, the artist Tony Smith, or possibly by association with Betty Parsons Gallery, where Ryan would have a major exhibition of her collages in September 1950. Johnson also owned a small semi-abstract etching of a dancing figure by Ryan, which she likely sent as a holiday greeting.

Ryan was among the first women artists to pursue instruction at Atelier 17 in New York when Hayter reestablished the workshop at the New School for Social Research in the fall of 1940. (After five years at the New School, the workshop relocated to the first floor of an aging brownstone at 41 East Eighth Street.)²⁸ Among the small group



Fig. 11. Anne Wienholt, *Wind, Bird, and Other Northern Fauna* (1948), etching and aquatint on paper, 9 3/4" x 17 7/8". Brooklyn Museum, Dick S. Ramsay Fund. Courtesy the artist.

of women who found their way into the New School classroom, Ryan, Sue Fuller, and Worden Day (1912–86) all continued to be active as printmakers for years. Others attended only briefly, including the urban scene artist Isabel Bishop (1902–88), abstract expressionist Perle Fine (1908–88), and surrealists Catherine Yarrow (1904–90) and Hope Manchester (1907–76). Of several other women, whose names appear on grade rosters at the New School or in related documents, we know little: Mary Jean Beird, Margaret Reinhart, Bess Schuyler, Alda Ortley, and a student known only as "Joan."²⁹

In 1944 the Museum of Modern Art organized the exhibition "New Directions in Gravure: Hayter and Studio 17," which traveled for two years throughout the United States and Latin America.³⁰ Met with wide acclaim, it prompted a swell of demand for access to the workshop. With the end of World War II in 1945, international travel became easier and international exchange more attractive, and artists came from around the globe to learn modernist printmaking. This global constituency complicates the research on studio members of both sexes, as many artists returned home with their prints, and the polyglot documentation of their careers—French, Spanish, Portuguese, Armenian, Dutch, Czech, Japanese, Hindi—creates a daunting research task. Yet documenting them and their exchange is important to the increasingly globalized study of art history.

In contrast to the small number of women who made prints at the New School, the list of female printmakers who came to the Eighth Street workshop beginning in 1945 is too extensive to cover in this essay. This surge can be seen in the workshop's tenth group show, held at the Willard Gallery in 1945, where eleven women exhibited alongside twenty-four men. In New York, as in Paris, the workshop was important not just for the skills it taught, but also for the professional networking it facilitated.³¹ For women artists in particular, affiliation with the newly expanded and increasingly renowned Atelier 17 opened doors. Two of the most important sculptors of the postwar period, Louise Nevelson (1899–1988) and Louise Bourgeois

(1911–2010), found that their innovative Atelier 17 prints helped launch their careers. Bourgeois, who began working at Atelier 17 in 1946, spoke of the catalyzing importance of participating in the Brooklyn Museum's annual print shows, which started in 1947: "I was able to enter the art field through the prints, because the Brooklyn Museum organized this show of prints every year. So it was an easy beginning, to have your name printed ... I did it for exposure."³² Bourgeois's most famous body of work made at Atelier 17 was a suite of nine engravings titled *He Disappeared into Complete Silence* (1947). But she made several other prints during her period of affiliation with the workshop. Semi-abstracts like *Ascension Lente* (1949; Pl. 9) visualize Bourgeois's feelings of improving her professional status through

her efforts at Atelier 17. Speaking later about this engraving, she mentioned the upward sweeping forms symbolically referenced a ladder and the possibilities of self-improvement through printmaking.³³

Similarly, Louise Nevelson gained enormous confidence and creative direction through her time at Atelier 17—roughly ten nonconsecutive months (ca. 1948, 1952–54)—and the more than two hundred highly experimental impressions she pulled from thirty intaglio plates.³⁴ These prints have a frenzied quality to them as a result of her spontaneous combination of several intaglio processes. *The Colored Jungle* (c. 1952–54; Pl. 10), whose three blocky queens reference the pre-Columbian imagery that fascinated Nevelson during this time, typifies the artist's Atelier 17 prints with its messy arrangement of etched and engraved

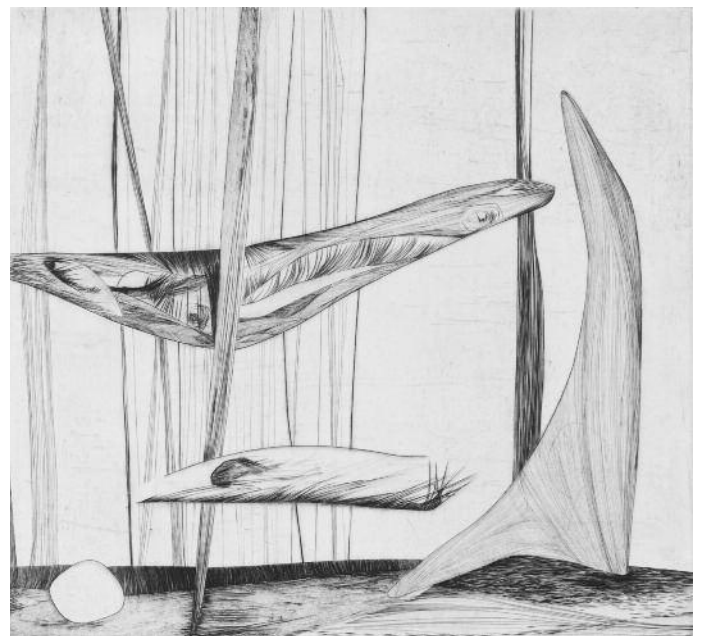


Fig. 12. Margaret Jean Kettunen Zegart, *Heavy Bird* (1950), engraving, 17 7/8" x 19 3/8". Brooklyn Museum, Dick S. Ramsay Fund. Courtesy the artist.

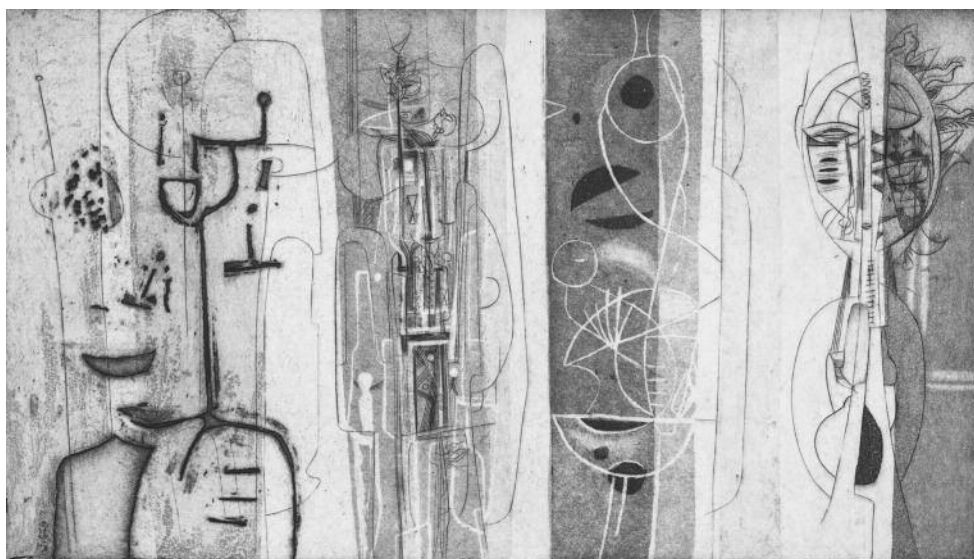


Fig. 13. Harriet Berger Nurkse, *Figures in a Garden* (1950), engraving and aquatint, 9 15/16" x 17 1/2". Brooklyn Museum, Dick S. Ramsay Fund. Courtesy the artist's estate.

lines, fabric textures applied through softground etching, and lighter highlights drawn by dribbling varnish over the plate surface. Although Nevelson's work is best known in black, white, and gold, prints like this one evidence her fearlessness to hand-apply bright colors like yellow and red idiosyncratically to create unique impressions. Her assertive inking strategies at Atelier 17 accelerated her shift towards the painted wood sculpture, which she began making in earnest by the mid-1950s, and which cemented her artistic reputation.

Besides Bourgeois and Nevelson, the two most prominent female members to emerge from Atelier 17's New York roster, there were close to one hundred additional women who hailed from many nations and diverse backgrounds. During the 1930s and 1940s, the United States government's Good Neighbor policy increased the diplomatic and cultural dialogue with countries in Central and South America, and the influence of this transnational exchange has been documented within Atelier 17.³⁵ Among the best known Latin American artists to work with Hayter were the Argentine émigré Mauricio Lasansky, who went on to establish the influential printmaking program at the University of Iowa, and the Chileans Nemesio Antúnez and Roberto Matta. Latin American women also gravitated to the workshop. Fayga Ostrower (1920–2001), who had been born in Poland to a Jewish family that relocated to Brazil in the 1930s, worked at Atelier 17 in 1955, while on a Fulbright Scholarship.³⁶ Lily Garafulic (1914–2012), a Chilean sculptor of Croatian descent, worked there in 1944 on a Guggenheim fellowship (she also studied direct carving with José de Creeft at the Art Students League). And Victoria Lucía Quintero (1919–unknown), a Puerto Rican of Venezuelan descent, continued her artistic studies at the League and at Atelier 17 after graduating from Barnard College in 1941. Garafulic and Quintero each showed a print in Atelier 17's Willard Gallery show, both bearing musical titles: *Cellista* and *Arpa de Viento*, respectively (the whereabouts of these prints, both dated 1945, is unknown).

Two other Latin American women, Maria Martins (1894–1973) and Ana Rosa Marcos de Ycaza (1915–2013), explored surrealist imagery as members of Atelier 17 in the second half of the 1940s. While Martins gained prominence for her sculpture—not to mention the notoriety of being Marcel Duchamp's longtime lover and model for his last major work, *Étant Donnés* (1946–66)—de Ycaza remains almost completely unknown.³⁷ But in 1952, Hayter, who was never overgenerous with praise, wrote that de Ycaza "had something promising, really important" and was "one of the most talented people we had."³⁸ In *A Tiniebla* (1948; Fig. 10), included in the Atelier 17 group show at Grace Borgenicht Gallery in 1951, de Ycaza combined aquatint, etching, and softground etching to create a vision of a mysterious, large-headed figure emerging from a shadowy background. Both artists were in the United States as a result of their husbands' diplomatic positions (Carlos Martins was the Brazilian ambassador, and Ramon de Ycaza was the Consul-General of Ecuador in San Francisco), and while the Martinses returned to Brazil in 1949, de Ycaza's trajectory after Atelier 17 is unclear.

The Australian Anne Wienholt (born 1920) arrived in 1945, having won the New South Wales Traveling Art Scholarship, which provided a generous three-year stipend.³⁹ In the beginning of that year, she enrolled in a life class taught by Yasuo Kuniyoshi at the Art Students League and learned of Hayter's downtown workshop, which she joined shortly after VE Day. Wienholt's prints garnered critical praise: she was included in the Brooklyn Museum's National Print Annual Exhibition in 1948, and later won purchase prizes from the Brooklyn Museum for *Rock Pippit* and *Wind, Bird, and Other Northern Fauna* (1948; Fig. 11) in 1949 and 1950, respectively. In the latter, a semi-abstract bird rises powerfully from a mountainous landscape, surrounded by other birdlike forms. Influenced by both Hayter and Rufino Tamayo, another of her teachers in New York, Wienholt remained committed to figurative abstraction.

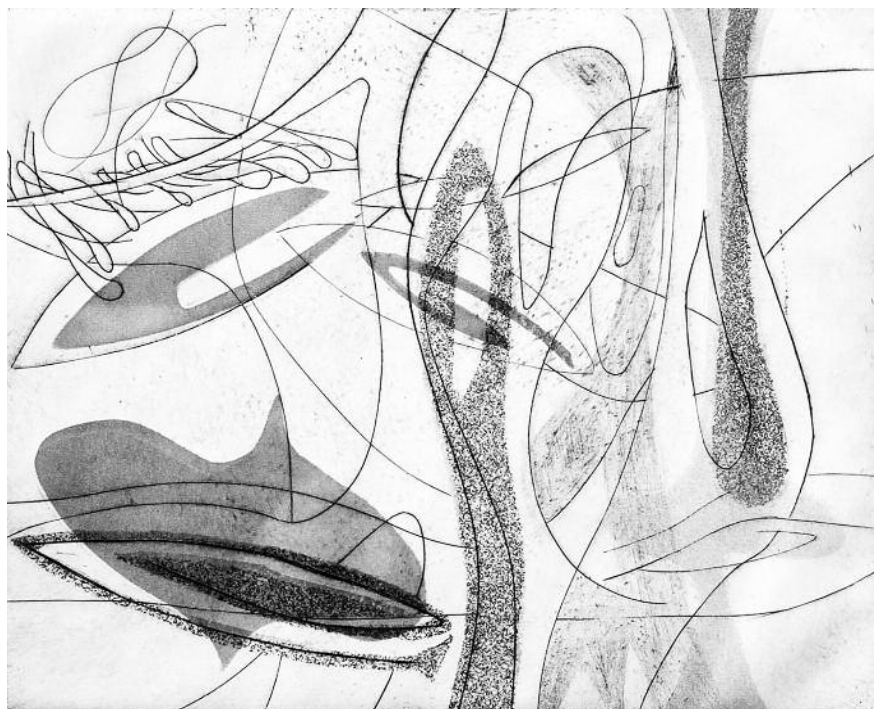


Fig. 14. Ellen Abbey County, *Sun Spot* (1948), engraving, aquatint, and stencil, 7" x 5 1/2".
Courtesy Estate of Ellen County.

Though many of these women managed to wring recognition or even praise from the demanding Hayter, the obstacles they faced—from family obligations and financial practicalities to critical neglect—derailed many promising careers. Postwar America was in many ways a difficult environment for women artists, with its resurgence of social values emphasizing marriage and children over professional aspirations. Several women who were active and successful as young artists at Atelier 17 later left the art world, only to return in some capacity later in life.

Margaret Jean Kettunen Zegart (b. 1926), raised in a conservative family from East Lansing, Michigan, was slated to become a home economics teacher but shifted course and moved to New York, where she took a job as assistant to *Glamour's* art editor. Hearing about Atelier 17 through a colleague at Condé Nast, Kett—as she became known professionally—attended Hayter's classes in the evenings and became a masterful engraver. She won a purchase prize at the 1950 Brooklyn print annual for *Heavy Bird* (1950; Fig. 12) and would show in the museum's next four annuals. *Heavy Bird*, a relatively large plate for this period, features biomorphic shapes carefully filled with intricately engraved and etched textures. She earned the respect of Hayter, whose terse statement, "she is good," counts as rare enthusiasm by the standards of his prose.⁴⁰ She was the only woman included in a small show of Atelier 17 engravings held at the Lotte Jacobi Gallery in late 1954, surrounded by the men who dominated the field of engraving: Hayter, Hecht, Vieillard, Pierre Courtin, Leo Katz, and Gabor Peterdi.⁴¹ Like so many married women of her generation, however, Kett faded from professional prominence because of

family commitments and economic necessity. Although she continued to work as a printmaker after moving to Northern California in 1953, she concentrated on raising four children and teaching art at Tamalpais High School in Mill Valley.

Born in France to a British father and American mother, Harriet Berger Nurkse (1916–78) graduated from the Slade School of Fine Art in 1939 before immigrating to the United States in 1940 and becoming active at Atelier 17 in the late 1940s.⁴² At the Art Students League, she formed close friendships with Fannie Hillsmith (1911–2007) and with Alicia Bell Legg (1915–2002), who went on to become a curator at MoMA. Berger Nurkse exhibited in Atelier 17 group shows twice, in 1947 and 1949, and in 1950 was awarded a Brooklyn Museum purchase prize for *Figures in a Garden* (1950; Fig. 13). This surrealist print is divided into four parts showcasing different intaglio techniques: deeply bitten etched lines of the figure at far left, the engraved lines of the one at far right, and a combination of stop-out varnish and aquatint for the central two. After this

activity, Berger Nurkse's professional career went quiet. Her husband, the economist Ragnar Nurkse, died unexpectedly in 1959, leaving her to raise their two sons. Settling in central New Jersey, she eventually reactivated her artistic practice and was a member of the Princeton Art Association.

Brooklyn-born Ellen Abbey County (1923–2017) was also active in the New York art community before marriage and family. In the early 1940s, she studied at the Art Students League and had private lessons in direct carving with William Zorach in Maine. Enrolling at the New School, she met both Hayter and her future husband, Edward County.⁴³ A member of Atelier 17 from approximately 1944 to 1948, Abbey County made about a dozen plates but, like many Atelier artists, never printed complete editions. As a result, her prints are rare and very few have surfaced in public collections. Those still in the artist's collection are wonderful examples of the technical experimentation characteristic of this period in Atelier 17's history. The abstract *Sun Spot* (1948; Fig. 14), for example, features automatist burin work overlaid with precisely defined areas of aquatint, spit bite and stenciled color. County and her husband eventually moved to Long Island, where he taught for many years at SUNY Stony Brook, first in the Engineering Department and later the Department of Art. Though Abbey County's professional career ended with motherhood, she remained close to Hayter and other Atelier artists. As a widow she visited Hayter and his wife, Désirée, in Paris and renewed her work in printmaking.

Though women artists were essential to Atelier 17 from its very inception, they have largely disappeared from its legend.

Dalla Husband was being “forgotten” even as the ink was drying on her prints: writing to Julian Trevelyan about the Spanish Civil War portfolio *Solidarité* one month before its publication in 1938, Hayter managed to omit Husband’s name from the list of artists, though Trevelyan knew her quite well.⁴⁴ Socially, institutionally, and often personally, women artists had the decks stacked against them, but it is important to recognize that for Husband and so many other adventurous, ambitious women, interwar Paris and postwar New York were essential centers of opportunity—even if those opportunities were more limited than those for their male peers. Atelier 17 represented a place where they could learn and contribute to the development of modern art, where they could establish networks both personal and professional, and where they might make their achievements known, at least to a small community and for a brief period of time. Atelier 17 should be remembered as a major touchstone of modernism for many women. •

Christina Weyl is an independent scholar and curator based in New York City. Her book about women printmakers who were members of Atelier 17 in New York City between 1940 and 1955 is forthcoming from Yale University Press in 2019.

Notes

Thank you to Susan Tallman and Ann Shafer, who read and commented on a previous version of this essay. This research stems from my book *The Women of Atelier 17: Craft, Creativity, and Modernist Printmaking* (Yale University Press, forthcoming 2019).

- For more about Atelier 17’s history, see Joann Moser, *Atelier 17: A 50th Anniversary Retrospective Exhibition* (Madison, WI: Elvehjem Art Center, Univ. of Wisconsin-Madison, 1977). By the end of 1938, Hayter was working at the Office Internationale pour l’Enfance as the “secretary in charge of exhibitions and donations from artists.” Stanley William Hayter, letter to Julian Trevelyan, Dec. 23, 1938, JOT 16_28, Papers of Julian Otto Trevelyan, Trinity College Library Cambridge [henceforth cited as PJOT]. In July 1938, the organization had established a relief fund, the fonds de la Commission d’aide aux enfants espagnols réfugiés en France, which presumably received the proceeds from *Solidarité* and *Fraternity*.
- Although Husband and Hayter met in the late 1920s, their romantic relationship seems to have begun in the early 1930s, lasting through 1937 or 1938. Annual exhibition catalogues for the Surindépendants reveal she lived near Hayter’s studio for much of her time in Paris (at 23 Rue Moulin Vert and 2 Villa Chauvelot). In 1935 she was a resident of the same building that housed the Atelier, 17 Rue Campagne-Première, but Gary Essar, an independent scholar who has researched Husband’s life, believes she lived on a different floor.
- “Artists Who Have Worked at Atelier 17,” in Moser, *Atelier 17*, 83-87.
- See varied references in Rosamund Frost, “The Chemically Pure in Art: W. Hayter, B. Sc., Surrealist,” *Art News* 40 (May 15, 1941): 13; Moser, *Atelier 17*, 2; Désirée Moorhead, “The Prints of Stanley William Hayter,” in *The Prints of Stanley William Hayter: A Complete Catalogue*, ed. Désirée Moorhead and Peter Black (Mount Kisco, NY: Moyer Bell, 1992), 19.
- I would like to thank Nina Ward de Creeft for sharing biographical information about her mother. For Husband’s training, see Maggie Dwyer and Lisa Gabrielle Mark, *Dalla Husband* (Winnipeg, MB: WAG Press, 1995). Although sources state Jennifer Topham Brown studied at the Slade School of Fine Art in London, the school’s records do not confirm her attendance.
- It has been reported that Husband inherited £10,000 (the equivalent of roughly \$525,000 today) when her grandmother, Mary Jane Husband, died on July 18, 1921. According to the will (accessed through “Find a Will” on Gov.uk), Husband did not receive an outright bequest. She and her siblings shared one-third of proceeds from sale of her grandmother’s real estate, investments, and bank accounts, the values of which are unknown. Inflation-adjusted values courtesy of Lawrence H. Officer and Samuel H. Williamson, “Computing ‘Real Value’ Over Time With a Conversion Between U.K. Pounds and U.S. Dollars, 1774 to Present,” <https://www.measuringworth.com/exchange>, accessed December 2016.
- Hayter briefly sketched Husband’s life to the print dealer Jan Johnson, who sold a large group of Husband’s work to the Winnipeg Art Gallery in 1986, and recalled that she had studied with Léger. Unfortunately, a complete list of students from Académie Moderne has not been compiled. Gladys Fabre offers a partial list (which does not include Husband) in “Petite histoire illustrée de l’académie moderne; liste des élèves de Léger entre 1924 et 1931,” in *Léger et l’esprit moderne* (Paris: Le Musée d’Art moderne de la Ville de Paris, 1982), 479-97.
- Before her marriage, Carr de Creeft’s address was listed as 147 Rue Broca in the 1927 Salon d’Automne catalogue. Nina Ward de Creeft says her mother did not speak much about Atelier 17. She recalled, “my father felt that the group working at the atelier was ‘not a good influence’ on my mother. Probably a Bohemian group.” Nina Ward de Creeft email to author, March 31, 2016. Gary Essar also said Carr de Creeft was reticent to say anything about Atelier 17 when he interviewed her in the 1990s. Gary Essar phone interview with the author, July 11, 2016.
- For Hayter’s chronology, see Black and Moorhead, *The Prints of Stanley William Hayter*, 391. The two exhibited prints were Black/Moorhead 2 and 6 in this catalogue raisonné.
- Stanley William Hayter showed Black/Moorhead 17 and 21. For Fletcher’s travel on the *Ascania*, see “New Yorkers Going to Mediterranean,” *New York Times*, Jan. 23, 1926, 5. Fletcher was the youngest of four children born to Arthur Fletcher, an architect, and his wife Adeline in Pelham, NY. After her divorce from Hayter in Sept. 1929, she lived with her mother in Larchmont, NY, and wrote a book about fashion merchandising (1939). After the death of their son, David Hayter, in December 1945, she moved to upstate New York where she was involved in hospital administration and eventually became a professor of business at Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs.
- See catalogue for *Exposition de gravure et quelques peintures de Edith Fletcher et Stanley William Hayter*, June 16-30, 1928, *Sacre du Printemps*, Paris.
- For more on Hecht, see J. Michael Armentrout, *Joseph Hecht* (Philadelphia, PA: Dolan/Maxwell Gallery, 1985); Jenny Squires Wilker, “Joseph Hecht: Animalier-Buriniste,” *The Print Collector’s Newsletter* 22, no. 4 (Sept. 1991): 126-31.
- For Hayter’s bison print, see Black/Moorhead 25. See Hecht’s bison prints (#144-147) in Dominique Tonneau-Ryckelynck and Roland Plumart, *Joseph Hecht, 1891-1951: catalogue raisonné de l’œuvre gravé* (Gravelines, FR: Editions du Musée de Gravelines, 1992).
- According to Helen Phillips, Fletcher Hayter’s work received more attention and sold better from the *Sacre du Printemps* show, a fact that “left a mark on [Hayter].” See handwritten document, “Before Me,” Helen Phillips papers, Paris, [henceforth cited as HPP]. Thank you to Carla Esposito Hayter for opening these archives to me.
- For an example of the letterhead, see Hayter to Trevelyan, Jan. 2, 1949, JOT 16_39, PJOT. For Hayter’s reference to 1928, see Hayter to Laurence Page Roberts, June 3, 1940, Brooklyn Museum archives, Records of the Department of Prints, Drawings, and Photographs. For Phillips’s comments, see typeset document,

