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(Front cover)
Suzanne Valadon,
Adam and Eve (1909), oil on canvas, 63 3/8" x 51 5/8".
Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Pompidou, Paris.

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During a well-attended conference of the College Art Association in New York City in February, the editorial staff and our publisher, Ian Mellanby of Old City Publishing, celebrated the fortieth year of continuous publication for *Woman's Art Journal*. Joining us were *WAJ* Founding Editor Elsa Honig Fine, retiring Book Editor Ute Tellini, and new Book Editor Aliza Edelman. We are pleased to report that current and future issues of WAJ can be accessed in a print edition and online.

Over time, we see more and more feminist scholars from around the world drawn to WAJ, and seeking opportunities to publish. This Spring/Summer 2019 issue demonstrates this global reach. Authors of the four articles in this issue represent four continents, with scholars based in the United Kingdom, Hong Kong, and South Africa, and an American living in France.

On our cover is a bold depiction by French artist Suzanne Valadon (1865-1938) of herself and her lover, both nude, as Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. The nude male figure, readily identifiable as Andre Utter, who would become Valadon's husband, appears in several paintings and drawings by the artist. For removing the proverbial fig leaf, Valadon, who absorbed her knowledge of painting while posing as a model for the likes of Degas and Puvis de Chavannes, is unparalleled among her generation of women artists. Author Lauren Jimerson, who wrote a dissertation on this artist, notes that "Valadon exploited her lower-class position, treating a subject that was taboo for female painters: the male nude." Comparing her drawings to those of male artists of the time, particularly Degas, Jimerson describes Valadon's rendering of "the male body straightforwardly in graceless poses and from unflattering angles." Although most of these works were not exhibited or discussed at the time they were painted in the early twentieth century, today they join a complex discourse on sexuality and gender.

Rachael Grew's subject, the versatile artist and designer Leonor Fini (1907-1996), is closely associated with the French Surrealists (with whom she exhibited multiple times), despite her expressed wishes to reject identification with that group. The focus here is on Fini's propensity for "dressing up" and the costume and set design work she did in addition to her paintings. The author writes that, "Fini used her costumed body as a vehicle for artistic creation, producing characters that illuminated facets of her identity, which then reappeared in her art and design." Remarkable photographs of Fini in various costumes and settings complement her paintings and sketches. "Through the medium of costume," writes Grew, "Fini enabled not only her own body, but the bodies she depicted on canvas and in three dimensions to continuously re-make their identity."

The painter and sculptor Pan Yuliang (1895-1977) is unusual among Chinese women artists for her reclining female nudes and her candid self-portraits—some of them nude—including many created in her later years. Pan came from a humble background that stunted her career prospects in China, and Sandy Ng considers the fortuitous circumstances that gave Pan an opportunity to study in Paris. Following her return to China, Ng describes how, for a time, "the widespread acceptance of nude imagery coupled with the persistent aspiration to modernize, encouraged Chinese women artists to render female nudes." Along with greater opportunities for education for women came greater awareness of their rights and social roles, and Ng chronicles how in early twentieth-century China, "female modernity" became closely aligned with contemporary cultural changes. Pan, however, explored her own vision of the New Woman. Her images differed greatly from the stereotypical images of the young consumers and "happy mothers" seen in popular Chinese illustrations of her time. "Pan Yuliang's paintings of female figures were among the most provocative in modern China," writes Ng, and it was likely for this reason that the artist moved permanently to France in 1937.

The South African artist Penny Siopis creates disturbing images that explore inequalities that relate variously to gender, class, and race, and to the contentious history of apartheid. The relationship between the black "nanny," who figured so importantly in the lives of many of that nation's white families, and the children for whom she cared, is the subject of Irene Bronner's discourse on Siopis. The article centers on *Tula Tula* (1994), a mixed-media portrait by Siopis based on a photograph of the artist's young brother seated on the lap of his nanny. Siopis (b. 1953) addresses the complex surrogacy relationship between these figures during apartheid and beyond. "From the mid-1980s through the 1990s," writes Bronner, "Siopis consistently references various black female figures with the intention of disrupting colonial and apartheid narratives about gender, race, and representation."

The extra-long section of book reviews in this issue reflects an outstanding effort by our outgoing and incoming book review editors and, as expected, the notable excellence of our reviewers. Interestingly, most of the books under review span subjects of the last century. Among these, the American photographers Anne Brigman (1869–1950) and Berenice Abbott (1898–1991) receive well-deserved attention, as do German modernist Jeanne Mammen (1890–1976), Swiss multimedia artist Sophie Taeuber-Arp (1889–1943), and the Swedish abstractionist Hilma af Klint (1862–1944). A new book on Malvina Hoffman's (1885–1966) "Races of Man" sculptures reveals how these works continue to draw controversy in today's sensitive political environment. Two books chronicle the monumental production, *Life? or Theatre?*, by Charlotte Salomon (1917–43), whose life was cut short at Auschwitz. On more contemporary subjects are reviews of major catalogues documenting recent exhibitions on UK-based multimedia artist Mona Hatoum (b. 1952) and sculptor Rachel Whiteread (b. 1963).

We thank Ute Tellini and Aliza Edelman, our four authors, and our sixteen accomplished book reviewers for their invaluable contributions to this issue. We also thank our partners at Old City Publishing for seeing the journal into print and into the hands of readers worldwide, and the Art History Department at Rutgers for its ongoing support of WAJ.

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

Defying Gender

Suzanne Valadon And The Male Nude

By Lauren Jimerson

Suzanne Valadon (1865–1938) is in every sense an exception. Although she began her career as a model, an object of the male gaze, she would transform herself into an active female agent as artist. She exploited her lower-class position, treating a subject that was taboo for bourgeois female painters: the male nude.[1] She confronted the subject head-on in several monumental paintings, including *Adam and Eve* (1909; Fig. 1, and front cover), *Le Lancement du Filet* (Casting the net) (1914; Fig. 2 and Pl. 1) as well as numerous drawings. Through various styles and media, she represented different materializations of the male form—idealized and unidealized, active and passive. In these works, Valadon eschewed patriarchal gender binaries and power relations as she invited viewers to admire the male figure. Valadon became an agent of her own gaze and desire as she captured the corporeality and erotics of the male body.

At a time when the expression of female sexuality in art was unacceptable, Valadon's paintings of the male body offended bourgeois audiences. Shown at major salons and group exhibitions, her male nudes provoked silence. While critics discussed her female nudes in detail, most ignored her paintings featuring male figures. It is likely that male critics were disturbed by Valadon's upfront display of sensual male bodies. Perhaps they also saw in these works a dangerous reversal of the power structure. Silence and omission, in this case, is a telling response.

Over a century later, art historians have yet to break the silence. There is a dearth of information on Valadon's male nudes in art historical literature.[2] The majority of scholars who have studied Valadon's oeuvre have focused almost exclusively on her representation of the female nude, which they have examined in relation to the theory of the male gaze. The few scholars who have discussed her male nudes have ignored her drawings and have provided just a cursory overview of the paintings.[3] Such perfunctory analyses have led to misinterpretations of her work.[4] Meanwhile, the male nude has lately received increased scholarly attention. Still, it seems that art historians are primarily interested in *male* artists' representations of the male body.[5] What happens when a female artist disrupts the sanctioned gendered relationship between the viewer and the body in art?

Adam and Eve, Valadon's first painting of a male nude, is not just a male nude. In this painting, Valadon daringly portrays herself naked next to her partner, André Utter, a man

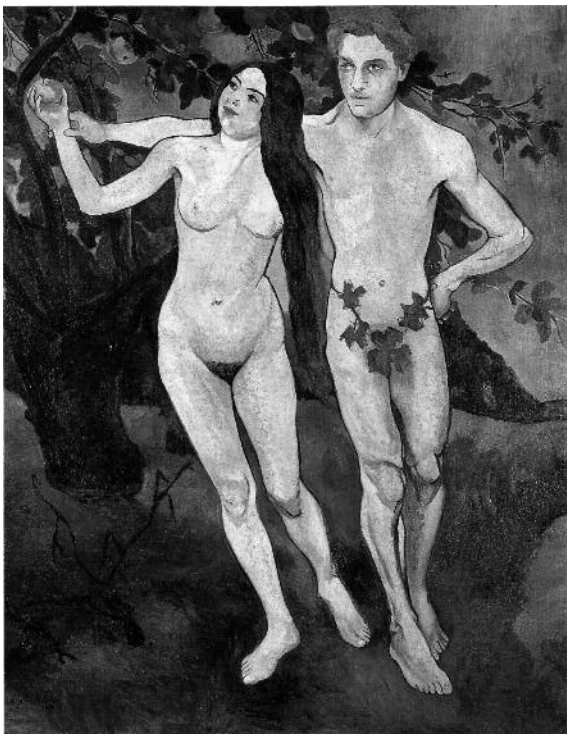


Fig. 1. Suzanne Valadon, *Adam and Eve* (1909), oil on canvas, 63 3/8" x 51 5/8". Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Pompidou, Paris.

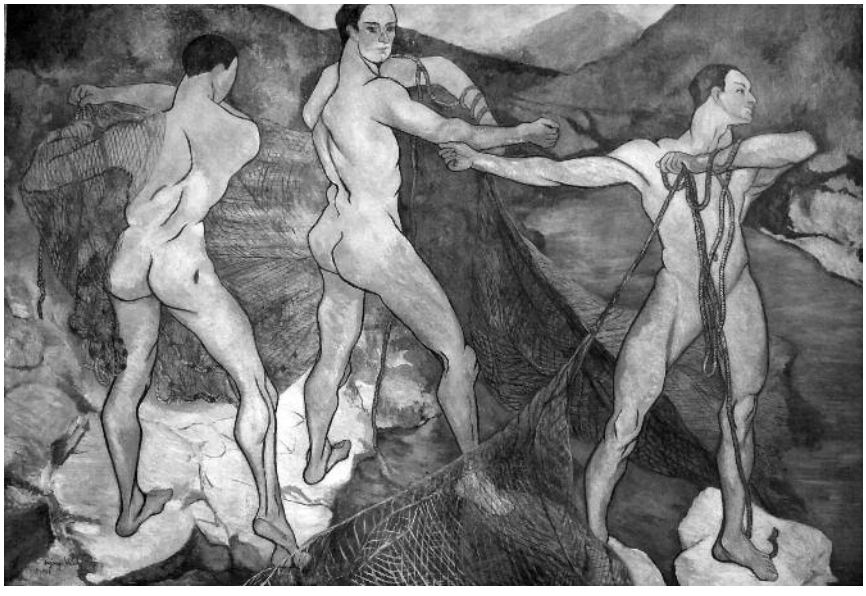


Fig. 2. Suzanne Valadon, *Le Lancement du filet* (1914), oil on canvas, 79 1/8" x 118 1/2". Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Pompidou, Paris.



Fig. 3. Suzanne Valadon, *Adam and Eve* (1909), photograph (location unknown).

twenty-one years her junior.[6] Such a work is unprecedented; it is claimed to be the first work by a woman artist that depicts the male and female nude together.[7] In this double nude portrait, each figure's identity is immediately recognizable. Neither one is idealized; Valadon subverts gendered codes by displaying the male and female body with the same steadfast realism. She ignores the conventions of the nude by not transforming Utter into a timeless figure but accentuating his unique physical characteristics. He appears awkward with his boyish figure and gangly limbs. Rather than modestly hide her own body, she shows off her youthful figure with her long hair swept to the side. They are not passive but moving forward, with arms interlocked. In this work, Valadon appropriates a time-honored biblical and art-historical theme to celebrate her relationship with Utter. In Valadon's version there is no serpent, and the man and woman reach for the apple together.

Now, imagine if there were no fig leaves. A preparatory sketch along with a photograph from 1909 show the original version, in which Utter's genitalia are exposed in full-frontal nudity (Fig. 3). Valadon added the fig leaves in order to exhibit *Adam and Eve* over a decade later at the Salon des Indépendants in 1920.[8] Even though the exhibition was unjuried, it is likely that officials, stunned by the display of male genitalia, required the painting to be censored. Even with fig leaves, *Adam and Eve* lies far outside the boundaries of female propriety. Not only does the painting exhibit a female and male nude together, Valadon is unabashed by her own naked body. Her pubic hair is shamelessly visible as she confidently guides Utter forward. Candidly and unequivocally, Valadon manifests her own private desires on canvas.

There are no contemporaneous examples of exhibited male nudes by French female artists to compare with *Adam and Eve*.[9] While female artists began engaging with the genre of the nude increasingly toward the end of the nineteenth century in France, they limited themselves to the female body. For a bourgeois woman to paint the male nude was considered socially objectionable. Affluent women could enroll in private academies in Paris, which had fewer restrictions regarding life drawing.[10] Yet when faced with the nude, it was nearly always a female model or a fully or partially clothed male model.[11] The mere idea of a woman viewing a naked man in an art studio or classroom caused a great deal of anxiety amongst French artists and academicians in the 1880s and 1890s. Women's chastity had to be preserved.[12] What's more, it was believed that the presence of female students in life drawing classes would negatively impact the male students' capacity to study the nude, thereby threatening the entire art establishment.[13] Women were thus banned from the prestigious École Nationale des Beaux-Arts until the very end of the century, effectively crippling them from competing with their male counterparts, particularly in the important domain of history painting.[14] When they were finally admitted in 1897, that institution's importance had greatly diminished.[15] In a rapidly changing art world and burgeoning gallery system, women artists faced a new set of obstacles. The nude was now a vehicle for the expression of a male artist's "originality," virility, and sexuality—an endeavor from which women were once again excluded.[16]

Valadon never received the rigorous academic training for successful "mastery" of male nude representation, but this did not impede her from exploring the subject. Her study of the male body began with her own son, Maurice Utrillo. Starting in the 1880s, she depicted him in numerous, candid drawings. Images of young Utrillo were among the first works she publicly exhibited in 1894 at the Salon de la Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts.[17] Valadon would not portray him nude past early adolescence, but rather, adopted Utter as her muse. He served as the model for several large-scale nude paintings from around 1909 to1914, including *La Joie de vivre*, which she exhibited in the 1911 Salon d'Automne.[18] These monumental paintings demonstrate Valadon's quest to transform and challenge the canonical genre of the male nude. *Le Lancement du filet* was her final and most ambitious painting featuring a male nude. The work was conceived during the couple's sojourn in Corsica in 1913, where Valadon sketched Utter nude in the wild landscape. A year later, the couple married, and Utter joined the army.

In *Le Lancement*, Utter is no longer the maladroit, youthful male as seen in *Adam and Eve*, but has been transformed into a robust figure. Shown three times from the back, side and front, the progressive rotation of a single figure in space recalls early cinema. In positioning the same masculine model from various vantage points, Valadon represents the male body as she had already been displayed herself countless times in art—as a passive object. She also eliminates Utter's individual characteristics, idealizing him instead. The figures exhibit "proportion, symmetry, elasticity, and aplomb," the essential attributes for an ideal male nude.[19] While Valadon does not render the genitalia, she suggests them by emphasizing the pelvic muscles. These strong lines, which divide the torso from the lower half of the body, are important "elements in the classical architecture of the human body" and assert the masculinity of the figure.[20] Rather than model the figure with chiaroscuro, Valadon creates a strong silhouette through a series of bold, flowing lines. These contours emphasize the figure's athletic form composed of a powerful torso and slender but brawny limbs.

While Valadon adheres to many of the conventions for representing the male nude, she simultaneously includes a number of pictorial tools typically reserved for the female nude.

She depicts man embedded in nature—an association typically reserved for the female. His skin is rendered with a kaleidoscopic palette of orange peel, salmon, ochre, and olivine, applied synchronistically with short and vigorous brushwork. These hues mimic those found on the rocks and mountains in the background. Valadon's accent on vibrant and warm colors, as well as the livened facture, draws parallels between man and landscape. Larger than life-size, the nudes take on a monumental presence within the composition. The central figure's head breaches the upper limit of the picture plane like the hyacinth mountain in the distance. Pushed to the foreground, the sequence of bodies reads like a classical frieze. In displaying the body from three angles, Valadon makes reference to the classical theme of the "Three Graces." As in Rubens's *The Three Graces* (1639),[21] Utter stands gracefully in contrapposto pose, with arched feet. His arms are outstretched almost close enough to form an embrace. He holds the ropes of a net that wrap around his body in the same poised manner as the graces carrying their drapery. Like gauzy, flowing fabric, the net veils and unveils the body, further accentuating the figure's nudity. In form and pose, the nudes lure and seduce the eye.

Bathing, a common subject in art since antiquity, experienced a renaissance during Valadon's lifetime. Given its heightened popularity and her firsthand experience with it as a model, it is only fitting that Valadon would turn her attention to this theme. In an interview, Valadon recounted her experience posing for both Auguste Renoir and Pierre Puvis de Chavannes. Valadon appears in a number of bathing scenes by these artists, including Renoir's *The Large Bathers* (1887), and in Puvis's mural *Le Bois sacré* (1884)[22] she posed for nearly all of the figures, both male and female: "I'm here, and then there, and almost all these figures borrowed something from me. I posed not only as women, but as young lads…. Puvis asked me to give him an attitude, a movement, a gesture. He transposed and idealized me."[23] The harmonious proportions of the nudes in *Le Lancement* reflect the classical treatment of the body evident in Puvis's work. After having learned how to adeptly position her own body as a model, Valadon would apply these same skills as an artist, displaying Utter from the most complimentary angles. She effectively mobilized a career of posing before male painters, tactfully transposing the masculine model into elegant and idealized figures on her own canvas.

Valadon's palette and brushwork depart from Puvis's and bespeak the influence of Gauguin. In one of the only surviving written accounts by Valadon, she paid tribute to the artist and stated that she applied Pont-Aven techniques, "without a trace of aestheticism or artificiality, all with force of life."[24] In *Le Lancement*, the touches of violine and neptune green amongst patches of raw-umber on the rugged landscape along with the shimmering, ultramarine-blue water recall Gauguin's liberal use of color. But as she herself acknowledged, her palette was not arbitrary; she never fully departed from nature. At the same time, the visible constructive stroke and flat planes of color are reminiscent of Cézanne. It is likely that she saw Cézanne's images of bathers. However, his architectonic, frozen and malformed bodies are at odds with Valadon's luscious and sensual treatment of the male nude.

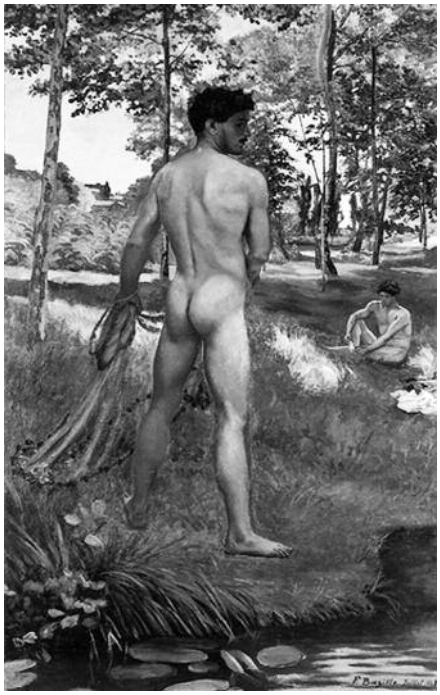


Fig. 4. Frédéric Bazille, *Le Pêcheur à l'épervier* (1868), oil on canvas, 72 7/16" x 32 5/8". Fondation Rau pour le tiers-monde, Zurich.

In composition and subject matter, *Le Lancement* most directly recalls Frédéric Bazille's *Le Pêcheur à l'épervier* (Fisherman with a net) (1868; Fig. 4). This painting was exhibited at the Bazille Retrospective at the Salon d'Automne in 1910.[25] Valadon showed her work at the Salon that year and thus would surely have seen it. In *Le Pêcheur,* two male nudes appear on the banks of the Lez river, near Montpellier. Sunlight filters through the trees creating patches of light on the grassy riverbank. One figure stands next to the water holding a fishing net, while the other undresses in the background. The standing figure is viewed from behind, in a similar position as the left-hand figure in *Le Lancement*. The clothes strewn on the ground reinforce the naked state of the men and push the painting outside the realm of acceptable male nudity in art. While it is common to find the female nude undressed in nature with her clothes piled on the grass, the male nude rarely is portrayed this way.[26] The jury of the Salon may well have detected the erotic undertones, as they rejected *Le Pêcheur* from the Salon in 1869.[27]

Le Pêcheur and *Le Lancement* parade the male body in a manner normally reserved for female nudes. Both artists display the male body in nature, ignoring the time-honored principle that women belong to nature and men to culture.[28] Using nascent impressionist techniques, Bazille displays his nudes in a contemporary, plein-air scene, firmly positioning his men within modern-day life. There is a notable absence of female bodies, which normally would help to affirm the heterosexuality of the male viewer. Instead, the male body is the sole object of the viewer's gaze. Furthermore, the nudes are unaware of the spectator. In *Le Pêcheur* the men are oblivious to the viewer as they relax naked on the riverbank. In *Le Lancement,* the figures' eyes are similarly averted from the viewers', while emphasis is placed on the athletic beauty of the male body. Both works plainly cast the male body as object of desire.

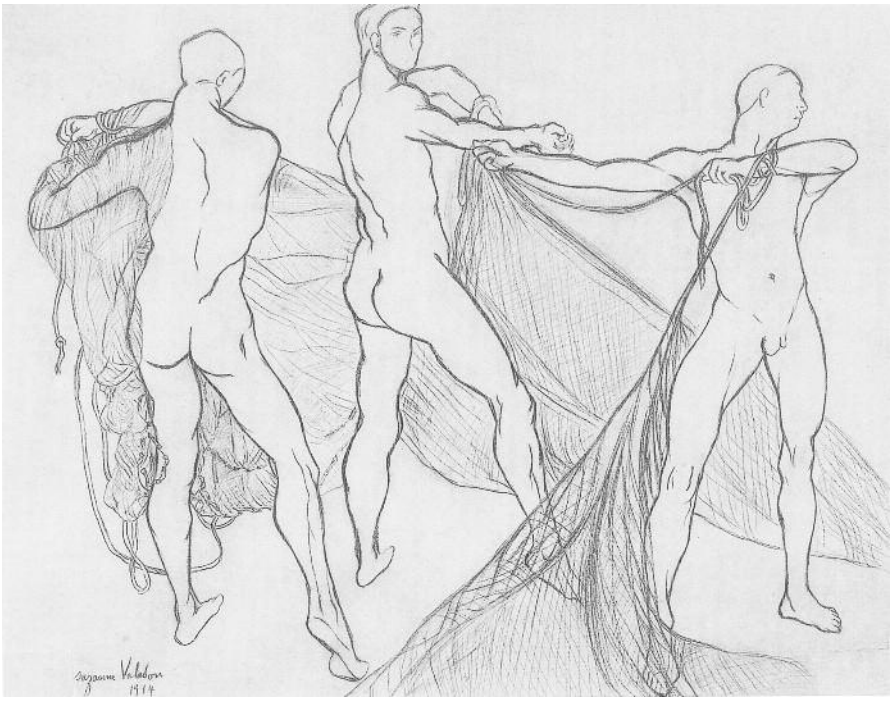


Fig. 5. Suzanne Valadon, *Study for Le Lancement du filet* (1914), soft pencil on tracing paper, 24 3/8" x 32 1/2". Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Pompidou, Paris. Photo: Lauren Jimerson.

Art historians have discussed this and other paintings of male bathers by Bazille in relation to homoeroticism.[29] A homoerotic image is one that permits male viewers to take pleasure in the male body. Michael Hatt lucidly explores the concept in an essay on Thomas Eakins's *The Swimming Hole* (1884–85), a painting inspired by Bazille's male bathers. His analysis has also proven useful for Bazille's work and has been cited by Bazille scholars.[30] I contend that the issues of homoeroticism that pertain to Bazille's and Eakins's male bathers are obliquely related to Valadon's *Le Lancement*. Hatt states that "the homoerotic unproblematically marks a particular desire of one man for another, an expression of homosexual desire framed in a particular, perhaps subtle or covert manner."[31] The homoerotic image often does not reveal desire in a conspicuous way, but instead partly conceals that desire.[32] In both *Le Lancement* and *Le Pêcheur*, the genitalia are fully hidden, and the figures engage in the manly activity of fishing. Furthermore, the men do not interact directly with one another. Sexuality is insinuated in subtle ways by showing off their muscularity and youthful physique, and, in Bazille's case, by including the piles of clothing. The homoerotic is normally concealed through the use of an allegorical framework. Traditionally, artists would legitimize the male nude with mythological or historical references and moral content.[33] Neither Valadon nor Bazille provides the necessary context for their male nudes—both fail to justify the nakedness of their male figures in any legitimate way. Their fishermen do not aggressively assert phallic power, nor do they illustrate a historical, mythological, or biblical tale. Without narrative or moral structure, these images offer no defensible reason for spectatorship. Their male nudes are simply displayed as handsome bodies for the viewer's enjoyment.

A number of scholars have speculated about Bazille's possible homosexuality and its impact on his art, however, never with any conclusive evidence. Any deviation from masculine, heteronormative sexuality seems to spark excitement and conjecture from art critics and scholars alike. For a woman artist, any display of sexuality at all transmutes her into an abnormality—it desexes her. Valadon's critical reception, biographies, and even recent art historical literature are riddled with gossip about her love life, while speculations on the identity of Utrillo's father add an additional element of intrigue.[34] Ultimately, whether the viewer is informed about Bazille's or Valadon's sexuality makes little difference. According to Hatt's definition, homoeroticism in art is not dependent on the artist's sexual orientation. Merely displaying the male body as an aesthetic object highlights pleasure and insinuates desire for it. Yet, one might object that issues of homoeroticism do not apply to an image of male nudes painted by a female artist. I argue the contrary. Spectatorship becomes a problem when the male nude is put on display regardless of who painted the image. Moreover, Valadon's eroticized bodies were addressed to a predominantly male audience at the Salon des Indépendants in 1914. When confronted with a sensual body of his own gender, the heterosexual male is faced with uncertainties about his masculinity.

The politics of looking is even more problematic with *Le Lancement*, as the male nudes are structured in accordance with the logic of female heterosexual pleasure—something, as far as we know, male viewers had never before witnessed at a public exhibition in France. Placing this enormous painting before heterosexual male viewers would be unsettling, since the eroticized gaze of the heterosexual female artist connects with that of the male homosocial realm. Once the viewer becomes aware of the fact that the artist is female, the painting would become doubly threatening. Male spectators, accustomed to identifying with the position of the male artist while gazing at eroticized female nudes, could not identify with the female heterosexual painter without becoming embarrassingly aware of their own sexuality. Therefore, it is not surprising that *Le Lancement* received very little attention by critics.[35] In one scathing review, the poet, Arthur Cravan wrote, "Suzanne Valadon knows well the little recipes, but reduced it's not made to be simple, old slut!"[36] Cravan's violent reaction, although tinged with satire, reveals shock and horror at viewing a male nude painted by a female artist. Calling Valadon a slut (*salope*), the critic must have detected the erotic undertones in the painting. For a female artist to create such a work was lewd and wholly offensive according to Cravan.

As a member of Montmartre's avant-garde art world and a frequent observer and participant of the Salon des Indépendants and the Salon d'Automne, Valadon was aware of the kind of response a painting of male bathers by a woman could incite. She would have known that painting male nudes on a colossal scale and exhibiting them before a patriarchal viewership was a feat that no female artist had ever done before in France. She was cognizant of the fact that certain manipulations were necessary in order to avoid censorship or rejection from the Indépendants. Although it was unjuried, exceptions could be made if a work was too scandalous. In addition to idealizing her male nudes, Valadon avoided rendering the genitalia with the careful positioning of a dangling rope. Yet this did not fully diminish the overall erotic impact. Rotating two of the bathers so that they are shown from the rear, their derrières are showcased at eye level. With a sway in his hip, the leftmost figure becomes a twisted corkscrew that at any moment could bare all. Presenting the male nude as an expression of her own desires, Valadon broke with centuries-old assumptions about gender and sexuality. Provocation was in every way intentional.

Studies for *Le Lancement* (Pls. 2, 3, and Fig. 5) reveal how she adapted and changed the orientation of the figures' bodies. She originally orchestrated the trio of figures so that their bodies overlapped and their legs intertwined. In this manner, they appear even more like the canonical three graces dancing together in a spiraling motion while exhibiting their slender and muscular limbs. The preparatory drawings show how Valadon reworked the placement of the bodies and the ropes so that the genitalia would be covered in the final version. Those who have examined *Le Lancement du filet* have ignored these studies, mistakenly describing the painting as reserved. Margaret Walters assumes that it was "too self-conscious to be fully successful… she carefully shields the genitals… she is inevitably over-conscious of the way she—former model and mistress—is turning the tables on men."[37] What Walters has failed to realize is that Valadon would not have been able to exhibit this painting had she not hidden the genitalia. From the preparatory drawings it is clear that only in the final image did Valadon cleverly position the nets to cover the male figure's groin. Forced to censor her works, she was restricted in the manner in which she could depict the nude. Lisa Tickner makes a similar error in assuming that, "We cannot expect it to appear full-fledged in an alternative taxonomy of Man; as though there could, socially or pictorially, be a role-reversed equivalent to Degas' and Lautrec's brothel scenes…."[38] While the overt sexuality of the female nude is accepted, the male nude must refute any eroticism.[39] The reason why Valadon does not paint the penis is not because she is embarrassed to, or because it is impossible for a woman to create a "role-reversed equivalent" to a man's art, but because she had to censor her work. Valadon, as these sketches reveal, was reluctant to conceal the eroticism of her male nudes.[40]

Although she would only depict the male nude a few times in painting, she treated the subject repeatedly in drawings. These works reveal an intense exploration of the male body that would have offended public taste. Valadon never exhibited them; they were made for her own private study and enjoyment.[41] Unlike *Le Lancement,* her drawings completely disregard artistic protocols for the male nude. Valadon audaciously treats the male body with equal aplomb and with matching steadfast realism as her female bathers. She renders the body straightforwardly in graceless poses and from unflattering angles. She shows the figure in the most primitive states reserved for women: bathing, sleeping, and relaxing unclad. These images work against contemporary stereotypes of gender and sexuality. In her drawings, Valadon usurped the role of the active artist, normally ascribed to man. The male body now serves as the object of *her* gaze.

Homme nu, de dos, tendant le bras gauche (Male nude, back view, holding left arm) (c.1909–10; Fig. 6) is Valadon's most unusual drawing of a male nude. Utter is seated and viewed from behind. The chair is covered in white drapery, as he dries himself after a bath. This image harks back to Valadon's drawings of female bathers, such as *Catherine nue s'essuyant* (Catherine nude drying herself) (c. 1895; Fig. 7). But it is clearly a reference to Degas's manifold variations on the theme of a seated female bather, such as *Femme s'essuyant le bras* (Woman drying her arm) (1885–95; Fig. 8), and *Après le bain, femme s'essuyant* (After the bath, woman drying herself) (1890–95; Fig. 9). This was unmistakably one of Degas's favorite motifs in the 1880s and 1890s, the period in which he was in close dialogue with Valadon.[42] She displays Utter in the same pose and in the most intimate moment of bathing and self-hygiene. The composition is remarkably similar to Degas's in a number of ways, from the angle of the chair, to the white linen and the forward leaning body. Only the tub is missing. Like Degas, Valadon emphasizes the awkward contortions of the body. Outlining the figure with dark contours, she articulates the sharp angles of his shoulder blades, elbow, and knee. Just as Degas captures the bather in movement, vigorously rubbing herself dry, Valadon depicts Utter in motion with one arm outstretched. Despite these artistic similarities, the overall effect is not the same. With *Homme nu, de dos,* Valadon places the male body in the position of the female bather and shows the male nude from a woman's viewpoint. This female authorial presence lends a new meaning to the work. Valadon depicts the male nude in a pose that undermines his authority; Utter is de-masculinized.

Adult male bathers was a subject seldom treated in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century French art. Degas depicted only female bathers without exception. Representing a grown male nude partaking in ablutionary rituals broke with all manners of decorum. Bathing was considered a feminine task. Indoor bathing, in particular, acquired gendered associations. It became linked in the popular imagination with prostitution, as it was customary for prostitutes to bathe in front of their clients before sex.[43] Valadon completely ignores this distinction, erasing the boundaries between male and female hygienic practices.

While images of outdoor male bathers exist from this period, "intimate, interior scenes which might compare with Degas's *Bathers* are rare."[44] Gustave Caillebotte's *Homme au*



Fig. 6. Suzanne Valadon, *Homme nu, de dos, tendant le bras gauche* (c. 1909–10), pencil and ink on paper with traces of oil paint, 9 5/8" x 7 5/8". Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Pompidou, Paris. Photo: Lauren Jimerson.



Fig. 7. Suzanne Valadon, *Catherine nue s'essuyant* (c. 1895), pencil on paper, 18 1/2" x 14 9/16". Private collection.



Fig. 8. Edgar Degas, *Femme s'essuyant le bras* (1885–95), pastel and charcoal on light pink wove paper, discolored at the edges, 12" x 17 1/2". Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

bain, se frictionnant (Man at his bath) (1884; Fig. 10)[45] is an anomalous example of a male bather indoors. A male nude appears after the bath, vigorously rubbing himself dry. The work insinuates the homoerotic; just as in Bazille's *Le Pêcheur*, there is no narrative—only the context of modern, everyday life. The clothes dispersed around the room further emphasize his nakedness. In her analysis, Tamar Garb examines the positioning of the body, arguing that, "the question of his 'masculinity' remains laden with anxiety. The view from the back constructs a potentially vulnerable image of the male figure."[46] Nevertheless, *Homme au bain* stands in stark contrast with images of female bathers. Caillebotte presents us with a virile, muscular figure that stands firmly upright. Barber observes that the artist "seems to have been at pains to distinguish masculine bathing from that of the languorous and sensual activity of women."[47] Anthea Callen agrees. She notes that the title itself, *se frictionner* (to rub oneself) separates this male bather from Degas's females with the word *s'essuyer* (to wipe oneself dry) in many of the titles.[48] Even though he is shown at his bath, his masculinity is so pronounced that his authority is not undermined. Caillebotte's nude "retains a dignity lacking in images of female bathers."[49]

Unlike Caillebotte, Valadon makes no attempt to mask the sensual nature of her male bather. In *Homme nu, de dos*, Utter is also viewed from behind, yet the position of Utter's body is far more effeminate. Rather than standing firmly with two feet squarely placed on the floor, Utter is seated. In the art-historical canon, the seated back view of the female nude is common, epitomized by Ingres's *La Baigneuse Valpinçon* (1808).[50] Standing, Caillebotte's male bather remains in control of his own body. Seated, Valadon's male bather is powerless, weak and vulnerable. Here, we have an equivalent to Degas's

bathers, but done by a woman. How many art historians have argued that such an image would have been impossible?[51]

Valadon adopts the keyhole viewpoint that Degas's critics, such as Gustave Geffroy, had identified in his work: "He wanted to paint a woman who did not know she was being watched, as one would see her hidden by a curtain or through a keyhole."[52] According to Callen, this vantage point is central to Degas's bather images and to "the iconography of voyeurism in which Degas's work is grounded."[53] The keyhole viewpoint implies distance, allowing the spectator to safely gaze at the female's body while remaining invasive and controlling.[54] It implies physical contact through eye contact and "embodies masculine scopic power."[55] Valadon counters the voyeuristic male gaze with her own feminine one. Eyeing the male body at the most private moment, the male nude becomes synonymous with female desire. The female artist has now become the voyeur, watching and controlling the objectified and eroticized male body while taking sensual gratification in looking.

For feminist art historians, the very act of looking is often aligned with heterosexual masculinity. The male gaze, as Laura Mulvey first argued, objectifies women in cinema and the visual arts.[56] Art historians and feminist theorists have expressed skepticism toward the idea of a woman reversing the gaze in accordance with her own desire.[57] Although there may be no direct female equivalent to the male gaze, Valadon demonstrates that a reversal is possible, and that it may occur to different degrees and in various manifestations of the male form. In *Le Lancement,* Valadon partially veils the sexual nature of her nudes, while accentuating their muscularity and grace. The covert sexuality inherent in *Le Lancement* aligns it with homoerotic works by Bazille and Caillebotte. In this way, the nudes are made available for the desiring male *and* female viewer. Such is not the case for her most intimate drawings of male nudes, which were created for Valadon's own experimentation and pleasure. As such, the dominant subject/object dichotomy is destabilized completely; they reveal uninhibited *female* pleasure in viewing and depicting the male nude. Against all odds, Valadon became an agent of her own desire, expressing without inhibition her sexuality in the representation of the male body.

A closer examination of *Homme nu, de dos, tendant le bras gauche* reveals that there is more at stake than a reversal of the gaze. The materials show that Valadon was experimenting with the male nude in an unprecedented way. Significantly, the work was done on tracing paper. Executed in graphite pencil and ink, there are traces of oil paint in varied colors on the surface. The use of tracing paper and residue of pigments demonstrates that Valadon was likely transposing the drawing to another work. This is a practice that Degas developed in the 1890s for transferring an image to another surface (Fig. 11). Employing tracing paper as a shortcut, the transparent material enabled him to see the drawing below, allowing him to trace over the original drawing repeatedly to create a numerous variants.[58] George Shackelford explains that the sheets were usually large enough to stand on their own as individual works, some of them signed by Degas and sold. The majority of these remained in his studio and were discovered after his death.[59]

Fig. 9 (below). Edgar Degas, *Après le bain, femme s'essuyant* (c. 1890-95), pastel on wove paper laid on millboard, 40 15/16 x 40 3/4". National Gallery, London.





Fig. 10 (above). Gustave Caillebotte, *Homme au bain, se frictionnant* (1884), oil on canvas, 57 5/8" x 45". Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Valadon's use of tracing paper indicates that she was intimately aware of Degas's studio practices. She seems to have employed this material not only for experimentation and modification of a single motif, but as a shortcut for transforming her drawings into paintings as well. Her catalogue raisonné reveals a handful of works done on tracing paper, each one serving as a preparatory study for a finished painting.[60] Thus, *Home nu, de dos* was most likely a preliminary drawing. Valadon must have been reworking the motif into a painting. The traces of oil paint further support this hypothesis.

Sure enough, she was. A black and white photograph of a painting entitled *Adam and Eve* or *Jeux* (1910; Fig. 12) in the catalogue raisonné shows a male nude in exactly the same pose as *Homme nu, de dos*.[61] Toward the right edge of the canvas a man is seated, enveloped by a skirt of drapery, reaching forward with his left arm, this time to touch a female nude. His back is sliced by the edge of the canvas in a manner that recalls Degas's cropping techniques. If the figure in the painting matches the scale of the one in the drawing, the overall size of the canvas would be enormous. Unfortunately, the current whereabouts of this work is uncertain and its dimensions are not listed in the catalogue. The subject matter of the work is ambiguous. The male bather motif conceived indoors is at odds with its *plein air* surroundings, and the presence of the female body next to it is unexplained. In the foreground of the composition, another set of male and female nudes appear and are recognizable as Valadon and Utter.[62] A playful reworking of the earlier painting *Adam and Eve,* the couple teases and flirts with one another. In a single image, Valadon materializes the male form as both active and passive, along with her own mobile body. In this peculiarly enigmatic work, Valadon unabashedly captures a euphoric display of female (hetero)sexuality and desire.

Valadon's humble *Homme nu, de dos* and its reiteration in paint demonstrates her aspiration to innovate, and it also shows that she was grappling with the male body with the same intensity as she extended to the female form. Valadon



Fig. 11. Edgar Degas, *Après le bain, femme s'essuyant* (c. 1895), charcoal on tracing paper, 24 3/8" x 27 1/4". Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth.

employed charcoal, one of Degas's preferred drawing media, as it allowed him to achieve smooth, continuous lines and to smudge, wipe or even erase. Her use of the medium is more assertive. Just as seen in her female bathers, she articulates the male form with a thick, bold outline, all the while depicting the body in a discomfited pose and from an unexpected viewpoint, as if trying to anchor the figure in space. Valadon insists on rendering the human form palpable with her hard-edged outlines. Whether male or female, her emboldened contours serve to metaphorically emphasize the corporeality of the human figure.

In her depictions of male nudes, Valadon radically defies the power relations between the sexes. She not only contests the standard dynamics of looking, but she also opposes male subjectivity as transcendent or disembodied. While it was the female that was traditionally seen as corporeal, Valadon insists on depicting the male form as similarly rooted in a physical body, rejecting the traditional Cartesian dualism/mind-body divide. In regards to masculine-normative subjectivity, mind and body were conventionally divided. Marsha Meskimmon elaborates on this "divisive logic": "Where an attainment of subjecthood relied upon the assumption of transcendence and a definitive rejection of corporeality, any sign of immanence, especially as "bodiliness," was eschewed. The corollary of this divisive logic was that the masculine (and white, middle-class, able-bodied—i.e., 'normative') subject position became disembodied."[63] In capturing the body, pose, and physiognomy of the male form, Valadon renders the male figure as incarnate, made flesh, and inherently embodied.

In Valadon's art, the notion of the subject, whether female or male, is not divorced from bodily experience. Such an approach was highly progressive. Her images of male nudes upend the "unilateral constitution of sexual myths" as encapsulated by Simone de Beauvoir in this citation from *The Second Sex*:

> The asymmetry of the two categories, male and female, can be seen in the unilateral constitution of sexual myths. Woman is sometimes designated as "sex"; it is she who is the flesh, its delights and its dangers. That for woman it is man who is sexed and carnal is a truth that has never been proclaimed because there is no one to proclaim it. The representation of the world as the world itself is the work of men; they describe it from a point of view that is their own and that they confound with the absolute truth.[64]

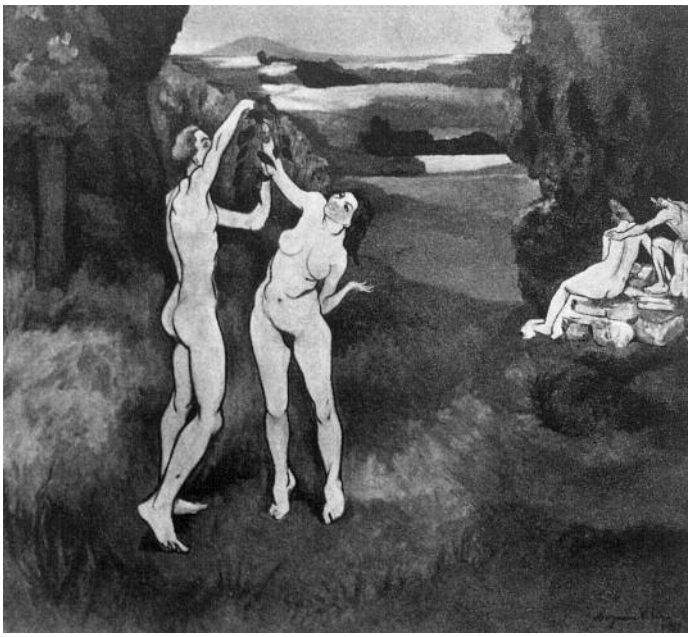


Fig. 12. Suzanne Valadon, *Jeux* (1910), oil on canvas, signed and dated lower right. Dimensions and location unknown.