- "Bill's early life," HPP. A 1940 article about Atelier 17's move stated: "For twelve years the designation of 'Atelier 17' was a meaningful term in Paris." "An Atelier Comes to America: Engravers' Workshop Set Up Here by Hayter," *New York Post*, Oct. 2, 1940.
16. These monotypes were on view recently at Greenberg Van Doren gallery in the exhibition, "Hedda Sterne: Machines, 1947-51," March 10 – May 7, 2016. Sterne left much of her work behind when she fled Europe in 1941. She kept photographs, but none show her prints. See two folders marked "Proto U.S. (1941)" and "Sculptures + Paper Collages drings [sic] proto NY" in the Hedda Sterne Foundation archive. Thank you to Shaina Laviree for sharing these files with me.
 17. Thanks to Richard Overstreet, the rights holder (*ayant droit*) of Leonor Fini, for sharing his collection of her Atelier 17 prints. For examples of her drawings and paintings conceived concurrently, see *Leonor Fini: l'italienne de Paris* (Trieste: MR, Museo Revoltella, 2009), 207; Peter Webb, *Sphinx: The Life and Art of Leonor Fini* (New York: Vendome Press, 2009), 28–36. Hayter invited Fini to exhibit with Atelier 17 at the Galerie Pierre in May 1936. See Hayter to Trevelyan, 7 March [1935], JOT 16_19, PJOT.
 18. Handwritten document, "30's," HPP.
 19. Phillips regretted not having had more time to devote to printmaking and sculpture during the years she and Hayter lived in New York. She remembered hosting New York studio members for coffee at her and Hayter's house on Waverly Place: "I knew much of what was happening in the workshop, although I hadn't the time and baby-sitters necessary to work there regularly." Helen Phillips, undated letter to Fred [Becker], HPP.
 20. For a list of Atelier 17's eight shows during its early years in Paris, see my chronology: <http://www.christinaweyl.com/atelier-17-group-exhibition-chronology>
 21. For Galerie Pierre entry fee see Hayter letters to Trevelyan, March 7 [1935], JOT 16_19 and April 23 [1935], JOT 16_11, PJOT. This financial arrangement was typical of interwar Paris where artists rented gallery space. See chapter 5 in Michele Greet, *Transatlantic Encounters: Latin American Artists in Paris between the Wars* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2018). The conversion is based on historic inflation rates found at <http://fxtop.com/en/inflation-calculator.php>.
 22. Moser, *Atelier 17, 13; Curriculum, 1940-1941* (New York: The New School for Social Research, 1940), 77.
 23. Oosting donated 752 of her prints to the Rijksmuseum before her death. For more on Oosting's career and the Jeanne Oosting Stichting, see <http://www.jeanneoostingstichting.nl/jeanne> and Maud van Loon, *Jeanne Bieruma Oosting Als Grafisch Kunstenaar* (As Graphic Artist) (Rotterdam: A. Donker, 1946).
 24. Thank you to Anders Wahlstedt for bringing these prints by Rathsmen to my attention.
 25. Helen Phillips, undated letter to Peter [Black?], HPP.
 26. For biographical information about Buffie Johnson, see <http://www.buffiejohnson.com> and Alexandra de Lallier, "Buffie Johnson: Icons and Altarpieces to the Goddess," *Woman's Art Journal* 3, no. 1 (Spring 1982): 29–34. Johnson published her book on goddess imagery called *Lady of the Beasts: Ancient Images of the Goddess and Her Sacred Animals* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988).
 27. Thank you to Tracy Boyd, former studio assistant for Johnson, for showing me these prints.
 28. Hayter and the university's administrators differed over policies regarding use of the studio, which precipitated the break with the New School. He believed the studio's equipment should be available to all artists regardless of their enrollment status, which vexed the school's administration. Atelier 17 remained affiliated with the New School until the end of the 1945-46 academic year though classes took place on Eighth Street. See *New School Bulletin* 3, no. 1, Sept. 1945, 103, New School Archives and Special Collections Digital Archive.
 29. The first three names are found on the grade rosters in the Registrar's Office at the New School. The last two were part of Anne Ryan's former collection given to the Metropolitan Museum of Art (see accession nos. 1983.1155.4, 1983.1156.9). The New School only kept course enrollment records for matriculated students. The vast majority of members during this period were, therefore, unmatriculated.
 30. For a list of venues within the United States, see my chronology: <http://www.christinaweyl.com/atelier-17-group-exhibition-chronology>. The itinerary of the show's tour in Latin America has not yet been found.
 31. See Christina Weyl, "Networks of Abstraction: Postwar Printmaking and Women Artists of Atelier 17," Archives of American Art, Graduate Essay Prize, <http://www.aaa.si.edu/essay/christina-weyl>.
 32. Vincent Katz, "Louise Bourgeois: An Interview," *The Print Collector's Newsletter* XXVI, no. 3 (August 1995): 88.
 33. Deborah Wye and Carol Smith, *The Prints of Louise Bourgeois* (New York: Museum of Modern Art; distributed by H.N. Abrams, 1994), 120. For more on the importance of printmaking to Bourgeois's career trajectory, see Deborah Wye, *Louise Bourgeois: An Unfolding Portrait: Prints, Books, and the Creative Process* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2017).
 34. Christina Weyl, "Innovative Etchings: Louise Nevelson at Atelier 17," in *American Women Artists, 1935-1970: Gender, Culture, and Politics*, ed. Helen Langa and Paula Wisotzki (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2016), 127–43.
 35. Valerie Fraser, "Encounters in New York, Printmaking in Chile," *American Art* 26, no. 2 (Summer 2012): 28–33.
 36. I wish to thank Silvia Dolinko for bringing Ostrower to my attention.
 37. For more on Martins's career, see Francis M. Naumann, *Maria: The Surrealist Sculpture of Maria Martins* (New York: André Emmerich Gallery, 1998). Duchamp's letters to Martins were published in Michael R. Taylor and P. Andrew Lins, *Marcel Duchamp: Étant Donnés* (Philadelphia and New Haven: Philadelphia Museum of Art, published in association with Yale Univ. Press, 2009).
 38. William Stanley Hayter, letters to Peter Grippe, Oct. 3 and Nov. 27, 1952, Allentown Art Museum, The Grippe Collection.
 39. The best source of information about Wienholt and Cilento is Jude Savage, "Atelier 17 and Australian Women Artists in New York: Margaret Cilento at Home and Abroad, 1946-1965" (MA thesis, The Australian National University, Canberra, 1995).
 40. Hayter, letter to Grippe, Oct. 3, 1952.
 41. See exhibition announcement in Series XIII: Oversized Material, Oversize Box 3, Lotte Jacobi Papers, Univ. of New Hampshire Library.
 42. Thank you to Dennis Nurkse for speaking with me about his mother's time at Atelier 17.
 43. Thomasin Countey kindly shared information about her mother's training with Zorach and her experience at Atelier 17.
 44. Stanley William Hayter, letter to Trevelyan, March 10 [1938], JOT 16_24, PJOT. In 1934, Hayter, Husband, Trevelyan, and his girlfriend Louise summered together in the south of France. Trevelyan's archives also include four letters from Husband.

DE PROFUNDIS

A CARTOGRAPHY OF THE FACE IN THE WORK OF PAULA REGO

By Márcia Oliveira

Born in 1935 in a country ruled by a fascist government that was not only a dictatorship, but also deeply patriarchal,¹ Paula Rego left Portugal at a very young age because, as her father said at the time, “this is not a place for women, this country. You go away.”² Fortunate in having been born into a rich, bourgeois family, with a rather progressive father (an electronic engineer) and in the fashionable resort town of Estoril, near Lisbon,³ she moved to England when she was only 16 years old. There she studied painting at the Slade School of Art between 1952 and 1956. Even though Rego remembers it as a place of artistic freedom, John McEwen, in his biography of the artist, notes the similarities between the institution and the gendered repression in Portugal that was then at the peak of the New State Regime: “The Slade might have been the smartest of art schools but in its male domination ... it could echo Portugal. Paula particularly disapproved of the way women were not treated as equals, and the fact that the rich girls were admitted at the expense of poor ones in the hope that they would support struggling young male artists by marrying them.”⁴

Living and working in London until today,⁵ the artist has achieved great recognition—one of the landmarks of her career being her appointment as the first Associate Artist at the National Gallery in London, in 1990—working on the threshold between a Portuguese identity, a strong political basis, and a unique pictorial style. Her work evolved from the deeply disconcerting and political 1960s and 1970s collages⁶ to later compositions made with acrylic, frequently in series, like the early 1980s Red Monkey series, based on a toy theatre story featuring a monkey, a bear, and a one-eared dog told to her by her husband, the painter Victor Willing. Rego told a story of humiliation and dominance between man and woman with these pictures, with really self-explanatory titles such as *Red Monkey Beats his Wife* and *Wife Cuts off Red Monkey's Tail*. Stories, in fact, are one of Rego's favorite things—throughout the years, she has produced series of works and large canvases departing from literary works such as Charlotte Brönte's *Jane Eyre*, Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* and J. M. Barrie's *Peter Pan*, among many others, since her enthusiasm for *mise-en-scènes*, story-telling, and tales is one of her most distinctive (and emphasized) characteristics.

But in 1994, Paula Rego made a radical change in her artistic practice when she started using pastel instead of acrylic

in her canvases. It seems that she put aside painting and its principal precepts to let drawing lead the way towards defining her unique style. Knowing that Rego particularly dislikes painting nature and landscape, we can truly grasp the reach of theatricality in her compositions, which are conceived and enacted inside her London studio. This exponentially increases a sense of infinitude both of the senses and of the pictures' meanings, a kind of *mise-en-abîme* that, being unable to extend beyond the limits of the painting overflows inward, thus overloading each line, each pigment, each image, and, ultimately, each pictorial composition. Vic Willing identified in her images “several levels of content on different levels of consciousness: the story, or ostensible subject; secondary content of a personal nature; painting about painting; painting about the artist painting this picture; the pre-conscious theme which is gradually revealed and unconscious personal content.”⁷ To these we might add another level of content: an overcharge that will emerge in the paintings through the only possible way out: the subject's face.

To try and understand this virtual level of her painting, I will trace a cartography of the face in the painter's work—for the face is where all the affective, imaginative, and creative movements entailed converge. The point of departure is a simple observation: when looking at her overall work, all the women's bodies that Rego has been painting since the 1980s are predominantly covered, even over-dressed. Female nudity hardly exists in these paintings.⁸ This is an interesting contrast to, for example, Jean Dubuffet, an early influence for Rego. As Andrea Nicole Maier states, Dubuffet in his *Corps des Dames* series (1950) painted nudes and not women, getting closer than ever to a European art historical tradition—notwithstanding his distaste of anything traditional—including traditional conceptions of beauty.⁹ On the contrary, Rego, who covers women with layers and layers of fabric, paints women, and the way she does it is probably one of the reasons why she is so distant from art history's traditional precepts despite being close to its themes. This is certainly one of the many ways through which Rego assumes a clear position against the history of art and its inherent male authority, one of her many achievements, as Germaine Greer has emphasized.¹⁰ The artist herself reveals this very singular interest in painting clothing and fabrics, in what may be seen as an analog to the accumulation of layers of paint in her



Fig. 1. Paula Rego, *Centaur* (1964), collage and oil on canvas, 55 1/8" x 54 3/4". ©Paula Rego. Courtesy Marlborough Fine Art.

painting-drawings or the accumulation of different materials in her 1960s and 1970s collages. As the artist and historian Luísa Capucho Arruda recently pointed out, Rego's work is essentially drawing and not so much painting, going beyond the traditional limitations of drawing as a sketch or study that assumes a secondary position with regard to painting.¹¹

There is, however, a profound dialogue between the painted surface and the depth of drawing, and in Rego's work there is an evolution from surface to depth which is substantiated by a re-emergence to the surface. One does not exist without the other; neither does one overturn the other. This continuous movement between surface and depth is quite noticeable, especially when we take a closer look at the faces of her figures/characters, given that the face is the central aspect of their physiognomy. The face is the way out, the map of emotions, saturated with all the signs, marks, and impressions that transform them into rough, textured, and therefore deep layers. To think about the face in this context is not so much to think about the body as fragment,¹² but rather to think about that signifying process that Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari describe as *visagéité*, or faciality.¹³ Deleuze and Guattari do not refer to any piece, any partial object; nor do they refer to anything isolated from a system of corporeality. The face, as an element that is visually represented and materially constructed, is first and foremost presented as an element of signification. As Deleuze and Guattari say, "it is not the individuality of the face that counts but the efficacy of the ciphering it makes possible, and in what cases it makes it possible. This is an affair not of ideology but of economy and the organization of power (*pouvoir*)."¹⁴ For Deleuze and Guattari, faces do not define individuality, they emit

redundancy: "They are engendered by an *abstract machine of faciality* (*visagéité*), which produces them at the same time as it gives the signifier its white wall and subjectivity its black hole."¹⁵ Faces are also not to be mistaken for heads, since "the head is included in the body, but the face is not."¹⁶

Michel Prieur, on the other hand, directly relates the face with individual identity, saying that in the relationship between face and *persona* a process of representation occurs.¹⁷ Unlike the mask, which implies an obstruction of identity, the face represents the essence of the person and, as a consequence, its reconnaissance. And even if humanity is not seen as a whole but as an I (a you, a she, a he...), the fact is that recognition of the face is a primary and distinctive trait of humans; this differs from animals, of which we recognize the head but not particularly a face. To Prieur, the face is a matter of representation, of identifying the person (*persona*), of a uniqueness of character.¹⁸ It is, therefore, a matter of *traces*, that is lines and marks that, in the face, form the traits of a certain personality; traces and lines also constitute the essence of drawing, and of much of Rego's painting, as I suggest. It is interesting to note that *persona* in Latin means mask, a theater character, a term that was "introduced with this connotation in philosophical language by popular Stoicism to designate the roles represented by an individual throughout life"¹⁹ and only later started to designate the substance of an individual in relationship with the world or with oneself.²⁰

A detail of *Centaur* (1964; Pl. 11 and Fig. 1), a large format collage and oil on canvas in a Pop Art lineage in which the Greek mythological figure represented is a woman, already indicates the basis of the trajectory of the face in Rego's work, occupying that indiscernible territory of her figures, always in limbo, between person and mask, reality and fantasy. This piece portrays a particular understanding of this monstrous, savage, and bestial creature of Greek mythology, whose "head, arms and torso belong to a man while the rest of the body and legs are horse-like."²¹ As described by the painter herself: "That's just the warrior standing on top of the centaur, who happens to be a woman. So he's riding a woman, going into a fight."²² What is truly disconcerting here is the inability to distinguish between mythological figure and knight as conveyed by that small detail that resembles both a face and a mask, neither masculine nor feminine, not clearly human or animal. The representational device that should be the most linear and particular—the face—ends up introducing more confusion and misperception amidst the chaos of the surrounding guerrilla warfare. According to Prieur, "it seems necessary to choose between the face and animality. The recognition and indiscernibility: the sacred exceeds the terms of the alternative and the notion of divine might as well be the result of the teratological union between the face that provides a meaning and the 'beast,' that neither includes nor expresses."²³ The philosopher José Gil also corroborates the status of the face as signification in his *Metamorphoses of the Body*, where he says that the face supports the relation between signifier and signification, for "there is no relation of meaning that doesn't redirect, from near or far, to a face."²⁴ Given this assumption, what happens in such a type of pictorial

representation marked by becoming an animal²⁵ and by a corporeality elsewhere described as extreme?²⁶ I would start by saying that the face is the element that binds together all the threads of what Victor Willing calls Rego's *imagiconography*,²⁷ having evolved from a mask-state to a map-state; from face-as-surface to face-as-depth. The face is the one element that expresses something, and what it expresses is, first and foremost, the vivid imagination of the painter made of the entwined threads of her own affective, visual, and haptic memory.²⁸

What, then, does the concept of surface bring to this discussion? Giuliana Bruno proposes a reading of the surface as a place of materialization that marks a turning point in the contemporary readings of art from optical to haptic, since the surface (canvas, screen, etc.) works as a mnemonic element, an "historically dense" space, an "archive."²⁹ The image is here seen as 'thing,' and the image's own materiality "manifests itself in the surface"³⁰ (Bruno refers to Lucretius's *De Rerum Natura*, that serves as a starting point for her argument), or the surface as a dynamic space of permutation between subject and object. Bruno also emphasizes the etymological connection between surface and face. For the sake of my own argument, it is important to clarify that I do not consider the face as a portrait, as for Rego the face is not a prerogative to identify or represent any fixed identity or character—rather, it serves as a relational space where desire and creativity meet. This is significant when we consider the way through which the most intimate and hidden secrets of women emerge in her work—secrets related to women's bodies, abortion, resentment, the negation of masculine supremacy, etc.—which is through the materiality of drawing. In fact, the stories that Rego paints often depart from literary and mythological sources, although they always convey an idiosyncratic vision of the particular story, transformed into a visual narrative contaminated by the mundane, by actual and real experiences. As the painter herself says, "my favorite themes are power, dominance and hierarchy games. They always make me turn everything upside down, to dislocate the established order."³¹ As an example, one can look at the scenes from the life of the Virgin Mary that were commissioned for the chapel at Palácio de Belém (the Palace of the President of the Portuguese Republic), a series of small paintings, from the Annunciation to the Assumption, including one depicting a pregnant Virgin Mary, dressed in her traditional blue robe but in the throes of giving birth (2002; Fig. 2). (The examples are too many to list here, especially considering her graphic work.³²)

Here it is useful to look more closely at *Wendy's Song* (1992; Pl. 12 and Fig. 3), from the series based on



Fig. 2. Paula Rego, *Nativity* (2002), pastel on paper mounted on aluminium, 21 1/4" x 20 1/2". Courtesy Museu da Presidência da República.



Fig. 3. Paula Rego, *Wendy's Song* (1992), color etching and aquatint, 16 1/8" x 13 7/8" (size on paper). © Paula Rego. Courtesy Marlborough Fine Art.



Fig. 4. Paula Rego, *Red Monkey Drawing* (1981), acrylic on paper, 29 3/8" x 22". ©Paula Rego. Courtesy Marlborough Fine Art.

J.M. Barrie's *Peter Pan*. Paula Rego described the connection of this work with pregnancy and abortion in a letter to art historian T.G. Rosenthal, who wrote: "As the artist has pointed out, Wendy, here younger than her usual, stronger, more bossy self shows the rounded profile of pregnancy. The pot she stirs is filled with and blood and foetuses, and blood streaks the etching. More foetuses look on.... Rego also indicated that this etching is in several ways the progenitor of her abortion series."³³ A pregnant Wendy's face is disconcertingly unformed, perhaps even slightly resembling that of a fetus, which relates to other elements of the composition that include four fetus-like babies exposed at the windows of the house standing behind the central character. As they look on, Wendy stirs a bucket of blood. The bloody tone is given by the bright red color, which accentuates the superposition of black lines that characterize engravings and brings her still forming face, with a disproportionate forehead, small nose, and flat face, features emphasized by her profile view, closer to the suggested idea of germination. Life and death, beginning and end, are thus deeply inscribed, or marked, and not superficially stained. This can be said to be the essence both of engraving and of drawing. And both the fissure of engraving and the marked line of drawing are synthesized in the technique Rego started using in the mid-1990s, of pastel on paper. All of these material processes enable the formation of ambiguous faces, on a threshold between human, monster, and animal. Philip Rawson defines drawing as the most spiritual of all the visual art forms because it adds something to our sight that not even Nature can provide.³⁴ Drawing also relates to sight in a very different way from painting. The marks of drawing



Fig. 5. Paula Rego, *Vivian Girls In Tunisia* (1984), acrylic on canvas, 78 3/4" x 39 3/8". ©Paula Rego. Courtesy Marlborough Fine Art.

deepen the look; a line sends us in the direction of another line. Like in a map, it is impossible to go through all the paths of a drawing without paying close attention to the visual and physical connections it entails. This is a process contrary to painting that converges in a diffuse action—the mark tends to be dispersed throughout the surface.³⁵ Therefore, one can deduce that drawing has a more immediate and, in a certain way, visceral nature. As Ignacio de Beryes says when thinking about Goya's drawings and etchings, drawing is a faster and more direct channel to convey thoughts and emotions,³⁶ and it was this exact feature that brought Rego closer to drawing after being trained as a painter at the Slade School of Art.

Influenced by Jean Dubuffet—"then I discovered Dubuffet. And it released me," she said³⁷—and by an increasing contact with Art Brut, Rego started exploring the further potentialities of drawing at the end of the 1950s. By then, according to John McEwen, "she drew and drew, and eventually the pictures came again, raw in both color and mood, as if she was literally 'drawing her guts out.'"³⁸ This rawness is present in the all of

the work Rego produced in these years. In collages like *The Eating* (1959) or *Popular Proverb* (1961)—which we could easily call “primitive,” meaning fundamental and visceral—we can see the exact same sense of freedom and possibility. Amongst the chaos of these compositions, masks emerge, small heads with only minor elements that suggest the idea of a mask: in *The Eating*, for instance, there is a tiny mouth inside the line that resembles a head, marks that look like rosy cheeks, and some discrete details suggesting an idea of sacredness (the letters JES CRIS, for example, on a piece of newspaper glued onto the canvas, make us think about Jesus Christ). In this regard, the commentary by Ana Gabriela Macedo, who refers to a “permanent dialogue between sacred and profane,” is especially poignant.³⁹

But modern painting, as Deleuze said, is an “atheist game.”⁴⁰ Thus, instead of bringing us towards an individual identification or to a metonymical exercise—taking the face for the whole of humanity—these masks, and their primitive substrate, tell us something about animalism and about pre-consciousness, something that is confirmed in later acrylic paintings such as *Vivian Girls* (1984) or in pastel works on paper such as *War* (2003)⁴¹ and *The Pillowman* (2004), a triptych based on the homonymous play by Irish writer Martin McDonagh that not only tells the story but is also reminiscent of the artist’s father and other of her memories in Portugal. *Portrait of a Lady* (1959; Pl. 13), a highly sexualized and autobiographical mixed media work that was made in Portugal after the Slade period with newspaper clippings and other materials,⁴² confirms this early and fundamental profusion of masks and the sentiment they encompass, based on a way of doing (collage) that has close similarities to drawing. (“It was all haptic, it all came out of what I was doing. This was to do with the hand and the gut: how you feel and some sort of sexuality.”⁴³) Indeed, like drawing, the construction process of these masks implies a base, a background onto which layers of material are superimposed. This process can be seen as creating solid foundations for something that is being built but also as a process of concealment. It looks like these masks conceal what is there to be shown or seen; i.e., to deny representing a face, an identity comes with a paradoxical emergence of something real, something material and not symbolic or ethereal, in contrast to canonical forms of representation and particularly of feminine representation. The allusion to primitive elements, archeological excavation, and a dive into the unconscious also is something close to drawing as a process—a relationship that is fundamental to Rego’s work since the beginning of her career. The mask was, then, inevitably to be transformed into face-depth.

The fragmentation of collage was replaced in the early 1980s with a return to painting with the Red Monkey series. *Red Monkey Drawing* (1981; Fig. 4) portrays a monkey drawing a figure onto a vertical canvas and clearly shows the rediscovery of the feeling of drawing after encountering Dubuffet. As McEwen says, the painter rediscovered the emotion inherent to a more direct kind of work: “she found she drew with a zest and truth to her own experience that she



Fig. 6. Paula Rego, *Grandmother* (2001), lithograph, 76.0 x 56.5 cm. ©Paula Rego. Courtesy Marlborough Fine Art.

had not felt since her post-Dubuffet outburst twenty years before.”⁴⁴ This was the moment when the mask entered a whole new level besides the one envisioned in the collages. Even though the primitive feel of the works was maintained (for example in the acrylic works *Little Girls Showing Off*, *Rabbit and Weeping Cabbage*, or *The Chicken Persuading the Woman*, all 1982), bodies of men and women emerge with vegetable or animal heads (e.g., cabbages, potatoes, horses, monkeys, rabbits, chickens, birds). Several anthropomorphisms dominate each piece, and their size keeps growing so that they are able to accommodate the staggering succession of events, stories, or “incidents”⁴⁵ until we reach the famous Operas, the epitome of this more direct and explicit form of drawing. Here is “the instinctive kind of drawing to which Paula resorts when she feels herself to be drifting away from the truth,” writes McEwen.⁴⁶ Rego calls these works “ink drawings.”⁴⁷ This series of large format paintings is akin to her graphic work in that the use of color is kept to a minimum, for example, besides black and white, there are different tones of red and amber, with the exception only of *La Bohème*. In *Aida*, *The Girl of the Golden West*, *Rigoletto* (Pl. 14) and *Faust* (all 1983) the preponderance of the line and two-dimensional figures comes as a heritage of that Art Brut influence, which will reach a peak with her *Vivian Girls* series, a re-reading of the North



Fig. 7. Paula Rego, *Dog Woman* (1994), pastel on canvas, 47 1/4" x 63". ©Paula Rego. Courtesy Marlborough Fine Art.

American outsider artist Henry Darger's famous work.⁴⁸

Darger's *The Story of the Vivian Girls in what is known as the Realms of the Unreal, of the Glandeco-Angelinian War Storm, caused by the Child Slave Rebellion*, a visual and literary masterpiece, is the story of the epic combat between the small Vivian Girls and the Glandelinians, evil grown-ups whose goal was to mistreat and enslave children. Rego described her impression when facing Darger's drawings, emphasizing the feeling of looking at the small figures with penises and the fact that they wore pretty clothes.⁴⁹ Yet, this was only a trigger for her own *Vivian Girls*, which focus instead on the troublesome relationship between women of different generations. *Vivian Girls In Tunisia* (1984; Pl. 15 and Fig. 5) "is about mothers eating their daughters,"⁵⁰ a theme that is present all over her work, as is the kissing between mothers, daughters, and grandmothers; as in *Grandmother* (2001; Fig. 6) and *Misericord* (2001) (a dialogue with Goya's *Saturn* [c. 1821–23] is almost inevitable here). In *Vivian Girls in Tunisia*, the mask-faces (the etymology of *persona* described earlier is relevant here), or the surface-faces, remain as central elements in these paintings, as is the anthropomorphism of the figures that is achieved via a process of rapprochement with the face: a palm tree with eyes, nose, and mouth is beheaded, the heads having clear and flattened shapes. But it is always the line that remains, even though the entire pictorial surface is filled with bright colors. The mask, a symbol of concealment and theatricality, apparently deludes the *persona* while at the same implying the

existence of the corporeal element on top of which it sits. The animals and their faceless heads need no masks but are transformed into masks.

In Rego's work all those borders are diffuse and blurred, the emotions shackled under an array of clothes and bursting through the only way out they can find: the face. This is the depth that will progressively emerge from the faces, rebutting the separation between surface and depth. The optical space is widened via that haptic quality of drawing, emanating from the gesture of the painter. In a way, and unlike Francis Bacon (for example, the triptych *August*, 1972 or the portrait *Seated Figure*, 1961) whose objective is, quoting Deleuze, "to dissolve the face, to uncover or to make the head emerge from beneath the face,"⁵¹ Rego superimposes the face on the head after anthropomorphizing it, after 'masquerading it.' This process comes to fruition via the lines of her drawing that allow all the traces of a sensorial and figurative memory to stay afloat. While in Bacon the face loses its shape, in Rego it becomes modular; it is redefined with each and every look, allowing for multiple shapes and different memories to co-exist. But the question is not so much whether such a redefinition is achieved by the act of looking or by the painter's hand, especially if we consider the fact that there is always a certain amount of figurative information that already exists prior to the act of painting, as Deleuze made clear.⁵² What happens in Rego's painting, which never ceases to be drawing, is that the line loses its exclusive function of delineating, demarcating,

outlining. Not actually being an outline, the line is intertwined with color, with the pigment, without being completely lost. The face, therefore, is no longer the limit of the figure because the figure does not exist as a *persona* or as an inner landscape (interior, affective, psychic, etc.).