Brandishing her brush, Valadon audaciously exposed men who are "sexed and carnal." Of course, her works predate Beauvoir's writing as well as the feminist art movement, and thus cannot be viewed as specifically "feminist" in the historically sanctioned sense. Even without an overt ideological motive, Valadon ruptured conventions, challenging patriarchal models governing the depiction of the male body in art. With this complete role reversal, Valadon contested the time-honored definitions of gender and sexuality and anticipated a feminist revolution. •

Lauren Jimerson, a Paris-based art historian, currently is writing a book on women artists in early twentieth century France and their representations of the nude.

Notes

I thank Susan Sidlauskas and Christopher Green for their perceptive insights and sage advice toward this project.

1. For a comprehensive analysis of Valadon's representations of the male nude, see my doctoral dissertation, Lauren Jimerson, "Defying Gender—Redefining the Nude: Female Artists and the Body in Early 20th century Paris," (PhD diss., Rutgers Univ., 2018). This essay is adapted from the chapter titled "Defying Gender: Suzanne Valadon and the Male Nude."
2. For the first comprehensive analysis of Valadon's representations of the male nude, see my Master's thesis: Lauren Jimerson, "Defying Gender: The Nude in the Art of Suzanne Valadon" (MA thesis, The Courtauld Institute of Art, 2011). Courtney A. Hunt also examined this topic in her Master's thesis, *Suzanne Valadon's Male Nudes* (MA thesis, Hunter College, Department of Art, 2013).
3. For a detailed discussion of Valadon's female nudes, see Rosemary Betterton. "How do women look? The female nude in the work of Suzanne Valadon," in *Looking On: Images of Femininity in the Visual Arts and Media* (London: Pandora Press, 1987); Patricia Mathews, "Returning the Gaze: Diverse

Representations of the Nude in the Art of Suzanne Valadon." The Art Bulletin 73, no. 3 (1991): 415–30; Gill Perry, *Women Artists and the Parisian Avant-Garde* (Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 1995).

4. Heather Dawkins erroneously states, "Valadon appears to have avoided drawing adult men, and the conventions of art and propriety would have discouraged inclinations in that direction." Heather Dawkins, *The Nude in French Art and Culture, 1870-1910* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2002), 88. Thérèse Diamand Rosinsky discusses *La Joie de vivre* and *Le Lancement du filet*, but does not examine Valadon's drawings of male nudes. She incorrectly assumes that Valadon "did not… represent him [André Utter] casually, as she did her female sitters." Thérèse Diamand Rosinsky, *Suzanne Valadon.* (New York: Universe, 1994), 84–89.
5. The Leopold Museum, Vienna, held the exhibition, *Nude Men. From 1800 until the Present Day,* entirely devoted to this topic in 2012. In 2013, Musée d'Orsay reciprocated with *Masculin/Masculin: L'homme nu dans l'art de 1800 à nos jours*. A select number of female artists were included in these exhibitions, but Valadon's work was notably absent. Tobias G. Natter and Elizabeth Leopold, eds., *Nude Men. From 1800 Until the Present Day*, trans. Ian Pepper and Bronwen Saunders (Munich: Hirmer, 2012); Guy Cogeval et al., *Masculin Masculin: L'homme nu dans l'art de 1800 à nos jours* (Paris: Flammarion, 2013).
6. Valadon was still married to Paul Mousis at the time she executed this painting. They divorced in 1910. Daniel Marchesseau et al., *Suzanne Valadon,* exh. cat. (Martigny: Fondation Pierre Gianadda, 1996), 252.
7. Ibid., 47.
8. Ibid.
9. Tamara de Lempicka also treated the subject of Adam and Eve depicting male and female nudes in 1931, See Paula J. Birnbaum, *Women Artists in Interwar France: Framing Femininities* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2011), 176.
10. Tamar Garb, *Sisters of the Brush: Women's Artistic Culture in Late Nineteenth Century Paris* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1994), 80.
11. Ibid., 82.
12. Tamar Garb, "The Forbidden Gaze: Women Artists and the Male Nude in Late Nineteenth-Century France," in *The Body Imaged: The Human Form and Visual Culture Since the Renaissance,* eds. Kathleen Adler and Marcia Pointon (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1993), 35.
13. Garb. *Sisters of the Brush,* 89.
14. Ibid. For much of the 19th century, the only state-funded art school for women in Paris was the École Nationale de Dessin pour les Jeunes Filles. The Union des femmes peintres et sculpteurs, founded 1881, fought for entry into the École Nationale des Beaux-Arts.
15. Ibid.
16. See: Carol Duncan, "Virility and Domination in Early Twentieth-Century Vanguard Painting," in *Feminism and Art History: Questioning the Litany,* eds. Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard (New York: Harper & Row, 1982), 293–313.
17. Jeanine Warnod, *Suzanne Valadon* (Norwalk, CT: Easton Press, 1982), 9.
18. Valadon's *La Joie de vivre* has been discussed by art historians in relation to the male gaze. See Rosinsky, *Suzanne Valadon* (1994), 85–88; Patricia Mathews, *Passionate Discontent: Creativity, Gender, and French Symbolist Art* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1999), 199–202.
19. Kenneth Clark, *The Nude: A Study in Ideal Form* (New York: Pantheon, 1956), 34.
20. Ibid., 35.
21. Peter Paul Rubens, *The Three Graces*, 1639, Museo del Prado, Madrid.
22. Auguste Renoir, *The Large Bathers,* 1887, Philadelphia Museum of Art. Pierre Puvis de Chavannes, *Le Bois sacré cher aux arts et aux muses*, 1884, Musée des Beaux-Arts Lyon.
23. "Je suis là, et puis là, et presque toutes ces figures m'ont emprunté quelque chose. J'ai posé non seulement les femmes, mais les jeunes gars. …. Puvis me demandait de lui donner une attitude, un mouvement, un geste. Il transposait et idéalisait.." Valadon quoted in Adolphe Tabarant, "Suzanne Valadon et ses souvenirs de modèle," *Bulletin de La Vie Artistique* (Paris, December 1921), 628. All translations by the author.
24. "Sans trace d'esthétisme ni d'artistisme, tout en force dans la vie." Suzanne Valadon, "Suzanne Valadon par elle-même," *Promethée* (Paris: Editions littéraires de France, March 1939), 53.
25. Michel Schulman, *Frédéric Bazille, 1841-1870: Catalogue raisonné* (Paris: Éditions de l'Amateur, 1995), 180. Thanks to Christopher Green for drawing this to my attention.
26. One example is François Boucher's *Diana sortant du bain,* 1742, Musée du Louvre, Paris.
27. Dianne Pitman, *Bazille: Purity, Pose, and Painting in the 1860s* (University Park: Penn State Univ. Press, 1998), 151.
28. Abigail Solomon-Godeau, *Male Trouble: A Crisis in Representation* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1997), 19.
29. See: Kermit S. Champa, "Frédéric Bazille: The 1978 Retrospective Exhibition," *Arts Magazine* 52 (June 1978): 110; Philippe Dagen, "Bazille, astre éphémère," *Le Monde (*July 17, 1992); Michael Kimmelman, "A Tragic Harbinger of the New," *New York Times (*Nov. 13, 1992); Michel Hilaire and Paul Perrin, *Frédéric Bazille (1841-1870): La Jeunesse de l'Impressionisme* (Paris: Flammarion, 2016), 143; Mary Manning, "Frédéric Bazille and Masculinity between Paris and Montpellier, 1841–1870" (PhD. diss., Rutgers Univ., 2015).
30. Thomas Eakins, *Swimming Hole*, 1884-85, Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth, TX. See Michael Hatt. "The Male Body in Another Frame: Thomas Eakins' *The Swimming Hole* as a Homoerotic Image." In *The Body: Journal of Philosophy and the Visual Arts,* ed. Andrew Benjamin. (London: Academy Editions, 1993). Many of the previously cited Bazille sources make reference to Hatt's groundbreaking study on homoeroticism in the visual arts.
31. Ibid., 11.
32. Ibid., 20.
33. Ibid., 12.
34. There are numerous biographies on Valadon, many of which blend fact and fiction. The most well researched biographies are: Catherine Hewitt, *Renoir's Dancer: The Secret Life of Suzanne Valadon* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2017) and Thérèse Diamand Rosinsky, *Suzanne Valadon*, trans. Emmanuelle Delanoë-Brun (Paris: Flammarion, 2005). As Valadon wrote very little about her life and art, these sources provide invaluable insight.
35. Consulting periodicals from 1914 at the National Art Library, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, Bibliothèque nationale de France and its online database, Gallica, uncovered limited critical response. As is customary, Valadon's name is listed amongst numerous other artists in the standard newspaper accounts which summarized the Salon des Indépendants each year. See: Lucien Klotz, "Le Salon des Indépendants," *La Presse* (March 4, 1914), 2 and *Lemouzi* (April 1914), 190. In his running list of artwork at the Indépendants, Robert Kemp remarked that the painting evinced poor judgment: "Valadon…a montré parfois plus de sensibilité." (Valadon…has shown sometimes more sensibility.") Robert Kemp, "Au jour le jour: les Indépendants, II," *L'Aurore* (March 1, 1914), 1.

36. "Suzanne Valadon connaît bien les petites recettes, mais simplifier ce n'est pas faire simple, vieille salope!" Arthur Cravan. "L'Exposition des Indépendants." *Maintenant,* 4 (March-April, 1914). In his review of the 1914 Salon des Indépendants, Cravan insulted almost every exhibitor, including Valadon. A boxer, poet, and editor of his own review, *Maintenant,* he aimed to shock readers, and he was greatly admired by Dadaists and Surrealists.
37. Margaret Walters, *The Nude Male: A New Perspective* (New York: Paddington Press, 1978), 315.
38. Lisa Tickner, *Women's Images of Men* (London: Institute of Contemporary Arts, 1980).
39. Hatt, "The Male Body in Another Frame," 12.
40. Preparatory sketches reveal that Valadon also censored *La Joie de vivre* (1911) in the final version.
41. Sketches for *Le Lancement du filet* were exhibited as early as 1928. The majority of the male nude drawings including *Homme nu, de dos* were not shown until 1967 or later. Pierre Georgel. *Suzanne Valadon*, exh. cat. (Paris: Musée national d'art moderne, 1967), 76, 88.
42. See: George T. M. Shackelford, "The Body Transformed: Degas's Last Nudes," In *Degas and the Nude,* eds., George T.M. Shackelford and Xavier Rey (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts Publications, 2011).
43. Fionna Barber, "Case Study 6: Caillebotte, Masculinity, and the Bourgeois Gaze," in *The Challenge of the Avant-Garde*, ed. Paul Wood (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1999), 152.
44. Ibid., 145.
45. Gustave Caillebotte, *Homme au bain, se frictionnant* (1884), private collection on loan to National Gallery, London. For some unknown reason, the English translation (Man at his bath) is typically abbreviated.
46. Tamar Garb, *Bodies of Modernity: Figure and Flesh in fin-de-siècle France* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1998), 50.
47. Barber, "Case Study 6," 152.
48. Anthea Callen, *The Spectacular Body: Science, Method and Meaning in the Work of Degas* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1995), 145.
49. Ibid., 147.
50. Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres, *Baigneuse Valpinçon*, 1808, Musée du Louvre, Paris.
51. "If it is normal to see paintings of women's bodies as the territory across which men artists claim their modernity and compete for leadership of the avant-garde, can we expect to rediscover paintings by women in which they battled with their sexuality in the representation of the male nude? Of course not; the very suggestion seems ludicrous." Griselda Pollock, "Modernity and the Spaces of Femininity," in *Vision and Difference: Feminism, Femininity and the Histories of Art* (London: Routledge Classics, 1988), 76.
52. Gustave Geffroy, quoted in Norma Broude, "Edgar Degas and French Feminism, Ca. 1880: 'The Young Spartans,' the Brothel Monotypes, and the Bathers Revisited, " *Art Bulletin* 70, no. 4 (Dec. 1988): 654.
53. Callen, *The Spectacular Body*, 109.
54. Ibid., 109., see also Carol Armstrong, *Odd Man Out: Readings of the Work and Reputation of Edgar Degas* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1991).
55. Ibid., 109.
56. See: Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," Visual and Other Pleasures (Indianapolis: Indiana Univ. Press, 1989), 14–26; E. Ann Kaplan, "Is the Gaze Male?," Women and Film: Both Sides of the Camera (New York: Methuen, 1983), 23-35.
57. See: Mary Ann Doane, "Film and the Masquerade: Theorizing the Female Spectator," in *Feminism and Film,* ed., E. Ann Kaplan, (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2000), 422.
58. Shackelford, "The Body Transformed: Degas's Last Nudes," 173.
59. Ibid.
60. Sketches for these paintings were executed on tracing paper: *Portraits de famille,* 1912, oil on canvas, 38 1/8" x 28 3/4"; *Nature morte à la théière,* 1914, oil on cardboard, 20 7/8" x 26", and *Lancement du filet.* See: Paul Pétridès, *L'Oeuvre complet de Suzanne Valadon* (Paris: Compagnie Française des Arts Graphiques, 1971). The illustrated sections of this catalogue raisonné are not paginated.
61. Ibid.
62. Ibid. Various studies related to this work appear in the catalogue raisonné.
63. Marsha Meskimmon, *Women Making Art: History, Subjectivity, Aesthetics* (London: Routledge, 2012), 76.
64. Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier (New York: Vintage Books, 2011), 162.

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Leonor Fini and Dressing Up

An Act of Creativity

By Rachael Grew

The position of Leonor Fini (1907–1996) within art history is rather paradoxical; she is both visible and unknown, linked to a major aesthetic movement but did not identify herself as being part of it. Mention of her name is often greeted with blank stares, yet her paintings appear in important collections across the globe, her work is frequently exhibited, and she appears in major publications on the women artists associated with the Surrealist movement.[1]

Art history relies on labels to talk about artists—movements, periods, media, and so on, but in the case of Leonor Fini, there is a problem. Much of the scholarship on Fini (my own included) continues to label her as a Surrealist, despite the fact she did not view herself as one.[2] How are we to talk about an artist who eschews categorization? Not only did Fini reject being labelled as a Surrealist, this rejection also extended to the labels of feminist and woman artist. Moreover, to effectively assess Fini's achievements, it is necessary to go beyond her painting, to assess her work across all areas of her oeuvre. Any discussion of this artist requires breaking out of traditional categories and adopting a more fluid approach.

Though her works frequently feature powerful women and express complex female identities that cannot be reduced to a single, traditional feminine stereotype, Fini did not accept a feminist identity. While she understood and sympathized with the feminist aim of standing up to gender inequality, she felt that such a label robbed her of her much-valued autonomy, and that placing women on a separate pedestal, as the early feminists did, only emphasized the gulf between genders. Nor was she alone amongst her female peers in feeling this way.[3] She also protected her independence in more tangible, social terms, as she eschewed not only the conventional routes of marriage and motherhood but also of monogamy. Though the major loves of her life, the Italian artist and diplomat Stanislao Lepri, and the Polish economist, soldier, and intellectual Constantin (Kot) Jelenski, both lived with her simultaneously in a communal arrangement, she also took additional lovers.[4] Fini's rejection of fixed labels is perhaps connected to this disavowal of social conventions and categories of Woman and femininity.

A key to understanding and discussing Fini's oeuvre in full, across all its different outlets, is the notion of transformation, with an emphasis on flux, metamorphosis, and ambiguity, all of which resonate throughout her work. Of central importance to this concept for Fini was her engagement with dressing up—a core catalyst for expressing the transformative. Dressing up allows one's identity to exist in a state of flux, to be repeatedly made and re-made. Fini used her costumed body as a vehicle for artistic creation, producing characters that illuminated facets of her identity, which then reappeared in her art and design projects.[5] To create a more cohesive exploration of her work in relation to dressing up, it is helpful to look at her use of clothing, theatrical designs, and painting, and to relate these to ideas Fini expressed in her own writings. Examples of her work from across her career demonstrate her widespread and continual exploration of transformation and the specific motifs she used to express this. In engaging with the transformative in her work, Fini ultimately portrays a complex notion of Woman that cannot be boiled down to simple categories.

Leonor Fini was born on August 30, 1907, in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Her father was a domineering man, and Fini's mother, Malvina, left him and fled home to her family in Trieste, Italy, while Fini was still an infant.[6] Fini grew up amongst her mother's relatives in a cultured, upper-middle-class household, where they introduced her to art and music but were unhappy when she declared she wanted to be an artist herself. She told an interviewer, "As soon as I began painting what was in my head, the people around me were shocked. Things acceptable to read or talk about were repugnant when they came to life."[7] She was largely self-taught, studying art from an early age through looking at books and visiting museums.[8] At age seventeen she left home for Milan, but a few years later, in 1931, her interest in dreams and the unconscious world drew her into the orbit of Surrealism in Paris.

Fini's interest in liminal spaces and relationships—the point between life and death, human and animal—dovetailed neatly with André Breton's stated aim of Surrealism: the reconciliation of opposing states.[9] Expanding on her attraction to Surrealism, she stated that the Surrealists explored "the reverse side of things and their hidden correspondences," something akin to her own practice, which revealed "a being inside [her]."[10] Despite her affinity with some of the core Surrealist interests, she never joined the group officially, put off by Breton's monopoly over the group and his prejudices: "I disliked the deference with which everyone treated Breton. I

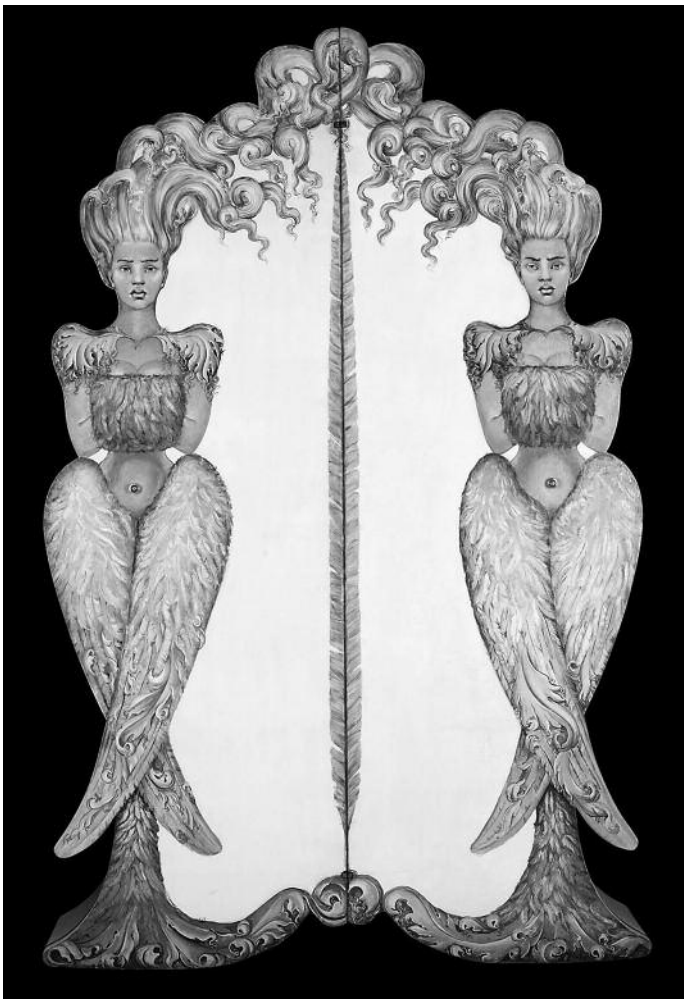


Fig. 1. Leonor Fini, *Anthropomorphic Wardrobe* (1939), oil on canvas on wood, 86 1/2" x 57" x 12 1/2". Rowland Weinstein Gallery, San Francisco. Image courtesy Weinstein Gallery, San Francisco. Photo: Nicholas Pishvanov. © Estate of Leonor Fini, 2019.

hated his anti-homosexual attitudes and also his misogyny. It seemed that women were expected to keep quiet … yet I felt that I was just as good as the men…. I never saw the point of being part of one group, and … I refused the label Surrealist…. I preferred to walk alone."[11]

Nevertheless, Fini participated in key Surrealist exhibitions, including *Fantastic Art, Dada and Surrealism* at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, in 1936. She also organized the *Surrealist Furniture* exhibition in 1939 for Leo Castelli and René Drouin's new gallery in Paris.[12] This exhibition reflects Fini's interest in design, which was not limited to furniture but extended to illustration, commercial design, and scenography, and would continue to grow in the 1940s and beyond. Most discussions of her work, however, focus on her painting alone. This is perhaps understandable, given that Fini often undertook design projects for additional income and to provide a break from her painting practice, suggesting that she primarily viewed herself as a painter.[13] For example, she specifically refers to her designs for an unrealized ballet of 1972 as "a diversion from my painting."[14] However, because these design projects frequently drew on motifs from her painting and her private life, it suggests that all areas of her output need to be considered to create a holistic analysis.

The pieces shown by Fini at the *Surrealist Furniture* exhibition included her *Anthropomorphic Wardrobe* (1939; Fig. 1) and *Corset Chair*, both of which highlight transformation. The women who flank the wardrobe doors are human-bird-plant hybrids; they are caught in the very act of metamorphosis, as their lower halves are replaced by wings, which curl into leaves at their tips. Like the sphinxes that frequently appear in Fini's painting, these hybrids are not one-dimensional monsters ready to pounce, but ambiguous guardians, protecting the doors while the feathered muffs over their hands possibly conceal claws, highlighting an unfixed identity.[15] Similarly, in *Corset Chair*, the corset is captured at a liminal point in transforming from a wearable item to a piece of furniture. Its loosened laces suggest a point between being dressed and undressed, and the way in which these laces hang in arabesque sweeps, rather than dangling limply, implies the *Corset Chair* has come to life, transforming from inanimate to animate.

While flux and transformation are ongoing themes in her work, an important aspect of this exploration for Fini is the act of dressing up, both as depicted on canvas and enacted in her everyday life. On the importance of dressing up, she wrote:

> To dress up, it is the instrument by which we feel the sensation of changing dimension, species, space. It enables one to feel gigantic, to plunge into vegetation, to become an animal…. To dress up, to disguise oneself is an act of creativity…. It is one—or many—representations of the self…. The act of disguising is a narcissism multiplied into other images and it becomes its own show made all the more fascinating in that … you always know that it is still your own self behind it.[16]

Fini's earliest encounter with dressing up was as a child. In order to evade Fini's father, who aggressively campaigned to regain custody of his daughter, Malvina would dress Fini as a boy whenever they travelled.[17] This episode may well have caused her to think (consciously or otherwise) that having a fixed sense of self was a dangerous thing to be avoided, and contributed further to her dismissal of identifying labels. This fear of exposure is perhaps at the root of Fini's change in attitude toward being photographed. She recalled, "When I was a child, I hated being photographed. I ran away…. Now I am always photographed: in costume, in disguise, in everyday dress. But I do not like snapshots, nothing is more false than the 'natural.' It is the 'pose' which is revealing, and I am curious and amused to see my multiplicity—which I think I know quite well—affirmed by these images."[18]

As a child Fini would have had little control over the creation of her image in the photograph; as an adult she would gain much more agency in choreographing an identity, one that could not easily be fixed.[19] Indeed, as an adult, dressing up became a central part of her character, posing for photographs in her studio wearing fabulous outfits entirely unsuited to the messy business of painting; and many are the descriptions of



Fig. 2. Dora Maar, Leonor Fini (1936), photograph. © ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London, 2019.

Fini's head-turning attire when receiving guests or appearing at parties or just on the city streets.[20] Examples abound. In 1936, when he paid a visit to Fini's Paris apartment, the art dealer Julien Levy was astounded to find her dressed in a beautiful robe that had been deliberately torn.[21] Similarly, Richard Overstreet, a close friend of Fini's and now the Director of her Archive, described an episode in the Paris boutique of the Italian couturier Simonetta, when Fini tried on a bespoke cloak with a high collar and wide sleeves that recalled birds' wings:

> She began sweeping around the shop, pausing at every mirror, swooping and snapping the loose taffeta sleeves like a bird of prey. Simonetta asked if she was happy with it. "I could approve," Leonor replied. "But it depends on the effect…. Do I terrify?!' … Leonor was cross-examining herself. Did the cloak, with its delicately vicious arabesque folds, strike just the right chord of theatrical effect? Clothes, after all, had a dual function for her. Conjuring beauty and providing coercion. And, if at all possible … striking mortal dread in the hearts of onlookers.[22]

The metamorphic power of dressing up can transform the body, shift identity, and blur borders, and the following examines how Fini achieves these in her work.

The transformative power of costume is an important element in *The Alcove—Interior with Three Women* (*The Black Room*) (1939; Pl. 4). This painting is most often discussed in relation to its portrait of Fini's friend and contemporary, Leonora Carrington (1917–2011), who wears a breastplate, a recurring item of costume from this period that appears in a number of Fini's paintings between 1938 and 1941. The armored Carrington appears as a guardian, standing before two other figures on a bed. Given Carrington's interest in alchemy, these figures can be read as a reference to allegorical images of alchemical transformation, in which the combination of substances in the alchemist's crucible is depicted as a couple in bed.[23] Furthermore, if we accept Whitney Chadwick's interpretation of Carrington as an androgynous figure (because she is depicted with a mixture of male and female clothing),[24] then Carrington may symbolize the product of this alchemical transformation: the androgynous Philosopher's Stone, as well as a Surrealist combination of opposites.

While this alchemical element would have been significant for Carrington, for Fini it is the items of clothing in this painting that evoke transformation, notably the striped stocking worn by one of the figures on the bed. Despite the fact that this (female?) figure lacks the feline eyes or the cloud of hair common to Fini's self-referential women of this period, it is commonly interpreted as a self-portrait. This is based partially on the fact that Fini owned a similar pair of stockings and sports them in a photograph by Erwin Blumfeld from 1936, and because the stocking appears in paintings that



Fig. 3. Horst P. Horst, Leonor Fini in her studio, rue Payenne, Paris (1946), photograph. Collection of Galerie Minsky, Paris. Courtesy Horst Estate and Condé Nast Inc.



Fig. 4. Leonor Fini, Costume design for the White Owl, *Leonor's Dream* (1949), pencil, ink, chalk, and gouache on paper, 13" x 19 1/4". © Estate of Leonor Fini, 2019.

clearly feature Fini's self-referential figures, such as *Three Figures on a Terrace* (1939), where the stocking appears, discarded, in the background.[25] Moreover, Chadwick has argued that "[t]he curtained bed [of *The Alcove*] is a copy of the bed in Fini's Paris apartment … [which] served as a social setting within which to entertain female friends," and that Fini often wore striped stockings while working in the studio.[26] These different contexts imbue the stocking in the painting with the power to evoke different personas, creating a series of reflections of Fini, shifting and multiplying her identity.[27]

The uncertainty about this figure is another reflection of the changeability afforded by dressing up, something underlined in *The Alcove* by the clothing scattered across the floor. This discarded clothing offers a further clue in the possible linking of the stocking-clad figure to Fini, as Dora Maar had photographed Fini in 1936 lying amongst cast-off clothes (Fig. 2). If Fini uses such a motif as a way of expressing transformation, then Levy's encounter of Fini in a torn robe suggests that she wished herself to be seen as a body in mid-transformation, a personage that cannot be labelled.

From the late 1930s onwards, Fini took on a number of design projects to supplement her income. Early on, these mainly took the form of illustration and design for fashion and included creating the bottle for Elsa Schiaparelli's new perfume, "Shocking," in 1936.[28] During World War II, Fini (unlike many of the Surrealists) elected to remain in Europe. She travelled from Paris to Rome via Arcachon and Monte Carlo and generated her wartime income from painting portraits.[29] Between 1944 and 1972, Fini turned to yet another area of design and became occupied with providing set and costume designs for a multitude of productions for the stage and screen. Her most prolific period was during the 1950s and 1960s, when her projects included designs for Oscar Panizza's scandalously erotic and blasphemous play, *The Love Council* (1969), as well as films by Federico Fellini (*8½*, 1963), and John Huston (*A Walk with Love and Death*, 1968). Even though painting remained her primary occupation, Fini's prolonged involvement with theatrical design reflects her ongoing interest in dressing up, and, in these cases, its power to transform the performers.

Fini was well known for dressing up herself, and throughout the 1940s, she appeared frequently in magazine gossip columns thanks to the striking outfits she created for exclusive fancy-dress balls. Photographs of Fini at the 1947 Bal du Panache and the 1949 Bal des Oiseaux, for example, appear in *Oeil de Vogue* and *Boston Weekly*, respectively.[30] Such publicity did not matter a jot to Fini; rather, it was all about her costume:

> The only reason I went to the balls was the opportunity to dress up … The true party for me was the preparation of my costume. I would arrive late, towards midnight, drunk on the happiness of being a royal owl, a great grey lion under a seedbed of transparent tears … queen of a subterranean country. I would only look at the mirrors (there were lots of them, happily, in these houses) and after an hour or two, sated by my reflections, I would say to my friends: 'Enough. Let's return'.[31]

A number of these costumes cast Fini as a hybrid human-animal, particularly cat- and bird-hybrids. The hybrid was a key theme of Fini's oeuvre and one which perfectly encapsulates the notion of transformation, as it reveals a body that is caught between states, blurring borders between human and animal. Fini reveals a clear interest in the sensual beauty of such hybrids, writing in 1975:

> What is it better to imagine?
>
> To be embraced very, very tightly when half asleep or half awake by a being with an animal body and a human face, or by a being with a human body but an animal face?
>
> Who would not pose themselves this question?
>
> The version with a human face shall give rise to the illusion of the strongest interest, but what of the animal body? Feline, hairy, with a strong, musky odour, with the face of Florinda Bolkan, of Bianca Jagger, of myself, of Charlotte Rampling, of Brando, of Cassius Clay?... Or the body of Clay or Raquel Welch and the head of a puma, of a tiger, of a jaguarundi?[32]

Fini's interest in such hybridity is most commonly expressed through the motif of the sphinx—the lion-human hybrid that populates many of her works from this period and expresses her well-known love of felines. However, bird-human hybrids are also to be found in multiple places across her oeuvre. In one of Horst's photographs of Fini in her studio (1946; Fig. 3), we see her shrouded in a feathered cloak or stole, which gives the impression that she is metamorphosing between woman and bird or is caught in some liminal state between the two, disrupting species categories of the body. Feathers are an important motif, metaphorically allowing the wearer to remain free and unattached to the earth, to never be fixed. Fini's use of wings and feathers in this performance for the camera emphasizes that liberated, transformative body.

A similar performance was produced on stage, in Fini's bird-human hybrid designs for her 1949 ballet *Leonor's Dream*, for which Fini wrote the scenario as well as designing the scenography, drawing on her lived experiences. The lead dancer transforms four times over the course of the ballet. One of her iterations is a white owl (1949; Fig. 4), a direct replication of the costume Fini herself wore to the fancy-dress Ball of the Birds thrown by Viscomte Charles Benoist d'Azy that same year.[33] This costume not only creates an inter-species transformation, but also implies a transformation between the bodies of the real Leonor, the on-stage Leonor, and the dancer portraying her.[34]

While cat and bird hybrids are perhaps the most common in Fini's work, another hybrid motif frequently used in various contexts of dressing up also destabilizes borders and shifts identity: horns. Also featured in *Leonor's Dream* is a horned character, Proserpine (1949; Pl. 5), an earlier manifestation of Leonor before she metamorphoses into the white owl. Like that of the owl, Proserpine's costume, including the horned headdress, is a replica of one worn by Fini to a fancy-dress ball, this time the Ball of Kings and Queens (Proserpine, or Persephone, was the Queen of the Underworld in Greek myth), thus strengthening the inter-species and inter-body transformation produced by the costumes for her ballet.

The positive character of the transformation afforded by dressing up in horns is spelled out at length by Fini in her 1975 text, *Le Livre de Leonor Fini*, which included a selection of her writings and paintings as well as innumerable images of herself in various costumes. Fini not only recognizes the sensual potential of hybrids, but also the way in which animal features enhance those of humans:

> I have always thought that human attributes are quite reduced, quite limited. I have always envied the beasts … especially their horns … Horns permit pretty movements of the head—they give strange allure, dignity, exaltation, aggression … I like those which, in gold, suffer transformations … amulet, charm, fetish, talisman … [H]orned women can only move with sovereignty and sometimes with the most graceful modesty.[35]

If horns are a sign of sovereignty for Fini, then it is perhaps unsurprising that Proserpine wears them. However, it is difficult to disentangle them completely from their bestial context, signifying base, animalistic qualities at odds with graceful, refined sovereignty. While this again suits Proserpine, given her position as Queen of the Underworld and Mistress of the Furies, it also destabilizes the typical feminine image of a queen, challenging gender norms. Fini may have been aware of the bestial inference of horns. For example, when using them in designs for other theatrical productions such as *The Crystal Palace* (a 1947 ballet with no story beyond four color-coded movements), and *Chi é di Scena* (What's on stage) (a 1953 musical review) (Fig. 5), they become branch-like, similar to stag horns, enhancing the association of feminine nature, grace, and dignity more suited to these roles, rather than the aggressive animality of Proserpine's pointed red horns.

Fini's reference to graceful horns also can be linked to a series of photographs of her wearing the coiled horns (Fig. 6) that make up her 1973 sculpture *Subject in Gold*. With these golden horns, Fini transforms herself into an alluring priestess, an exalted sovereign, capable of controlling a powerful talisman. This transformation is made more effective as she is posed by a stone sphinx, thus echoing the sphinx's famed mystery and aggression through the characteristics bestowed by her horned costume. Equally, though, given the choreographed nature of the photographs of Fini in fancy-dress, we could argue that she is turning herself into an art work—a reverse Pygmalion process— causing her identity to shift between her own self and the creatures she creates.



Fig. 5. Leonor Fini, Costume design for *Chi é di Scena* (What's on stage) (1953), mixed media. Private collection. © Estate of Leonor Fini, 2019.

Fini's aesthetic shifts dramatically in the 1950s and 1960s. Though we still find hybrids appearing across the various aspects of her oeuvre, they are much less common, and have been replaced by a preponderance of what Estelle Lauter refers to as goddess figures. Initially bald and set in ambiguous surroundings, the figure that emerges in the 1960s is powerful, ritualistic, ambivalent, and crowned with red hair, flowers, or large hats.[36] In 1965 Fini bought a ruined monastery at Nonza in Corsica, which became her summer home, where she and her friends would dress up, play games, and feast the days away. Red hair aside, the headdresses of Fini's goddesses once again match her fancy-dress outfits, this time worn in the more intimate surroundings of Nonza, among close friends. But this is not the only way transformation through dressing up is evoked in works from this period.

In *The Lock* (1965; Pl. 6), for example, a central female nude, crowned with flowers, emerges from a keyhole, a motif Lauter specifically equates with transformation and rebirth.[37] If we look closely at the woman's legs, we notice that they are patterned and tinged a very pale blue, as though they were a textile rather than skin. It is unclear whether she is transforming from material to flesh, or from flesh to material, or is an ambiguous mixture of both. The pattern seen on her legs recalls lace or crochet and is similar to the patterns on clothing worn by Fini at Nonza, again suggesting a blurring of bodies between the 'real' Leonor, the painted woman on canvas, and the other figures across Fini's work that also utilize similar textile patterns. They also appear in some of Fini's 'voyages' paintings, depicting women and androgynous figures on trains. Fini uses the train as a liminal space, presenting dichotomous characters (asleep / awake, aggressive / passive) in the same space.[38] If this textile pattern is associated with a liminal moment, a point of metamorphosis between two states, then this enhances the transformative nature of the textile-woman in *The Lock*.

This blurring of skin and textile seems to be an important theme as it appears in other later works—notably *The Fitting II* (1972; Pl. 7) and *Vesper Express* (1966; Pl. 8), both of which depict a central, full-length woman whose body blends seamlessly with her diaphanous covering. In *Vesper Express* what gives away that she wears anything at all are the barely visible lines at her ankle and wrist of what appears to be an almost transparent body suit (although there does not seem to be a neckline). Interestingly, it is the body parts that are moving away from the train—the Vesper Express—that reveal the clothing. The liminal space signified by the train is also referred to in the title, as 'vesper' refers to twilight, a liminal moment of the day. Thus, as the figure moves away from this space, her dressed form solidifies. That this transformation from liminal to actual is effected through clothing again highlights Fini's belief in the metamorphic power of dress.

The women of *Vesper Express* and *The Fitting II* are depicted wearing large hats, another significant motif for dressing up and transformation. The hat becomes a particularly important item of dress when worn by young girls, and a number of Fini's works from the late 1960s and into the 1970s show pre-pubescent and adolescent girls wearing enormous, elaborate hats, as though they have raided their mothers' Sunday-best wardrobes. Large hats, especially when worn by young girls, have particular significance for Fini as catalysts for blurring borders: "I believe that [large hats] are attributes or emblems which take up the flame, the halo, the crown. Slight sovereignty in Woman, delighted narcissism in the girl, simultaneously natural and artificial … [A]mong the different games of disguising, of dressing up … the important thing is the discovery of the body and the games it makes possible."[39]

Thus, the hat-wearing young girls of works like *Capital Punishment*, (1969) and *The Mutants* (1971; Fig. 7 and Pl. 9) not only blur their sense of identity between a 'natural' reality and a consciously performed artifice, but they are also engaged in a discovery of the body, destabilizing the stereotypical innocent identity of the young girl.[40] As Georgiana Colvile has noted, the cats in the girls' laps are situated where their 'pussy' would be, suggesting increasing sexual awareness—particularly as the way in which the girls stroke the cats could therefore be interpreted as masturbation, a sexual game to be played in discovering the body.[41] This again blurs the normative ideology of 'pure' young girl and 'sexual' woman, suggesting that the girls are between states, between gendered categories.

The very title of the work—*The Mutants*—suggests transformation. Colvile argues that "the women [Surrealists] tended towards an inner identification with bestial



Fig. 6. Eddy Brofferio, Leonor Fini at her house in Saint-Dyé, undated photograph. © Estate of Leonor Fini, 2019.

metamorphoses, often inspired by myths or deities."[42] While the main inspiration here is in all probability the sphinx, the way that Fini equates the hat with Christian religious emblems of the halo and the flame of the Holy Spirit as well as the worldly crown allows the hats not only to transform these young girls from humans to sphinxes, but also to saints, queens, and, as discussed above, sexually mature women. They do not merely transform from one thing to another, but into a plethora of identities—enacted through dressing up.

Over a career spanning six decades, Leonor Fini's metamorphic bodies have thus challenged the concept of a fixed, stable self, and created a more complex, ambiguous image of Woman. The theme of transformative bodies that cause shifts in identity and blur bodily borders is visible across Fini's oeuvre, infiltrating not only her painting practice and design work but also her life. Through the medium of costume, Fini enabled not only her own body, but the bodies she depicted on canvas, on stage, and in three dimensions, to continuously re-make their identity. She endowed clothing with special attributes, either directly through her writing, or indirectly through re-using an item of clothing in



Fig. 7. Leonor Fini, *The Mutants* (1971), oil on canvas, 57 7/8" x 37 3/8". Private collection. Image courtesy of Neil Zukerman, CFM Gallery, New York. © Estate of Leonor Fini, 2019.

different contexts. These attributes—sovereignty, liminality, hybridity, and so on—contribute to this sense of transformation by presenting the costumed bodies as a series of masks, each exhibiting a facet of her shifting self that was quickly discarded to make room for yet another one. Ultimately, Fini's engagement with dressing up reveals and emphasizes her multiplicity—her reluctance to be categorically defined. •

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Notes

1. Fini appears, for example, in Whitney Chadwick, *Women Artists and the Surrealist Movement* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1985); Mary Ann Caws, Rudolf Kuenzli, and Gwen Raaberg, eds., *Surrealism and Women* (Cambridge, MA and London: MIT Press, 1991); and Patricia Allmer, ed., *Angels of Anarchy: Women Artists and Surrealism* (London and New York: Prestel, 2009).
2. The most recent texts to directly connect Fini and Surrealism include Whitney Chadwick, *Love, war, and the militant muse: Women of Surrealism* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2017); Andrea Kollnitz, "The Self as an Art Work: Performative Self-Representation in the Life and Work of Leonor Fini," in Leah Armstrong and Felice McDowell, eds., *Fashioning Professionals: Identity and Representation at Work in the Creative Industries* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), 121–42; and Brita Täljedal, Cecilia Andersson, Anna Rådström, *Leonor Fini: Pourquoi Pas?* (Umeå, SW: Bildmuseet, 2014) (hereafter, *Leonor Fini: Pourquoi Pas?*); Valentina Vacca, "The art of 'tra(s)vestire' in Leonor Fini: An itinerary of costume design between Rome and Paris" (PhD thesis, Università Tuscia, 2015) focuses on the impact of place on Fini. Peter Webb, *Sphinx: The Life and Art of Leonor Fini* (New York: Vendome, 2009), and Xavière Gauthier, *Leonor Fini* (Paris: Le Musée du Poche, 1979) also note this connection as part of a web of other factors.
3. Interview between Leonor Fini and Peter Webb, Paris, March 15, 1993, cited in Webb, *Sphinx*, 273. See also Chadwick, *Women Artists and the Surrealist Movement*, 12.