The face is a map because in it are inscribed all the paths of Rego and her work. This process became clearer when, in 1994, Rego started using pastel with her (in)famous Dog Women to paint Lila Nunes crouching and snarling (Pl. 16 and Fig. 7).⁵³ In these works the composition was reduced to one or two figures, always women, not acting like dogs but actually *being* dogs, engendered dogs. In them, the use of pastel, said Rego, introduced her painting and her figures to a whole new set of possibilities: “I found that if I used these sticks of pigment, I could get the volume of the body. It’s terribly difficult to do unclothed bits of the body in paint; it is for me. And I found it a lot easier doing it in pastel, building it up in layers.”⁵⁴ Such layering—the constructing of images by superimposing lines engraved on the pictorial surface with the pastel stick that are later harmonized with *conté* crayons—is what transforms these faces into complex surfaces, full of volume and depth (this process, and its material implications, contrasts strongly with the use of brushes in oil painting, for example. Rego’s true drawing in the guise of painting, using pastel, deeply transformed the type of figuration she produced. “It gave me a different kind of look,” she says.⁵⁵ The series *Dancing Ostriches* from Disney’s *Fantasia* (1995), based on the 1940 Walt Disney film, made for the “Spellbound” exhibition at the Hayward Gallery in London, synthesizes this process in a representative way,⁵⁶ portraying dancers that were all but the epitome of a ballet dancer, with their rude, large and clumsy bodies and their brute faces and expressions. The same can be said of the *Dog Women* and the *Abortion series*⁵⁷ (1998; Fig. 8) or the polyptych *Possession* (2004), a set of seven large panels inspired by the hysteria studies and photographs made by the French neurologist Jean-Martin Charcot at the Salpêtrière Hospital, in which a woman is portrayed on a bed in seven different positions, or seven different stages of her possession by ‘evil forces’ or simply by desire. The face is where exception occurs, a place where all the senses and feelings meet. It is the main characteristic of Deleuze’s “affection-image”⁵⁸; the face allows for the affective image to stand out, not just in each composition individually but also in each series of paintings and, ultimately, in the artist’s overall work. As Deleuze says:

In painting, the techniques of the portrait have accustomed us to these two poles of the face. Sometimes painting grasps the face as an outline, by an encircling line which traces the nose, the mouth, the edge of the eyelids, and even the beard and the cap: it’s a surface of *visageification* [faceification]. Sometimes, however, it works through dispersed features taken globally; fragmentary and broken lines which indicate here the quivering lips, the brilliance of a look, and which involve a content which to a greater or lesser extent rebels against the outline.⁵⁹



Fig. 8. Paula Rego, *Untitled no. 1* (1998) (*Abortion series*), pastel on paper on aluminum, 43 1/4" x 39 3/8". ©Paula Rego. Courtesy Marlborough Fine Art.

The face is the organism in which this process of affection, or showing affect, actually exists—it is not merely reproduced.⁶⁰ As was said earlier, Paula Rego does not make portraits; she also goes beyond faciality, expanding affect toward the interior, toward inside the face itself. And the face is the only way out. ●

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Notes

1. The fascist regime, that came to be known as the New State, ruled Portugal between 1933 and 1974, the year of the coup d’état that overthrew the republicans. Known as the Carnation Revolution, it was led by a group of military that brought democracy back to the country. This was the longest dictatorship in Europe and had distinctive features, such as a deep-seated patriarchy, censorship and political persecution as well as a strong Catholic matrix. António de Oliveira Salazar, the head and face of the regime until his death in 1968, stated that the country was “proudly alone,” with its back turned against Europe and focusing its economic and political relationships with the African countries that then, and until the Revolution, were colonized by Portugal (Angola, Mozambique, Guinea Bissau, Cape Verde and São Tomé e Príncipe). An independence war was fought in these countries between 1961 and 1974. Overwhelming poverty, and cultural, social, and economic backwardness were some of the most visible results of these decades of repression and isolation.
2. John McEwen, *Paula Rego* (London: Phaidon, 1997), 46.

3. A place where the European aristocrats, intellectuals and political exiles found asylum during WWII. This occurred because Portugal was officially a neutral country during the conflict.
4. McEwen, *Paula Rego*, 46. In a recent documentary directed by Rego's son, Nick Willing, she made startling revelations regarding the relationship between men and women in those days, including hers with her husband, painter Vic Willing, whom she met at the Slade School (Vic was married by then and Paula got pregnant at a very young age; they had their first child in 1956). Nick Willing, *Paula Rego. Histórias & Segredos*, DVD (Lisbon: Midas Films, 2017).
5. She lived in Portugal for a brief period with her husband and three children (1957–63) and between London and Portugal during 1963–75. They settled permanently in London in 1976.
6. In 1966 she presented her work in Portugal, at the National Society of Fine Arts, in what was her first solo show in the country. The works shown caused a turmoil in Portugal's conservative capital, and she was even accused by a visitor of being 'a slut.' She responded promptly and fearlessly: 'No, sluts paint churches,' McEwen, *Paula Rego*, 76.
7. Victor Willing, "The Imagiconography of Paula Rego," *Colóquio Artes* 13, no. 2 (1971): 43–49.
8. One exception is *Girl with Chickens* (1997, pastel on paper mounted on aluminum), which portrays a woman lying on a bed wearing only underpants. It is more frequent that male figures appear naked, as in the *Kafkaesque* cockroach man of the *Metamorphosis after Kafka* (2002, pastel on paper mounted on aluminum) and several other examples of her graphic work.
9. Andrea Nicole Maier, "Jean Dubuffet and the Bodies of Ladies," *Art History* 34, no. 5 (2011): 1012–41.
10. In an article published in *The Guardian*, Greer says that "her work is not about the development of herself or her position within the Western tradition; she couldn't care less about all of that. Indeed, she refuses to list herself among the "great painters", and continues to call what she does "drawing", as she did when she drew on the floor as a child. Her stories are moments that have no narrative sequence; they defy and undo history, explanation and theory." In Germaine Greer, "Untamed by Age," *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2004/nov/20/art> (accessed Jan. 3, 2017). Greer, a feminist and an admirer of Paula Rego, has written extensively about the painter's work. Rego produced an iconic portrait of the writer in 1995, a commission for the National Portrait Gallery, in London.
11. Lecture by Luísa Capucho Arruda entitled "Paula Rego and Drawing: Challenge and Bravery" at the international conference Caught in the Act: The (Literary) Imagiconography of Paula Rego (NOVA School of Social Sciences and Humanities, Lisbon, Dec. 3–4, 2015).
12. For more on the body as fragment, see Linda Nochlin, *The Body in Pieces. The Fragment as a Metaphor of Modernity* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1994).
13. The French word is *visagéité*. Throughout this paper I use the translation of the term by Brian Massumi. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis/London: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1987).
14. *Ibid.*, 175.
15. *Ibid.*, 168.
16. *Ibid.*, 170.
17. Michel Prieur, "Visage et personne: Contribution à l'établissement du statut ontologique de la représentation (Face and person: Contribution to the establishment of the ontological status of representation), in *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*, 3 (July–Sept. 1982): 314–34, 315.
18. *Ibid.*
19. Nicola Abbagnano, *Dicionário de Filosofia*. ed. Ivone Castilho Benedetti (São Paulo: Martins Fontes, 2000), 761 (my translation).
20. *Ibid.*
21. Jean Chevalier and Alain Gheerbrant, in *Dicionário de Símbolos* (Lisbon: Teorema, 1982), 181 (my translation).
22. Paula Rego, *Paula Rego* (Madrid: Museu Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, 2008), 250.
23. "Il semble qu'il faille choisir entre le visage et l'animalité. La reconnaissance et l'indiscernabilité: le sacrédépasse les termes de l'alternative et la notion du divin pourrait bien résulter de l'union tératologique entre le visage qui donne un sens et la «bête» qu'in n'en comporte ni n'exprime." Prieur, "Visage et personne: Contribution à l'établissement du statut ontologique de la représentation," 314–34, 316 (my translation). Webster's Dictionary defines teratology as "the study of malformations or serious deviations from the normal type in developing organisms."
24. In this book the Portuguese philosopher focused on the body, the body's different spatial dimensions, and more specifically the dichotomy between inside and outside (what he calls the threshold space, the space of the body and the body's internal space). In this more recent edition of the work, he publishes a new chapter entirely devoted to the question "What is a face for?" Here, he reflects on the importance of the face to the understanding of this problematic. José Gil, *Metamorfoses do Corpo* (Lisbon: Relógio d'Água Editores, 1997).
25. Márcia Oliveira, "Paula Rego: uma leitura transversal a partir de conceitos de Gilles Deleuze e do Feminismo" *Diacrítica. Dossier Género e Estudos Feministas* 22, no. 3 (2008).
26. Márcia Oliveira, "Is this Desire? Power, politics and sexuality in Paula Rego's extreme bodies," *Journal of Romance Studies* 15, no. 2 (2015): 22–39. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3167/jrs.2015.150202>; accessed Jan. 5, 2018.
27. Willing. "The Imagiconography of Paula Rego," 43–49.
28. See Maria Manuel Lisboa, *Paula Rego's Map of Memory. National and Sexual Politics* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2003), 4. Lisboa traced an all-encompassing map of personal and political relationships in the work of Paula Rego: "the political is translated back into the immediately accessible vocabulary of the personal: history is paraphrased in images drawn from domestic life, and national politics finds expression through the familiar lexicon of interpersonal relations."
29. Giuliana Bruno, *Surface Encounters. Matters of Aesthetics, Materiality and Media* (Chicago and London: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2014), 6.
30. *Ibid.*, 3.
31. Alexandre Pomar, "Pinturas de Histórias," *Tabacaria* 2 (1996): 19 (my translation).
32. For a complete survey on Paula Rego's graphic work see T.G. Rosenthal, *Paula Rego : the complete graphic work*. New updated and expanded edition (London: Thames & Hudson, 2012).
33. *Ibid.*, 82.
34. Philip Rawson, *Drawing* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1969).
35. See Walter Benjamin's 1977 essay, "Painting, or Signs and Marks," in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, Volume 1: 1913–1926*, eds. Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2004), 83–86.
36. Ignacio d Beryes, *Dibujos y Grabados de Goya* (Barcelona: Iberia – Joaquín Gil Editores, 1946).
37. McEwen, *Paula Rego*, 56.
38. *Ibid.*, 57.

39. Macedo, *Paula Rego e o poder da visão*, 123 (my translation).
40. Deleuze, *Francis Bacon. Logique de la Sensation* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2002), 17.
41. This pastel on paper on aluminum painting (63" x 47 1/4") about the suffering during war times is based on a picture by a little girl in panic that was published in the British newspaper *The Guardian* during the Iraq war. As Rego says, "I thought I would do a picture about these children getting hurt, but I turned them into rabbits heads, like masks. It's very difficult to do it with humans, it doesn't get the same kind of feel at all. It seemed more real to transform them into creatures." Rego, *Paula Rego*, 268.
42. This work marks Rego's early encounter with the work of Dubuffet and the moment when she cut loose with the academic education she encountered at Slade.
43. Rego, *Paula Rego*, 248.
44. McEwen, *Paula Rego*, 104.
45. Ibid., 117.
46. Ibid.
47. Rego, *Paula Rego*, 203.
48. Paula Rego saw the exhibition "Outsiders," including these works by Henry Darger (1892–1973) at the Hayward Gallery, London, in 1979. This show is now considered to be a landmark of the British art scene and was curated by Victor Musgrave and Monica Kinley.
49. Rego, *Paula Rego*.
50. Ibid., 353.
51. "Défaire le visage, retrouver ou faire surgir la tête sous le visage." Deleuze, *Francis Bacon. Logique de la Sensation*, 27 (my translation).
52. Ibid., 83, "La peinture avant de peindre."
53. Lila Nunes travelled from Portugal to England to look after Vic Willing when he was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. With Dog Women, she and Rego started a life-long collaboration and friendship as she became the main model for the artist's pictures. As Rego says, "Somehow it's her, I can't imagine that it could be anybody else. She's terribly good at finding poses. She herself can help a great deal, by getting the right stance, exactly right. I say, 'Give it a twist'. And she does. She gets it. Extraordinary." Rego, *Paula Rego*, 258.
54. Ibid.
55. Ibid.
56. This exhibition was dedicated to the relationship between the visual arts and cinema.
57. In 1998, the Portuguese government organized a referendum to ask the population if they should legalize abortion. The referendum failed to pass and illegal abortion continued to be a major problem for women in Portugal, many of whom died as a result of such practice. This shocked Paula Rego, who decided to produce one of her most deliberately political series of paintings, depicting several women in the context of having illegal abortions. As she says, "all I can do is paint; it is the only power I have." In Márcia Oliveira, *Paula Rego em Serralves: trabalhos recentes*. DVD (Porto: RTP 2, 2005).
58. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia*.
59. Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1, The Movement-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1986), 88.
60. Paul Klee wrote that "art ne reproduit pas le visible; il rend visible" ("art does not reproduce the visible; it makes visible"). Klee, *Théorie de l'art moderne* (Paris: Éditions Denöel, 1964), 34.

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PERFORMING A PUBLIC FOR RAPE

THE COLLABORATIVE PERFORMANCES OF SUZANNE LACY AND LESLIE LABOWITZ-STARUS

By Angelique Szymanek

In 1977, women in Los Angeles were gripped with fear as stories of the so-called “Hillside Strangler” saturated news media. The killer first targeted alleged prostitutes whose rape and murder provoked little popular attention. The discovery of bodies on hillsides in the middle-class neighborhood of Glendale-Highland Park, however, generated a media frenzy that consumed the city with stories that reveled in the gruesome details of the crimes and in predicting the killer’s motives. Over the course of three months the “Hillside Strangler,” who ended up being two men, had raped, tortured, and killed ten women, leaving their naked bodies posed provocatively in public spaces. As is often the case with stories of rape, the similarities between news media coverage of the murders and fictional narratives of sexual violence in popular culture abounded.

Describing the coverage of the murders, artist Suzanne Lacy (b. 1945) recalled the particular zeal with which reporters indulged in the thrill and fear that violent death often elicits. “The fantasy involvement of the reporters, mostly male, in the drama of the Hillside Strangler murders,” she wrote, “was transmitted to their audience.”¹ The reportage cast terror into women who, as Lacy recounts, began carrying knives and purchasing dogs for protection while the rest of the population appeared to revel in their assumed roles as criminal investigators. As false confessions and stories about the murders accumulated over the three-month killing spree, the attention seemed to embolden the killers, who began dumping the bodies with increasing frequency.

Lacy, along with artist Leslie Labowitz-Starus (b. 1946), disgusted by both the crimes and the way the media were handling them, created a public performance addressing the issue. *In Mourning and in Rage* was the second among a series of their collaborations wherein they confronted the issue of rape and the ways it is made visible within the public sphere. *In Mourning and in Rage* and *Three Weeks in May*, both 1977, are among the first feminist works to address sexual violence, but their place within the canon of art history rarely credits them with much more than the novelty of their subject. This article foregrounds some of the conceptual innovations of Lacy and Labowitz-Starus’s collaborative performances, namely, their challenge to notions of collectivity and public engagement, the

former of which has long been a hallmark of the way early feminist art is historicized.²

The claim that these performances create *a* public, rather than address *the* public, is one that depends upon the acknowledgment of the constructed and, therefore, exclusionary nature of the public sphere as first articulated by German philosopher Jürgen Habermas in his 1962 tome *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. Historicized as the product of the increased division between private and public life through processes of modernization, Habermas defined the public sphere as “the sphere of private people come together as a public; they soon claimed the public sphere regulated from above against the public authorities themselves, to engage them in a debate over the general rules governing relations in the basically privatized but publicly relevant sphere of commodity exchange and social labor.”³ Characterized by inclusivity and a “disregard of status,” the public sphere as conceptualized by Habermas doesn’t account for the various material, political, economic, and social factors that make participation in the authoring of public opinion limited if not entirely impossible for women and non-white people, among various others.

In her essay, “Rethinking the Public Sphere,” Nancy Fraser problematizes the singularity and consensus building structure of Habermas’s model. For Fraser, the deliberation and discourse that generate a public are inherently exclusionary and, as an alternative, she proposes a model that addresses those who are effaced from bourgeois deliberation. What she calls subaltern counterpublics have “a dual character,” functioning as “spaces of withdrawal and regroupment” while simultaneously acting as “training grounds for agitational activities directed toward wider publics.... It is precisely in the dialectic between these two functions,” she continues, “that their emancipatory potential resides.”⁴ Through this model, oppressed social groups are able to make change within public spheres while sustaining a collective identity that remains independent (however marginally) from dominant publics. Using this theoretical model, this paper argues that Lacy and Labowitz-Starus create such “training grounds” and, in their creation of a counterpublic, they allow those who had previously been



Fig. 1. Suzanne Lacy and Leslie Labowitz-Starus, *In Mourning and in Rage* (1977), Los Angeles, CA. Photo: Maria Karras. Archival photo. Courtesy Leslie Labowitz-Starus.

unauthorized to speak the truth of rape in “the” public a space to do so with an agency that wasn’t, and arguably still is not, afforded the rape survivor.

In Mourning and in Rage was performed at the height of the sensationalist media coverage around the Hillside Strangler murders, and the artists rallied the participation of members of the Rape Hotline Alliance, Los Angeles City Council, and The Woman’s Building. Described as a “public ritual of rage as well as grief,” *In Mourning and in Rage* commenced with a motorcade of sixty women. A string of cars, each marked with stickers that read “Funeral” and “Stop Violence Against Women,” trailed a hearse to the stairs of Los Angeles City Hall. Upon arrival, nine seven-foot-tall veiled women emerged from a car wearing dark robes; the tenth was cloaked in scarlet (Fig. 1). The towering figures, referred to as “mourners,” spoke for each of the murdered young women. Describing the event, Lacy wrote: “The mourners faced the street as the women from the motorcade procession drove slowly past. Forming a procession three abreast, the mourners walked toward the City Hall steps ... forming a chorus. As the performance began, they unfurled a banner that read ‘In Memory of Our Sisters, Women Fight Back,’ designed to fit a horizontal camera frame.”⁵ With the media positioned to film the event, the first mourner walked to the microphone and stated: “I am here for the ten women who have been raped and strangled between October 18 and November 29.” After her

statement, and the nine to follow, the chorus echoed the phrase: “In memory of our sisters, we fight back” (Plates 17 and 18 and Fig. 2).⁶ The veiled women’s words were brief and designed, as Jeff Kelley describes, to “capture and fix media attention by anticipating and appealing to its journalistic conventions, including the need for bold, simple images” and “concise statements (sound bites, declarations of rage).”⁷

Referred to by them as a “media strategy,” Lacy and Labowitz-Starus used this approach in a number of their collaborative performances. In an essay entitled “Feminist Artists: Developing a Media Strategy for the Movement,” the artists lay out the key elements of a successful “media action.” The step-by-step format is intended to serve as a guide for like-minded people seeking a means to participate in the creation of an “overall working strategy” to address sexism in media culture and mobilize a “social revolution.”⁸ Another way to conceptualize these tactics is as strategies toward the production of a public, one that is reproducible. The directives in the essay include: “Come together with women who feel as you do”; “Learn everything you can about the press in your community”; and “Pick your location strategically to enhance the impact of your images.”⁹ The feminist media action, as defined and enacted by Lacy and Labowitz-Starus, is a recipe for how to effectively deploy dominant media tactics to ends that are at odds with the capitalist patriarchal systems that rely on them to author rape culture. When put into action, in other



Fig. 2. Suzanne Lacy and Leslie Labowitz-Starus, *In Mourning and in Rage* (1977), Los Angeles, CA. Photo: Maria Karras. Archival photo Courtesy Leslie Labowitz-Starus.

words, these media actions perform a momentary co-optation of the machinery of oppression.

The parodic nature of *In Mourning and in Rage* echoed the gruesome hyperbole used by many of the very news outlets in attendance. One particularly exploitative component of the “Strangler” coverage was the circulation of photographs of the discovery of bodies of the victims, usually fully or partially nude and always bloodied. Not only did these crime-scene images continue to violate the murdered women, who certainly couldn’t consent to the exposure of their bodies post-mortem, but they demonstrated a public appetite for them. Considering the journalistic overexposure of the murdered women, the shrouded mourners of *In Mourning and in Rage* refused that dehumanizing scrutiny in favor of anonymity which both shields the participants from voyeuristic ogling and suggests the ubiquity of rape. The “facelessness” of the mourners emphasized the quotidian reality of sexual violence, its unexceptional status as a fact of the lives of many women and girls who will never be identified publicly as victims.

The auditory components of the performance also challenged the notions of exceptionalism that characterize “real rape.” These included statements such as: “I am here for

the 4,033 women who have been raped in L.A. last year;” “I am here for the half million women who are being beaten in their own homes;” and “I am here for the one out of four of us who are sexually abused before the age of eighteen.” Sadly, the numbers shared in *In Mourning and in Rage* have changed little. According to statistics generated by the U.S. Department of Justice in 2015, for example, approximately 321,5000 people (over the age of 12) are raped or sexually assaulted every year.¹⁰ In 1977, these numbers were far less familiar to most, and they shifted focus, if even for just the duration of the performance, from the isolated cases of serial stranger rape to the broader systemic status of sexual and gendered violence. The statements made by each of the ten shrouded women, as well as those of the chorus of women and public figures who accompanied them, performed a public for rape wherein, unlike most media coverage of the subject, victims had the agency to express their own experiences and make demands for change.

Three Weeks in May began on Mother’s Day in 1977 and, like *In Mourning and in Rage*, deployed various tactics of media intervention, protest, and interpersonal discussion. The sites and forms of these interventions, however, ranged widely from installations and performances to radio talk shows and

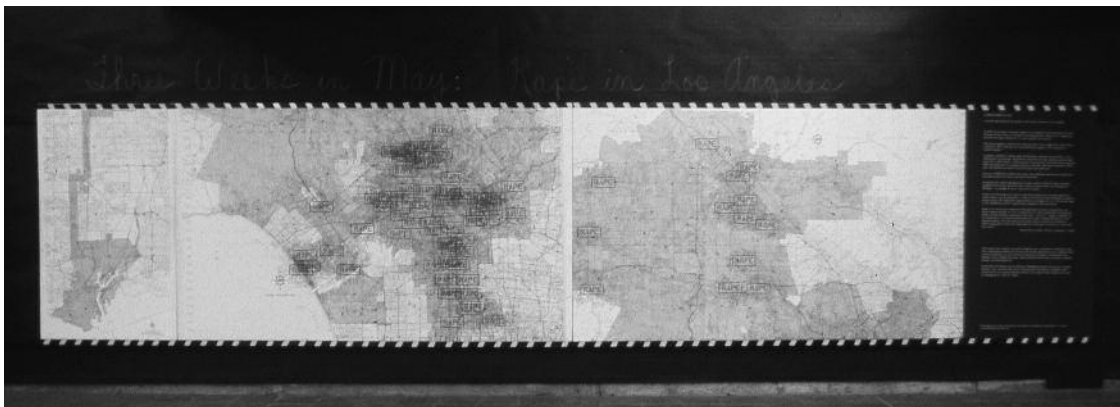


Fig. 3. Suzanne Lacy, *Maps*, part of *Three Weeks in May* (1977), ca. 6' x 30', City Mall, Los Angeles, CA. Archival photo. Courtesy Suzanne Lacy.

intimate dinners bringing together diverse groups of women to discuss issues related to sexual violence. The constitution of a public, therefore, became the central point of critical consideration. Furthermore, questions of how the justice system, popular media, and art world, each engage in the issue of sexual violence, implicitly or explicitly, were thrown into relief. In speaking, performing, and imaging sexual violence outside of dominant cultural codes, Labowitz-Starus, Lacy, and their many collaborators, shed light on the modes by which these spaces and their associated institutions exploit the violent subjugation of women. Troubled by the appearance of what is meant to remain unspoken and unseen (rape as a real and foundational component of Western culture), the publics these performances conjure are confronted not only with rape as an issue worthy of empathy or rage but as an institution within which we are all unavoidably implicated.

The central component of *Three Weeks in May* was *Maps*. The installation was created through the support of the community-based arts organization Studio Watts Workshop and The Woman's Building and consisted of two twenty-foot-wide and six-foot-high yellow maps of the city of Los Angeles (Fig. 3). Over the course of three weeks, Lacy, with the cooperation of the LAPD Rape Detail division, marked the map each time rape was reported. The word "RAPE" was stamped in four-inch red lettering on the map at the location of reported assaults (Fig. 4). In a fainter shade of red, additional "RAPE" stamps appeared to stand in for the estimated number of unreported incidents of rape. The pendant map detailed sites for support including crisis and counseling centers, emergency care facilities, and rape outreach organizations. Together, the maps wallpapered a space located in the basement of City Hall, City Mall Plaza.

The placement of *Maps* is critical. While expanding the reach of the work beyond the spaces of the art world proper, the maps stage an intervention that can be understood to subvert rather than merely situate itself within these institutions. The City Mall Plaza is a place of confluence for many of the residents of Los Angeles, soliciting consumers for

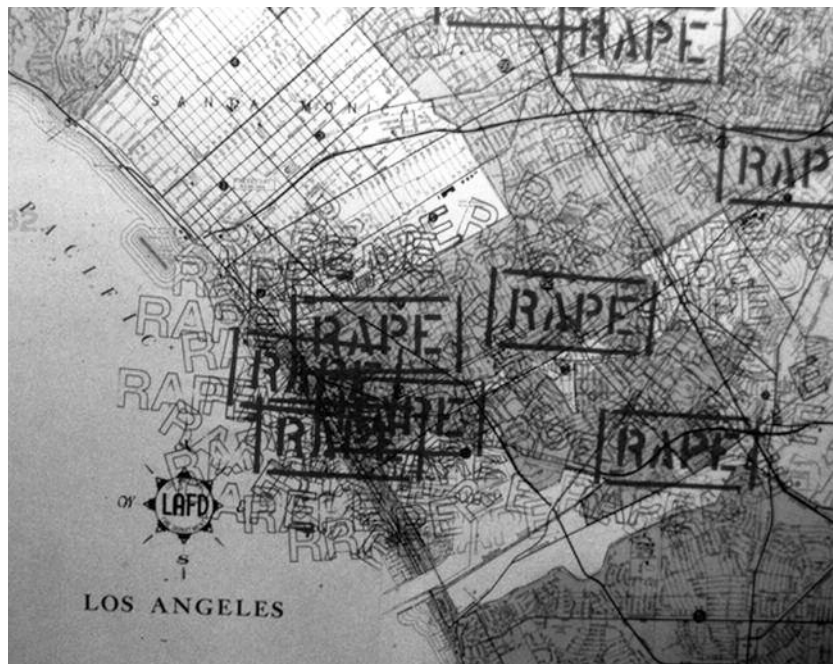


Fig. 4. Suzanne Lacy, *Maps*, part of *Three Weeks in May* (1977), City Mall, Los Angeles, CA. Archival photo. Courtesy Suzanne Lacy.

its retail spaces, employees of City Hall who frequent the Mall as a space for holding meetings or meal breaks, as well as a more general and diversified pedestrian traffic (Fig. 5). Describing the choice of location, Lacy wrote:

Downtown Los Angeles was perceived as the optimal installation site because it was the center of activity for the city, housing governmental city and county organizations, large businesses and shopping complexes. Further, much fear and mythology had accumulated about the downtown area and the many people who work there leave immediately after working hours are over. Many attempts have been made to revitalize this area, but a fear exists, much of it for women, related to rape.¹¹

As the primary targets of both rape and the fear-mongering tactics of media culture and the legal system, Lacy chose locations that would maximize exposure to women. Having first approached and been denied by two commercial sites, the



Fig. 5. Suzanne Lacy, *Maps, part of Three Weeks in May* (1977), City Mall, Los Angeles, CA. Archival photo. Courtesy Suzanne Lacy.