4. Webb, *Sphinx*, 171.
5. Rachael Grew, "Feathers, flowers, and flux: Artifice in the costumes of Leonor Fini," in Patricia Allmer (ed.) *Intersections: Women/Surrealism/Modernism* (Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 2016), 259–60 (hereafter, "Feathers, flowers, and flux").
6. Webb, *Sphinx*, 7-8.
7. Interview between Leonor Fini and Nina Winter, *Interview with the Muse* (Berkeley, CA: Moon Books, 1973), 57.
8. Brita Täljedal, Cecilia Andersson, Anna Rådström, "Introduction" in *Leonor Fini: Pourquoi Pas?*, 18.
9. Anna Rådström and Cecilia Andersson, "Between Yes and No: Leonor Fini's work 1930–1960," in *Leonor Fini: Pourquoi Pas?*, 35.
10. Leonor Fini, Interview with Leonor Fini (trans. Lars-Håkan Svensson with Richard Overstreet), in *Leonor Fini: Pourquoi Pas?*, 121.
11. Interview between Fini and Webb, Paris, Feb. 9, 1994; cited in Webb, *Sphinx*, 69–72.
12. Webb, *Sphinx*, 57, 65. See also Ghislaine Wood, "Surreal Things: Making 'the fantastic real,'" in Ghislaine Wood, ed., *Surreal Things: Surrealism and Design* (London: V&A, 2007), 6–7.
13. This attitude is obliquely suggested in a 1973 interview with Nina Winter. In describing how she decided to make her own living rather than rely on marriage, she stated: "I didn't always earn my living by painting. I designed glasses, perfume bottles, decorative paper, anything. I was flexible and not ashamed to do all kinds of jobs," implying that she considered certain areas of design work as secondary to her painting. Winter, *Interview with the Muse*, 57.
14. Leonor Fini, "Ballet: 'Le Sabbat' (Péripéties)," Typescript, c. 1972, Leonor Fini Archive, Paris, 2. "… considérant le travail comme une 'diversion' de ma peinture." (All translations by the author.)
15. I discuss this in detail in my essay, "Sphinxes, Witches and Little Girls: Reconsidering the Female Monster in the Art of Leonor Fini," in Elizabeth Nelson et al, eds., *Creating Humanity, Discovering Monstrosity: Myths and Metaphors of Enduring Evil* (Oxford: Interdisciplinary Press, 2010), 97–106.
16. Leonor Fini, *Le Livre de Leonor Fini* (Lausanne: La Guilde du Livre et Les Éditions Clairefontaine, and Paris: Vilo, 1975), 41. "Se costumer, c'est l'instrument pour avoir la sensation de changer dimension, d'espèce. D'espace. C'est pouvoir se sentir gigantesque, plonger dans les végétaux, devenir un animal … Se costumer, se travestir est un acte de créativité…C'est une – ou plusiers – representation de soi…Le fait de travestir est un narcissisme multiplié puisqu'on entre dans d'autres images et qu'on deviant ainsi son proper spectacle d'autant plus fascinant que…on sait toujours que c'est encore soi-même derrière cela."
17. Webb, *Sphinx*, 8.
18. Fini, *Le Livre*, 32. "Quand j'étais enfant, je détestais me faire photographier. Je fuyais … Depuis on m'a toujours photographiée: costumée, déguisée, quotidienne. Me je n'aime pas les instantanés, rien n'est plus faux que le 'naturel' figé. C'est la 'pose' qui est révélatrice, et je suis curieuse et amusée de voir ma multiplicité — que je crois assez bien connaître— affirmée par ses images." (my translation, drawing on Webb, *Sphinx*, 64)
19. Andrea Kollnitz discusses Fini's self-fashioning in detail in "The Self as an Art Work," in Armstrong and McDowell, eds., *Fashioning Professionals*, 121–42.
20. Fini, *Le Livre*, 33.
21. Julian Levy, *Memoir of an Art Gallery* (New York: Putnam, 1977), 169–70, cited in Webb, *Sphinx*, 44.
22. Richard Overstreet, "The Sphinx's Riddle," in *The Sphinx's Riddle: The Art of Leonor Fini* (San Francisco: Weinstein Gallery, 2012), 7.
23. Rachael Grew, "The evolution of the alchemical androgyne in Symbolist and Surrealist art" (PhD thesis, Univ. of Glasgow, 2010), 205, and for Fini's knowledge of alchemy, 73–74.
24. Chadwick, *Love, war, and the militant muse*, 69.
25. Webb, *Sphinx*, 77.
26. Chadwick, *Love, war, and the militant muse*, 68–69.
27. Grew, "Feathers, flowers, and flux," 260.
28. Thimo te Duits, "Shocking. Fashion and Surrealism Now" in Wood, ed., *Surreal Things: Surrealism and Design*, 177.
29. For a detailed discussion of Fini's wartime movements and activities see Webb, *Sphinx*, 84–113.
30. Ibid., 127.
31. Leonor Fini, "My theatres," in *Written Body* "Mes Théâtres," in *Corps Écrit*, no. 10, (1984), 32.
32. Fini, *Le Livre*, 100. "Qu'est-il preferable d'imaginer? Être embrassé très très légèrement au moment du demi-sommiel ou demi-reveil par un être à corps d'animal et visage humain, ou par un être à corps humain mais visage d'animal? Qui ne se pose cette question? La version visage humain ferait naître l'illusion de plus forte participation, mais quell serait le corps d'animal? Félin, velu, à forte odeur musquée, avec le visage de Florinda Bolkan, de Bianca Jagger, de moi-même, de Charlotte Rampling, de Brando, de Cassius Clay?... Ou le corps de Clay ou de Raquel Welch et la tête d'un puma, d'un tigre, d'un jaguarundi."
33. Webb, *Sphinx*, 127.
34. Grew, Feathers, flowers, and flux, 265.
35. Fini, *Le Livre*, 44. "J'ai toujours pensée que les attributs des humains sont bien réduits, bien limités. J'ai toujours envié les bêtes … surtout leurs cornes…Les cornes qui permeetent de si joli mouvements de tête—ells donnent étrange allure, dignité, exaltation, aggressivité … [L]es femmes cornues ne pouvant que bouger avec souverineté et parfois avec la plus gracieuse modestie."
36. Estelle Lauter, "Leonor Fini: Preparing to Meet the Strangers of the New World," *Woman's Art Journal* 1, no. 1 (Spring/Summer, 1980), 46–47.
37. Ibid., 47.
38. Fini described train compartments as spaces that were simultaneously distressing and protective. Fini, *Le Livre*, 197. See also Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock, *Old Mistresses: Women Art and Ideology* (London: Pandora, 1981), 140–41 for an analysis of Fini's *The White Train*, which notes this liminal nature.
39. Fini, *Le Livre*, 143, 149. "Je crois que ce sont des attributs ou des emblems qui tiennent de la corolla, de l'aureole, de la couronne. Souveraineté légère de la femme, narcissisme ravi de la fillette à la foid nature et artifice…[P]armi les differents jeux de se masque, se travestir…ce qui importe c'est la decouverte du corps et des jeux possibles avec celui-ci."
40. For more on this topic, see Grew, "Sphinxes, Witches and Little Girls," in Nelson et al, eds., *Creating Humanity, Discovering Monstrosity*.
41. Georgiana M. M. Colvile, "Beauty and/Is the Beast: Animal Symbology in the Work of Leonora Carrington, Remedios Varo, and Leonor Fini," in Caws et al, eds., *Surrealism and Women*, 178.
42. Georgiana M. M. Colvile, "Women artists, Surrealism, and animal representation," in Allmer, ed., *Angels of anarchy*, 65.

The Art of Pan Yuliang

Fashioning the Self in Modern China

By Sandy Ng

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, China's encounter with the West's social ideology, advanced technology, and industrial standard led Chinese intellectuals to question the viability of its traditional culture. Imposed through ideological, religious, economic, political, and cultural means as well as military force, it came at a defining moment in Chinese history. The revolutionary replacement of a 2000-year tradition of imperial rule with a republican form of government transformed an isolated empire into an increasingly global nation.[1] And the May Fourth Movement of the late 1910s and early 1920s introduced a new era in the development of modern Chinese intellectual, cultural, and social history.[2] Apart from various projects for social reforms, these events radically reshaped the minds of Chinese intellectuals and opened a new age regarding the relationship with popular culture.

In the context of the search for a new identity for China, female artists are particularly undervalued in the history of Chinese painting. Their importance before the modern period was tied, for the most part, to their roles as daughters or wives of male artists or as courtesans who practiced music and painting to entertain clients. Their subjects were generally limited to flowers, butterflies, and, occasionally, portraiture. Traditional Chinese society restricted the participation of women in intellectual and cultural life, limiting their primary duties to the home. As Chinese institutions and social values underwent a monumental transformation in the twentieth century, the way women were depicted began to break with Confucian iconography and other age-old paradigms of virtue. Female modernity became closely aligned with contemporary cultural changes, even nation-building. Along with greater opportunities for education for women came greater awareness of their rights and social roles, which were now less restricted by traditional Chinese ethics. Few artists exemplify this development better than Pan Yuliang (1895–1977), whose paintings of female figures were among the most provocative in modern China.[3] In a small oil painting titled *Seated Nude* (1953; Fig. 1), Pan rendered a nude woman crouching forward with her head down. Her triangular body dominates the composition. The artist's textured brushwork foregrounds the body and the bond between the right arm and leg. Soft cushioning adds a sense of three dimensionality in an otherwise flattened composition. Unlike the typical portrayal of the female nude that is open and engaging,

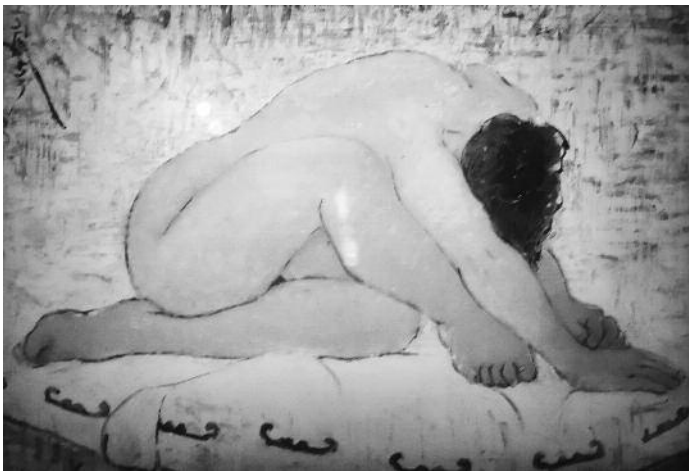


Fig. 1. Pan Yuliang, *Seated Nude* (1953), oil on canvas, 12" x 17 3/8". Collection of Musée Cernuschi, Asian Art Museum of Paris.

Pan depicts a sheltered body that reveals no signs of femininity but is, rather, a formal arrangement.

This article explores Pan's nudes and self-portraits, particularly those executed in her mature phase (1940s to 1960s). The works also shed light on the moment when modernism was in ferment and on what this meant to a woman who pushed the limits of acceptability in a still guarded and male-dominated art world. Her paintings of women illustrate Julia Kristeva's theory of the "abject," concerning the female body, the subject and object relationship, the self and identity.

As Chinese society transitioned from the feudal era to the modern period, Pan Yuliang bore personal witness to the struggles of women. She was born on June 14, 1895, in Yangzhou in Jiangsu province. She came from an impoverished family and, following the death of her parents, was sold to a brothel in the city of Wuhu in Anhui province by her uncle, a common practice at the time.[4] Her life took a better turn after she met Pan Zanhua, an open-minded government official. She eventually married him, adopted his surname, and moved to Shanghai.[5] Pan Zanhua recognized his wife's talent and encouraged her to study painting.[6]

The practice of apprenticeship with a master artist was on the wane at the turn of the twentieth century in China. Professional art schools where artists taught both Chinese and

Western painting techniques had recently been established in some cities, including Shanghai. Students also began to sojourn in Japan and Europe to deepen their training. They brought back new ideas, techniques, and experiences that intensified the discussions over the modernization of Chinese art.[7]

It was in this transformative climate that Pan assumed her studies at the Shanghai Art Academy in 1920, under the tutelage of the pioneering modernist Liu Haisu. European forms of pedagogy like sketching from life were gradually adopted along with the traditional Chinese approach of copying past masters' works. Like many of her contemporaries, however, Pan found teaching resources in China to be inadequate, and eventually she left for Europe. She began her training at the Sino-French Institute of Lyon in 1921, later attending the École Nationale des Beaux-Arts in Lyon. In 1923, she was enrolled in the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris and trained with the painter Lucien Simon. She favored styles outside the formal system, especially Fauvism, whose leading exponent was Henri Matisse.[8] Her works from this early period already displayed a penchant for bright colors, bold brushwork, acute observations, and female figures—including women of different races and classes. In 1925, she won a scholarship to study sculpture in Rome.[9] After eight years in Europe, Pan returned to China.

China's artistic reforms had grown more vigorous during Pan's absence; many of her peers had formed art societies based on collective ideologies. *Tianmahui* (The Heavenly Horse Society) was organized around Liu Haisu's Shanghai Art Academy, with bold colors and expressive brushwork reminiscent of Post-Impressionism and Fauvism, as their signature. *Juelanshe* (Storm Society) emphasized a dislike of nineteenth-century realism and traditional Chinese painting.[10] In Southern China, *Lingnan Pai* (Lingnan School) incorporated scientific perspectives and chiaroscuro into traditional ink painting and introduced modern iconography such as airplanes and trains.[11]

Pan was active in the art world and held solo exhibitions at home and abroad that won praise.[12] She organized groups for female artists, including the Chinese Women's Calligraphy and Painting Society, and was a senior fellow in *Yiyuan* (Art Court), a private studio in Shanghai.[13] Xu Beihong, a Paris-trained painter, recognized Pan's potential despite their divergent styles and employed her to teach Western-style art at the National Central University in Nanjing.[14] He asserted that beaux-arts realism was the only proper direction for China's art, which should be purposeful and intellectually accessible.[15] He remained the nation's leading master from the 1930s until his death in 1953, as his philosophy came to converge with Communist ideology.[16]

Teaching was both exciting and exasperating for Pan Yuliang, and she encouraged expressive freedom and innovative artistic approaches for her students.[17] Although her works received recognition and were reproduced in art magazines, Pan was unable to entirely erase the social stigma associated with her early life and was treated differently from her peers who came from affluent and educated families. While Xu Beihong's studio was reportedly packed with students, for example, her classroom was often empty because students and colleagues still considered her a lowly woman. In a solo exhibition of her work in 1936, a viewer slashed her oil painting *Powerful Hero* and left a derogatory comment on the wall: "A Prostitute's Ode to her Client."[18]

Pan did not fit the "Modern Shanghai Ladies" archetype that was prevalent at the time, that of fashionable young women who enrolled in art colleges to enhance their feminine beauty and charm. Shanghai Art Academy admitted its first cohort of female students, including Pan, to encourage co-education, coinciding with the education reform promoted by the chancellor of Peking University, Cai Yuanpei.[19] However, because of her humble background, she never found acceptance by the "Modern Shanghai Ladies."[20]

In the early twentieth century, the depiction of nudity was a contentious subject. Unclothed figures, rarely depicted in Chinese painting, were regarded as a vulgar Western import. Liu Haisu shocked the public when he introduced live nude models in art classrooms in the 1910s.[21] Xu Beihong's nude figures escaped criticism because their neoclassical idioms accrued nationalistic connotations by being placed in patriotic narratives. A few artists defended the genre, proclaiming that artistic quality rather than archaic standards of social propriety was the criterion for evaluating the nude.[22] To quash the public's fear of male artists' dubious intentions, the artist Ni Yide argued that models were not prostitutes, and asserted that man was an artist and the woman a muse: a woman's body, he proposed, was a tool to inspire male artists.[23]

This notion became complicated when female artists took up the nude as subject matter. Apart from the question of social propriety, the representation of the nude female body in art and popular culture also was considered to embody Western modernist ideologies.[24] Introducing life drawing in art classes impacted a culture that was eager to assimilate itself into a modern world. In fact, as Chinese painters began to favor the female nude as a subject, this imagery became ubiquitous in the print media. In 1920s and 1930s China, female corporality was transformed in three ways: artists used it to display their talents, designers and companies employed it as a marketing tool, and the government depended on it to disseminate public health information. The display of the female body became part of the national discourse on modernization, which grew increasingly connected to commercialism.[25] For male viewers, gazing at the female nude may have denoted power and control, while female viewers recognized an idealized form of femininity and desirability. The widespread acceptance of nude imagery, coupled with the persistent aspiration to modernize, encouraged Chinese women artists to render female nudes. Moreover, they regarded working in that genre as a means to signal their genuine participation in modernizing the arts.[26] As David Clarke elaborates in his studies on the role of the female nude in Chinese painting, the subject became a site for modernist negotiation.[27] Introducing the physical body to Chinese art also presented an alternative mode of visuality, challenging the dominance of bodily gesture long established in the practice of calligraphy.

A social prejudice prevailed that caricatured the idea of a female artist painting herself, emphasizing the gaze and self-objectification. A light-hearted humor embodied the dual representation of woman as both artist and subject.[28] There was also the cynical view—that women artists painted nudes out of convenience, unlike male artists who used the nude to channel their creativity.

Pan embraced the controversial subject of the female nude as a site to construct her own identity. In her *Nude in Front of the Window* (1940s; Pl. 10), the figure strikes an overtly sexual pose: spread across a tilted chaise, her full breasts and round buttocks in plain view, arms drawn away from the torso to maximize its exposure. The pert nipples pick up the color of the face, a rich red hue that runs through the entire composition, from the side-table to the carpet to the matching curtains and chaise. The vibrant interior accessorized with rich fabrics evokes the canvases of Matisse, particularly his *Reclining Odalisque* (Harmony in Red, 1927).[29] While Matisse's subject is lethargic, however, Pan's nude dominates her surroundings. Her crossed legs project outward, and her posture hides her pubic area, acknowledging the artist's modesty. By tilting the bed and table towards the viewer, Pan heightens the already intense color field. The nondescript landscape outside the window opens up the room but allows viewers to settle their gaze on the body, which, characteristic of the artist, stands out against a tonally contrastive ground. Her rouged face suggests an alcohol-induced nap. On closer examination, the subject's awkward posture and strange perspective are comparable to *Nude Beauty* (1912) by the avant-garde Japanese painter Yorozu Tetsugoro.[30] Pan may have seen Yorozu's painting through a reproduction. His unusual artistic approach had caused an uproar at its initial exhibition and had subsequently made a key contribution to modernizing Japanese art after the Meiji period (1868-1912). Experimentations may have led both artists to discover similar creative approaches in reinterpreting the nude genre. Sexuality is secondary to the dramatic pictorial effects and technical excellence of Pan's work. Although it is widely believed that Pan's subjects' stout bodies echoed her own, an approach to claiming authorship as a female artist painting the female nude,[31] her subjects' facial features do not constitute an archetype nor do they resemble hers.

Julia Kristeva's theory of the abject brings a stimulating dialectic to the present discussion. Concerning the female body, she defines abject as "the most significant border … between the subject and the object, the distinction between the inside and outside of the body."[32] She is concerned with the unending judgment of a woman's subjectivity and sociability that remains on the border of her identity, threatening to dissolve her apparent unity and make her sense of self a state that is continuously provisional. The abject is the space between subject and object, a position of both desire and danger. Hence, the body is primarily the site for the subject's struggle for attainment of identity.[33] Pan's depictions of the female nude helped her to redefine the boundaries of subject and object, disregarding the process described by Kristeva as that which destabilizes a woman's identity, where she is constantly considered as "the other" and thus abject. Instead of objectifying the painted subject, Pan redefined herself through repeatedly projecting her own self-image onto the subject as a way of asserting its normative value; she tried to negate the stigma of her youth.[34] Her nudes, in short, are visual reclamations of a desired self.



Fig. 2. Ni Gengye, Calendar poster for Qidong Tobacco Co. (1938), 42 5/8" x 15". Fukuoka Asian Art Museum.

As China was beset by political and social turmoil in the early twentieth century, anxious about European and Japanese imperialist aggression and their modern advancements, many Chinese developed critical views of antiquated customs and practices.[35] Women, especially those who were educated and urbanized, became more resistant to traditional restrictions imposed by their families.[36] For the first time, women became socially and politically active, even participating in street protests.[37] A much-publicized scandal involved a young educated woman, "Miss Zhao," who was coerced into an arranged marriage and committed suicide in her bridal carriage, instigating a flurry of newspaper essays criticizing prearranged matrimonies.[38]

Fashionably dressed females graced calendar posters in cosmopolitan cultural centers such as Shanghai, where mass-produced images advertised a wide range of products, including light bulbs, cosmetics, and cigarettes (Fig. 2).[39] Like Pan's subjects, the women had natural-sized feet that were emphasized through high-heel shoes, considered "part of a new look that celebrated leisure, movement, and urbanity."[40] Young, joyful, beautifully dressed, and often posed seductively, as Ellen Johnston Laing has written, they were "selling happiness."[41] This commodification of the female body made commercial sense, also to illustrate trendy publications.[42] Dance performances featuring appealing young women were also popular, even though some traditionalists found them too provocative. In short, the public display of the female body was treated as a culturally important signifier because it

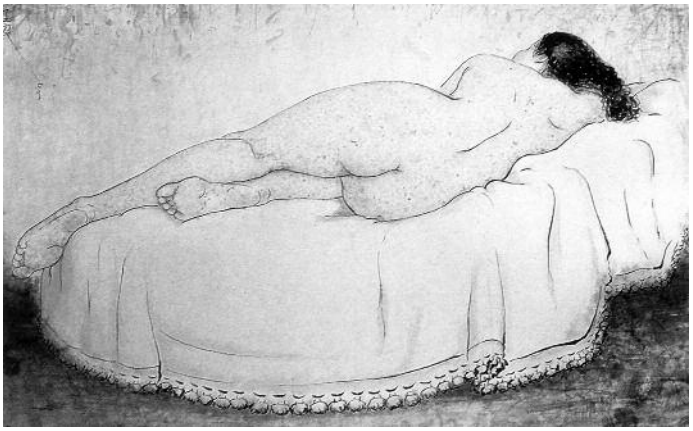


Fig. 3. Pan Yuliang, *Reclining Nude Woman* (1959), ink and watercolor on paper, 27 3/8" x 36 1/4". Anhui Provincial Museum, Anhui. Photo: in *Fine Arts selection of Pan Yuliang* (Nanjing: Jiangsu Art Publishing Press, 1988), p. 77.

embodied two signs of modernity: corporeal representation and an increased public demand for leisure-time entertainment.[43] Although Pan's paintings had little to do with the commodification of sexuality, they shared with the calendar posters a desire to reform the feminine self in line with the modern cultural context.

In Pan's *Nude in Red Qipao* (1955; Pl. 11), the figure looks introspectively downward while holding her raised right leg. Her composed expression deviates from the boldness of the bare body that is projected forward by the bright *qipao* (a fashionable, form-fitting dress) and textured background.[44] Lacquered nails emphasize her bare feet, free from the constraint of shoes. The allure of baring one's foot was associated with a freedom only afforded to the working class. Painted toenails became popular when sandals were in fashion and became another erotic modern symbol.[45] Why did Pan choose to depict her model undressed with a qipao? Women in the qipao were regarded as progressive and respectable. Portraying a woman undressing in a qipao implies a sense of freedom not normally felt by the wearer. For both the artist and viewer, physical freedom signaled emancipation of the mind.

Reclining Nude Woman (1959; Fig. 3) illustrates Pan's ability to construct a forceful composition in a more subtle manner. The chaise complements the figure's relaxed body, sensitively modelled in relief. Her hair softened on her upper right arm is palpable. Her physicality is strengthened by the brightened backdrop. Portraying the nude was complicated for Pan because of conservative moral standards and the gender bias. She chose to render the female body to establish her own artistic idiom. Her works reclaimed the body with a non-European female subjectivity, as her subjects' robust bodies and prominent hips challenged the European ideal of slender beauty.[46]

Popular Chinese pictorials helped define a new ideal of the female body in the 1930s. Healthy, athletic women were keen to display themselves to convey a progressive view of femininity.[47] A calendar poster titled *Two Ladies Roller-Skating* (1920–30s; Fig. 4) is an example. In this vivacious composition, two young women on roller skates lean forward with identical radiant smiles. Fair-skinned arms and legs extend from their boldly cut sports clothing. Their chests are almost visible, especially that of the woman in back in the skimpy top. Roller-skating—a new form of recreation, their carefully crafted appearances, and the Western style building combine to display an affluent and leisurely lifestyle. The poster suggests the ambiance of Shanghai, a liberal city that had westernized rapidly in the early twentieth century. At this moment, physical fitness had taken on a new significance, said to embody healthy minds for both genders. Female students were encouraged to participate in sport, and woman athletes were featured in popular magazines, though their bodies rather than their abilities were emphasized.[48] In the larger social context, the main responsibility of a woman was to raise strong, healthy children, and to do so she needed to be a model of good health. Paradoxically, the sensual female body was associated with endangering social morality, with sexual liberty and male pleasure; some even believed that a naked woman insinuated uncontrolled sexuality and spiritual pollution.[49] The poster delicately balances between these opposing views.

Images of stylish female models advertising commercial products attracted women who sought self-identification. Their body-image awareness, higher level of education, and their power as consumers were important to China's modernization.[50] Patriotic sentiment was strong, and while it was inappropriate for men, the proprietors of national pride, to acknowledge foreign ideas and promote foreign products, women could redefine their social position because their sense of identity was regarded as flexible, making them more likely to accept novel ideas and Western commodities.[51] A calendar poster for Gande, Price & Co., Ltd., an importer of Western liquors (1934; Fig. 5), exemplifies this perception: a bottle of Moët & Chandon champagne is shown with two glasses—the featured beauty is not drinking alone. Different types of liquors, meticulously identified in Chinese, are displayed in the corners. The subject's striped, transparent qipao is the latest fashion, and the white lace underwear peeking through the slit of her dress reinforces the seductive pose. Her strategically placed left hand flaunts a diamond ring. The Western-style interior and her bejewelled appearance convey a sense of a luxuriant lifestyle. Her natural-size feet in high heels show that modern women are freed from the practice of foot binding, a deforming custom associated with male privilege and the low social status of women.[52] Every element in the composition expresses a sense of Westernized modernity. It also illustrates how women were put on display for male viewers and male artists projected their own biased views of womanhood, neglecting female perspectives.

Despite the growing westernization, women who purchased locally produced goods were deemed patriotic and supportive of their husbands and families. The Chinese woman's liberation was only skin-deep, as she was restricted by a new set of rules: to be fashionable and to also advocate traditional values.[53] After the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, women were expected to contribute to the building of a new nation. *Good Mother* (1954; Fig. 6) is a watercolor painting that

would be printed and distributed to the public. In an era when women were socially active, the longing for a "good wife, wise mother" became widespread.[54] As the state encouraged childbearing in its 1950s population policy, images of women with children were produced and distributed in *nianhua* (New Year Pictures, celebrating Lunar New Year). In this work, the former "modern girl" now assumes motherhood, bringing up children, regarded as holding the promise of the future. She is depicted here as a beauty, reclining outdoors and holding a flower; she is surrounded by animated children but she does not interact with them. Instead, her gaze reaches outside the composition. (The only figure engaging directly with the viewers is the dog in the center.) The children are strategically scattered around her (like the bottles of liquor in the champagne calendar poster), and her femininity is reinforced by her floral qipao, which harmonizes with her surroundings. Rather than promoting a product, this poster suggested that women embrace the responsibilities of motherhood—raising strong and smart offspring was the Chinese woman's nationalistic duty. Women, in many of these images at the time, were defined by consumption and reproduction, with their own interior values given less importance.

Fig. 4 (below). Jin Meisheng, Calendar Poster: Two Ladies Roller-Skating (1920–30s), 25" x 16 1/2". Fukuoka Asian Art Museum.





Fig. 5 (above). Kwan Jo Mou , Calendar Poster for Gande, Price, & Co., Ltd. (1934), 28 7/8" x 20". Hong Kong Heritage Museum.

Frances Borzello has proclaimed that "Self-portraits are not innocent reflections of what artists see when they look in the mirror. They are part of the language painters use to make a point, from the simply "this is what I look like" to the more complicated "this is what I believe in."[55] Self-portrayal does not produce the physical body but shapes the flesh through the medium of paint; it is a continuous process of self-fashioning.

In a self-portrait painted in 1940 (Pl. 11), while she resided in China, Pan situates herself in an interior setting, resting the right elbow on a white linen table top. Just visible on the left is a vase of colorful chrysanthemums (denoting purity and steadfastness) that counterbalances her dark, fashionable qipao. The swirling patterns on her collar draw attention to her facial expression, making her slightly unfocused gaze more prominent. This deliberate choice of dress and flowers expresses a cultivated self-image that positions her as a respectable modern Chinese woman.[56] Her unfocused gaze suggests distance and perhaps a resistance to the prejudice she continually suffered despite being a married woman.[57]

Self-portraiture was a popular genre, as individuality was associated with well-being, a much sought-after quality in modern China. Readers of popular journals were curious to know about well-to-do women and their fashion styles. Playing to this interest in the lives of professional women, photos of female artists and their works were presented with a touch of glamor, as if they were socialites or movie actresses. Self-portraits, on the other hand, afforded a representational control for these artists, who sought a place in the male-dominated art world, and it was crucial that their art was regarded as bold and modern but also patriotic and espousing traditional values.[58]

By the time she completed her *Self-portrait* in 1945 (Fig. 7), Pan had made Paris her permanent home.[59] In this work, she stands with her right hand resting on a table with a jug of flowers. The closed window and warm clothes indicate it is winter. Once again, there is a sharp tonal contrast between the figure and background, emphasizing her body, dressed in western attire, which bespeaks her assimilation into European culture. Her gaze is direct and confident, a demeanor that is progressively evident in her later works. A second *Self-portrait* (Fig. 8) executed in the same year shows the artist standing in front of an open window, again wearing western dress, and an amber necklace. She holds a pot of lush flowers. The raw, textured brushwork suggests a freedom of expression that comes with long experience with the oil medium. She gazes out with an assertive attitude, softened somewhat by the ubiquitous floral arrangement. In the Chinese context, *huāpíng* (a flower vase) alludes to attractive women, suggesting that they are regarded as merely decorative with no intellectual substance.[60]



Fig. 6. Jinnong, *Good Mother* (1954), watercolor on paper, 17 1/4" x 25 3/8". Fukuoka Asian Art Museum.

Flowers are closely aligned with femininity in many cultures. They are a symbolic accessory for a Chinese courtesan—*Hua Guniang* (flower maiden) in Chinese is a euphemism for prostitute.[61] New Women like Pan held only real flowers or posed with potted ones.[62] Her piercing eye contact engages viewers, perhaps challenging them with these ideas, and the directness of her gaze had few precedents in the history of paintings by Chinese women.[63]

Like the female nude, self-portraiture was closely associated with western culture, even though artists in classical China occasionally depicted their own likeness. The reasons for painting the self in the western tradition are manifold; the perception of the self, for example, affirms that the world can be an object of subjective contemplation.[64] Pan's mature self-portraits clearly go beyond the clichéd suggestion of a female artist using herself as model. They characterize what Richard Vinograd calls "Emblematic Portraits"—"images oriented to the contemporary social and cultural milieu of the sitter that embody a complex personhood, comprising aspects of temperament, role, and behaviour."[65] In Pan's self-representations, we see an artist who was approaching self-acceptance. Her works are never rigid and often suggest interiority. Her self-portraits convey such palpable personality that they prompt the viewers to speculate on her psychological state. Yet, it appears that she painted for herself, refused to sign contracts with galleries, and many of her works stayed in her collection until she died.[66] Although her paintings were exhibited and well-regarded in France, receiving numerous significant awards including a Silver Medal from the French Salon of the Free Art International Association in 1965, there was no mention of patrons or commissions in her records.[67] Her numerous self-portraits, it seems, were part of her journey to search for the *self*.

Pan inhabited many roles in her life; she was a woman, an artist, a Chinese citizen living overseas, and an absentee wife. Her self-portraits and female nudes prod viewers to consider the biographical significance imbued in her compositions. Little is known about her social life and career, especially after moving to France in 1937. She documented herself as an artist, however, through self-portrayal, making her artistic skills, personhood, and professional choices manifest in painted form. Her portrayals revealed fundamental qualities of the artist's body and self. Pan lived in an era when a woman's grace and beauty were paramount, when images were a crucial avenue to understanding a dynamic culture. Through her compositions, she constructs her story and her own sense of identity. In her photographs, she gazes into the distance, a typical demeanor required of women to appear modest, or she is seen as a working artist, sculpting intensely. Her self-portrayal affirms her professional prowess. Rather than depicting herself in a flattering manner, she regains the subjectivity of the female model.

Pan signed her works 'Yuliang,' excluding her adopted surname, Pan. In her first 1945 self-portrait (Fig. 7), the last stroke on the character 'liang' is lengthened significantly as if to point to herself. In the second 1945 self-portrait (Fig. 8), the name is signed with the same thick stroke used for the entire work. In most of her paintings, the date is placed at the tip of the exaggerated stroke and she sometimes signs her name in an upper corner, making it noticeable. To lengthen the stroke, a conscious and gestural effort is required. She does this even when signing horizontally. The stroke goes diagonally and it is especially awkward to lengthen it when writing from left to right. This particular writing gesture is repeated in her bronze self-portrait (1951; Fig, 9). "Liang" is translated as "goodness" or "kindness"—did she emphasize this character as a rebuttal to the indelicate gossip about her background? Pan had studied sculpture and a bronze bust was an unusual portrayal for a Chinese artist at that time. Though her expression is tranquil, with eyes downcast, her facial contours are strengthened by the cut eyebrows and tightly closed lips, offering the viewer some sense of her personality. Her self-representation expresses the tensions between a socially appropriate constructed identity and the private psyche of the artist.

In her last self-portrait completed in 1963 (Pl. 13), she sits with her blouse opened and breasts exposed as her left arm rests on a table with bottles of spirits, a glass, and an ashtray filled with cigarette butts. She bares her body and her habits with an unexpected degree of candor. The knocked-down bottle and cigarettes are emphasized through an elevated perspective, making it clear that she has been drinking and smoking alone for some time. The delicately rendered glass displays her artistic skill. This work stands in contrast to the more commercial images of modern women with cigarettes and alcohol, where

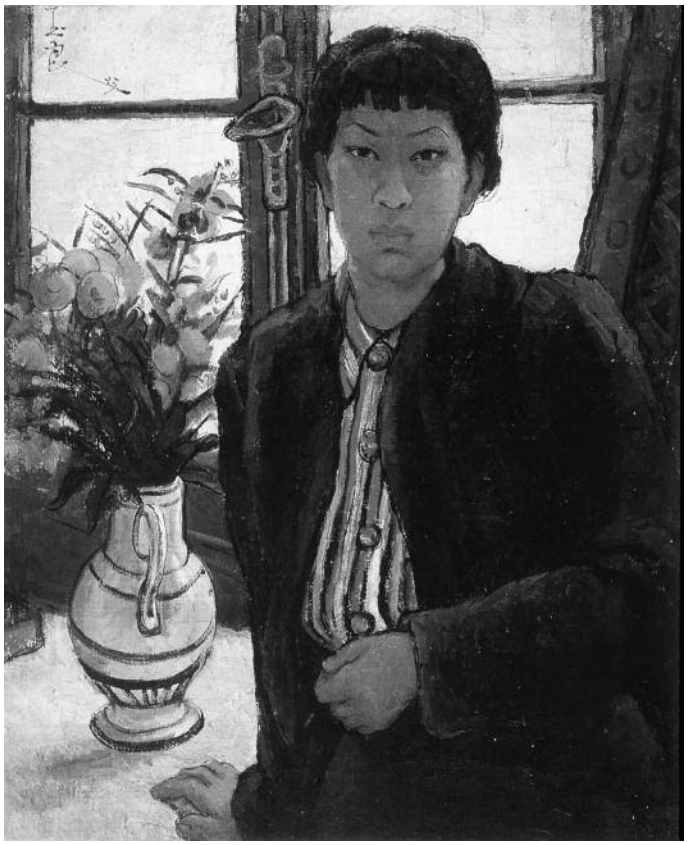


Fig. 7. Pan Yuliang, *Self-portrait* (1945), oil on canvas, 28 7/8" x 23 5/8". National Art Museum of China, Beijing. Photo: in *Fine Arts selection of Pan Yuliang* (Nanjing: Jiangsu Art Publishing Press, 1988), p. 38.

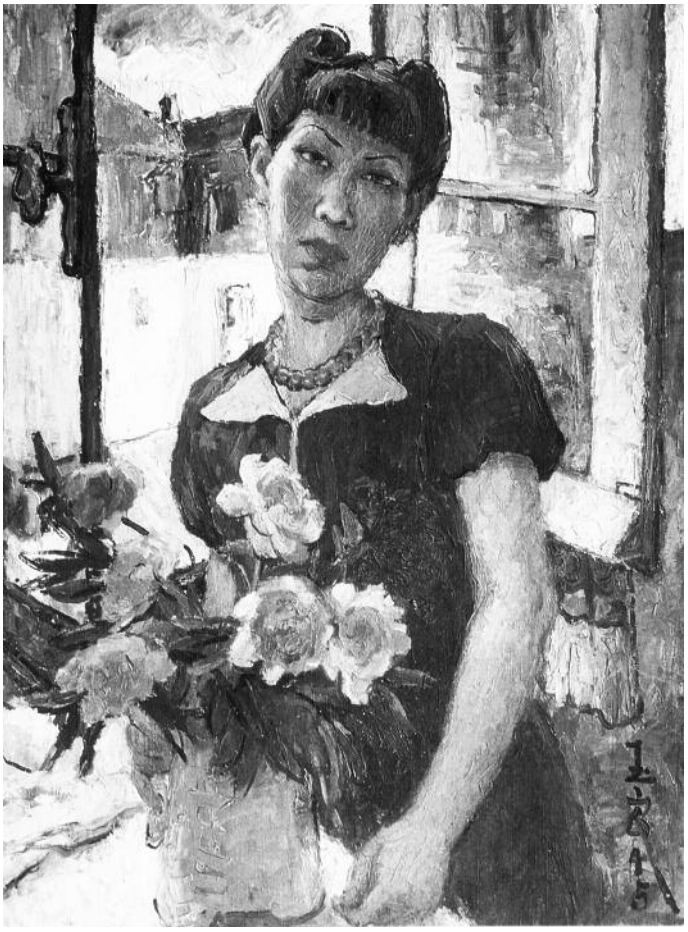


Fig. 8. Pan Yuliang, *Self-portrait* (1945), oil on canvas, 11 1/2" x 9 1/4". Anhui Provincial Museum. Photo: in Eric Lefebvre, *Song of Spring: Pan Yu-Lin in Paris* (Hong Kong: Asia Society Hong Kong Center, 2018), p. 18.

they were depicted as glamorous and joyful. This late work has a sense of ambiguity, pointing to other aspects of these habits, such as acting as narcotic in a lonely person's life. Pan smokes alone; an anti-social behaviour that challenges the stereotypical depictions of modern professional women; living as she did, in self-imposed exile, the freedoms she enjoyed came perhaps at the cost of loneliness.

Her forlorn presence is reminiscent of the woman in Edgar Degas's *L'Absinthe* (1875-76). Her gaze directs us to bottles of alcohol and cigarettes; she offers no flowers, as in her previous works. There are interesting comparisons here with her *Nude in Red Qipao* (Pl. 11). Both Pan and the model wear Chinese dress while assuming a downcast gaze to their left and holding their raised right leg. Her nude self-portrait epitomizes her life as an accomplished artist and a lonesome woman, having sacrificed family life and companionship. Her nakedness is accentuated by her noticeably aging body—she was sixty-eight when she painted it, and it is rare for an artist to depict herself nude at an advanced age.[68]

Pan's final portrait suggests that she was free of the social constraints that caused her to be exiled in Paris. Several biographical accounts suggest that Pan was unhappy and homesick in France and that she continuously expressed her wish to return to China. Wars and ill-health intervened, keeping her in Paris, where she remained an active painter until her death at age 82.[69]

Her final self-portrait documents her private life as a solitary woman artist who shaped her own path. The background of this work has the same textured brushwork found in her nude paintings (Pls. 10 and 11), relating her "self" to these figures and offering continuity of the artist's identity. Unlike the enticing looks of the calendar and poster models that invited viewers to share their world, the absence of eye contact in her final self-representation and in her female nudes suggests subjects that existed in their own private realms and did not function as objects of the gaze. In contrast with her 1940 self-portrait (Pl. 12), presenting herself as delicate and feminine, this final image shows her in a different light—challenging conventions and perhaps defining herself more honestly.[70]

In many respects, Pan Yuliang's work represented a complete break with the past. Unusual for the time, her husband supported her artistic aspirations and her studies abroad, though they lived apart for most of her life. By synthesizing modern idioms with an unreserved penchant for the female body, her self-portraits and female nudes celebrate the modern woman at ease with herself and her body. Instead of objectifying the painted subject, her subjects project a confident sense of self that does not seek the all-dominant



Fig. 9. Pan Yulaing, *Bust of Pan Yulaing* (1951), bronze, 19 3/4" x 9 7/8". Collection of Musée Cernuschi, Asian Art Museum of Paris.

male gaze. In these works lie a triumphant self-realization, albeit at the price of the artist's exile and solitude.

Pan Yuliang's story is about a woman's determination to define her self in the male-dominated institution of art production. Her humble beginnings were detrimental to her career, hindering objective assessments of her paintings even long after her death, but these are of secondary importance to the daring images she produced.[71] By closely examining her art, with all its complexities, this study looks to raise understanding of her place in modern Chinese art and to offer up her work for a more profound and multifaceted scrutiny. ●

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Notes

1. Maxwell K. Hearn, Introduction, in Maxwell K. Hearn and Judith G. Smith eds., *Chinese Art: Modern Expressions* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2001), 13.
2. See for example, Vera Schwarcz, *The Chinese Enlightenment: Intellectuals and the Legacy of the May Fourth Movement of 1919* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1986) and Joseph T. Chen, *The May Fourth Movement in Shanghai: The Making of a Social Movement in Modern China* (Leiden: Brill, 1971).
3. Pan Yuliang is the only non-Western female artist mentioned in Guerrilla Girls, *The Guerrilla Girls Bedside Companion to the History of Western Art* (New York: Penguin Books, 1998), 80. Her works are now ranked as equal among her well-known peers such as Xu Beihong (1895–1953) and Zhang Daqian (1899–1983). Refer to the video program, He Ailin, *Hua hun: Pan Yuliang chuan qi* [The Soul of Painting: The Tale of Pan Yuliang] (Xianggang: Xianggang hai wai lu ying gong si, 1993). There is also increasing public interest in her works; a retrospective exhibition in Beijing was organised by the Beijing Municipal Administration of Cultural Heritage in 2007.
4. Phyllis Teo, *Rewriting Modernism: Three Women Artists in Twentieth-Century China: Pan Yuliang, Nie Ou and Yin Xiuzhen* (Leiden: Leiden Univ. Press, 2017), 37.
5. Pan Zanhua married Pan Yuliang in 1913 and died in 1960. His exact birth year is unknown.
6. Liu Haisu, *Nuxing huajia: Pan Yuliang* (Female Painter: Pan Yuliang) in Pan Yuliang, *Pan Yuliang mei shu zuo pin xuan* (Pan Yuliang's Selected Art Collection) (Nanjing: Jiangsu Art Publishing House, 1988), 2–14.
7. John Clark, *Modern Asian Art* (Honolulu: Univ. of Hawaii Press, 1998), 160. For a detailed discussion of twentieth century Chinese art and artists, see Michael Sullivan, *Art and Artists of Twentieth Century China* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1996).
8. Zhang Yuzi, "The Blending of East and West in Pan Yuliang's Paintings: Reviewing The Pan Yuliang Collection in Taipei National Gallery," in *Lion Art Journal* 222 (1989): 56. Teo, Rewriting Modernism, 42.
9. Teo, *Rewriting Modernism*, 43. See also Tseng Lifa, "Soul in a Brothel: Pan Yuliang's Artistic Life," in *Lion Art Journal* 157 (1985): 30–37. Pan Yuliang was also a print maker and a sculptor but it is beyond the scope of this article to examine her works outside of paintings. See Li Zongtai, "Pan Yuliang's Works in Cernuschi Museum in Paris" in *Lion Art Journal* 222 (1989), 56–62 for a discussion of her prints. See Pan Yuliang, Pan Yuliang's Selected Art Collection for examples of her sculpted busts, including a bust of Zhang Daqian now in Paris.
10. Ralph Croizier, "Post Impressionists in Pre-War Shanghai: The *Juelanshe* (Storm Society) and the Fate of Modernism in Republican China," in *Modernity in Asian Art*, ed., John Clark (Broadway, NSW: Wild Peony Press, 1993), 139–40. The author examines the function of each group and the tension created due to their ideological differences.
11. For a comprehensive study of the Lingnan school, see Ralph Croizier, *Art and Revolution in Modern China: The Lingnan (Cantonese) School of Painting, 1906-1951* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1988).
12. Teo, *Rewriting Modernism*, 45, 50–53. One particular successful overseas exhibition was held in Tokyo in 1929.
13. Julia F. Andrews and Kuiyi Shen, *The Art of Modern China* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2012), 105–06, 70.
14. Ibid., 68.
15. The term "social realism" is generally applied to paintings executed in the Republican period (1911–49); "socialist realism" refers to the official style of the People's Republic of China as sanctioned in 1953.
16. Robert L. Thorp and Richard Ellis Vinograd, *Chinese art and Culture* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2001), 399. According to Thorp and Vinograd, Xu Beihong's *Yugong yishan* (*Old Foolish Man Removing the Mountain*) (1940) attracted Mao Zedong's attention. Mao believed that the painting could be regarded as a socialist icon, which no doubt solidified Xu's stature in the Communist Party.
17. Tseng Lifa, "Soul in a Brothel: Pan Yuliang's Artistic Life," 34.
18. Pan Yuliang, *Pan Yuliang*, Overseas Chinese Fine Arts Series 3, (Taibei shi: Yishujia chubanshe, 2007), 197.
19. Teo, *Rewriting Modernism*, 40.
20. Jane Zheng, "The Shanghai Fine Arts College: Art Education and Modern Women Artists in the 1920s and 1930s" in *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture*19, no. 1 (Spring 2007), 192–235 (200, 201,

208, 213, 215). Zhou Zhaochui, *Pan Yuliang* (Taibei: Jinxiu Publishing Co., Ltd., 1995), 1, 3. Her particular fondness for the nude must have made broad acceptance of her paintings even harder; this particular aspect was explored in the 1995 movie *Hua Hun* (*A Soul Haunted by Painting*) starring Gong Li as Pan. Throughout the film, Pan is portrayed as a strong-willed woman devoted to her husband and her art but eventually choosing the latter as her lifelong companion. The narrative implies that her upbringing in the brothel molded her defiant spirit that is manifested in her art and unorthodox career. Though the film is much dramatized, it is true that Pan went alone to study in France and in later life returned there to live out her mature years. Her life also inspired Jennifer Cody Epstein, *The Painter from Shanghai*, (New York: Norton, 2008). The author gave Pan a dramatized life in a brothel and imagined struggles she encountered as an artist.