Broadway and Arco plazas, Lacy noted her desire to reach the “working women of the downtown business district, secretaries, [and] housewives shopping in the area” in particular.¹²

Another focus here is how the two feminist community-based performances by Lacy and Labowitz-Starus critically engaged with the ideological construction of the public sphere. Explicitly, it considers the relationship between rape and the production of the public as it is orchestrated and authored by the state. In these two works, the mythology of inclusion that undergirds the dominant cultural narrative regarding the public is not only challenged but countered through the performance of alternative publics. These artworks are public in so far as they take up “the idea of a public,” as Patricia Philips describes, rather than merely addressing one.¹³ The stakes in this reading of *Three Weeks in May* and *In Mourning and in Rage* are in claiming that they are feminist not just because they present the issue of rape to a public but because they also acknowledge that the public sphere, and the various modes by which it is constructed and policed, is intimately tied to the creation and preservation of rape culture.

By definition, rape culture is that which normalizes, if not eroticizes and spectacularizes, sexual violence. In the U.S., there is no doubt that the media is one of the most powerful architects of socio-culture meaning-making. Addressed to and productive of publics, the media and its dissemination of misogynist and racist mythologies about rape, reinforce the patriarchal power structures that author cultural norms. Furthermore, like legal and legislative institutions, industries of cultural production such as film, television, and news outlets, depend upon a Habermasian notion of the public sphere as one in which all members of a society have access and in which they are engaged in critical debates over matters of “public opinion.” As poststructuralist and feminist theorists, as well as Habermas himself, have been critiquing

for decades, however, the exclusionary realities of the public sphere, and the institutions that shape it, belie the supposedly democratic consensus-making processes that present fictions crafted by the powerful as shared realities of the whole.¹⁴ These exclusions are, of course, instrumental to the maintenance of rape culture and are exemplified in the lack of diversity concerning the kinds of rape narratives that enter the public sphere.

The many sociological, historical, and theoretical accounts of the public sphere are too complicated and varied to address in depth here. As such, this article takes up the two dominant frameworks that are most relevant regarding the ways Lacy and Labowitz-Starus’s performances negotiate the public. The first comprises the work of sociologists and theorists such as Fraser, Alexander Kluge, and Oskar Negt, among others, who refused the monolithic character of Habermas’s bourgeois public sphere in favor of an approach that acknowledges the inherently fragmentary and discursive nature of public life. The second stems from members of Habermas’s Frankfurt School patrilineage, with which Labowitz-Starus was particularly familiar, who attended to the relationship between the public sphere and the media. Including Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, and Herbert Marcuse, the critical social theory of these philosophers proposed that capitalism had co-opted all forms of mass culture and cultural production to attend to the needs of the market, transforming it from a forum for political debate into “an arena infiltrated by power in which, by means of topic selection and topical contributions, a battle is fought not only over influence but over the control of communication flows that affect behavior while their strategic intentions are kept hidden as much as possible.”¹⁵ In short, the failures and exclusions of the public sphere, are also those of the media.¹⁶

Drawing, as Lacy described, a geographic and temporal frame around the issue of rape, *In Mourning and in Rage* and *Three Weeks in May* made visible many “strategic intentions” relative to the perpetuation of rape culture in Los Angeles in 1977, intentions that remain largely intact today. In both projects, the focus was on critiquing the media while recalibrating it toward feminist ends. As such, these performances attended to what Lisa McLaughlin describes as a tendency for much feminist scholarship to “focus on internal, oppositional identity at the expense of a consideration of the media’s role in hindering the establishment of representative space necessary for democracy in late capitalism.”¹⁷ The various visual and interactive components of Lacy and Labowitz-Starus’s projects illuminated the conditions under which rape is made visible within the public sphere. These projects do far more than merely raise awareness or create visibility”; rather, they perform publics wherein that which remained invisible within rape culture could appear. The feminist politics of *In Mourning and in Rage* and *Three Weeks in May* go well beyond the fact that they are about rape to include an interrogation of the social and cultural mechanisms that



Fig. 6. Leslie Labowitz-Starus, *Myths of Rape*, part of *Three Weeks in May* (1977), City Mall, Los Angeles, CA. Photo: Suzanne Lacy. Archival photo. Courtesy Leslie Labowitz-Starus.

over-determine the conditions under which sexual violence appears and the meanings produced or sustained through the proliferation of its image.

Prior to the 1970s, media representations of rape took primarily one form, what Susan Estrich has called “real rape.”¹⁸ “Real rapes” are those that are committed by a stranger, occur in public, and involve excessive physical assault or use of weapons. Despite the persisting fact that the vast majority of rapes are carried out by people known to the victim, the images of rape that proliferated the public sphere, as in the Hillside Strangler case, perpetuated the mythology of “real rape.” The origin of this myth reaches as far back as the eighteenth century, when American newspapers only covered accusations of sexual assault when the accused was a black man and the alleged victim a white woman. Created to justify lynching, the raced and classed identity of the rapist in the event of “real rape” had changed little. The rise of anti-rape activism in the 1970s began to disrupt the cultural fictions regarding rape, but the images that made their way into the public sphere, although increasing in number, deviated only minimally from those tropes that rape culture depended upon to normalize oppression.

In tandem with the efforts and collaborative participation of various activist groups for *In Mourning and in Rage*, Lacy and Labowitz-Starus generated a space for the unspeakable, unimaginable, and unheard to appear. The performance was

staged, not incidentally, on the steps of City Hall, the center of Los Angeles’s local government, housing the office of the mayor and the City Council chambers. In 1976, Los Angeles was deemed the “Rape Capital of the Nation” and *In Mourning and in Rage* was a call for city officials to reckon with their inaction in the face of the ubiquity of the crime by, quite literally, bringing it to their doorstep.¹⁹ If one of the hallmarks of a functioning public sphere is an inclusive democratic exchange, then the performance also called out how a space which is called “public” (City Hall), fails to meet the mark by which such a claim can be made. The failure to commit the funds toward rape-prevention, convicting rapists, or passing legislation protecting victims, for example, illustrated not only the inadequacies of local government but the socio-cultural modes through which institutionalized silencing of rape victims is justified. The site-specificity of *Three Weeks in May* was a reminder that, although we may conceive of the public sphere as immaterial, public space is not. According to Henri Lefebvre, however, public spheres and public spaces are socially produced, ideological in their constructions, and plural.²⁰ Both material and ideological, this production is determined by the desires and profits of capitalism, which, to be sure, include investments in the sustainability of rape culture and the power structures it stabilizes.

Hannah Arendt once described public space as the “space of appearances,” detaching it from physical space. In 1958 she

wrote that “the organization of the people as it arises out of acting and speaking together, and its true space lies between people living together for this purpose, no matter where they happen to be.... It is the space of appearance in the widest sense of the word, namely, the space where I appear to others as others appear to me.”²¹ Lacy and Labowitz-Starus’s performances conjured the appearance of rape in forms that are not within the hegemonic lexicon. Rather than a spectacle, erotic fantasy, reasonable punishment for “unfeminine behavior,” or any other number of misogynist visual tropes, it appeared in these ephemeral performed spaces as a systemic mechanism of violent oppression. It must be noted, however, that these alternative or counterpublics and spaces, by the very nature of their constructedness, also involve some level of violence. The distinction between normative and counterpublics, then, is in the latter’s acknowledgment of these violent processes, whereas the former works to naturalize them. More than merely signaling the parameters of one’s counterpublic, the dissonance, and lack, therefore, of consensus is the very hallmark of a functioning democracy.

In light of the reading offered here, the terms collectivity, collaboration, and empathy, which have often been used to describe the effects and modes through which *In Mourning and in Rage* and *Three Weeks in May* operate, fail. The inherent conflict and contradiction that manifests in any project involving large numbers of people across communities, political affiliation, class, and race were an unavoidable part of Lacy and Labowitz-Starus’s process as well. Intentional or otherwise, the lack of consensus over how to address rape or fight against a culture of gendered violence that these projects surfaced speaks to the current cultural climate regarding rape, and, possibly, to the futility of the pursuit to end it without first dismantling the racist patriarchal power structures that generate rape culture.

Civic institutions, here in particular the LAPD, seem curious collaborators given their history of mishandling gendered crime, especially rape. The brutalization and underrepresentation of women and people of color within these systems was a reality not far from public consciousness in L.A., where the nearby Watts Riots of 1965 had ended in the loss of 34 lives and over 1,000 people injured. The tension between police and the historically black Watts neighborhood, mounted when two white policemen engaged in a violent altercation with a black male suspected of driving while intoxicated. The encounter resulted in a riot that spanned over five days and took the aid of The National Guard to suppress.²²

The riots were the impetus for artist Jim Woods, later a collaborator on *Three Weeks in May*, to create the Watts Studio Workshop in 1969. Along with Guy Miller, Woods developed an over two-year-long project wherein he collaborated with fellow artists as well as city officials and various community members to provide housing for families and seniors residing in Watts. This collaboration across government, artists, and community organizers was an explicit model for Lacy and Labowitz-Starus. Rather than perpetuate the lack of empathy and communication that often exacerbate racially motivated expressions of dominance, Woods was experimenting with

how to challenge and redefine the relationship between the LAPD and the communities they are meant to serve. For the legal system of L.A., working publicly with artists and activists on projects aimed at addressing issues of social injustice was a fruitful step in the way of rebuilding community trust, as superficial or disingenuous as it may have seemed to those who had had negative experiences with these institutions.

Considering the current conditions of police relations in communities of color, the inclusionary and reformist ideals of Woods and Lacy seem futile. The fact is, of course, that the legal system is but one portion of a much larger machinery of power that sustains a racist patriarchal culture. Relevant to *Three Weeks in May* is the conspicuous absence of an acknowledgment of how the social and cultural tropes surrounding the rapist and the rape-able women were, fundamentally, raced categories, marking its most grave misrepresentation of rape culture. Responding to the exclusion of race from anti-rape activism, in *Women, Race, and Class* (1981), Angela Davis declared the return of the myth of the black rapist during the mid-1970s, writing, “Unfortunately, this myth has sometimes been legitimated by white women associated with the battle against rape.”²³ Pointing to some formative texts on the subject of rape, including Susan Brownmiller’s *Against Our Will* (1975) and Shulamith Firestone’s *The Dialectic of Sex* (1970), Davis’s critique highlights the codification of the figures of the white virginal victim and the black male rapist which form the foundation of dominant anti-rape rhetoric. As with most white anti-rape feminist projects of the decade and later, silence regarding these raced mythologies meant playing a complicit, if not supportive, role in sustaining them.

The formidable strength of the performances, however, is the way they demonstrated that rape, in the context of a shopping mall, City Hall, the street, or a gallery, is not merely an intervention in or an invasion of public space, as much of the scholarship on them contends. Art historian Sharon Irish, for example, described the goal of *Three Weeks in May* as striving to “publicize the problem of rape for those oblivious to it” and “to transform the organizers as well as the participants.”²⁴ While making the actively suppressed reality of rape a public matter is one of the most significant contributions these performances offer, the inferred optimism and enlightenment of the “transformation” Irish describes is utopic. Similarly, in her essay on *Three Weeks in May*, Vivian Green Fryd wrote of the *Maps* that “rape became a visualized reality in a public space that originally had a quite different purpose of consumerism.”²⁵ Fryd’s statement highlights another absence in the current literature on art and rape. The suggestion that public space is devoid of sexual violence, soiled only through the intervention of artists like Lacy and Labowitz-Starus who place “unpleasant” issues within the public view, is to fail to recognize the degree to which it serves as the very underpinning of our social order.

Like the *Map* installation, the performances, workshops, and self-defense courses that took place in the City Mall infiltrated a space with deep investments in a culture that often exercises and enforces its dominance through violence. Self-defense

clinics were a common part of anti-rape activities; a means to erode the dominant/passive relations of gendered violence as well as to help women feel empowered in their physical capabilities. Among the *Three Weeks in May* events hosted in the Mall, Labowitz-Starus created four performances over the course of four consecutive days: *Myths of Rape*, *The Rape*, *All Men Are Potential Rapists*, and *Women Fight Back*. Executed at noon to maximize attendance, according to Labowitz-Starus, the performances “were designed to take the viewer and the performers through a personal and political experience.”²⁶ In *Myths of Rape*, eight participants were blindfolded with a white fabric brandishing the word “Society” (Fig. 6). The women wandered throughout the mall carrying signs naming various dominant “myths” surrounding rape culture in the U.S., including: “Myth: Pressing Charges Will Lead to Arrest” and “Myth: Women Who Resist are Killed.”

Myths, as well as the three other performances, confronted the manner in which rape scripts place the blame on women while obfuscating institutional complacency toward or support of these tropes. *Three Weeks in May* was not merely an intervention, a staging of the appearance of rape into a space formally free of it, but a series of events that revealed forms of violence that are suppressed on the level of appearance. These forms are often subsumed by the sensationalized stories of trauma that populate media culture and serve as profitable storylines for film and television.

Three Weeks in May capitalized on the then growing discourse around rape and included collaborations with multiple activist groups, including Women Against Violence Against Women (WAVAW). On May 22, for example, a rape speak-out sponsored by the Rape Hotline Alliance was hosted at The Woman’s Building. Different from the earlier speak-outs hosted by New York Radical Feminists, this event included poetry readings, a self-defense demonstration, and a slideshow created by WAVAW that showcased examples of violence in advertising. The slideshow, in particular, shed light on the relationship between cultural representations of violence and the realities of rape, illustrating the various manifestations of misogyny that sustain rape culture.

Listening is as important as speaking when it comes to generating the kind of public discourse that the anti-rape movement and many feminist artists were working to create. The phrase “speak-out” has focused on cultivating the necessary courage to come forward about rape, just as the consciousness-raising sessions goaded confessional-style revelations of personal strife from their participants. The ability to listen to testimonies like those recorded by Lacy and Judy Chicago for their first project on rape, *Ablutions* (1972), however, requires equal consideration. Generating public art through both “speech and action,” to return to Arendt’s phrasing, the statements, declarations, and demands that characterize *In Mourning and in Rage* are distinct from the more intimate and confessional-style platforms offered in many of the smaller-scale performances that constituted the multi-site and durational *Three Weeks in May*.

Throughout her career, Lacy has incorporated the voices of disenfranchised communities as integral components of the



Fig. 7. Suzanne Lacy, *She Who Would Fly*, part of *Three Weeks in May* (1977), Garage Gallery, Los Angeles, CA. Archival photo. Courtesy Leslie Labowitz-Starus.

performative politics of her work. *Ablutions*—as well as *She Who Would Fly* (1977)—produced spaces for both testifying and listening to stories of rape. *She Who Would Fly* was created for *Three Weeks in May* and consisted of three different components that culminated in an installation at Jim Woods’s Garage Gallery. The first part of the work was an open invitation for women to come to the gallery and speak with Lacy about the subject of rape. “These turned out,” she described, “to be on-going consciousness-raising groups due to the number of women who arrived.”²⁷ Many of the women in attendance wrote their experiences of rape onto sheets of paper that they then adhered to a map of the U.S. that was hanging on the gallery walls. The second part was a private performance by Lacy and four others, all of whom had experienced sexual violence in some way. The women conducted what has been described as a “private ritual” wherein they marked one another’s bodies with red greasepaint then shared food and conversation. The intimacy and care with which they attended to one another’s bodies was a stark contrast to the physical and psychological objectification to which women are regularly exposed and, likely, to the experiences they were exorcising.

The map and its accompanying writings from the first portion of *She Who Would Fly* became the framework for the work’s third component, an immersive installation at the Garage Gallery. The space of the installation was intentionally

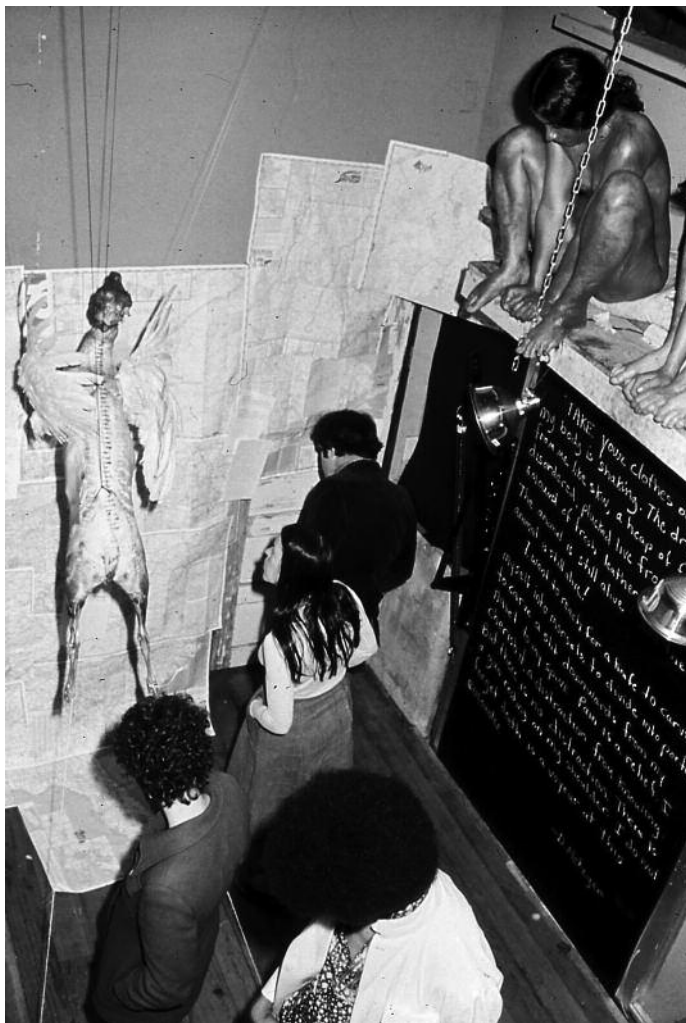


Fig. 8. Suzanne Lacy, *She Who Would Fly*, part of *Three Weeks in May* (1977), Garage Gallery, Los Angeles, CA. Archival photo. Courtesy Leslie Labowitz-Starus.

intimate in scale, claustrophobic even, and only three or four visitors were allowed entry at a time. A winged lamb carcass was suspended in the center of the space as if taking flight (Fig. 7). The viewers had to navigate around the carcass to read the intimately hand-scrawled stories of trauma that littered the map on the surrounding walls. After a short time, the attendees would have become eerily aware of four women hovering silently above them in the rafters (Fig. 8). They were painted blood red and crouched “like vultures” above the lamb carcass, watching the visitors from their perched positions. Lacy described these women as “avenging angels, metaphors for a woman’s consciousness that often splits from her body as it is raped,” as well as “bird-women [who] reminded visitors they were voyeurs to the pain of very real experiences.”²⁸

The gallery ignited not only an exchange of stories but also a confrontation with the spectatorial circuits at play, namely the voyeurism inherent in viewing others’ pain. As Meiling Cheng has stated, the most potent aspect of the piece was the “moment of theatrical reversal,” that turning of the voyeuristic

engagement with the “victims” onto the viewers themselves.²⁹ The lamb carcass and “bloody angels,” moreover, provided the kind of visual impact that Lacy felt was necessary to confront the subject of sexual violence. The experience provoked in *She Who Would Fly* yielded the kind of feminist approach to social activism that foregrounds not only empathy but also the less comfortable ways in which we, as members of a culture of rape, are insinuated or implicated in its many manifestations. What Sharon Irish described as “embodied networks” are thus woven not just in solidarity or a taken-for-granted feminist understanding, but in and through our simultaneous relationship to violent patriarchy as its subjects and spectators of its image.³⁰ The danger of this acknowledgment of shared subjectivity is, of course, the ways it risks flattening the distinct modes through which difference fundamentally alters one’s relationship to violence and, particularly, the ability to be socially and legally recognized as a victim.

As already noted, the raced and classed dimensions of rape mythology are acute and construct the identity of the raped, or rape-able as actively as that of the rapist. Just two years before Lacy & Labowitz-Starus made these performances, for example, every state in the country had a “marital exemption” that allowed a husband to rape his wife without the threat of legal consequence. A married woman, therefore, was not rape-able if the assailant was her husband. This legal exception bared its social legacy in 2015, when Michael Cohen, the special legal counsel for the then-presidential candidate, Donald Trump, replied to an accusation of rape against his client by his ex-wife, Ivana. Cohen stated: “You’re talking about the frontrunner for the GOP presidential candidate, as well as a private individual who never raped anybody. And, of course, understand that by the very definition, you can’t rape your spouse.”³¹ In the case of sex workers, as the “Strangler” case made particularly clear, rape is treated like an occupational hazard or moral retribution, marking women and girls in the prostitution or porn industries as equally “unrapeable.”

As scholars such as Dorothy Roberts and Danielle McGuire have addressed in their writing on histories of sexual violence and race, since slavery, black women have remained “exiled from the norm of true womanhood” and, as such, have always had a fundamentally different relationship to rape culture than white women.³² The legal statistics continue to bear out the fact that “black women who are raped are racially discriminated against because their rapists, whether black or white, are less likely to receive significant jail time than the rapists of white women.”³³ The persisting stereotypes about the sexual appetites and behaviors of non-white women have long been used to delegitimize their claims to having been violated. When in 2015 former Oklahoma police officer Daniel Holtzclaw was charged with over 36 counts of sexual assault and rape, the confluence of race and rape culture was made painfully clear. The white man had systematically selected thirteen black women with criminal records, many of them for involvement in sex work, threatening them with arrests if they either didn’t comply or reported his behavior.³⁴

All thirteen of Holtzclaw’s victims testified and, to be sure, the defense challenged the integrity of their testimony,

outlining the petty crimes and family histories of the defendants in lurid detail. The logic of the crimes and the treatment of the accusers, which was by no means exceptional, perfectly illustrate how the intersections of race, class, and gender create the “unrapeable” woman. One of the criticisms regarding media coverage of the Holtzclaw case is precisely the lack of attention the story drew. The seeming disinterest of media outlets regarding this case is stark when compared to the attention being paid to the growing number of women currently coming forward with accusations of sexual harassment and abuse at the hands of high-profile Hollywood executives, actors, and television anchormen. Might it be, as many black activists and journalists have pointed out, because most of the accusers are wealthy white women? Just a few years earlier, in 2014, Bill Cosby was accused of rape by more than 50 women, many of whom are not white. In this instance, the media pored over the details of the events as they unfolded. As a profit-driven industry, the popular media responds to that which will be legible to their public and, conversely, the public is produced through the media’s address to it. The narratives that make it into the visual culture landscape are barometers for measuring the shifts, or steady patterns, in rape mythology. If the current trends in coverage of rape tell us anything, it is that white victimhood and black criminality remain the anchors of “real rape” mythology.

To resist the marginalizing of these early feminist projects for their exclusions and limitations, this article has aimed to rethink their “failures.”³⁵ The inability of early feminist practitioners to end rape culture or to create an inclusive form of feminism, for example, has long been justification for a de-intellectualizing of their pursuits. In reading Lacy and Labowitz-Starus’s performances on rape as means of producing counterpublics, however, these bones of contention become necessary building blocks. The counterpublics performed in *In Mourning and in Rage* and *Three Weeks in May* highlight some of the mechanisms by which media culture functions as an ideological apparatus of the state. In their infiltration and co-optation of that apparatus, moreover, Lacy and Labowitz-Starus addressed and, therefore, conjured a public for a feminist understanding of rape. The violent exclusions of these counterpublics, however, are made evident in the lack of a critical address of the raced and classed conditions of appearance for the figures of the victim and the rapist.

The multiplicity of the public has continued to fracture in the decades since Lacy and Labowitz-Starus’s performances. In her 2012 reprisal of *Three Weeks in May*, titled *Three Weeks in January*, Lacy acknowledged this through the incorporation of social media platforms as means to interact with the piece. A feminist media strategy for 2018 would have to include tactics for navigating Twitter and Snapchat, for example, if it hoped to reprogram the current modes through which the socially and politically powerful interface with public. As images of rape, and even live-video, have become nearly ubiquitous since 1977, the role of the public in determining which acts of sexual violence get named rape and which don’t, still supersede the word of the individual, particularly when that person isn’t a straight white male.

As co-constitutive institutions, the court of public opinion and the court of law both abide by the raced, classed, and gendered tropes that delegitimize the speech of survivors. Furthermore, as domains of the state, the courts of public opinion and the law both depend upon the consent of its members to function. Consent, however, is a contractual agreement that is only valid when all parties involved are recognized as subjects. Through their continued status as sub- or non-human under the neoliberal democratic state, non-white, trans-, and differently-abled bodies are, paradoxically, unable to consent and always-already consenting.

In Mourning and in Rage and *Three Weeks in May* address these realities in terms of both what the projects include and, importantly, what and who they exclude. The model for reading feminist public performance as inherently dissonant, exclusionary, and contested offered here contends with the dismissive treatment of these, among other early feminist works, as either wholly essentialist or naively activist. Taking into account, rather than trying to excuse or ignore the omissions of these projects, moves discussions of these performances beyond the impossible expectation of collectivity while, getting us closer to answering the why of rape culture despite the over forty years of activism aimed at attempting to end it.³⁶ ●

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Notes

1. Suzanne Lacy, *Leaving Art: Writings on Performance, Politics, and Publics, 1974-2007* (Durham & London: Duke Univ. Press, 2010), 65.
2. While *In Mourning and in Rage* was conceived of and executed by Lacy and Labowitz-Starus in full collaboration, *Three Weeks in May* was produced by Lacy with Labowitz-Starus, among many others, contributing as an artist participant. As a project that depended upon the efforts and engagement of various artists, city employees, and other members of the Los Angeles community, it remains appropriate to describe the piece as collaborative.
3. Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989), 21.
4. Nancy Fraser, “Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy,” *Social Text* no. 25/26 (1990): 68.
5. Lacy, *Leaving Art*, 69–70.
6. Digital archival footage accessed Feb. 24, 2015, *In Mourning and in Rage* in Long Beach Museum of Art Video Archive, Getty Research Institution, Los Angeles, CA.
7. Suzanne Lacy, ed. *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1995), 241.
8. Suzanne Lacy & Leslie Labowitz-Starus, “Feminist Artists: Developing a Media Strategy for the Movement,” in *Leaving Art*, 83–91.
9. *Ibid.*, 86–91.
10. U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 2010–2014 (2015). <http://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=6166> (accessed Jan. 22, 2018).