21. For a brief history of modern Chinese art, see Michael Sullivan, *The Arts of China* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1984), 274–99.
22. Lin Fengmian, "Zhi quanguo yishujie shu" (1927) (A Letter to The Art World 1927) in *Lin Fengmian tan yilu* (Lin Fengmian Discusses Art), ed. Gu Liu and Peng Fei (Zhengzhou: Dashi tan yi congshu, 1999), 46, 61–62.
23. Ni Yide, "Lun luoti yishu" (Examining Nude Art) in *Ershi shiji zhongguomeishu wenxuan (I)* (Essays on Twentieth Century Chinese Art (vol. I)], eds. Lang Shaojun and Shui Zhongtian (Shanghai: Shanghai shuhua chubanshe, 1999), 128.
24. For a thorough discussion on the female nude in Chinese art, see David Clarke, "Iconicity and Indexicality: The Body in Chinese Art" in *Chinese Art and Its Encounter in the World* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Univ. Press, 2111), 115–32.
25. Yingjin Zhang, "Artwork, Commodity, Event: Representations of the Female Body in Modern Chinese Pictorials," and Carrie Waara, "The Bare Truth: Nudes, Sex, and the Modernization Project in Shanghai Pictorials," in *Visual Culture in Shanghai, 1850s-1930s,* ed. Jason Kuo (Washington, D.C.: New Academia Publishing, 2007), 121–61 and 163–203.
26. Tao Cuiying, "*Nüzi fayu mei yu renti huafa*" (The Beauty of Woman's Physical Growth and Figure Painting Methods), *Funü zazhi*, 15.7 (July 1929).
27. Clarke, "Iconicity and Indexicality: The Body in Chinese Art," 124.
28. See Figure 8, "The Convenience of the Female Painter," by Zhang Hongfei, published in *Meishu shenghuo* in August 1934, in Waara, "The Bare Truth: Nudes, Sex, and the Modernization Project in Shanghai Pictorials," 188.
29. Teo, *Rewriting Modernism*, 62–64. Teo suggests that Pan's nudes were inspired by the Orientalist approach that was popular in Europe, and that, therefore, her works should be regarded from gender and racial perspectives.
30. For a thorough discussion on Tetsugoro's female nude, refer to Alicia Volk, *In Pursuit of Universalism: Yorozu Tetsugoro and Japanese Modern Art* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2010).
31. Teo, *Rewriting Modernism*, 70.
32. Julia Kristeva, Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1982), 6, 7.
33. Ibid. Also Lynda Nead, *Female Nude: Art, Obscenity and Sexuality* (London: Routledge, 1992), 32.
34. Tseng Lifa, "Soul in a Brothel: Pan Yuliang's Artistic Life," 32–34. It was known that Pan was occasionally insulted publicly. In 1917, she was initially not admitted to the Shanghai Art Academy; the school administration worried that her background would further inflame the nude model controversy. The situation was only amended when Liu Haisu supported her application.
35. Thorp and Vinograd, *Chinese Art and Culture*, 368–69.
36. Ma Wanhua, "The Readjustment of China's Higher Education Structure and Women's Higher Education" in *Holding up half the sky: Chinese Women Past, Present, and Future,* eds. Tao Jie, Zheng Bijun and Shirley L. Mow (New York: Feminist Press at the City Univ. of New York, 2004), 109–22.
37. Lu Meiyi, "The Awakening of Chinese Women and the Women's Movement in the Early Twentieth Century," and Lily Xiao Hong Lee, "The Chinese Women's Movement Before and After the Long March" in Tao Jie, et al, eds., *Holding up half the sky: Chinese Women Past, Present, and Future*, 55–70, and 71–91.
38. One writer was none other than Mao Zedong, who was to turn women's empowerment into a political cause during the Communist era. See Mao Zedong, "The Question of Miss Zhao's Personality" (Nov. 18, 1919); and "Concerning the Incident of Miss Zhao's Suicide" and "'The Evil of Society' and Miss Zhao" (both Nov. 21, 1919), in *Women in Republican China: A Sourcebook* , eds. Hua R. Lan and Vanessa L. Fong (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1999), 79–80, 80–83, 85–88.
39. When these posters were first created for use as advertisements, calendars were part of the designs. Eventually, the calendars disappeared from the posters.
40. Dorothy Ko, "Jazzing into Modernity: High Heels, Platforms, and Lotus Shoes" in *China Chic: East Meets West*, eds. Valerie Steele and John S. Major (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1999), 140-153 (145).
41. See Ellen Johnston Laing, *Selling Happiness: Calendar Posters and Visual Culture in Early Twentieth-Century Shanghai* (Honolulu: Univ. of Hawaii Press, 2004); Li Chao, "Traces of Time The Art of Early Twentieth Century Shanghai Posters," in *China Dream Another Flow of Chinese Modern Art* (Fukuoka, Japan: Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, 2004), 178–79; Cheuk Pak Tong, "A History of Calendar Posters," in *Chinese Woman and Modernity: Calendar Posters of the 1910s-1930s*, ed. Ng Chun Bong (Hong Kong: Joint Publishing, 1996), 8–15.
42. Zhang, "Artwork, Commodity, Event," 138, 141. The so-called "nudity movement" in the 1930s combined moral condemnation and visual indulgence as satire towards the nude.
43. Ibid., 143.
44. For a detailed examination of *qipao* and woman's social status, see Sandy Ng, "Gendered by Design: *Qipao* and Society, 1911–1949," in *Costume-The Journal of Costume Society* 49, no. 1 (Jan. 2015), 55–74.
45. Ko, "Jazzing into Modernity: High Heels, Platforms, and Lotus Shoes," 149.
46. Teo, *Rewriting Modernism*, 61, 76, 78.
47. Zhang, "Artwork, Commodity, Event," 148.
48. Maura Elizabeth Cunningham, "The Modern Girl in Motion: Women and Sport in *Liangyou*" in *Liangyou*: *Kaleidoscopic Modernity and the Shanghai Global Metropolis, 1926-1945*, eds. Paul G. Pickowicz, Kuiyi Shen, and Yingjin Zhang (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 95–105.
49. Waara, "The Bare Truth: Nudes, Sex, and the Modernization Project in Shanghai Pictorials," 186, 190.
50. Zhang, "Artwork, Commodity, Event," 138.
51. Ibid., 148, 149.
52. For a thorough study on footbinding, see Dorothy Ko, *Cinderella's Sisters: A Revisionist History of Footbinding* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2005). High-heeled shoes were not new to China; there are surviving examples of heeled slippers for bound feet. See Ko, "Jazzing into Modernity: High Heels, Platforms, and Lotus Shoes," 145–46.
53. Shu-mei Shih, "Shanghai Women of 1939: Visuality and the Limits of Feminine Modenrity" in Kuo, ed., *Visual Culture in Shanghai, 1850s–1930s*, 229.

54. *China Dream Another Flow of Chinese Modern Art*, 198.

55. Frances Borzello, *Seeing Ourselves: Women's Self-Portraits* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1998), 17.

56. Teo, *Rewriting Modernism*, 94, 95, 104.

57. Her husband was rarely mentioned in her biographies once her career took off, because her status as a secondary wife would further dampen her reputation.

58. Female ink painters who fought with their male peers to preserve tradition were also portrayed as modern. See Lesley W. Ma, "Blossoming Beyond the Pages: Female Painterly Modernities in *Liangyou*" in *Liangyou: Kaleidoscopic Modernity and the Shanghai Global Metropolis, 1926-1945*, 202–25.

59. Tseng, "Soul in a Brothel: Pan Yuliang's Artistic Life," 35. The chronology of her life is sometimes inconsistent. Some accounts note her return to Paris in 1937; see Zhang, "The Blending of East and West in Pan Yuliang's Paintings," 56.

60. When women first entered the work force, they were employed as secretaries, providing office assistance to male superiors. The term "flower vase" was often used to describe them, as a form of office decorations. In addition, many people believed that working women's morals were compromised by their male superiors' dubious intentions. Angelina Chin, *Bound to Emancipate: Working Women and Urban Citizenship in Early Twentieth-Century China and Hong Kong* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012), 221. Wang Zheng, *Women in the Chinese Enlightenment: Oral and Textual Histories* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1999), 263.

61. Dal Lago, "Crossed Legs in 1930s Shanghai," 127.

62. "Republican Ladies" is a term the author uses to refer to the New Woman, generally regarded as modern and educated in the early twentieth century. Characterizations of Republican Ladies and Courtesans were confusing because of their 1910s photographic images that share similar attributes, such as the use of flowers to accentuate their femininity. Refer to Joan Judge, *Republican Lens: Gender, Visuality, and Experience in the Early Chinese Periodical Press* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2015), 176–211.

63. See Richard Vinograd, *Boundaries of the Self-Chinese Portraits 1600-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1992), 128–30.

64. Borzello, *Seeing Ourselves*, 17–35.

65. Vinograd, *Boundaries of the Self*, 12.

66. Amanda Sue Wright, *Qiu Ti's Contributions to Juelanshe and The Intersection of Modernist Ideology, Public Receptivity, and Personal Identity for a Woman Oil Painter in Early Twentieth-Century China* (PhD dissertation, Univ. of Kansas, 2011), 34. Wright states that Pan's background was often omitted in print and she refused to have lovers, to be represented by dealers, and to accept French citizenship. The author cites no original source.

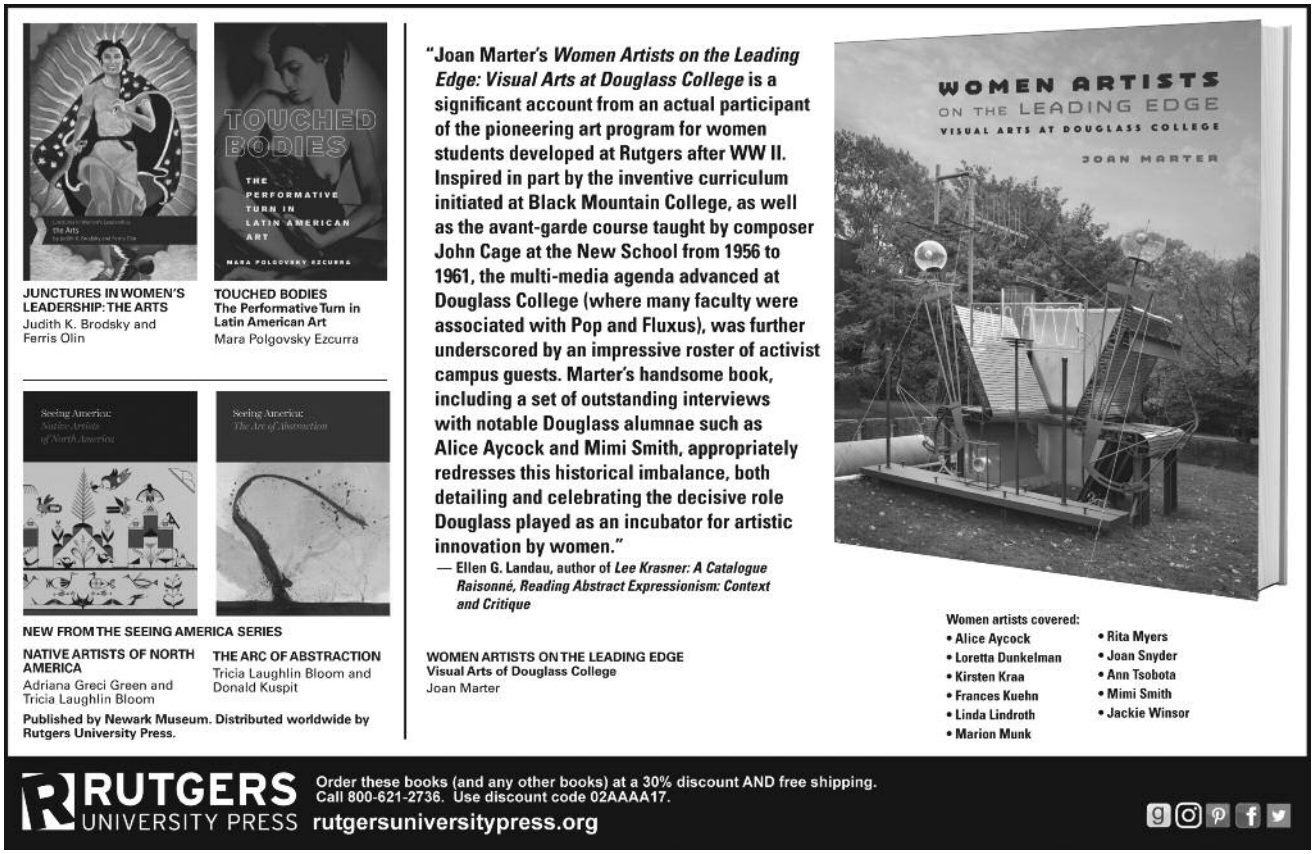
67. Vinograd, *Boundaries of the Self*, 12. See also Pan Yuliang, *Pan Yuliang mei shu zuo pin xuan*, 96–103. She left instruction to donate her works to the Anhui museum in the province where she was born. Zhang, "The Blending of East and West in Pan Yuliang's Paintings," 56. It would take extensive research to trace whether she had regular commissions during her lifetime.

68. The American painter Alice Neel, in her 1980 *Self Portrait*, made when she was 80, renders herself in the act of painting. Jeremy Lewison, *Alice Neel Painted Truths* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2010).

69. Pan Yuliang, *The Art of Pan Yu-Lin*, 131.

70. Teo, *Rewriting Modernism*,.90, 93, 95–98.

71. It is constructive to regard Pan's artistic expression from biographical and gender perspectives, which provide insights into the evolution of social roles. However, it is my hope that future studies of Pan's works will not be hindered by gender, as it is troubling that the focus on Pan's background, particularly her experience in a brothel, is so explicitly emphasized in most of the current literature.



Penny Siopis: *Tula Tula*

Re-membering the South African Nanny-child Relationship

By Irene Bronner

"*One of the ironies of the [apartheid] system is the role of the black nanny*"[1]

Since the 1980s, Penny Siopis's work has been seminal in South Africa in its engagement with issues of gender, race relations, representation, sexuality, memory, and belonging. She is foremost a painter but works extensively in film/video, photography, and installation, compelled by form, formlessness, and contingency. Her deployment of figures from classical and contemporary mythologies, metaphysical archetypes, as well as characters and emotions in extremis create identifiable tropes through which the artist explores inter-subjective relationships.

Tula Tula (1994; Fig. 1 and Pl. 14) is a mixed-media portrait that draws its source from a photograph of the artist's young brother seated on the lap of his black 'nanny'[2] in the early 1960s, evidence of a complex surrogacy relationship between black 'nannies' and white children that was photographed as uncontroversially quotidian in apartheid-era South Africa. The photographic negative has been photocopied and enlarged, inverting color laden with racialized power associations. The black woman's face and the background have been worked over in paint. An ornate gilded picture frame is stuck on top of and within the unframed pasteboard work, dominating the lower half of the work; inside it are coarse scouring pads and a word fragment translating as "terrorism." The first of three works that originally formed the Tula Tula series, I refer to this work as *Tula Tula*, although it is sometimes called *Tula Tula I* in the literature. The second two works were never exhibited and have long since been destroyed in a flood in the artist's studio, without having ever been documented.[3]

Born in 1953 in the small town of Vryburg in the Northern Cape Province, Penny Siopis's Greek parents were immigrants to South Africa, and her memories of the family bakery influenced her first acclaimed, feminist Cake Series in the early 1980s. *Plum Cream* (1982; Pl. 15), for instance, is characteristic of this series with its thickly layered paint sculpting nonliteral yet sexually suggestive forms. The work may be variously interpreted as a parody of womanist imagery that celebrated an essentialized vision of feminine body parts, a parody of the purist, modernist display of art objects on white plinths, and a valorizing of historically marginalized forms of predominantly female creativity, such as baking. Siopis's use of paint as a 'sculptural' medium was also provocative at the time, as it blurred demarcations between artistic mediums.



Fig. 1. Penny Siopis, *Tula Tula* (1994), photocopy, photograph, steel wool, found object and oil on board. 44" x 26". Collection of the artist. Photo: Courtesy of Penny Siopis and Stevenson Gallery.

From the mid-1980s through the 1990s, Siopis consistently references various black female figures with the intention of disrupting colonial and apartheid narratives about gender, race, and representation. In one of her iconic history painting series, *Dora and the other Woman* (1989; Pl. 16),[4] Siopis continues

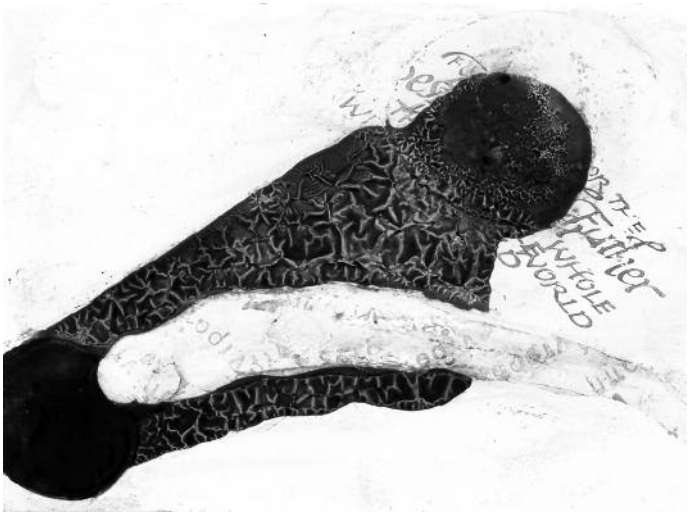


Fig. 2. Penny Siopis, Untitled from the Shame series (2002–05), mixed media on paper, 7" x 10". Private Collection. Photo: Courtesy of Penny Siopis and Stevenson Gallery.

her interest in the retelling of female stories, taking particular cogniscence of how their narratives have so often been written for, and over, them themselves. In this work, Siopis stages herself in a self-reflexively theatrical fashion as 'Dora,' the eponymous young woman in Freud's case study, apparently traded between two men in their own power game, who had by the 1980s become a feminist watchword for female exploitation. The other main character depicted in the work, or rather depicted through Siopis's reproduced European images of her, is Sarah Baartman, the Khoekhoe woman exhibited at European fairs and prurient scientific gatherings as so-called evidence of her 'lesser race.'

In the early 2000s, two other well-known series, Pinky Pinky and Shame, may be seen to extend Siopis's already established interest in trauma and female subjectivity through a psychoanalytical framework of subject formation.[5] In these two series, she explores the imprint of gender-based violence and childhood sexual trauma in ways that express both the smothering quotidian quality of such experiences as well as their timeless horror. Pinky Pinky is a contemporary urban myth told by children in South African schools of an indeterminate, alternately ghoulish or impish creature that lurks in public places, particularly in girls' bathrooms. Siopis images these tales as fears around puberty in a society deeply traumatised by gender inequality and violence. In *Who is Pinky Pinky?* (2002; Pl. 17), the creature has humanized plastic eyes and hands folded like tomb effigies embedded in impasto pink paint, while its stomach writhes with plastic baby figurines, which either maggot-like consume it, or that the creature has itself consumed.

In the Shame series (2002–05), Siopis manipulates various spilt liquids into amorphous forms which co-exist alongside the saccharine banalities of crafting stamp-kit greetings, which, in this context, are rendered deeply menacing and repressive. In one of the untitled works (Fig. 2), two shapes appear ambiguously interlocked, one seemingly engulfing the other. Together they partially obscure a blurred stamp, a type of brand, reading "To the Best Father in the Whole World." Siopis displayed the Shame Series, together with interventions of other kinds, at her exhibition in the Freud Museum in London in 2006.[6] Her thirty-year oeuvre has consistently grappled with the ways in which subjectivity has been narrated and the sociopolitical context in which subjects are formed. She continues to display a profound respect for the workings of the subconscious, challenging her own processes of art-making to image the deep internal wells in which things are hidden, and also found.