11. Suzanne Lacy, undated typewritten notes titled "Chronology, Three Weeks in May," in the artist's personal archive, 3. Accessed Feb. 27, 2015, Los Angeles, CA. It was accompanied by numerous archival materials relative to the execution and planning of *Three Weeks in May*, 1977.
12. Lacy, "Chronology, Three Weeks in May," 3.
13. Patricia Philips, "Temporality & Public Art," in *Critical Issues in Public Art: Content, Context, & Controversy*, eds. Harriet F. Senie & Sally Webster (New York: Icon Editions, 1992), 298.
14. For examples of feminist and poststructural critiques of the public sphere, see Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy," 56–80; also Michael Warner, "The Mass Public and the Mass Subject," in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. Craig Calhoun (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992), 377–401.
15. Jürgen Habermas, "Further Reflections on the Public Sphere," in ed. Calhoun, *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, 436–37.
16. Lisa McLaughlin, "Feminism, the public sphere, media, and democracy," *Media, Culture & Society* 12 (Oct. 1993): 599–620.
17. *Ibid.*, 614.
18. Susan Estrich, *Real Rape: How the Legal System Victimizes Women Who Say No* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1987).
19. From the poster for *Three Weeks in May* found in Lacy's archive. The designation of Los Angeles as "Rape Capital of the Nation" was cited in Lacy's *Three Weeks in May*, from Nancy Ward, Ad Hoc Committee on Rape, Dept. of Human Relations, Los Angeles County, 1976.
20. See Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1991).
21. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2013; 1st ed. 1958), 198.
22. For more on the Watts Riots and the history of racially motivated police brutality in Los Angeles, see Gerald Horne, *Fire This Time: The Watts Uprising and the 1960s* (Charlottesville: Univ. of Virginia Press, 1995).
23. Angela Davis, *Women, Race, and Class* (New York: Random House, 1981), 178.
24. Lacy, *Leaving Art*, 64.
25. Vivian Green Fryd, "Suzanne Lacy's 'Three Weeks in May': Feminist Activist Performance as 'Expanded Public Pedagogy'" *NWSA Journal* 19, no. 1, *Feminist Activist Art* (Spring 2007), 30.
26. "Note: Description of Slides," in Labowitz-Starus's personal archive, 18th Street Arts Center, Santa Monica, CA.
27. Lacy, "Chronology, Three Weeks in May."
28. Jeff Kelley, "The Body Politics of Suzanne Lacy," in *But is it Art? The Spirit of Art as Activism*, ed. Nina Felshin (Seattle: Bay Press, 1995), 238.
29. Meiling Cheng, *In Other Los Angeleses: Multicentric Performance Art* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2002), 118–20.
30. Sharon Irish, *Suzanne Lacy: Spaces Between* (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2010), 37–60. The chapter titled "Embodied Networks" emphasizes the literal and metaphoric networks and exchanges present in many of Lacy's performances. Importantly, she situates this within the context of Lacy's interest in conceptual art practices, namely those of Allan Kaprow, as well as of her feminist contemporaries at CalArts, many of whom were not understood to be "conceptual" in their approach.
31. Dorothy E. Roberts, *Killing the Black Body: Race, Representation, and the Meaning of Liberty* (New York: Pantheon, 1997), 10. See also Danielle L. McGuire, *At the Dark End of the Street: Black Women, Rape, and Resistance—A New History of the Civil Rights Movement from Rosa Parks to the Rise of Black Power* (New York: Random House, 2010). Saidiya Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1997).
32. Kimberle Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity politics, and Violence against Women of Color," *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6 (July 1991): 1277.
33. See Molly Redden and Lauren Gambino, "Oklahoma officer's trial defense attacks credibility of vulnerable black women," *The Guardian*, Nov. 27, 2015. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/nov/27/oklahoma-officer-daniel-holtzclaw-trial-defense-attacks-credibility-of-vulnerable-black-women> (accessed Jan. 5, 2018).
34. Here, some of the theoretical possibilities offered by J. Jack Halberstam in *The Queer Art of Failure* (Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, 2012), although not included in this essay, provide a useful point of departure for thinking through the rich possibilities of "failure" as a heteronormative and conventional categorization used to devalue radical or non-normative practices.
35. Leslie Labowitz-Starus is currently preparing a website, ARIADNE: A Social Art Network, documenting all of the art projects undertaken by her and Lacy over the course of their careers that address the issue of violence against women: www.againstviolence.art

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Yayoi Kusama: Inventing the Singular

By Midori Yamamura
MIT Press, 2015

Reviewed by Gloria Sutton

Since the publication of this watershed study in 2015, there has been an unparalleled level of public attention stemming from international museums, commercial galleries, and popular media alike (*Time* Magazine named Kusama one of the most influential people in 2016), all concentrated on the 87-year-old artist's prolific output. The global reach of Kusama's signature dot painting style, iconic sculptural forms that draw from natural elements, and the heightened visibility accorded her persona have been amplified through social media often generating record breaking crowds to *Yayoi Kusama: Infinity Mirrors*, a career survey organized by Mika Yoshitake for the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, which will travel throughout the United States and Canada over the next two years.

This intense public interest only makes art historian Midori Yamamura's rigorously researched book even more vital, not simply as a scholarly account of a popular artist's career, but as an argument for how Kusama's current visibility must be measured against a historical backdrop of deliberate omission. Each of Yamamura's assiduously framed chapters delivers a perceptive and compelling argument for how Kusama converted the unconscious biases as well as the overt omissions of the international art world into generative methodologies by anticipating many of the conceptual maneuvers made by her U.S.-born white male artist contemporaries. These included Claes Oldenburg, Robert Rauschenberg, and Andy Warhol, whose own storied careers would eclipse Kusama's art historical reception. Despite the unassailable impact Kusama has had on the key debates that have shaped postwar art—including her first barrier breaking exhibition of her infinity net paintings in 1958 set against the dominant discourse



Fig. 1. Eikoh Hosoe, Yayoi Kusama in 14th Street Happening (1966), Slide projections of performance. Collection of the artist. Reproduced in *Yayoi Kusama Infinity Mirrors* (Hirshhorn Museum and Delmonico Prestel, 2017), p. 119.

of Abstract Expressionism up through her ambitious public performances during the 1960s and 1970s that foregrounded the commodity status of art, followed by her large-scale outdoor sculptures and the sensorial environments created through her mirror rooms and experimental multimedia installations that she continues to produce—the scholarship

on Kusama is often limited to the sub-specialty of Japanese postwar art history. In addition to making Japanese language primary sources newly available in English, Yamamura's book is an important corrective. Rather than recuperating Kusama as a lost visionary or overlooked female artist, Yamamura deftly recasts the entire art historical

postwar background against which the production and circulation of her artworks figure. In this way, Yamamura argues that while Kusama's training may reflect her Japanese education and cultural history, her turn toward accretive and serial forms in painting and sculpture and her adoption of film and photography directly responded to the specific conditions of the Cold War milieu and reflected the rise of a neoliberal order that developed in the United States and Western Europe. Ultimately, Yamamura makes the compelling case that Kusama's impact is not limited to a strictly Asian context but instead needs to be contextualized within a global purview, making it required reading for all historians that examine the postwar period.

The author's rigorous archival research, nuanced translation skills, and fierce analytical writing does double duty throughout this well-framed study of this complex figure, first cutting through the dense mythologies and biographical narratives that have grown around Kusama while simultaneously unpacking her own methods and strategies. Key among these are demonstrating how Kusama's professional ambitions and indefatigable work ethic put her in direct dialogue with a cadre of highly visible and influential artists, including Joseph Cornell, Eva Hesse, Donald Judd, Allan Kaprow, Claes Oldenburg, and Andy Warhol, while she lived in New York between 1958 and 1973. Beyond formal resemblances, Yamamura's fastidious comparisons of gallery exhibition checklists, studio visit dates, and correspondence with these artists and their network of dealers, critics, curators, and other supporters recalibrates the timeline around momentous developments in the history of Pop Art, including Oldenburg's operation of *The Store* in New York's Lower East Side and Warhol's introduction of wall paper as painting. This lack of recognition or traction in New York precipitated Kusama's permanent exit from the United States.

This level of archival detail is also brought to bear on Kusama's activities in Europe, where she received numerous exhibition invitations after leaving New York and before decamping to Tokyo.

Equally illuminating to scholars of European contemporary art is how Kusama's longstanding investigations into the perceptual qualities of light and space developed from her pioneering use of mirrors and other industrialized materials, including fluorescent lighting, various plastics, and electrical circuitry, to create spatial environments and installations. Yamamura links these experiments to a range of artists that Kusama exhibited with during this period, including the (Dutch) Nul, (German) Zero, and (Italian) Azimuth groups as well as interactions with Luciano Fontana and Yves Klein, all the while providing new insight into the overlapping connections—both conceptual and material—between these figures in New York and Europe, which are frequently written about as temporally coincident phenomena but disparate and unrelated.

The fact that Kusama was frequently (and often continues to be) the only female and the only non-white artist operating in the male-dominated contexts of the major discourses of the period—Happenings, Light and Space, Minimalism, and Pop Art—combined to make Kusama a double outlier. This precarious position, Yamamura argues, contributed to the delayed broader reception and the uneven critical attention afforded Kusama's work during the 1960s. As a case example, Yamamura details how *Phalli's Field*, Kusama's first mirror room and arguably the first in contemporary visual art, was installed at the Richard Castellane Gallery between March 16 and April 22, 1966, and garnered only a mention in *Arts Magazine* and *ARTnews* folded in among the standard roundup review of current exhibitions. This groundbreaking installation multiplied the repetition of her handmade forms drawn from her earlier paintings, drawings, and sculptures into a totalizing perceptual experience reflecting the viewers' own body into the space of the installation. Lucas Samaras's comparable mirror room, exhibited six months later at the Pace Gallery, Yamamura notes, resulted in a six-page interview in *Artforum* and a seven-page special feature in *ARTnews*, both in October 1966. The subject of recent intense art historical scrutiny,

Phalli's Field would become a fulcrum in the analysis of Kusama's prolific body of work. The subject of the published photographs of *Phalli's Field*, for example, shifts from the seemingly spontaneous documentation of a live event to staging still images for the express purpose of media publicity. In all cases, Kusama's clear subject is the act of mediation itself, which pressures the temporal construction of the audience divided between the live event (usually connoted as primary) and the document (often considered secondary). Within Kusama's work the two often converge, challenging the linear sequence of action followed by document or enactment and then depiction. This division would become a key line of scholarly inquiry in the field of performance art studies in the late 1990s—another area that Kusama's practice during the 1960s helped advance, which has not been fully credited.

In fact, the images of *Phalli's Field* are rarely published without featuring Kusama's own body in various states of performativity—laying prone in the space in what has become her signature red leotard, gazing at the camera while her image is reflected exponentially in the room's mirrored paneling. Yamamura has importantly argued that these photographs should be seen as "collaborative" works detailing how these now iconic images were created in concert with the photographer Eikoh Hosoe. His prismatic lens telegraphed Kusama's perceptual aims of these earlier mirrored room installations as well as other performances, such as the 14th Street Happening, which he photographed from several stories above the street (1966; Fig. 1)

Yamamura does not sidestep past the less discussed experimental media performances initiated by Kusama in New York during the early 1960s that unfolded in and around those associated with Fluxus, Judson Dance Theater, and Expanded Cinema. In the chapter entitled "Eros and Liberation" these semi-scripted public art events are read against a background of a shifting social and political landscape shaped by protests against the Vietnam War, the hippie rhetoric of free love and free

speech, and the rising neoliberal order. What distinguishes Yamamura's interpretation of Kusama's use of popular songs and popular slogans in these durational events is that she takes the artist's stated intentions alongside those of the critics and other first-person accounts to interpolate new meanings from the phrases that would become part of the artists' visual vocabulary, including "Endless Love," "Love

Forever," "Infinity," and "Self-Obliteration." Not relegated to the past, Kusama's critical gestures during this period have become central to a diverse range of successive feminist visual art strategies that attempted to deconstruct gendered representations within mass cultural ideology and consumer imagery. Yamamura's timely and responsive study demonstrates how these methods can be applied to the

practice of writing about global contemporary art history as well. •

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Florine Stettheimer: Painting Poetry

Essays by Stephen Brown and Georgiana Uhlyarik
Yale University Press/The Jewish Museum, and Art Gallery of Ontario, 2017

Marguerite Zorach: An Art-Filled Life

Essays by Jane Bianco, Betsy Fahlman, and Cynthia Fowler
Farnsworth Art Museum, 2017

Reviewed by Roberta K. Tarbell

These recent catalogues document exhibitions celebrating two fascinating and accomplished artists, Florine Stettheimer (1871–1944) and Marguerite Zorach (1887–1968). Both were groundbreaking painters, poets, and multimedia artists deeply involved with vanguard transatlantic intellectual, artistic, and literary circles in New York during the early twentieth century.¹ Zorach and Stettheimer were friends of Gertrude Stein during their Paris years and later, in New York, followed her example by welcoming a wide range of artists, writers, and critics to their own homes and studios. After Georgia O'Keeffe and Marcel Duchamp introduced Zorach and her husband, the sculptor William Zorach, to Stettheimer, the Zorachs often attended the famous, sumptuous salons at the Stettheimer home, presided over by Florine, her sisters Carrie and Ettie, and their mother, Rosetta.

Stettheimer and Zorach shared additional connections. Both exhibited with the Salon d'Automne in Paris, the



Fig. 1. Florine Stettheimer, *Studio Party (Soirée)* (1917–19), oil on canvas, 28 1/4" x 30". Yale Collection of American Literature, Beineke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven.

Carnegie International (Pittsburgh), and in the initial exhibitions of the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Society of Independent Artists in New York. Both were members of the Modern Artists of America; the Salons of America; the Society of American Painters, Sculptors and Gravers; and the Société Anonyme. Zorach sketched two pencil portraits of a middle-aged Stettheimer, and both

Zorachs contributed miniature works to Carrie Stettheimer's famous dollhouse (now in the Museum of the City of New York), which also included works by Alexander Archipenko, Duchamp, and Gaston Lachaise.

The large-format catalogue, *Florine Stettheimer: Painting Poetry*, includes 150 illustrations in color, eleven poems, essays with expanded endnotes by the

curators from the host museums, the edited transcript of a discussion panel of seven contemporary international artists, and a "Selected Bibliography." It was disappointing not to find any analysis of the poetry,² and instead of an inventory of objects on view, the book includes an eighty-two page section of illustrations with captions but no text.

Stephen Brown, the Neubauer Family Foundation Associate Curator at the Jewish Museum, described the aim of the exhibition and catalogue as "an occasion for reconsidering the work of the American painter, designer, and poet Florine Stettheimer" (FS, 12).³ In comparison, however, the more extensive catalogue for the exhibition at Lenbachhaus in Munich (2014–15), with essays by sixteen scholars, provided a more complete re-evaluation of Stettheimer's idiosyncratic creative output, with its myriad media and various contexts.⁴ Brown, however, has assimilated the many primary and secondary resources, met the challenges of understanding Stettheimer's complex art and life, and written a cogent summary with references to specific works. He applauds the originality of Stettheimer's fifty drawings, paintings, and maquettes for her bacchanalian play/ballet *Orphée of the Quat-z-Arts*, inspired by both a 1910 dance performance of Vaslav Nijinsky with the Ballets Russes, which she saw in Paris, and the Parisian students' annual Bal des Quat-z-Arts. Brown writes that these events awakened her consciousness of "the aesthetic power of combining the quotidian with exquisite fantasy [that] was formative for her art" (FS, 27). This experience prepared Stettheimer for the success she achieved in the sets and costumes she designed for *Four Saints in Three Acts*, Virgil Thomson's opera with a libretto by Gertrude Stein, performed at the Wadsworth Atheneum in 1934 and later on Broadway (FS, 40–43).

Brown focuses on Stettheimer's unique genre of group portraits of her close friends set in her homes in New York and Sea Bright, New Jersey, in her studio, or in social gatherings elsewhere. One of these, *Studio Party (Soirée)* (1917–19; Fig. 1), celebrates the unveiling of her 1915 self-portrait, *A Model (Nude Self-Portrait)*, with Maurice Sterne, Isabelle and Gaston Lachaise,

Juliette and Albert Gleizes, Avery Hopwood, and Leo Stein among those in attendance.⁵

Georgiana Uhlyarik, Curator, Art Gallery of Ontario, in "4 ST.S Seen by Florine: A Case Study," analyzes a single painting, *Family Portrait II* (1933). The title, inscribed in the painting's banner at the upper left, refers to the four Stettheimers, who are named in pie-shaped sections of the circular rug or folding fan. The critic Parker Tyler, author of a largely fictional biography of Stettheimer, claimed that the artist considered the painting to be "My Masterpiece" (FS, 47).⁶ Stettheimer's self-portraits and portraits of her family are a major component of her oeuvre. The iconography of this enigmatic painting connects it to Monroe Wheeler and Alfred H. Barr, Jr., both of whom had authoritative roles at the Museum of Modern Art, and to the RCA Building and Radio City Music Hall at Rockefeller Center, the Chrysler Building, Cleopatra's Needle (near the Metropolitan Museum) in Central Park, the Statue of Liberty, and the Stettheimer's Alwyn Court home, landmarks depicted in the painting's fantasy Manhattan "skyline." Uhlyarik concludes that because the artist's "original personal intentions are private and unknowable and ... resist categorical interpretation, ... they keep generating meaning and attracting new admirers" (FS, 56).

The concluding text documents a panel discussion, "My Friend Florine: A Conversation with Contemporaries: Cecily Brown, Jamian Juliano-Villani, Jutta Koether, Ella Kruglyanskaya, Valentina Liernur, Silke Otto-Knapp, and Katharina Wulff." Jens Hoffmann moderated the panel, in which these artists, born between 1958 and 1987, considered the significance of Stettheimer for themselves and the art of our time. Generally, the artists had been impressed by Stettheimer's paintings—especially the Cathedral Series—when they first encountered them in New York during the 1990s in exhibitions at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Whitney Museum of American Art.⁷ They found that her acute awareness of gender identity and duality foreshadowed contemporary concerns.

(The works by the painters who were represented, however, do not appear to be directly inspired by Stettheimer.)

The Farnsworth Art Museum's catalogue for the largest exhibition of Marguerite Zorach's work since 1973 presents new research on her murals and textiles.⁸ *Marguerite Zorach: An Art-Filled Life* includes essays by Jane Bianco, Associate Curator at the Farnsworth and the exhibition organizer, Betsy Fahlman, and Cynthia Fowler. The three writers consulted rarely accessed archival resources for the artist and explained aspects of Zorach's career under-represented in the literature.

Jane Bianco's essay, "Brilliant Interplay: Art of Marguerite Thompson Zorach, 1910–1940," reveals new insights based on her many interviews with Zorach's daughter, Dahlov Ipcar (1917–2017), and documents from Ipcar's archives. Bianco also discusses the intertextuality of Zorach's poetry and art.⁹ She notes the autobiographical nature of *Eden* (1917; Fig. 2), showing the nude couple embracing: "The unusually tender depiction of Adam and Eve may reflect the Zorachs' own closeness as newlyweds" (MZ, 26–27), and conjectures that the edenic images that the artist painted on the walls of their home in Maine continued such themes of their harmonious coexistence with nature (MZ, 26).¹⁰ It is possible that Stettheimer's nude self-portrait was a catalyst for Zorach to create nude self-images veiled by vague titles. Zorach's *Nude Reclining* (1922; National Museum of Women in the Arts) suggests both her affirmation of the new freedoms women had achieved and her struggle during the 1920s with her own self-identity.

In her essay, "Marguerite Zorach: The Thirties and Beyond," Betsy Fahlman is the first scholar to publish the four murals that Zorach created for U.S. Post Offices, funded by the Department of the Treasury's Section of Painting and Sculpture: *New Hampshire Post in Winter*, Peterborough, NH (1938); *Autumn*, Ripley, TN (1940); *Irrigation* and *Grape Picking*, Fresno, CA (1939–41); and *Haymaking*, Monticello, IN (1942). These murals are an important manifestation of what vanguard artists

who had emerged during 1910 to 1920 did two decades later, during the Depression years, making large public, figurative works. Fahlman not only discusses Zorach's contributions to New Deal programs and to American Regionalism, but also her one-person exhibitions (at Knoedler, 1944, and four at Kraushaar Galleries, 1953–68), and travels of her late career.

Cynthia A. Fowler, the author of "Marguerite Zorach's Modernist Embroideries," considers Zorach's fiber arts in the contexts of modern textiles, family iconography, and feminism.¹¹ She documents the seminal role Zorach played in the acceptance by artists, critics, and collectors of embroidery and crewel work as art—through her one-woman shows of textiles at the Montross Gallery in 1923 and at the Brummer Gallery in 1935 (MZ, 47). Although Stettheimer, who was wealthy, never sold a painting in her lifetime, the sales of Zorach's tapestries were the main source of the family's income through the 1920s (MZ, 46–47). The jewel of the exhibition was *The Family of John D. Rockefeller Jr. at their Summer Home, Seal Harbor, Maine* (1929–32), which the artist considered her textile masterpiece.

Fowler continues Bianco's theme that the autobiographical nature of her works extended well beyond family portraits. She also points out that, while art history may have favored William Zorach, Marguerite was an important force in the art world, as an officer of the Society of Independent Artists (1922–24) and, in 1925, as the first president of the New York Society of Women Artists, an organization founded to provide exhibition space for women modernists (MZ, 53–54).

All essayists in the current publications emphasize the independent spirits of Stettheimer and Zorach. Fahlman, for example, defines Zorach as a "New Woman" who relished modern social freedoms and who helped redefine gender norms, having "weathered the complex gender politics of the American avant-garde that favored male artists" (MZ, 31), a description equally apt for Stettheimer. Brown and Uhlyarik echo throughout their essays the many

paradoxes and contradictions that Linda Nochlin—with prescient insight—established for Stettheimer in 1980,¹² and

that describe most women modernist artists, including Zorach. Nochlin's binaries include insider/outsider, social

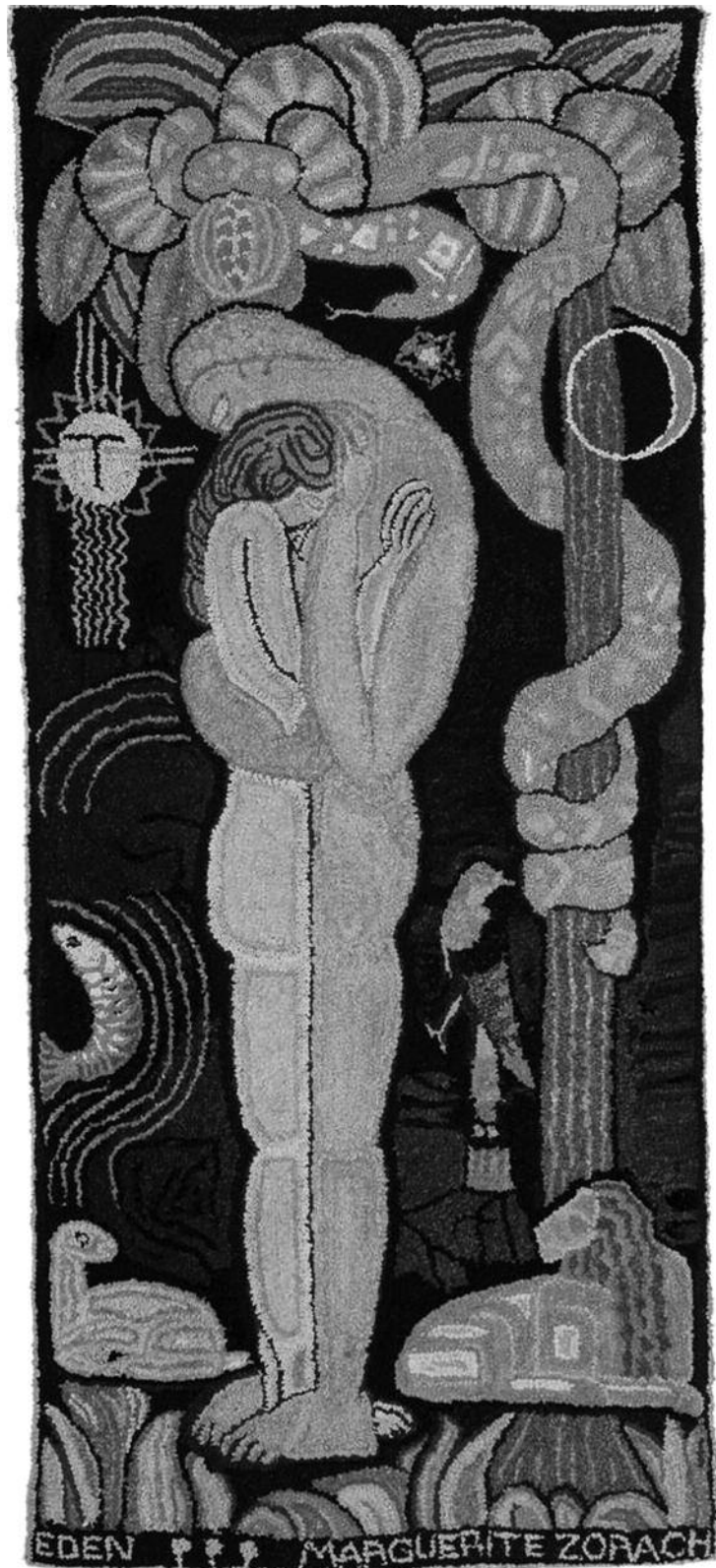


Fig. 2. Marguerite Zorach, *Eden* (1917), wool embroidered on linen, 77 1/4" x 34". Collection Pamela C. Grossman.

but intensely private, internal/external worlds, and feminine but feminist—themes that also permeate *Marguerite Zorach: An Art-Filled Life*. Zorach shared Stettheimer's political beliefs in equality for women, acceptance of all varieties of sexual preference, an open-minded attitude toward African-Americans, and the need for government-sponsored social programs.¹³ Both catalogues give voice to these early feminist painters by including not only their visual art but their poems, laying the groundwork for future exploration of the interconnectedness of their poetry and their art. •

Roberta K. Tarbell, Professor Emerita, Rutgers University, Camden, and Visiting Scholar, Center for American Art, Philadelphia Museum of Art, has published extensively on the Zorachs and most recently contributed to *A New American Sculpture, 1914–1945: Lachaise, Laurent, Nadelman, and Zorach* (2017).

Notes

1. See also my review of Ellen E. Roberts, O'Keeffe, Stettheimer, Torr, Zorach: *Women Modernists in New York*, in *WAJ* 38, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2017): 44–45.
2. Although Stettheimer did not publish her poems, many are collected in *Florine Stettheimer, Crystal Flowers: Poems and a Libretto*, Ettie Stettheimer, ed. (New York: privately printed, 1949); reissued, Irene Gammel and Suzanne Zelazo, eds.

(2010). "Young Poems by William and Marguerite Zorach" is an unpublished manuscript assembled by Carl Schmalz, Jr., 1964, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, hereafter AAA SI.

3. Contrary to a popular misconception, Stettheimer and her paintings have not been neglected; no fewer than thirteen one-woman exhibitions since her death include retrospectives at the Museum of Modern Art (1946), the Whitney Museum of American Art (1995) and Lenbachhaus, Munich (2014–15). Among many publications, see for example, Barbara J. Bloemink, *The Life and Art of Florine Stettheimer* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1995); Bloemink currently is preparing a revised biography and a catalogue raisonné. In "Rediscovering Florine Stettheimer (Again): The Strange Presence and Absence of a New York Art World Mainstay," *WAJ* 32, no. 2 (Fall/Winter 2011): 22–29, H. Alexander Rich queried, "How many times will Stettheimer have to be 'rediscovered' before critics and audiences alike accept her, once and for all, into the artistic fold?"
4. *Florine Stettheimer*, Matthias Mühling, Karin Althaus, and Susanne Böller, eds. (Munich: Lenbachhaus, 2014).
5. See Bloemink, *The Life and Art of Florine Stettheimer*, 96.
6. Parker Tyler, *Florine Stettheimer: A Life in Art* (New York: Farrar, Straus, 1963), 72.
7. *The Cathedrals of Broadway* (1929), *The Cathedrals of Fifth Avenue* (1931), *The Cathedrals of Wall Street* (1939), and *The Cathedrals of Art* (1942) were donated to the Metropolitan Museum by Ettie Stettheimer in 1953, and remain on view

there. Although illustrated in the catalogue, they were not in the Jewish Museum exhibition.

8. See also my *Marguerite Zorach, the Early Years* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1973).
9. Zorach published her poems, in 1915 and 1916 in *Others*, edited by Alfred Kreyenborg, and in 1918 in *Poetry*, edited by Harriet Monroe. See also "Young Poems by William and Marguerite Zorach," AAA SI.
10. Zorach depicted Adam and Eve in a life-size painting in the hallway of their home at 123 W. Tenth St., a design she repeated full scale in *Eden*.
11. Fowler wrote her dissertation on the subject (Univ. of Delaware, 2002). See also her *Hooked Rugs: Encounters in American Modern Art, Craft and Design* (Burlington VT: Ashgate, 2013) and *The Modern Embroidery Movement* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2018).
12. Linda Nochlin, "Florine Stettheimer: Rococo Subversive," *Art in America* 68 (Sept. 1980): 64–83, reprinted in *Florine Stettheimer: Manhattan Fantastica* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1995), 97–116.
13. See Barbara Bloemink, "Imagine the Fun Florine Stettheimer Would Have with Donald Trump: The Artist as Feminist, Democrat, and Chronicler of Her Time," *Art News* (July 6, 2017). <http://www.artnews.com/2017/07/06/imagine-the-fun-florine-stettheimer-would-have-with-donald-trump-the-artist-as-feminist-democrat-and-chronicler-of-her-time/> (accessed July 6, 2017).

Eileen Agar: Dreaming oneself awake

By Michel Remy
Reaktion Books, 2017

Reviewed by Judith Zilczer

In the annals of twentieth-century art, the name Eileen Agar (1899–1991) is known primarily to specialists in British Surrealism. An artist of considerable imaginative gifts, Agar gained recognition in the interwar period, when the Surrealist movement arrived from France, in her words, "to the shores of Albion ... to mingle with our native roots in Blake, Lewis Carroll and Edward Lear."¹ She was the only

professional woman artist to be selected by Roland Penrose and Herbert Read for their groundbreaking International Surrealist Exhibition at London's Burlington Galleries in 1936. Thereafter, Agar enjoyed a long and productive career, and her inventive collages such as *The Reaper* (1938; Fig. 1), found-object sculptures, evocative abstract paintings, and haunting photographs earned her a secure place in the history of Surrealism in England and in the literature on the role of women artists in the international Surrealist movement.

Agar's work has been featured in solo and group exhibitions with accompanying catalogues in which her affiliation with Surrealism is regularly acknowledged. Lately, however, Agar's

identification as a Surrealist has been questioned by Andrew Lambirth, collaborator on her autobiography. Echoing the observations of Whitney Chadwick on British Surrealism, not only did he contend that Agar's organic imagery is more akin to romanticism, but he also singled out her use of collage as the key to her entire oeuvre.² Notwithstanding the growing body of exhibition publications on Agar, the story of her art and life has never before been the subject of a scholarly monograph that might resolve the issue of her artistic identity.

Michel Remy, Emeritus Professor of English Literature and Art History at the University of Nice, France, aims to fill this void with *Eileen Agar: Dreaming*

oneself awake. In his preface to this well-illustrated volume, Remy explains his three-fold purpose: to explore the encounter of “a young independent-minded woman with the plastic arts in the 1920s and 30s, the encounter of the artist with the secret workings of her own subconscious, and finally the encounter of an English painter—and indeed, of English art at large—with the Surrealist movement” (6). To do so, Remy traces Agar’s personal and artistic evolution in five chapters that span chronological intervals he identifies with notable turning points in the artist’s life (7). His account is based on Agar’s autobiography, *A Look at My Life*, published in 1988, as well as her unpublished papers in the Tate Gallery Archives, and his own conversations with the artist.³

The first two chapters cover the formative period from Agar’s birth in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in 1899, through 1931, and the period between 1931 and 1936, when she embraced imaginative abstraction. The daughter of a wealthy Scottish businessman and an American heiress, Agar enjoyed a privileged childhood, received an English education, and eventually pursued formal artistic study with sculptor Leon Underwood at his Brook Street School and at the Slade School in London. Remy ably covers her interactions with the English art world of the 1920s and goes on to examine the impact of her encounters with modern art, particularly the Cubism of Juan Gris and Czech painter Frantisek Foltyn, during her periodic travels to France. Remy delves into the intellectual influence of her lover and future husband, Joseph Bard (né Jozsef Diamant), a Hungarian expatriate writer and classical scholar, whom she met in 1926. By 1931, their personal and intellectual bond led Agar to subsidize Bard’s vanguard journal *The Island* and to pen the only statement of her artistic credo, “Religion and the Artistic Imagination,” which appeared in the first issue of the journal. Remy has chosen helpfully to reprint the rare text in its entirety as an appendix to the book. Not only did Agar express her faith in a kind of nature symbolism grounded in

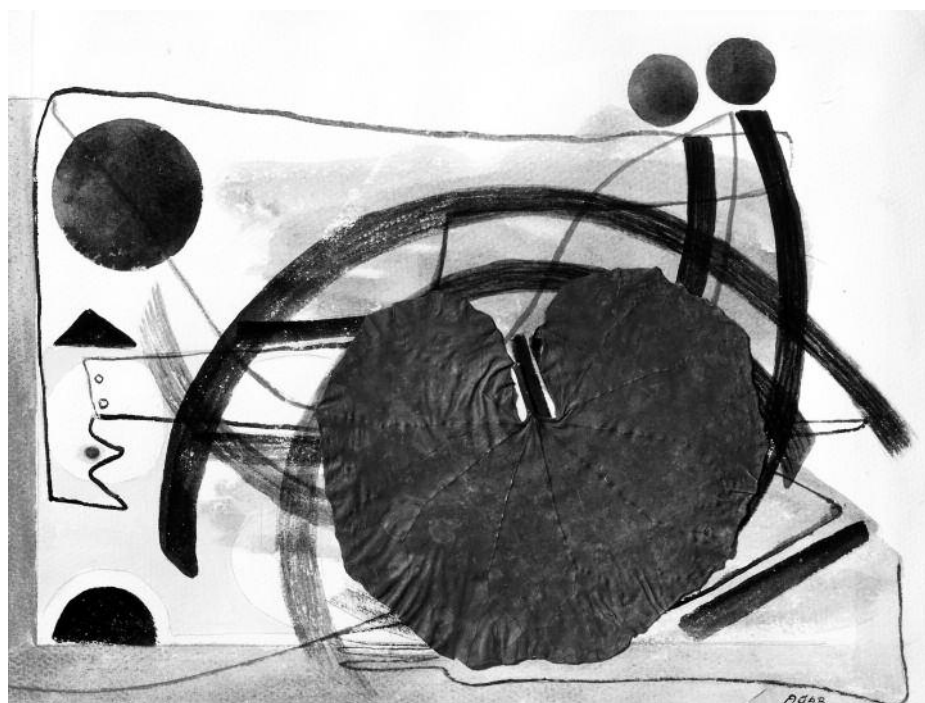


Fig. 1. Eileen Agar, *The Reaper* (1938), gouache and leaf on paper, 8 1/4" x 10 7/8". The Tate Gallery, London. © Estate of Eileen Agar.

“three emergent cultures in Russia, Europe, and America,” but she also claimed that: “In Europe the importance of the subconscious in all forms of Literature and Art establishes the dominance of a feminine type of imagination over the classical and more masculine order” (221). Remy seizes upon this essay, augmented by Agar’s unpublished diaries, to argue for her commitment to the Surrealist movement, yet he avoids consideration of the feminist perspective implicit in her essay.

The three remaining chapters chronicle Agar’s life and art, from her 1936 debut in the International Surrealist Exhibition through the war years and her continual productivity during the postwar period of waning Surrealist influence in the art world. Throughout, Remy interweaves the story of Agar’s personal life with analyses of her creative and social interactions among vanguard contemporaries. While touching on her affairs with British painter Paul Nash and French poet Paul Éluard, he emphasizes her contacts with such luminaries as Pablo Picasso and Man Ray and proponents of British Surrealism,

notably E. T. L. Mesens, Roland Penrose, and poet David Gascoyne. The volume concludes with Remy’s summation of his argument that Agar’s search for the marvelous epitomizes the essence of Surrealism.

In developing his narrative, Remy devotes considerable attention to close iconographic readings of Agar’s art work. His analysis invariably leads to an attribution of Surrealist meaning in what he terms the “mytho-poetic” content of her imagery. Over the course of the book, these passages become repetitive and too often devolve into paragraph-long sentences that defy the syntactical limits of English grammar. Apart from such stylistic problems, the captions for the high-quality reproductions fail to provide dimensions or locations for any of Agar’s works. Without such basic information, the reader cannot judge the scale of the art reproduced and must consult the photographic credits at the end of the book to learn where the original works reside. Confusion also results from conflicting dates for Agar’s decision late in her career to begin using acrylic paint. Although Remy at one point claims she discovered the new medium in 1965

(166), he also mentions that she began using the medium in the late 1950s (165), and several acrylic-based paintings illustrated in the book are dated 1962 (164, 171). Equally troubling is the absence of either footnotes or endnotes to provide the documentation customary in a scholarly monograph. Although Remy incorporates references to sources in his text, such information is incomplete, and the bibliography and list of exhibitions at the end of the book are less than definitive.

Beyond such editorial considerations, substantive issues emerge with the author's habit of considering Agar's work exclusively through the lens of Surrealism. Writing about Agar's later paintings from the 1960s and 1970s, for example, he claims: "Throughout that period, Surrealism was constitutively present in Agar's mind, whether she accepted the idea consciously or not—one can hardly trust her repeated unilateral declaration of independence from the movement" (174–79). Such an assertion, by disparaging the artist's own words, undermines the intended purpose of the book. In her autobiography, Agar explicitly questioned two tenets of the

movement—automatism and reliance on dreams: "I am suspicious about the whole idea of working from dreams.... Automatism is also impractical."⁴ Instead, Agar explained, "For me, intuition combined with controlled emotion and intellectual consideration produce the best effects."⁵

Indeed, the formal invention and wide-ranging modernist affinities apparent in Agar's creative output over seven decades exceeded the bounds of Surrealism. As critic James Beechey observed, "[H]er allegiance to Cubist principles of structure and control" shaped her approach to the collage medium and is equally evident in her abstract paintings.⁶ Such considerations are largely absent from *Eileen Agar: Dreaming oneself awake*. A more nuanced approach to Eileen Agar's art and her relation to Surrealism might have yielded greater understanding of the artist and the originality of her contribution to modern art. •

Judith Zilczer, Curator Emerita of the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, has organized more than two dozen exhibitions and published widely

on modern and contemporary art. Her most recent book is *A Way of Living: The Art of Willem de Kooning* (2014, 2nd ed. 2017).

Notes

1. Eileen Agar with Andrew Lambirth, *A Look at My Life* (London: Methuen, 1988), 114.
2. Andrew Lambirth, *Eileen Agar: An Eye for Collage* (Chichester: Pallant House Gallery, in association with Ava Publishing, Lausanne, 2008). On the romantic sensibility of British Surrealists, see Whitney Chadwick, *Women Artists and the Surrealist Movement* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1985), 146.
3. Portions of Agar's papers have been digitized and are accessible online at the Tate Gallery Archives website, a fact not mentioned in the book's bibliography.
4. Agar, *A Look at My Life*, 125.
5. *Ibid.*, 126.
6. James Beechey, "Surrealism Returns; Moore; Agar," *The Burlington Magazine* 151, no. 1270 (Jan. 2009): 47–50. For another perspective on Agar's reputation as a Surrealist, see Richard Cork, "The forgotten Surrealist," *FT.com* (London, Nov. 18, 2008) <https://search-proquest.com.library.access.arlingtonva.us/printviewfile?accountid=46215> (accessed Oct. 29, 2017).

Radical Bodies: Anna Halprin, Simone Forti, and Yvonne Rainer in California and New York, 1955–1972

By Ninotchka Bennahum, Wendy Perron, Bruce Robertson, et al
University of California Press, in association with the Art, Design & Architecture Museum, University of California, Santa Barbara, 2017

The Concrete Body: Yvonne Rainer, Carolee Schneemann, Vito Acconci

By Elise Archias
Yale University Press, 2016

Reviewed by Aliza Edelman

Dance was a revolutionary influence on the broader visual arts in the postwar years. Artists Anna Halprin (b. 1920), Simone Forti (b. 1935), and Yvonne Rainer (b. 1934) literally reshaped the boundaries of modern dance, and in turn positioned the *radical* female body directly within prominent political, feminist, and racial debates in the United States. *Radical Bodies* is an eye-opening catalogue documenting an exhibition that focused on the intergenerational narratives, relationships, and creative innovations of these three women. It is also a fascinating journey that flows seamlessly between California and New York, and highlights an auspicious gathering of dancers, including Forti and Rainer, in August 1960 for an experimental workshop on the expansive outdoor dance deck attached to Halprin's home on the slopes of Mount Tamalpais. This majestic backdrop in Marin County

played host at various times (Fig. 1) to scores of dancers, artists, composers, and choreographers, including Merce Cunningham, John Cage, Robert Morris, and LaMonte Young. On the East Coast, the Judson Memorial Church, home to the Judson Dance Theater (founded in the spring of 1962), saw a similar groundswell of artistic and theatrical "experimentation." In early fall of 1960, pianist Robert Dunn (a student of Cage) held composition classes at Merce Cunningham's lower Manhattan studio, initially attended by Forti, Rainer, and Steve Paxton, and later by Trisha Brown, Lucinda Childs, Robert Morris, Elaine Summers, and Robert Rauschenberg, among many others. *Radical Bodies* argues that both coasts and communities, with their overlapping cast of characters and networks, were aligned to generate extraordinary changes in postmodern dance and art in the 1960s.

In the introductory overview, primary co-authors Wendy Perron, Ninotchka Bennahum, and Bruce Robertson (other contributors include Forti, John Rockwell, and Morton Subotnick) position the body's radicality around the central idea of the "unadorned" corporeal subject; here, embodiment refers collectively to the dancer's potential to act collaboratively and freely with her environment, public space, and the audience, to embrace improvisation and disregard structures, and to mine quotidian elements and objects of everyday existence. Isadora Duncan had heretofore "liberated dance from aristocratic codes of behavior," and Halprin, Forti, and Rainer were drawing on such earlier models (RB, 35). In the sixties, nudity was exercised as an emblematic state of social and spatial freedom, presented symbolically in Halprin's ritualized, task-oriented expression of "undressing and dressing" in her groundbreaking choreography *Parades and Changes* (1965); Rainer eliminated gender role designation in *Words Words* (1963), which she performed nude with Steve Paxton, but also politically capitalized on the nude body in her 1970 rendition at Judson of *Trio A with Flags*, People's Flag Show, for which flags draping five naked dancers opened a discourse on war and censorship (RB, 48–49).

As the eldest, Halprin's fundamental approach, grounded in dance's ethical and moral purpose, presupposes the art form's capacity not only to intersect and advance cultural and civil issues but also to "construct new ways of being through the practice of conscious movement" (RB, 56). Bennahum's essay emphasizes Halprin's strong connection to Judaism, relating the underlying experience of diasporic narratives and xenophobia to her intellectual growth as an artist, and moreover positing her autobiography among a much wider group of mid-century artists similarly recoiling from news of the Holocaust. In her college's Hillel at the University of Wisconsin–Madison (1938–42), Anna Schuman met fellow student Lawrence Halprin, her future husband and a landscape architect with whom she collaborated throughout her career.



Fig. 1 Anna Halprin, *The Branch*, the Halprins' dance deck, Kentfield, CA (c. 1957), with A.A. Leath, Anna Halprin, and Simone Forti. Photo: Warner Jepson. Estate of Warner Jepson, 2017. Museum of Performance + Design, San Francisco.

Together they engaged theoretically with Judaism's moral compass as a guide for democratic and social learning via Justice Brandeis and the important ideas put forth by the Hillel director, Rabbi Max Kadushin. Halprin thus pursued from her earliest choreographies an "ethics of embodiment," turning equally to the lessons obtained in Kadushin's *Organic Thinking*, which revealed the "physical manifestation" of sacred texts and moral principles, such as the Talmud and *tikkum olam*, and likewise those of teacher Margaret H'Doubler, whose non-systemized and kinesthetic study of dance's history revitalized form (RB, 62).¹ Halprin's *The Prophetess* (1947) addresses these ideas in the title's reference to the Jewish figure, Devorah. For Halprin, dance was above all a form of activism with ethical and feminist "imperatives," as Bennahum argues, whose rejection of traditional technique and narratives in favor of ordinary movements unearthed a new "gestural" vocabulary reconfiguring the body's "nonhierarchical" relationship to space (RB, 69, 71–72). This was humorously

exemplified by the casually dressed performers walking up a San Francisco street in *People on a Slant* (1953) or the simple domestic act of cooking an egg for breakfast in *Apartment 6* (1965). Moreover, the environment and the audience form a partnership as a new dimension of public space. Formal and gendered barriers dissolve in the development of Halprin's "Paper and Dance," a section of *Parades and Changes* (1965–67), where the interaction of male and female nude dancers tearing, folding, and manipulating materials subverts the stage to the topography of the body.

Further breaking down barriers was Simone Forti's introduction of the term "Dance Constructions" to define a holistic unity between objects and movement that explored the "inter-connectedness of the body" (RB, 89, 91). Forti's childhood fascination with animals and her experiences as a Jewish Italian émigré had early significance. As Perron explains in her essay, it was Halprin who initially encouraged and guided Forti's engagement in the mid-



Fig. 2. Carolee Schneemann, *Meat Joy* (Nov. 16–18, 1964), Judson Memorial Church. Photo: Al Giese. Carolee Schneemann Papers, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.

fifties with improvisation, first at the Halprin-Lathrop Studio in San Francisco and later at Halprin's dance deck workshops where the body was situated in the natural landscape and the influence of Cage, Taoism, and Zen Buddhism strongly resounded. The catalogue's publication of Forti's private letters to Halprin conveys her poignant emotional reliance on her mentor. Yet Forti's development towards "generic" and "undomesticated" movement was conceptually reinforced by the gestural impact of Japanese Gutai artist Saburo Murakami's *Passing Through* (1956), and the free-form happenings created by artist Robert Whitman, with whom she performed in New York and later married (she was previously married to artist Robert Morris) (RB, 98). In Dunn's composition class, moreover, she further realized the interconnections between chance, nature, and rules, ideas manifest in the Chinese book, *The I Ching, or The Book of Changes*. With this foundation and her relationship to the New York School, she advanced the ingenious and hybridized ideas around "Dance Constructions," which included *Huddle*, *Platforms*, and *Slant Board*, originally performed in 1961 at Yoko Ono's downtown loft and shown today (and recently acquired by MoMA) as a set of

instructions with quotidian objects and performers following and interacting accordingly.

Through Forti, not surprisingly, Yvonne Rainer released herself from the weight of dance histories. But it was through the latter's complex relationship to the expansive scene in New York surrounding Minimalism, and her dense critical writings, that she had a significant and reciprocal impact on her fellow contemporary artists, Robertson offers. Rainer's work thus resonated widely in the avant-garde circles of Pop, Fluxus, and Minimalism and its newfound focus on the active role of the spectator. Her extensive study of the real "body as art"—a rapprochement among gestures, material objects, texts and music—was germane to Rauschenberg, with whom she worked at Judson from 1962 to 1966, as well as artists George Sugarman, Claes Oldenburg, George Brecht, and Eleanor Antin, among others. Richard Serra, for example, saw in Rainer's performances a clarification of space, time and material in relation to the body, and his *Verb List* of 1967 follows in form Rainer's rigorous table of terms (here comparing Minimalist sculpture and dance) that introduced her now celebrated 1966 text, "A Quasi Survey of

Some 'Minimalist' Tendencies In the Quantitatively Minimal Dance Activity Midst the Plethora, or an Analysis of *Trio A*" (RB, 123).² As Robertson argues, Rainer's choreography consistently "blur[s] the distinctions we make between sculpture and dance," while likewise traversing cultural history: *Parts of Some Sextets* (1965) draws upon a solemn eighteenth-century diary that correlates to the dancer's unfolding thirty-one movements, over thirty second frames, amid a wild assemblage-like mattress pile (RB, 133).

Elise Archias's theoretical study of the concrete body in the United States after World War II includes case studies on Rainer, Carolee Schneemann, and Vito Acconci. Further bridging relationships among dance and painting, sculpture, and performance, Archias significantly informs the discussion on embodiment to reflect a contemporary engagement with bodily materiality and abstraction. Her carefully delineated introduction explores the anti-heroic, task-oriented, impersonal and "self-contained" performative body as one deeply embedded in our physical world and the "lived immediacy of everyday life" in the 1960s (CB, 2). In contrast to the agile, laboring thrust behind Pollock's drip paintings and the purposeful gestures indexing Abstract Expressionism, the abject actions of Rainer, Schneemann, and Acconci risk vulnerability, ambiguity, banality and misinterpretation. Leaning heavily on T.J. Clark's wide analyses of art's physical materiality in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to serve as a formal grounding in artistic practice itself, or in Archias's terms, a "concrete medium of communication," the author determines the structural "physicality of the ordinary body" newly expressed and negotiated in the dances, representations, performances or *concretions* (in Schneemann's words) developed by these three artists vis-à-vis their contingent environments (CB, 7, 11, 13).

The author privileges painting's abstract language as a material presence in postwar New York, as addressed by Clement Greenberg, in the development of Rainer's "tasklike" style, from her early choreographies such as *Terrain*

(1963) leading up to such major works from the late sixties as *Trio A* (1966) and *The Mind Is A Muscle* (1968). The urgency of Rainer's 1968 statement, "My body remains the enduring reality," aptly dovetails Theodor Adorno's relegation of art's purpose in the worldly realm to sanction "the primacy of reality" (CB, 31). Most interesting is the process through which Rainer arrives at her "look of ordinariness" in distinction to the grave expressivity of Martha Graham, for example, to reveal a concrete "matter-of-fact" sensibility in the body's own materiality (CB, 53).

Archias thus turns specifically to the "materiality of sex" in her close reading of the development of Schneemann's epic score for *Meat Joy* of 1964 (Fig. 2)—utilizing ten performers, raw materials (including meat) and popular music—situated historically amid the formative postwar constructions and "cultural codes" on sexuality, from Hugh Hefner's popular *Playboy* to Wilhelm Reich's (a pupil of Freud) Marxist psychoanalytic writings on sex (a significant early resource for the artist) (CB, 81).³ As with Rainer, Archias frames Schneemann through the important feminist lens of modernist abstraction, the centrality of the artist's early explorations in gestural painting to the vital presence and cultural positioning of the artist's own body as "painting-constructions" or "concretions," manifest at-large in her later celebrated performance, *Interior Scroll* (1975). Tellingly, *Meat Joy*'s aesthetics of sex embodied in the underlying choreography of materials and performers—meat and bodily collisions—is a

compelling examination by Archias, further exploring Schneemann's erotic conceptualization and Reichian influence as the happening was first executed and critically received in Paris. Of particular interest is Schneemann's approach as an "untrained" dancer to the performer's corporeal relationships in space and to their bodies as "unfinished" material (CB, 95).

Turning to Acconci, the author extends her arguments on embodiment and structure to his early performances between 1969 and 1971, including the filmed adaptation studies. She underscores their more aggressive manifestations reliant on the "constrained" body's reflexive and stressed response to a "set of conditions"—such as balls thrown at a blinded person or soapy water thrown in one's face—in tandem with the audience's or camera's presence and positioning (CB, 123, 125). While Acconci's conceptual language of exchange structuring relationships and desire was framed potentially through Foucauldian or Butlerian poststructuralist angles of sexuality, power and discourse, Archias grounds the artist's ideas more squarely in the social and historical theories from the sixties on informational systems. Therein, Archias revisits her earlier thesis on how we must continually "understand the signifiers of embodiment" in a performer's bodily practice, and specifically for Acconci, whose early production of concrete poetry supports his disposition in a capitalist world towards a "communicative" and abstracted physicality (CB, 133, 135).

If *Radical Bodies* elucidates postwar embodiment through sweeping female and professional interrelationships, *The Concrete Body* provides the vast "theoretical underpinnings" conditioning such affinities. Both face the undue challenge of conveying dance and performance through photography, as the still image becomes an index of meaning, even as the exhibition component of *Radical Bodies* includes video and a few installations. Nevertheless, both books significantly revisit the body of the sixties as a living and breathing resource of inspiration, complexity, and revolution. •

Aliza Edelman is a freelance critic and curator. Her most recent article in *W&J* is "The Particle and the Wave: Sandra Lerner's Metaphysical Landscapes, Taoism, and the Calligraphic Impulse" (2016). In 2017, she curated two exhibitions, "Judith Lauand: Brazilian Concrete Abstractions" and "Bruno Miguel: Seduction and Reason," both in New York City.

Notes

1. See Max Kadushin, *Organic Thinking: A Study in Rabbinic Thought* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1938).
2. Rainer's 1966 essay was originally published in Gregory Battcock, ed. *Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1968).
3. See Wilhelm Reich, *Selected Writings: An Introduction to Orgonomy* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Cudahy, 1951).



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We Wanted a Revolution: Black Radical Women 1965-85, A Sourcebook

Edited by Catherine J. Morris
and Rujeko Hockley
Brooklyn Museum, 2017

Reviewed by Lisa Farrington

In honor of the tenth Anniversary of the Brooklyn Museum's Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art, curators launched the 2017 campaign dubbed "A Year of Yes: Reimagining Feminism," which includes a series of public programs and ten exhibits that take a revisionist look at the Feminist Movement. Key to the museum's campaign is an ambitious traveling show of the art of black women entitled "We Wanted a Revolution: Black Radical Women 1965-85," which includes forty major artists, including Emma Amos, Maren Hassinger, Senga Nengudi, Lorraine O'Grady, Howardena Pindell, Faith Ringgold, and Betye Saar. Many of the works featured in the show (such as Dindga McCannon's *Revolutionary Sister* (Fig. 1) and Ringgold's *For the Women's House*, both 1971) have become iconic representations of black feminist art. The goal of the exhibit, according to Museum Director Anne Pasternak, is to acknowledge "the diversity, voices, and concerns of women outside the largely middle-class white leadership of the mainstream Feminist Movement" (10).

Published by the Brooklyn Museum in conjunction with the exhibit is a book of the same name, subtitled "A Sourcebook" and edited by Catherine J. Morris, Curator of the Sackler Center, and Rujeko Hockley, one-time Assistant Curator for Contemporary Art and now on the curatorial staff of the Whitney Museum. *A Sourcebook* is not what one might expect—that is, it is not an exhibition catalogue (which is planned for some time later during the show's 2017–18 tour to the California African American Museum in Los Angeles, the Albright-Knox Art Gallery in Buffalo, and the Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston). It is, instead, an astutely annotated compilation of 38 original documents produced by renowned

activists and black feminists from the 1960s to the 1980s. Judiciously chosen, these primary sources offer some of the most powerful, insightful and honest statements ever made on the schism between white and black feminists, and the distinct problems minority feminists faced in their quest for empowerment and equity.

A Sourcebook is divided into eleven unnumbered chapters or segments, organized roughly chronologically. Chapters are theme-based and cover everything from the Spiral black (and almost solely male) artists collective of the 1960s to the Judson Three *cause celebre* of 1971 that resulted in black feminist artist Faith Ringgold's arrest for flag desecration; to racial tensions among editors and contributors to the feminist journal *Heresies*; to a range of discussions on art world racism and sexual identity biases. The roster of contributors to *A Sourcebook* includes men, women, Blacks, Whites, Asians, and Latinas, and reads like a Who's Who of feminist art theory and activism—Kay Brown, Alice Walker, Audre Lorde, Michele Wallace, Flo Kennedy, Lucy Lippard, Tony Whitfield, Lowery Sims, Lorraine O'Grady, Vivian E. Browne, Emma Amos, Lorna Simpson, Ana Mendieta, Beverly Buchanan, Howardena Pindell, James Baldwin, bell hooks, Sam Gilliam, Joe Overstreet, Melvin Edwards, William T. Williams and others.

The introduction, "Revolutionary Hope: Landmark Writings, 1965-85," eloquently penned by the book's editors, is thorough and lucid, offering an excellent overview of the show and the book. Morris and Hockley describe the goals of the exhibition and give a history of feminism and the Black Feminist Art Movement that hits all the high notes. They also discuss what it meant to be a black feminist during the years covered by the exhibit—someone doubly oppressed as both a woman and a minority, who had to be, in the words of Lorraine Hansberry, "twice militant"¹ (17). The organization and nature of *A Sourcebook* is described as a compendium of voices unheard by mainstream feminism, which are highlighted through crucial historic documents and

revealing conversations. Contextual abstracts of key writings are included in the introductory section along with quotes from the more radical feminist voices, such as Morrison, Linda LaRue and Lorde, the latter of whom remarked that "Black women have no abiding admiration of white women as competent, complete people [but rather see them as] willful children, pretty children, mean children, ugly children ... never as adults capable of handling the real problems of the world"² (18-19). After offering such a provocative peek at the book, the authors quickly mitigate the most militant remarks quoted (in my opinion, unnecessarily) by stating that the remarks "do not dispute that white women were in need of liberation, or that they had valid complaints—only that there are levels to oppression" (19).

Section one, written by contributor Connie Choi, Associate Curator at the Studio Museum in Harlem, documents the history of the civil rights artists group, Spiral, founded by Romare Bearden, Norman Lewis, Charles Alston and other key male players of the Black Arts Movement. As is the case with each section, the numbered sources are preceded by a commissioned essay which places the sources in context. In the case of Spiral, the context is patriarchy and the roles of the very few women who were making their voices heard at the time—Elizabeth Catlett, Jae Jarrell, and Ringgold and her group, Where We At—Black Women Artists. The sources in this section provide mostly male voices (Spiral members) and center on black liberation rather than women's liberation—presumably as a jumping off point for the feminist content to follow, since black women artists were largely ignored by Spiral. The sources in this section include a 1966 Jeanne Siegel *Artnews* interview with members of the group who discuss their careers, politics, and aesthetic philosophies. A single brief comment is made by the group's only woman member, Emma Amos, who calls for Spiral to be integrated, but makes no mention of women's concerns, given her status as a college student and the only woman, sponsored into the group by Hale Woodruff.

Source 2 of the first section is an *Ebony Magazine* Larry Neal article from 1966 entitled “Any Day Now: Black Art and Black Liberation,” in which the author defines the meaning of Black Power and the history of the Black Arts Movement (rooted in the literature, visual art and music of the Harlem Renaissance). Neal takes a staunchly militant and unvarnished (“... a cultureless revolution is a bullcrap tip”) (44) stance on the need for black self-determination and self-definition, and on the decadence of white art that compels blacks to see themselves through white eyes. Illuminating this manuscript (to adopt the Medieval Art term) is a photograph of the actual full color magazine cover and pages wherein the source first appeared. In fact, this technique is utilized throughout the book. Exceptional about these illustrations is that they are photographed well enough to be readable, and yellowed pages and cast shadows are included to suggest the presence of a real book or magazine. These illustrations have the capacity to transport readers back in time, as one recalls the look of magazines from the 1970s—their page layouts, pictures, coarse paper, and advertisements showing women wearing afros and mini-skirts or turtlenecks and long vests. Source 3 of the introduction is Jeff Donaldson’s iconic “10 in Search of a Nation” article published in an October 1970 issue of *Black World*; and Source 4 is Kay Brown’s 1972 *Feminist Art Journal* essay describing the nature and make-up of WWA (“Where We At” Black Women Artists).

Section two, “Race and Women’s Liberation” takes readers into the meat of the book with a contextualization of the sources by Hockley. It includes sources 5 through 9: Mary Ann Weather’s “An Argument for Black Women’s Liberation as a Revolutionary Force,” which appeared in *No More Fun and Games: A Journal of Female Liberation* in 1969; Toni Morrison’s “What the Black Woman Thinks About Women’s Lib,” from a 1971 issue of the *New York Times Magazine*; Toni Morrison’s classic “In Search of Our Mothers’ Gardens”; and Mary Sloan’s treatise on the National

Black Feminist Organization, both from the May 1974 issue of *Ms. Magazine*. Michelle Wallace’s interview of her mother, Ringgold, on the artist’s feminist *chef d’oeuvre*, the 1971 mural *For the Women’s House* is the sole content of the next section. Plucked from the pages of the April 1972 issue of the *Feminist Art Journal*, the interview is contextualized with a brief history of Ringgold’s feminist art, activism, and membership in WSABAL (Women Students and Artists for Black Art Liberation).



Fig. 1. Dindga McCannon. *Revolutionary Sister* (1971), Mixed media construction on wood, 62" x 27". Brooklyn Museum, Gift of R.M. Atwater, Anna Wolfrom Dove, Alice Fiebiger, Joseph Fiebiger, Belle Campbell Harriss, and Emma L. Hyde, by exchange, Designated Purchase Fund, Mary Smith Dorward Fund, Dick S. Ramsay Fund, and Carll H. de Silver Fund, 2012.80.32. ©Artist or artist’s estate. Photo: Brooklyn Museum.

The “Collective Artist Actions in New York” section is introduced by Carmen Hermo, Assistant Curator of Brooklyn’s Sackler feminist art collection, who details the history and activities of the BECC (Black Emergency Cultural Council), the AWC (Art Workers’ Coalition), WAR (Women Artists in Revolution), the Metropolitan Museum’s “Harlem on My Mind” exhibition controversy, and the historic Judson Three’s curation of the “People’s Flag Show.” Hermo’s is a splendid overview of the topic of collectivist actions that gives one a real sense of the agitprop excitement of the age. Sources in this section include published letters and typed statements such as the list of fourteen demands made by the AWC of the Museum of Modern Art, including a call for equal representation of women in the museum’s exhibits; a leaflet distributed to Whitney Museum visitors by WAR, WSABAL and the Women’s Ad Hoc Committee, exposing and critiquing the museum’s meager representation of women there; a letter of withdrawal from the Whitney exhibit, “Contemporary Black Artists in America” penned by, among others, Sam Gilliam, Joe Overstreet, Melvin Edwards, and William T. Williams, lamenting what they saw as a “token” (124) show that was poorly curated and researched; and open letters published in *Artforum* in May of 1971, defending the Judson Three and written by three attorneys, including Flo Kennedy.

Equally substantive, historic and discerning, subsequent sections include a fifth, introduced by Hockley, which is devoted to the contributions and history of JAM Gallery and its founder, Lynda Goode Bryant. A Tony Whitfield interview of Bryant published in *Black American Cultural History* in 1994 provides a thorough history of JAM. Particularly poignant in this section is a hand-written 1967 letter written by a 17-year-old Bryant to her parents. The sole black in a white private school (after being expelled from public school for mouthing off to her teachers), the precocious Bryant waxes philosophical about her experiences of racial disparity and integration, followed by a telling P.S. requesting

that her parents send her \$5 to buy Franz Fanon's book, *Black Skin, White Masks*. In the sixth and shortest section, Senga Nengudi's own words describe her 1978 *Freeway Fets* (performed with David Hammonds, Houston Conwil, Hassinger, Ulysses Jenkins and others). So complete is Nengudi's description and Hockley's contextualization of the performance that the single "source" in this section—an announcement card for the event featuring little more than filmstrip images of the under-the-freeway performance, location, date and time of the event—is more than enough for the reader to imagine precisely what took place.

Section seven is devoted to the Boston-based, lesbian "Combahee River Collective" (named after the 1863 Combahee Ferry raid led by Harriet Tubman, which freed 750 slaves). The collective's 1977 "A Black Feminist Statement" is stunning evidence of how far ahead of the curve members were in their fight against not only racial and gender equality but, in their words, "racial, sexual, heterosexual, and class oppression" (174). Morris's chapter on "Struggling for Diversity in *Heresies*" is especially revealing regarding the exclusion of women of color from its 1977 "Lesbian Art and Artists" issue; and the subsequent white matriarchal position taken by certain *Heresies* Collective and editorial staff members after agreeing to publish a "Third World Women—The Politics of Being Other" issue in 1979, (and later, in 1982, producing the "Racism is the Issue"). Tensions between white and black players in this multi-year drama are palpable in the editorial statements penned by the women of color who guest-edited or otherwise contributed to the issues. Especially witty and telling is Emma Amos's article in *Heresies* 15, "Some Do's and Don'ts for Black Women Artists." Amos's pithy advice includes: "Don't fantasize about winning recognition without breaking your behind for it"; "Don't complain about being a black woman artist in the '80s"; and "Don't take your art to Soho or 57th Street without Alex Katz's written introduction..." (205).

Section nine centers on the historic 1980 A.I.R. exhibit curated by Ana Mendieta, "The Dialectics of Isolation: An Exhibition of Third World Women Artists of the United States," which functioned as a critique of A.I.R., the women-only cooperative gallery which, like *Heresies*, had few minority members (most notably, Mendieta and Pindell) and tended to exclude women of limited economic means. Artists' statements from "The Dialectics" catalogue are included as sources here. Among the contributors are Nengudi, Beverly Buchanan, Janet Olivia Henry, and Pindell (who exhibited her iconic *Free, White and 21* video in the show). Pindell's statement reads in part: "all non-white Americans face racism projected on them by white males and females.... The white feminist who wishes equality for herself too often remains a racist in her 'equality' " (222). Pindell's remarks about her motivation for creating the video (wherein she wears "whiteface" makeup and a blond wig while intoning a monologue of a white woman speaking patronizingly to an unseen black woman) and the transcription of the actual speech from the video reveal the intensity of Pindell's disgust with racism within the Feminist Art Movement.

Closing the volume are a chapter on "Gender Politics at the Intersection of Race, Class, and Sexual Identity" and one on "The Eighties" (annotated by Hermo and Hockley, respectively). Chapter ten, "Gender Politics," addresses the heterosexuality of mainstream feminism, which displayed about as much interest in queer feminists as in minority ones. Notable contributors to the sources in this segment are feminist and queer theorists and writers Gloria Anzaldua, Audre Lorde, and James Baldwin. A stunning pair of portraits by illustrator Higgins Bond of Lorde and Baldwin accompanied their published conversation in a 1984 issue of *Essence Magazine*—serving as reminders of genius lost (Lorde and Baldwin both died of cancer within 8 years of the interview). Far from anticlimactic, *A Sourcebook* ends with an explosive topic. "The Eighties" chapter takes on the now infamous *The Nigger Drawings* exhibit (which, by the way,

had nothing to do with "Niggers") by white artist Donald Newman, mounted at Artists Space in 1979. Sources here include Pindell's impeccably researched document (hand-typed, gritty and shocking in what its statistics reveal), "Art (World) & Racism: Testimony, Documentation and Statistics." Pindell presented her research at Hunter College in New York in 1987. Included in the report were letters of protest against the Newman show, written to Artists Space funder, the New York State Council on the Arts, by Studio Museum Director Mary Schmidt Campbell and renowned art historian Carol Duncan; and a letter-to-the-editor of *Women Artists News* from Judith Wilson, editor of *Afro-American Art History* (today *The International Review of African-American Art*), calling out Barbara Barr for her racially insensitive remarks about conceptual artist Adrian Piper made in the June 1987 issue of *Women Artists News*.

This source is followed by an interview of Camille Billops by bell hooks about the artist's powerful and award-winning films—*Suzanne*, *Suzanne* (1982) and *Finding Christa* (1991), on women in her family (including herself) who have had to struggle with heroin addiction, domestic abuse, mental illness, unwanted pregnancy, motherhood, and adoption. The book closes with a pithy and often poetic description by Lisa Jones of her time with the Rodeo Caldonia High-Fidelity Performance Theater, an inter-arts collective of twenty-something women visual artists writers, actors and musicians. From Jones's words and from a double-spread *Interview Magazine* photo of the attractive, lively group, one gets a clear sense of the love shared between Rodeo members, their camaraderie and unique personalities. Significant is that they represent a shift in the attitudes of minority women artists by the end of the 1980s, away from agitprop action and toward a more laissez-faire attitude about Black Power and women's rights. According to Hockley, "these were not their fights.... Beneficiaries of the gains of the Civil Rights, Black Power, and Feminist ... movements, Jones and her cohort were raised in a more integrated society and living through the lens of

the “ain’t-nothin’-goin’-on-but-the-rent” eighties (255), which allowed them the freedom to “love themselves fiercely.”³ As if to punctuate this last essay, excerpted from Jones’s 1994 *Bulletproof Diva*, the glossy back cover of *A Sourcebook* sports an illustration of McCannon’s assemblage, *Revolutionary Sister*—a woman clad in a crown and belt made of real bullets.

Perusing each full-length original text, undiluted, is a powerful reader experience that exposes one to the thought processes of a remarkable contingent of activists and feminist trailblazers. I must admit, however, that the individual chapter prologues, which perfectly clarify the sources to follow, are the real stars of the text. Suspending

my expectation of the usual catalogue that accompanies an exhibit, I found *We Wanted a Revolution: Black Radical Women 1965-85: A Sourcebook* to be an unmatched resource that should be required reading in university Africana, American, and Gender Studies Departments, as well as in art history programs, nationwide. Impeccably and innovatively designed (alternating gray, white and black pages; rectangular boxes drawn around each source reference; and 3-D reproductions of original journals and letters), this is not your typical anthology, but rather a well-structured, astutely annotated, and beautifully produced book that the authors and the Brooklyn Museum should be proud of. I, for one, am grateful for their efforts. •

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Notes

1. Lorraine Hansberry, radio interview by Studs Terkel, WFMT Radio, Chicago, 12 May 1959, transcript published as “Make New Sounds: Studs Terkel Interviews Lorraine Hansberry,” *American Theater* (November 1984): 6.
2. Toni Morrison. “What the Black Woman Thinks About Women’s Lib,” *New York Times Magazine*, 22 August 1971, 14-15.
3. Ntozake Shange. *for colored girls who have considered suicide when the rainbow is enuf: a choreopoem*. (New York: Scribner Poetry, 1997), 63.

Tracey Emin: Works 2007-2017

By Jonathan Jones
Rizzoli, 2017

The Memory of Your Touch

By Tracey Emin; essay by Jonathan Jones
Xavier Hufkens, 2017

Reviewed by Jan Garden Castro

In *Tracey Emin: Works*, Jonathan Jones compares Tracey Emin’s art to Cycladic art, the Venus of Willendorf, Van Gogh’s bedroom in Arles, the art of Lucian Freud, Francis Bacon, August Rodin, Michelangelo, Rogier van der Weyden, Egon Schiele, Edvard Munch, and other men. Is her work one eighth as groundbreaking as Michelangelo’s? Why are women missing from the canon Jones generates? The short answer is that, based on this book, Emin and Jones seem to value art solely by famous men. Historically, comparisons are often used to include or exclude artists—as women were excluded from the canon for centuries. In *The Memory of Your Touch*, the focus is touch in every sense of the word. Let me first discuss Emin’s art and writings, then Jones’s two essays in these two books, and, finally, my opinion.

Tracey Emin’s insistence on the *line itself* is original and striking in *Works*. Her elementary outlines and the linear facet in her work somehow incorporate abstraction, figuration, and self-expression. Her sexual self oozes from this new huge book, as in *God, I wanted You* (2012), a two-page spread that is a full frontal female outline, legs open in Prussian blue. Outlines of her naked body predominate, along with a photo (from 2000) of her open bare legs with a pile of money around her crotch. The book cover is a raw photo of her nonsmiling face at around age 53: arched eyebrows, deep somber eyes, uncombed hair. She told the capacity crowd at 192 Books, a New York bookstore, that Jonathan Jones, a critic for *The Guardian*, initially thought that her reputation was inflated, but now that he has gotten to know her work, Jones compares her art to the men named above, in part because Emin idolizes works by many of these artists. Her public persona is large. She related that she has given up on love, gone back to drawing and sculpture, and is most at peace in her oceanside home in Le Lavandou, France. She personally installs *My Bed*, her 1999 bare mattress, its sheets askew amid used condoms, drugs, bottles, and cigarette butts. It sold at Christie’s London in 2014 for 2.5 mil-

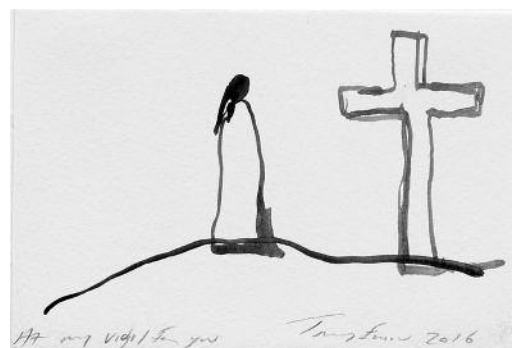


Fig. 1. Tracey Emin, *At my vigil for you* (2016), gouache on paper, 4 1/8" x 6 1/8". Photo: HV-Studio, Brussels.

lion pounds and is on loan to the Tate.¹ Emin has no interest in topping that installation. Instead, she’s excited that her latest exhibits bring tourists to her native seaside town Margate, England, and to the Tate Britain.

Among the hundreds of self-portraits in *Works*, one classic is an acrylic, *Trying to find you 1* (2007). A nude female body’s red outline bows in a supplicant position with her back and behind in a blue-white sky as head, hands, and legs rest in green-brown earth. Is the person she seeks below the earth? We see earth and sky through her body’s outline. *The Vanishing Lake* (2011) is listed as a steel bath and flag. A somewhat rusted steel gray antique bath that looks like a giant cradle holds a crumpled and perhaps



Fig. 2. Tracey Emin, *I will look for you in every sleeping hour* (2017), acrylic on canvas, 59.92" x 83.94". Photo: HV-Studio, Brussels.

soiled British flag. The image looks like a photograph of the bath in a mottled gray location—the vanishing lake of the title. The label lists three dimensions but does not clarify whether the murky lake bottom is a painting, a painted floor, or a photograph. The reproduction greatly enhances the bath, flag, and title—all potent symbols for Great Britain. *My lips moved across your face* (2015), an acrylic, shows the black outlines of two large nude figures. The lovers are half-covered in red and pink washes as slim pink lines drip down the page. This captures a hot tender moment. Emin's spare outlines of her nude body alone or coupling, and her charged words, like *There is no warmth* in pale pink amid purple scrawls, surge with a sweeping range of emotions from sensual ecstasy to misery.

Emin's sculpture is more difficult to assess: fewer three-dimensional works are included in *Works*. Her pieces range from amorphous human forms that nod to Rodin and Matisse—they remind me most of Marisa Merz—to architectural towers and ramps that evoke Russian conceptualists like Tatlin. The loosely figurative sculpture seems notable.

Every artist as productive as Emin has hits and misses. For example, the neon art writing in *Works* is well chosen from a few too many previously exhibited and published neon glosses on love. *I Followed You To The Sun* (2013), a phrase in bright yellow neon, expresses physical and spiritual rapture. A giant white neon rose climbs a wall above six small, unidentified sculptures shown at the Haywood Gallery in 2007. "Where I Want to go," a 2015 Tracey Emin and Egon Schiele exhibit at the Leopold Museum, Vienna, is represented on six pages but fails to list any titles, media, and materials of either artist. In general, this book leaves the sculpture in the background (Jones leaves out any mention of her staff, foundry, and her neon fabricator.)

Jonathan Jones opens his essay in *Works*, titled "Between the Bed and the Clock," by interspersing his views of the tradition of the nude in art with discussions of Tracey Emin's figures, the male gaze, and pornography. He points out that Michelangelo's sculpture *Dying Slave* (1513–16) shows the slave's bodily death while his face expresses joy. Jones segues from discussing this work into dis-

cussing Emin's animated masturbation film, *those who suffer love*. He suggests that the film achieves the same kind of physical/spiritual climax, and that "Like Michelangelo's *Dying Slave*, she suffers love" (*Works*, 13).² Jones suggests that Emin's "art of disclosure ... is ... "explicit, confrontational, and literal" ... [and] destroys ... the safe border between the work of art and our own being" (23). After learning that Emin loves the Munch painting *Between the Clock and the Bed*, he projects that the framed "spectral figure" on one side of the painting "bears a striking resemblance to the art of Tracey Emin" (*Works*, 33).³ This comparison is convenient rather than insightful.

Remarking on the artist's "difficult childhood, a patchy education and a precociously sexualized adolescence" in Margate, Jones recounts her dropping out of school and letting random men have sex with her from age 13 on. At 25, a gang of locals yelled "Slag! Slag! Slag" at a disco dance competition (*Works*, 23). Jones distinguishes between the pain in the artist's early life, her photographic memory of same, and her art then and now.

Jones argues that the male lineage of "Realist painting, from Caravaggio to Courbet" showed a distance between art and life until, in the work of Munch, "real things howl real emotions," especially in *The Scream* (*Works*, 25–26). Jones singles out Emin's 2016 sculpture *She knelt before him* and other "big nude sculptures of women in states of rapture and longing" as "visions of the earth-shaking love she still believes in" (*Works*, 31). *Between the Clock and the Bed* is among many Munch self-portraits in which he appears ill or depressed, either alone or with a generic model; a relatively featureless man in blue stands between a faceless clock and a painting of a standing nude. Unlike in *The Scream*, Munch's features are less evident than the striking geometric shapes and the palette of hues. Jasper Johns stole the bed's crosshatching from this composition. Munch is an object

surrounded by other objects. Jones contends, “Emin’s art is an archaeology of herself, driven by the same truthfulness that makes Munch paint his own life ticking away” (*Works*, 33). I don’t “see” Jones’s view of this painting’s “disturbing visual immediacy”; I see an ordered life. Yet it poses great conundrums: What is time? What transforms a memory into art? Is Munch’s art more ‘truthful’ than the exploding visceral-spiritual portrait in Caravaggio’s *The Conversion of St. Paul* (1601)?

Presented in *The Memory of Your Touch* are 95 works created in 2016–17 and shown in the light-filled Xavier Hufkens gallery, Brussels. It includes words and images related to the death of Emin’s mother, Pansy Cashin, yet the title refers to D. H. Lawrence’s novel *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*—a nurse’s memory of the touch of her husband, who died in a mine explosion. Jones’s essay here is gritty and direct: “Because she can draw the nude—which is, after all, pretty much the heart of the academic art tradition—with such unaffected simplicity and reality, she can also mess it up without any loss of precision—so bodies merge with mountains and are drowned in red seas of blood and fire” (*Touch*, 5). Jones points out that Emin is always her own model and that her “figurative art still cuts through the plastic surface of modern life...” (*Touch*, 7).

The images in *The Memory of your Touch* include a black shadow at the bedside of a partly outlined figure. *At my vigil for you* (2016; Fig. 1) is three main outlines: a landscape, a figure, and a cross; the line for land and the carrot-shaped figure could also be seen as a body and with an erect penis. Many messier works in bronze, acrylic, neon, and gouache offer angst-filled sexual narratives—some neon handwriting has crossed out words or changed lines. The one untitled giclee photo shows the semi-nude artist on white bed sheets wearing only a black bra and red fishnet thigh-high stockings. Most art in *Touch* is frenetic, expressive, and sexual, such as *I will look for you in every sleeping hour* (2017; Fig. 2), where the main focus appears to be not the loss of Emin’s mother but that of a sexual partner.

Possibly Emin is conflating the loss of her mother with the lack of a mother figure in her life. Three handwritten pages about how “I almost stopped loving you” are vague and claim chaos, change, and an absence of safety in Emin’s life.

This brings us to what Emin offers and fails to offer. In Europe, Emin’s work is being shown next to works by Schiele, Turner, Blake, and Bacon. She is being canonized. Her wild lines are akin to Joan Mitchell’s. Her sexual allusions are direct. Are outlines and scrawls enough? She is in league with Cy Twombly and Mitchell. Louise Bourgeois’s psychoanalytical journal, her outlines of women and their wombs, and her repertoire of drawings, paintings, prints, books, and sculpture in media from marble to cloth show more imagination. Frida Kahlo’s self-portraits are layered with universal symbolism, psychological cues, and intense hues, forms, and settings.

I agree with Jones that Emin’s gift is her ability to recreate her own body’s angst and fleeting bodily truths, but this tends to reduce the female to a fetish object and often a victim. Unlike Jones, I find her art differs from that of the male masters she follows. She is more open, classical, spare, unique, and fluid to frenetic. Color is missing or minimal as are textures, backgrounds, and contextual details. The figures don’t age.

Is solipsism enough? A painter once characterized Georgia O’Keeffe as “both the driver and the horse.” In Emin’s case, she is both the artist and her own subject/object.⁴ She is the subject she is painting, hers the body she is sculpting. The lines draw us in, yet lack the heart that Frida Kahlo put into every painting. Some Emin writings have the same flowing to crashing lines as her best art, but Sophie Calle’s art and texts seem more outrageous and witty. Jones compares Emin and Rodin, without noting that at the end of his life, Rodin painted women masturbating and female genitalia. These works, hidden at Musée Rodin, are rarely or selectively shown.

Emin’s endless outlines mostly conjure emptiness and the void. Her brand of ecstasy centers on visceral union

or the lone artist’s haunting memories of same. In contrast, the ecstasy *inside* Magdalene Odundo’s ceramic vessels is spiritual, mysterious, *and* visceral, as is the ecstasy of Bernini’s marble *St. Teresa*. I believe that Emin believes in her void—in the artist’s capacity to create out of one’s own body. Yet her entire oeuvre points to the limits of this approach; ecstasy is beyond what she outlines. Neither Jones’s comparisons nor my own are definitive. The art canon needs to be radically revised beyond gender, politics, and cultures.

Emin has a gutsy attitude and talent; her writings and art attract us in ways that are curious, real, and of value. Her sexualized preoccupation seems tragic. Kahlo’s suffering, her identification with her country, and her means of expression were profound. Art is not a measure of one’s suffering but of one’s ability to create despite it. As Emin continues to work in her studio or at her estate, hopefully, she will find new art frontiers beyond her own body. •

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Notes

1. Top auction sales by women artists in 2016 included Georgia O’Keeffe (\$44.4 million), Louise Bourgeois, and Joan Mitchell; Kahlo was 10th at \$8 million. See <https://news.artnet.com/market/most-expensive-female-artists-at-auction-2016-500096>
2. “This guy’s bloviating” is author Richard Schiffman’s view of this inflated comparison. Jones, perhaps, should have considered Bernini’s *Ecstasy of St. Teresa*, 1647–52, a life-sized marble of the nun’s transformed (some say orgasmic) state that expresses physical and spiritual rapture.
3. In *Tracey Emin: Angel without You*, Bonnie Clearwater notes that Emin’s *My Bed* refers to a Munch painting of a model on a bed.
4. See my “Art Futurecast: Merging Object with Subject” in *The Next Thing, Art in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Pablo Baler (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, 2013), 81–94. I argue that “Objects turn into subjects *if* and *when* they interact with viewers.”

Marlow Moss: A Forgotten Maverick

Edited by Sabine Schaschl
Hatje Cantz, 2017

Reviewed by Joanna Gardner-Huggett

The recent exhibition at New York's Museum of Modern Art, "Making Spaces, Women Artists and Postwar Abstraction," demonstrates scholars' resurgent interest in female abstract artists. Drawn from MoMA's own holdings, there was one artist missing despite her being represented in the collection: Marlow Moss (1889–1958). The rare moment Moss is mentioned in a modern survey is as a follower of Piet Mondrian rather than as an innovator in her own right. However, this catalogue, *Marlow Moss: A Forgotten Maverick*, published in conjunction with the exhibition of the same name held at the Museum Haus Konstruktiv, Zürich (February 9 – May 7, 2017), will play an important role in restoring Moss's role in art history. Although the three essays, published in English and German, do not offer new perspectives on Moss for specialists, bringing the texts together with sumptuous illustrations of the artists' paintings, sculptures, and preparatory drawings make the catalogue an essential resource. Lucy Howarth, who co-curated the exhibition with Sabine Schaschl, previously organized two major shows devoted to Moss, at Tate St. Ives and Tate Britain in 2013 and 2014, respectively, but the museum published only a brief curatorial essay online.¹ Therefore, this text is welcome and overdue.

Moss is best known to Dutch audiences due to her Neo-Plasticist style and long relationship with the Dutch writer Antoinette Hendrika (Netty) Nijhoff-Wind, who promoted the artist's career (31). As Schaschl explains in her introductory essay, "A Neglected Forward and Lateral Thinker," Marjorie Jewel Moss was born to a Jewish family in Kilburn, northwest London, and first studied at St. John's Wood Art School and the Slade School of Fine Art from 1916–1919. Moss quickly tired of the British preference for naturalism in

painting and turned to the British Library for writings by Marie Curie, Arthur Rimbaud, and Friedrich Nietzsche as philosophical inspiration for her later non-objective paintings. In 1920, Moss stated "I destroyed my old personality and created a new one"; this she accomplished by breaking with her family, adopting Marlow as her first name, cutting her hair short, and starting to wear men's riding clothes (33). By 1927 Moss was in Paris studying with Fernand Léger and Amadee Ozenfant, and in February of that year she saw Mondrian's paintings for the first time (5, 33, 35). Nijhoff describes this encounter as transformational for Moss. Newly committed to geometric abstraction, in 1931 Moss became a founding member of Abstraction-Création along with Mondrian (35, 95).

All three catalogue essays examine the reasons for Moss's historical erasure. Schaschl explains that World War II interrupted Moss's flourishing career in

France, forcing her to flee to Cornwall, England, in 1940 where she would remain until her death. Moss stored her artwork made up until that date at the Château d'Evereux in Normandy, where she was living with Nijhoff. Unfortunately, Nijhoff's home was destroyed in a bombing raid in 1944, so the only evidence of Moss's early years that remain are works already sold or photographs of works sent to art associations and interested parties for publication or exhibitions (7). Ankie de Jongh-Vermeulen recounts visiting the Constructivist scholar Willy Rotzler, who supervised the estate of Anne Rotzler of Gimpel & Hanover Galerie, who held several works by Moss in art storage. These paintings, reliefs, and sculpture were included in a Moss retrospective in Arnhem from late 1994 to early 1995, and returned to Switzerland, but sometime after Rotzler's death (in 1994) the works were discovered missing (51). Howarth suggests that if Moss had emigrated to

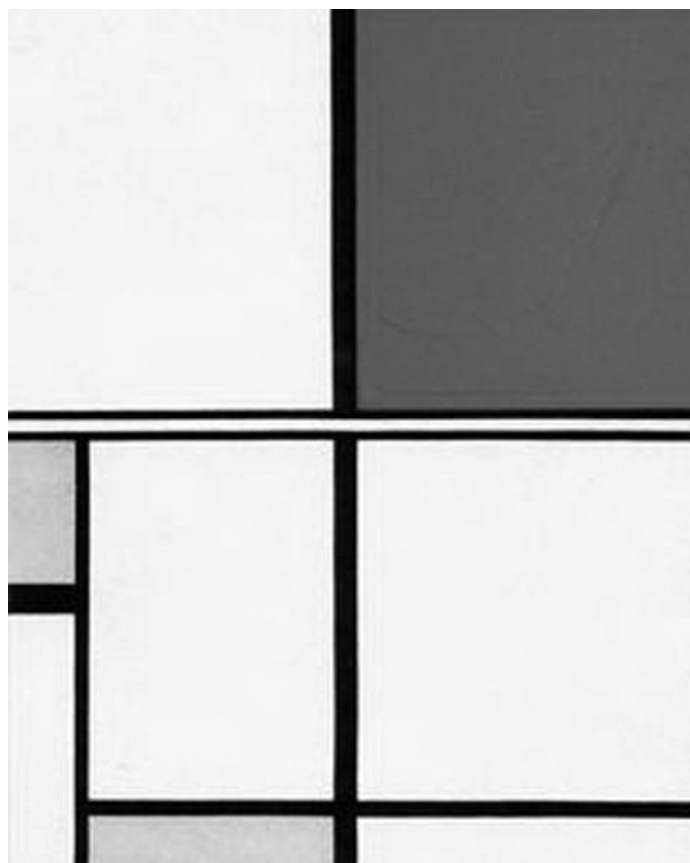


Fig. 1. Marlow Moss, *White, Black, Red, and Grey* (1932), oil on canvas, 21 1/4" x 17 1/2".
Collection Gemeente museum Den Haag.

New York after World War II, as Mondrian encouraged, and exhibited among her peers, she might be better known, but she also cautions against dwelling on the artist's status as forgotten as it eclipses Moss's many accomplishments (99).

Lucy Howarth's contribution, "The Double-Line of Miss//Moss," focuses on the impact of Moss's invention of the double line. The artist found the single line grid Mondrian employed for nearly ten years too restricting, so in 1930 Moss invented the double line, or two lines running parallel. In 1932, examples of these works, such as *White, Black, Red, and Grey* (1932; Fig. 1), were published and sparked a significant dialogue between Moss, Mondrian, and other constructivists. Once Mondrian started using this motif, rivals, such as Vantongerloo, accused Mondrian of stealing the double line from Moss. Howarth explains that these disputes took a toll on the artists' friendship, but more important is the fact that both artists' embarked on a fruitful period of experimentation and reflected the ultimate goal of Neo-Plasticism, establishing a universal language of color and form (95, 97). Howarth then turns sharply to a more recent reception of Moss's art and life, for example, examining how photographs of Moss with short and brilliant hair taken by Nijhoff's son Stefan contributed to reassessment of the artist through the lens of queer theory. Howarth cites Kati Röttger's reading of Moss's works as a radical commentary to debates concerning sexual difference (97). Unfortunately, this issue is addressed very briefly and misses an opportunity to explore how non-objective paintings provide the potential for a queer imaginary, which is suggested by Moss's inclusion in the Tate's 2017 exhibition "Queer British Art, 1861–1967." As Schaschl acknowledges in the introduction, Howarth's dissertation and curatorial research merit a full-length academic text where new findings on Moss can be explored in greater depth.

De Jongh-Vermeulen's essay, "Marlow Moss—The Construction of a New Reality," primarily draws on a previously published (1994) article and a 2009 lecture (31). Although Mondrian disapproved of using mathematical formulas in painting,

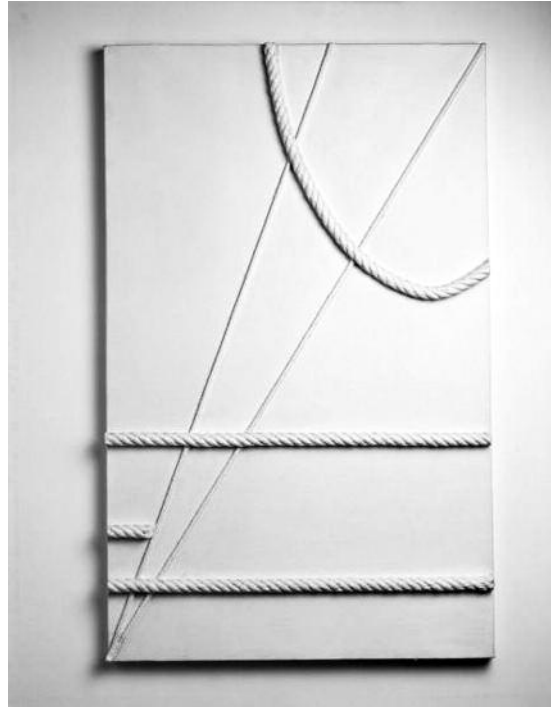


Fig. 2. Marlow Moss, *White with Curved Cord* (1936), oil, string and cord on canvas. 24 5/8" x 17 3/4". Collection Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, The Netherlands. Gift of Ida and Piet Sanders, Schiedam.

de Jongh-Vermeulen shows why they were essential to Moss's oeuvre. She highlights, in particular, the influence of Matila Ghyka's writings on Moss. A Moldavian diplomat, philosopher, and mathematician, Ghyka lived in Paris and published two books on Pythagorean philosophy and number theory, arguing that ratios, such as the Fibonacci sequence and the golden ratio, are essential for articulating maximum beauty in art and music. De Jongh-Vermeulen illustrates how the artist utilized these ratios by tracing their presence in preliminary studies for Moss's paintings and reliefs from 1940 onward. She also makes clear that Moss's career was not limited to the gridded paintings reminiscent of Mondrian, but in fact evolved into white reliefs created with curved cord and non-objective sculptures rendered in bronze, marble, and steel, for example *White with Curved Cord* (1936; Fig. 2) (37–45).

Marlow Moss: A Forgotten Maverick is a valuable contribution to the literature on Moss, but it would have benefitted from some editing to avoid overlap in content, such as Moss's biography and relationship with Mondrian found in all three essays. In addition, there are inconsistencies in language, such as de Jongh-Vermeulen's description of

Moss's relationship with Nijhoff as a friendship while Schaschl and Howarth clearly identify it as an intimate partnership (31). The inclusion of the constructivist Max Bill's 1973 exhibition essay on Moss as an appendix is welcome; however, because it is not translated into English from German, it is less accessible to a broader audience. It is also unfortunate that the catalogue does not reprint two essays published by Moss in the cahier *Abstraction-Création Art non-figuratif* in 1932 and 1933, which are addressed throughout the text. Nevertheless, this book is a welcome addition that will be appreciated by both undergraduates and scholars of modernism and should engender wider conversations about Moss with art historians, curators, and critics. •

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Note

1. See Lucy Howarth, "Marlow Moss: Movement, Space and Light," March 14, 2015. <http://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-britain/display/bp-spotlight-marlow-moss/essay> (accessed July 10, 2017).

Openings: A Memoir from the Women's Art Movement, New York City 1970 – 1992

By Sabra Moore
New Village Press, 2016

Reviewed by Gabrielle Warner

In the acknowledgments section of this engaging memoir, Sabra Moore (b. 1943) writes, "One of the things we learned twenty years ago in our efforts to recover our art history was how quickly women's contributions and ideas can vanish" (v). In an attempt to preserve this art history in which she was an active participant, *Openings* invites readers into the under-examined history of women's art movements in New York City in the 1970s and 1980s. The memoir begins with Moore's move to New York City in 1966 and her initiation into the city's misogynistic art scene. More important, the book recounts her introduction to activist communities and artists' collectives that comprised women of color and feminist organizers who rallied to combat unjust structures within and beyond the realm of art.

Moore's insights, based on her own experiences, highlight the complicated and difficult nature of the period she witnessed. And while, at times, it seems that Moore's retelling of the history is disjointed and chaotic, it becomes apparent that this is representative of the time: Feminist artists and activists alike were finding their footing in newly emerging movements that were confronting issues of racial inequality, class injustice, representation and rights. This generative chaos is evident in Moore's firsthand recollections of grassroots efforts, during which she discusses organizing meetings for the feminist art periodical *Heresies* and the Women's Caucus for the Arts (WCA), among others. But it also shapes her more personal stories of coping with loss, escaping abusive relationships, and finding her own artist/activist voice. Even during this erratic, and at



Fig. 1. Sylvia Sleigh, *Sabra Moore: My Ceres* (1982), oil on canvas, 36" diameter. Photo: Sylvia Sleigh.

times dizzying recapture of this point in time, Moore is the constant.

While the written history that is contained within this book is significant, equally so are the more than 900 images that accompany it. Art scans, flyers, and photographs line the bottom of almost every page. Two full-page portfolios with art by Moore and her peers and fellow organizers Emma Amos, Marina Gutierrez, Sylvia Sleigh—who painted Moore (Fig. 1), and others are included as well. From her personal archive, Moore has documented many events, persons, and movements from this period and exposes the overlap among them. *Openings*, then, offers not just a memoir, but a visual history of the art and ephemera circulating during these pivotal decades. These many and varied visual representations allow readers to connect with this rich text on several levels that bring together the historical and personal.

Openings contains an abundance of vital information for inquiring scholars interested in the New York women's art movement, archival research, artists' books, and feminist organizing. While the historical contributions are remarkable, the curious and unique way in which this book reassesses a more traditional understanding of memoir should not be ignored. *Openings* is a thoughtful text that has filled a large gap in the telling of women's art history and looks to inspire us all to think carefully about our own histories and stories and their place in the future. •

Gabrielle Warner is a graduate student in the Gender and Social Justice program at the University of Alberta, whose current research focuses on the intersections of feminist care ethics and harm reduction work for survival sex workers in Edmonton.

Kunst und Gesellschaft zwischen den Kulturen: Die Kunsthistorikerin Hanna Levy-Deinhard im Exil und ihre Aktualität heute / Art and Society Between Cultures: The Art Historian Hanna Levy- Deinhard and Her Timeliness Today

Edited by Irene Below and
Burcu Dogramaci,
edition text + kritik, 2016

Reviewed by Elizabeth Otto

A groundbreaking twentieth-century scholar who took a radically new approach to art history through sociology, the ever curious and multilingual Hanna Levy-Deinhard (1912–84) researched, published, and taught in Germany, France, Brazil, Israel, and the United States. Three decades, her most productive, were spent based in New York City, where she taught legions at The New School, Bard College, and Queen's College. Never heard of her? Well, you're not alone, but this recent edited volume goes a long way to rectifying the absence of this creative and influential German-Jewish scholar from standard histories of art history. The book, volume 9 of the series *Frauen und Exil* (Women and Exile), contains eighteen scholarly essays (three in English, fifteen in German) that chart Levy-Deinhard's development as a scholar in Munich and, after the National Socialists' takeover, Paris; her flight to Brazil, where she helped to shape art

history as a field prior to coming to New York; and her encounter with sociological theory and development of a range of new art-historical directions and fields of inquiry in art and architectural history. The volume also includes a substantive introduction, a detailed "Life Collage" biography, and a full list of Levy-Deinhard's publications and manuscripts in four languages. Key among these is her magnum opus, *Meaning and Expression: Toward a Sociology of Art* (1970). She began her pursuit of the idea of a sociology of art—which focused in particular on the historical conditions of production—as early as the 1930s in her French scholarship as well as in her English-language writing and teaching from the late 1940s onward, well before Arnold Hauser would advocate similar ideas. Now-famous scholars such as Meyer Schapiro and Max Horkheimer enthusiastically supported her work in this direction.

Levy-Deinhard was one of the hardest working art historians in the field, often teaching at multiple institutions to make ends meet as the sole breadwinner. She was also simply overflowing with ideas; Renaissance painting, the Baroque, Brazilian architecture and decorative arts, and the role of contemporary art in post-war society were all topics Levy-Deinhard taught and wrote about in original ways. As this book reveals, the fact that Levy-Deinhard is not better known is a case study in how prejudice often colluded to keep immigrants and women out of the spotlight. Yet Levy-Deinhard published actively and left behind a cadre of grateful and talented students, including several who contributed photographs and material for the volume. (For transparency, I

would point out that, out of enthusiasm for the topic, I contributed an essay on Levy-Deinhard's mid-century work and her struggles as an immigrant and a woman.)

The essays in this book cover some of the most exciting chapters of twentieth-century art history and reveal how the struggle to develop a social history of art was one fought on both sides of the Atlantic. The book's essays also reveal how many of the world's now proud havens for Jews fleeing Nazi Germany were not exactly hospitable. In 1968, Levy-Deinhard did return to Germany to address students at Berlin's Free University; they were eager for her engaged, sociological approach to art history, an antidote to the relatively lifeless, formalist, and hierarchical scholarship that still dominated there. One young student, Irene Below, heard Levy-Deinhard's speech and was inspired by this art history that was so much more than a history of great men told by male professors. Below and her coeditor on this book, Burcu Dogramaci, represent two generations of feminist art historians who led a team of scholars to unearth this essential global history of one of the last century's most important scholars, a leftist, socially engaged, female art historian who was almost lost to history. •

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Equal Under the Sky: Georgia O'Keeffe and Twentieth Century Feminism

By Linda M. Grasso
University of New Mexico Press, 2017

Reviewed by Laurie Lisle

In *Equal Under the Sky*, English professor Linda Grasso has done meticulous research and analysis in examining artist Georgia O'Keeffe's relationship to feminism. The title of the book comes from a phrase—"that all men and women stand equal under the sky"—the artist, a member of the feminist National Woman's Party, wrote in a 1944 letter to Eleanor Roosevelt seeking her support for an Equal Rights Amendment. The important issue of O'Keeffe's adherence to feminist ideals has bedeviled many of us who have written about this independent and self-actualizing New Woman, who, disappointingly, turned her back on 1970s feminism at the end of her long life (1887-1986).

Organized into six sections, Grasso's scholarly study describes the way 1910s feminism profoundly shaped the young O'Keeffe by fueling her aspirations and enabling her to break gender barriers to become a professional painter (Fig. 1). It enumerates the ways her work was early on endorsed and supported by women teachers, women friends, women collectors, women critics, and women's clubs, alongside the advocacy of her husband, photographer Alfred Stieglitz. The book also elucidates the way the elderly artist inspired younger generations of women. Grasso goes on to explain how O'Keeffe mythologized her trajectory as an artist in her profusely illustrated 1976 book, *Georgia O'Keeffe*. Rich with perceptions and new primary materials, *Equal Under the Sky* ends by elaborating O'Keeffe's ambivalent relationship to feminism.

On the spectrum between equality and difference feminism, O'Keeffe stood for equality and so-called male values. A member of the first generation of American modernists, she sought gender parity at a time when her husband and male art critics were interpreting her

abstractions and enlarged flowers as expressions of feminine eroticism and sensibility, undermining, in her eyes, her position as a painter. "The feminism she embraced and practiced ennobled individualism, self-expression, and professional achievement as ultimate forms of liberty," Grasso states (4), instead of a traditional submissive feminine role.

When second wave feminism emerged in the later part of the twentieth century, O'Keeffe was in her eighties. As Judy Chicago and other feminist artists asserted a fundamental link between women's bodies and their imagery, it was exactly what O'Keeffe had so strenuously resented and rejected at the hands of men in the 1920s. Regarding classification as a woman artist as a form of inferiority and injustice, in old age she turned her back on the resurgence of feminist activism and solidarity.

Nevertheless, as Grasso points out, O'Keeffe's strength and single-mindedness attracted the attention of hundreds of younger women, many of whom wrote admiring letters to her (including yours truly), which O'Keeffe carefully kept and eventually gave to Yale's Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library. Unlike most other researchers in the archive at

Yale, Grasso carefully examined them, documenting O'Keeffe's enormous influence on other middle-class white women, even as the octogenarian artist denied the immense impact of feminist ideas on her younger self.

Grasso argues dauntlessly that O'Keeffe's large body of paintings is a powerful feminist act. "O'Keeffe's art dislodges gendered assumptions about women's sensibilities, sources of power, and abilities to render the world imaginatively," she writes. "It is radical because of its potential to motivate feminist creativity, which is a kind of activism" (200). Despite the aged artist's disapproval of the modern women's liberation movement, it was what brought her the many accolades that fulfilled her ambition to be regarded as a well-respected and even great American artist. Even for someone like myself, who has been examining and following the O'Keeffe story for forty years, this book is a fascinating and welcome addition to the oeuvre. •

Laurie Lisle is the author of the first biography of Georgia O'Keeffe, *Portrait of an Artist: A Biography of Georgia O'Keeffe* (1980). She is also the author of *Louise Nevelson: A Passionate Life* (1990).



Fig. 1. Josephine B. Marks, photo of Georgia O'Keeffe (ca. 1938). Georgia O'Keeffe Museum.



Pl. 1. Betsy Damon, *The 7000 Year Old Woman* (1977), Performance, New York City. Photo: Su Friedrich. Courtesy the artist.



Pl. 2. Betsy Damon, *The Living Water Garden: Living Water Drop Fountain* (1998), Chengdu, Sichuan Province, China. Photo: Courtesy the artist.



Pl. 3. Betsy Damon, *The Living Water Garden: Flow Forms* (1998), 5.9 acres, Chengdu, Sichuan Province, China. Photo: Courtesy the artist.



Pl. 4. Betsy Damon, *Water Rules Life: Seeking Lost Rivers in Pittsburgh*, (2012), Installation at the Mattress Factory, mixed media. Photo: Courtesy Mattress Factory and the artist.



PL. 5. Helen Phillips, *Abstract Composition* (1953), etching and engraving, 13 7/8" x 10 1/2". Davis Museum at Wellesley College, Wellesley, MA. Nancy Gray Sherrill, Class of 1954, Collection. Courtesy Carla Esposito, Rome.



PL. 6. Siri Rathsman, *untitled* (1931), engraving with hand coloring, 6 7/8" x 9 1/4". Courtesy Anders Wahlstedt Fine Art.



PL. 7. Buffie Johnson, *untitled* (ca. 1950), image: 11 1/2" x 14 3/8". Courtesy of Jenny Johnson Sykes.



PL. 8. Anne Ryan, *XXXIV* (1949), color woodcut on black paper, sheet: 19" x 23 3/4". Yale University Art Gallery, Anonymous Purchase Fund. Courtesy of the Estate of Anne Ryan and the Susan Teller Gallery, New York, NY.



Pl. 9. Louise Bourgeois,
Ascension Lente, state XII of XIV (1949),
 engraving, with scorper, and stencil
 additions, 8 3/4" x 6 7/8". Museum of
 Modern Art, New York, Gift of the
 artist. Art © The Easton Foundation /
 Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY.
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 Resource, New York.



Pl. 10. Louise Nevelson,
The Colored Jungle (1952-54),
 etching on paper, 20 1/8" x 22".
 Brooklyn Museum, Gift of Louise
 Nevelson. © 2014 Estate of Louise
 Nevelson / Artists Rights Society
 (ARS), New York.



Pl. 11. Paula Rego, *Centaur* (1964), collage and oil on canvas, 55 1/8" x 54 3/4". ©Paula Rego. Courtesy Marlborough Fine Art.



Pl. 12. Paula Rego, *Wendy's Song* (1992), color etching and aquatint, 16 1/8" x 13 7/8" (size on paper). ©Paula Rego. Courtesy Marlborough Fine Art.



Pl. 13. Paula Rego, *Portrait of a Lady* (1959), mixed media on canvas, 28 3/4" x 39 3/8". ©Paula Rego. Courtesy Marlborough Fine Art.



Pl. 14. Paula Rego, *Rigoletto* (1983), acrylic on paper, 94 1/8" x 80".
©Paula Rego. Courtesy Marlborough Fine Art.



Pl. 16. Paula Rego, *Dog Woman* (1994), pastel on canvas, 47 1/4" x 63".
©Paula Rego. Courtesy Marlborough Fine Art.



Pl. 15. Paula Rego, *Vivian Girls In Tunisia* (1984), acrylic on canvas, 78 3/4" x 39 3/8". ©Paula Rego. Courtesy Marlborough Fine Art.



Pl. 17. Suzanne Lacy and Leslie Labowitz-Starus, *In Mourning and in Rage* (1977), Los Angeles, CA. Photo: Maria Karras. Archival photo. Courtesy Leslie Labowitz-Starus.



Pl. 18. Suzanne Lacy and Leslie Labowitz-Starus, *In Mourning and in Rage* (1977), Los Angeles, CA. Photo: Maria Karras. Archival photo. Courtesy Leslie Labowitz-Starus.

*What few things would you take with you
if you had to leave your home, maybe forever?*



Wooden Shoes 921; 2017; wood, metal, stone, fabric, mixed media; 65 x 25 x 23 inches Photo: Jeffrey Scott French

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