Having received an MFA from Rhodes University in 1976 (as well as an honorary doctorate in 2017), Siopis lectured in painting for many years at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg and currently holds an Honorary Professorship at the Michaelis School of Art at the University of Cape Town. She has received awards and has held residencies around the world and a significant body of scholarship has explored her work.[7]

In other collaged works of the 1990s, three of which are discussed here, the artist paints over photocopies, keeping fragments and traces that are as much in conflict with the paint that enfolds them as they are a part of the whole work. Working over existing documents as photocopies, incorporated into paint, allows for the mediations and disjunctions of received narratives that may be said to be the basis of conscious memory work. My focus here is on three elements of *Tula Tula*: the reworked photocopy, the use of connective color, and the picture frame within the unframed work. I expand upon how it is specifically in the artist's method, in the light and color reversals, and the affective, layering, repeated touches of paint, that Siopis's contribution to the dissolution of the fetishization of this trope may be enacted.

There are a number of contemporary artists in South Africa who have examined domestic worker tropes—how these tropes perpetuate unequal racial and gendered relations, how they impact black women, and how they may be transformed and deployed to subvert and complicate power relations.[8] In the early 1990s, however, the years where South Africa knowingly headed toward profound sociopolitical changes with the advent of democracy, it was most notably Penny Siopis who was creating works that explored the subjectivities of black and white South Africans who meet in this relationship between employers, their families, women employed as domestic workers, and their (usually absent) families. While artists such as Mary Sibande and Zanele Muholi have become known in the last ten years for their works that draw on domestic worker tropes, they have not (as yet) engaged directly with the nanny-child relationship. Siopis's works influenced by this particular relationship, as discussed here, remain, I argue, the most nuanced on the theme, even today.

Siopis herself offers the most extended critical engagement with *Tula Tula*, specifically with how the work seeks to image the nanny-child relationship through psychoanalytic theories of loss in subject development.[9] Annie Coombes's analysis of *Tula Tula* and Siopis's other domestic service-themed work,

Maids (1993; Fig. 3), focuses on how Siopis uses psychoanalytic theories of subject development to motivate that the social relations formed within the context of domestic labor are central to understanding South Africa's apartheid past and its legacies of intersecting race, gender, and class inequalities that have continued structurally to inform the country.[10] I take the opportunity here, however, to discuss not only connections in theme and medium with her other work of the period, with comparisons not drawn by other writers, but I also emphasize *Tula Tula* as a linchpin between Siopis's earlier and later work. In *Tula Tula*, Siopis's feminist concerns with issues of representation and historical situatedness meet the assertive materiality of her paint. This meeting may, I propose, be interpreted through Bracha Ettinger's theorization of a matrixial womb membrane, in order to reflect critically on the nanny-child relationship.

The role that domestic workers play in the reproduction of labor power is overtly that of physical maintenance, through the performance of their duties in the employer's home, but arguably more significantly, the role that domestic workers fulfill is to maintain an ideological order based upon a racialized sociopolitical hierarchy.[11] Especially during the years of apartheid prior to democracy in 1994, white South African children and the black women employed in their parents' homes were socialized into an asymmetrical experience of interracial contact. In white family photographic albums, from one of which the source photograph for *Tula Tula* was drawn, photographs of nannies with their white charges function as an ambiguous counterpoint to other family groupings. It was likely that evidence of racial intermingling would be represented exclusively by the inclusion of women employed as domestic workers and nannies.

The particular loss when the nanny loses the child's affection is expressed by many writers commenting on South African cultural mores. Ernest Cole, South Africa's first black freelance photographer, observes how "the lessons they learn at home" perpetuate the "awful heritage of racism" for white children, who learn that it is socially acceptable for them to treat domestic workers in the dehumanizing manner that their parents model.[12] The central role that a black female domestic worker in South Africa often plays in the nurturing of white children, Siopis's own experiences of mothering a young son, and her memories of having had a nanny who cared for her and her brother in her own childhood, stimulated her interest in this issue.[13] This kind of critical attention in South African creative practice and scholarship of the 1990s was often inspired by the proceedings of the Truth and Reconciliation Committee (T.R.C.) and the wider rippling cultural effects that it exerted on the national psyche.[14] Marianne Hirsch saw art practitioners' reflection on and the telling of stories of those years in South Africa as "a means to account for the power structures animating forgetting, oblivion, and erasure and thus to engage in acts of repair and redress."[15] Siopis was therefore not alone in those years in feeling that the end of apartheid signalled a time of greater, not lessened, social responsibility and personal reflection.[16]

In *Tula Tula*, the young boy's individuation from two



Fig. 3. Penny Siopis, *Maids* (1993), maids' uniforms, cake decorations and rice paper with laser print. 57" x 48". Collection of the artist. Photo: Courtesy of Penny Siopis and Stevenson Gallery.

mother figures, the import of one (the black nanny) disregarded by his nation's narrative and perhaps within his community and family as well, is what Siopis works with in articulating emergent masculine subjectivity. *Tula tula*, the isiZulu lullaby from which Siopis's work takes its title, may be translated as 'Be quiet' or 'Be still': it may be interpreted as a soothing of, a smothering of, or a requiem for the white male child, or of/for the black woman. In this metaphoric scenario, the nanny tells (sings) of her own future silencing by the emergent personality that she is at this moment nurturing. As Siopis puts it, she loses her voice and her authority as the child grows into his place in his society, despite (or because of) the emotional and physical dependency he has in infancy on the surrogate mother.[17] The song becomes a warding off, even disavowal, of the loss that she may suspect that she (and the child, to a less economically impactful extent) will likely suffer. The visual counterpart to the silencing suggested by the song is arguably of the child's hand, placed over the woman's, which may present both as the boy's affectionate dependence and as a forceful foreshadowing of the power that his society will tacitly or overtly allow the man to wield, physically and symbolically. Siopis's rendering of the two subjects' gendered gazes is also central.

In the artist's source photograph, the boy is looking out at



Fig. 4. Penny Siopis, *The Baby and the Bathwater* (1992), oil, collage, marble, steel and photographs on board, 98" x 315". Collection of the artist. Photograph courtesy of Penny Siopis and Stevenson Gallery.

the photographer and viewer, and the black woman is looking down at him. As Siopis explains: "Because it is a photographic negative, she's in fact white, if you like, colourwise, and he's black, but his eyes are white. I've tried to invert value-laden colour. His eyes are in some ways absent or blank because in the original photograph they would have been black."[18] By blinding or 'blanking' the eyes of the white boy, and the racialized apartheid ideology that he is to be read as representing in this moment, Siopis offers a space to consider how vision is a psychoanalytic, politically situated process of subjectivity. She emphasizes how, as the infant's autoerotic body yields to a speaking subject, vision is at the behest of ideologically structured language rather than using language to explore the infant's own subjective formation.[19]

In this inverted image, Siopis does not 'reinstate' the nanny's gaze, however, as arguably this may be visually akin to 'speaking for' her, thereby disallowing both the difficulties of her situation and the agency she may have exercised within that sphere. It would be disrespectful and ahistorical to reductively invert the power hierarchy by retrospectively 'bestowing on' the nanny apparent agency in the scopic and ideological realm. Rather, it is in the white painting marks that Siopis feels that she works through her personal understanding of the nuances of this kind of situated, surrogate maternal relationship.[20] Using white oil pigments to paint into the blank white spaces of the photographic negative is a subtle intervention in the existing document, one that results in an overall surface that, arguably, is more to be touched than to be looked at. This painting is a gestural meditation that occurs in a separatist society that seeks an expression of acknowledgement for the experiences of 'others' who are not 'akin to' the artist herself, an acknowledgement that nonetheless does not participate in this scopic separatism. The artist's use of colors not black or white in this work is confined to the depth of field, which is suffused with the blood reds and placental purples that recur in Siopis's oeuvre. (Works already discussed here that deploy libidinal colors in this way are *Plum Cream*, *Dora and the Other Woman*, and *Untitled* from the Shame series.) Her working into the image is therefore a conscious and sensitive consideration of how the ideologies of racialized skin were maintained by circulating on the surface, while soaking deeply into perceptions of self and other.

Siopis's interest in psychoanalytical accounts of subjectivity is matched by her (feminist) reservations about their reliance on the scopic and the visual image. In this, her stylistic choices share similarities with European and US feminist art of the 1970s that deployed a "negative aesthetics," which involves, as Griselda Pollock describes, "a radical distanciation from any aspect of the spectacle and visual pleasure, a distrust of the visual image, of the iconicity especially of women."[21] In *Tula Tula*, working 'outside' of this 'frame' is done by "(be)labour[ing] the painting process itself into a kind of identificatory gesture of extreme intimacy, making tiny white paint marks in the spaces left blank through the photocopying process."[22] By drawing attention to the scriptal slippage of labor/belabor, Siopis positions the artist's gestural labor as contemplative. The tactility of the painting process builds up a "strong point of identification" with the female subject that is intended not to be specular or mimetic.[23] Her intention is not to perpetuate inadvertently the hypervisibility of black female bodies. Within the ersatz-Victorian frame are Brillo pads, the coarse scouring pads such as are used in domestic cleaning. Being hard on the hands, they exemplify the physical labor performed by domestic workers.



Fig. 4. *continued.*

As a different form of labor to the artist's gestural labor, and a different surface to the traditionally smooth mimesis of oil paint, Siopis represents the domestic worker's labor metonymically rather than metaphorically, arguably to permit such experience its own voice.

In *Tula Tula*, Siopis uses a photocopied photographic negative from her personal archive, but other of her history painting series (1985–95), also layer photocopied images from a wide variety of sources in the public domain. *Terra Incognita* (1991; Pl. 18) is an example of how Siopis developed a subversive copy-and-paint approach to the 'grand narratives' in the genre of academic history painting. The background is built up from images of colonial powers exploiting the African continent, mining, mapping, and waging wars of attrition: the main source is repeated fragments of colonial artist Thomas Baines's painting of the Battle of Blauwkrantz of February 1838. The seemingly tattooed crawling female figure personifies not a classical nude allegory of European dominion, nor a 'noble savage' stereotype, but rather the anger, despair, but also the critical subversion of William Blake's critique of Nebuchadnezzar and Thomas Hobbes's Leviathan.[24] In both *Terra Incognita* and *Tula Tula*, using existing images means retaining the referent as well as the iconographic image. The co-existence of different marks over time allows for a clear material disruption.

Experiencing how the iconographic elements of the sourced photographic negative interact with the formlessness of her paint is central to Siopis's workings. The artist interprets the color red as connective and cataclysmic: "hot" colors "reflect the fragility of the body and the emotional states that we connect very directly to the body."[25] These hot colors express her own desire to assert "Eros … life and energy in the face of counter-pressure to balance, or return to, stasis or inertia."[26] More recently, she has similarly contrasted "the eternal wrestling between life-giving and life-denying forces."[27] Saturating the visual field with red, enveloping *Tula Tula*'s so-called blank background spaces or depth of field with this color, holds space through affect-laden paint. This deliberate painting as an aspect of connection may be considered in the context of subjectivity formation, as in the matrixial womb membrane Ettinger theorizes.

Cultural theories of the gaze and the field of vision situate the subject within the highly scopic imaginary that is dominated by an Oedipal, Foucaultian, mastering gaze.[28] Ettinger joins Freud's passage on the uncanny aesthetic effect of womb phantasies (*Mutterleibsphantasien*) with Lacan's re-theorizing of the gaze in his 1964 seminar. Here he repositions the gaze as a phallic *objet a*, as "a non-optical psychic inscription of a trace of what came to be felt to be lost as the subject emerges through its successive severances from archaic unity with the m/Other."[29] Ettinger's proposal is for a matrixial gaze, theorized further as a matrixial *objet a*, that is "not the psychic inscription of what is forever lost whose scar forms the incitement to desire, but as a borderlinking mechanism that is never totally lost as it is not phantasized in retrospect as being had or being submerged in."[30] This is significant because the gaze proposed is neither essentializing, nor utopian, nor based upon the creation and opposition of differences, but rather on the relationships that exist between even ambivalently connected individuating subjectivities. I suggest that what Siopis calls the Eros of her affect-laden, somatic, oft-used red paint may be deployed as the "screen" or "transferential, unconscious field" that spreads itself out between the shared thing and lost object. This field becomes "the transport for affects generated in this libidinized textile of connectivity and dissemination."[31]

Ettinger's "transferential, unconscious field" is symbolized as unconscious, uterine, connective memories. Siopis's smothering, enfolding, connective red in *Tula Tula* symbolically becomes, in this context, a sense of another kind of looking. By placing the memory object (the source photograph) within the body/womb (the painterly process), it is, I argue, being depicted as fertilized and co-created in the artist's past and present memories. When perception is an embodied thing, when the gaze is anchored in the body's eyes, it becomes an "intra-psychic remnant of the body." By obliterating both characters' gazes and conscious subjectivities, even as she references and acknowledges them, by retaining reference rather than literal depiction or iconography, I propose that Siopis develops what Pollock has called her work, namely, "a painting practice rooted in



Fig. 5. Penny Siopis, *At the Root* (2011), ink and glue on canvas, 67" x 98". Private Collection. Photo: Courtesy of Penny Siopis and Stevenson Gallery.

historical trauma."[32] This connective color field that allows the semi-digested glut of images is also apparent in *The Baby and the Bathwater* (1992; Fig. 4).[33]

Here Siopis creates an eight-meter long collage of photocopied images of enslaved women threatened with rape, humiliation, and the loss of their infants, as well as photographic images of Siopis and her son Alexander (born in 1988). These images are embedded in paint and overlaid with fragments of Alexander's first attempts at speech, rendered in hard, wrought-iron, cursive forms. These allude to how language, as a medium of communication and purveyor of identity, imparts lessons on the value-laden differentiation between 'self' and 'other.' In photographic negatives and positives, each image coated in wax, Siopis's hands are spread in atavistic protection, affection and/or maternal suffocation over or on the body of her young son (Pl. 19). This creates a dialogue with her brother's hand in *Tula Tula*, which is placed over that of his nanny. *The Baby and the Bathwater* is also, like *Tula Tula*, a fragment of a phrase that takes childhood as its vehicle for metaphor and also refers to silencing and caution ('Don't throw the baby out with the bathwater'). While in *Tula Tula*, Siopis explores implications for the subjectivities of both the black nanny and the white boy, precipitated by their interaction, in *The Baby and the Bathwater*, she seeks out profoundly different experiences of motherhood, experiences that may serve as points of identification if they remain respected as rooted in their own particularities. As a white, middle-class woman in possession of authorial or artistic authority, Siopis does not associate herself in a reductive essentialism with the positions or histories of enslaved women. *The Baby and the Bathwater* amounts also to a consideration of how, but for an accident of history, Siopis's son might have grown into a slave master (or an apartheid-era 'baas') and how she, as his mother, might have nurtured that socialization.

As in *Tula Tula*, Siopis whitens out or works up the blank spaces in the scaled-up images of *The Baby and the Bathwater*, where the white blank spaces are filled with white processed sugar. Sugar as a mark across history of colonial slave labor, production, and commodification has left traces in the apartheid-era institution of domestic labor, as represented by *Tula Tula*'s Brillo pads. In *The Baby and the Bathwater*, the gritty unresolve of the graininess of the sugar can be seen to contrast with the affective connective feather strokes that Siopis describes for *Tula Tula*. The incorporation of sugar creates the material foundation for Siopis's contention that the traumas suffered particularly by enslaved women and children are a crucial aspect of acknowledging the experiences of slavery. Not intending to fetishize or to ghoulishly isolate such experiences, Siopis nonetheless draws attention to South Africa's own slave-owning history (in the Cape Colony, 1658–1834) even though many of the images sourced are of the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

Tula Tula's haptic engagement with the placental paint that transforms the work's background has continued in Siopis's enduring experimentation with painting materials as affective carriers. Since about 2007, for instance, Siopis has been spilling and manipulating glue and ink, and through these mediums exploring contingency in form and formlessness. Glue is a viscous substance, and that determines how liquid ink flows and where it is absorbed on the surface. *At the Root* (2011; Fig. 5)[34] is from her exhibition *Who's Afraid of the Crowd?*, which explores the tensions between the multitude and the individual.[35] The pictorial source for the work was an image of a lynching in the United States; lines of words of the poem "Strange Fruit"[36] appear on a horizon of formless red towards which bird-forms plummet through acid color. The thread from her earlier work is evident in how Siopis describes her conceptual compulsion: "the formlessness I am after seems less about abstraction than materiality. Iconography is important but always in dynamic relation to materiality, of which colour is key."[37]

The gilded frame inside the unframed pasteboard work in *Tula Tula* may be considered as the wound of severance in the racialized nanny-child relationship. It is thus explicitly outside this frame, even as she incorporates its homunculus presence, that Siopis seems to attempt the rapprochement of connective color between self and other, and the holding together, without conflating differences, in gender, race, class, privilege, memory, and experience. The frame is like a tombstone, a fetish, commemorating disavowed knowledge. Siopis examines the remains for the way of life they have come now to commemorate. "Commemoration," Pollock writes, is the ambiguity central to Freud's later theory of fetishism, in that commemoration "attempts to disavow unbearable knowledge while simultaneously placing at its traumatic site a memorial marker, the fetish."[38] The frame in *Tula Tula* and its contents may be posited as an externalization of the fetish, freeing the artist and the viewer to engage affectively with individuals' childhood memories and collective socio-historical memories. There is no conventional frame on the pasteboard edges of the work; the frame is within, around the fetish.

The '*terrorisme*' to which the word fragment within the gilded frame refers is the literal concretizing of this wound: Siopis references the stainless steel and concrete sculpture erected in the

strongly Afrikaner nationalist capital city of Pretoria in the politically turbulent 1980s that commemorated the implicitly white victims of black liberatory violence or 'terrorism.' This monument acts as an example of the Freudian frozen fetish. Siopis's metonym may be seen as a reclamation and release of that fetish. Referring not to a datable public event, *Tula Tula* opens up a quotidian moment in the long process of socialization and identity formation that solidified South African race relations. As a mnemonic device, this *aide de memoire* is of the will to change and of the external markers of a more rooted psychological history that does not change so expediently.

Siopis's Forgotten Families series (1996) brings attention, through recreated portraits, to the black African families, such as those of domestic workers, for whom the consequences of apartheid's social engineering projects continued to influence life after 1994. The works in this series are the artist's interpretation of a recognizable kind of hand-colored portrait that was common for petit bourgeois, urban, black Africans, particularly in the 1950s and 1960s, the era in which the photograph of Siopis's brother and his nanny was taken. These portraits montaged the aesthetics of the studio portrait with the ubiquitous headshot photograph used in the apartheid reference books for all 'non-white' citizens. The family members in the photograph likely would not have been able to come together to the studio to sit for a portrait, because of how apartheid policies of migrant labor and racial segregation drove the separation and disintegration of black family life. Headshots of individual family members would therefore be collaged onto bodies deemed appropriately festive and formal; these would be then arranged together in a family group in the photographer's darkroom. John Peffer has written on how this portrait aesthetic "revaloriz[es] bureaucratic uses of photography by the apartheid state into celebratory heirlooms and markers of community status."[39]

In *Forgotten Families I* (1996; Fig. 6), the desire for a unified and stable family triad, despite overwhelming oppositional forces, is respected even as the harsh blocked colors and the faint photocopied faces emphasize its constructed realities. Siopis again uses photocopies, here directly of photographs, a technique that becomes an expression of witnessing, in that she is facsimilizing, not creating, lives other than her own. This family is imagined, *not* invented. The invention is the maps of Africa and the vision of territory and resources—but not the stories of contemporary human inhabitants they present—which collage the background of this family. Taken from collectible cereal boxes of the 1990s, these images would be absorbed at domestic (predominantly white, suburban) breakfast tables, a different domesticity to, and one that elides that experienced by, the black family members portrayed. That this work was selected as part of the South African Post Office's Constitutional Court artwork stamp series, issued on June 5, 2009, expresses how central and painful the subject remains in the national consciousness. Migrant labor has been definitive in structuring the experiences of African community life in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. It would not be a leap to suggest that this kind of 'imagined' family that is seen in the assembled portrait may be representative of how the black woman in *Tula Tula* experiences her own family life.

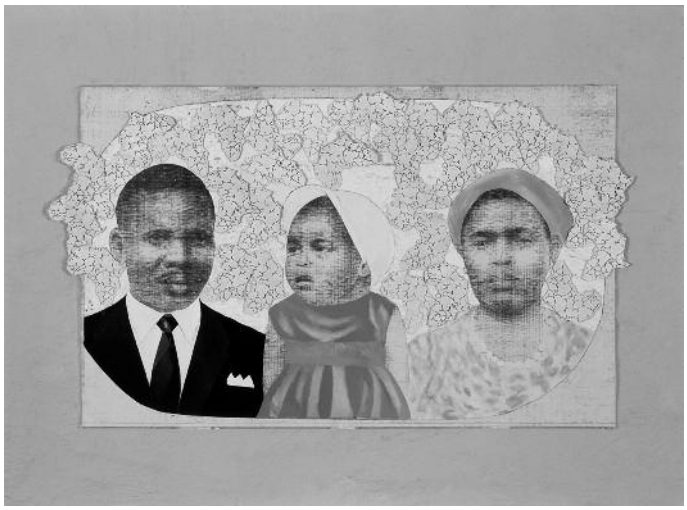


Fig. 6. Penny Siopis, *Forgotten Family I* from Forgotten Families Series (1996), mixed media, 37" x 61". South African Constitutional Court Collection. Photo: Courtesy of Penny Siopis and Stevenson Gallery.

In the mixed-media portrait *Tula Tula*, Siopis seeks expression for the complexities of the traumatic wounding and repression that occurred during the years of apartheid, as seen through the 'nanny' trope and through the relationship between black women and the white children for whom they care. In working with less conscious or examined memories, the artist invites the viewer to consider, as sociologist Jennifer Fish does, "the institutionalized nature of domestic work as the mostly deeply embedded and complex endurance of apartheid's legacy."[40]

Transforming her source photograph allows Siopis to examine the nuances and find a means of mourning the losses in the South African nanny-child relationship. Siopis's empathic and respectful rapprochement between these different characters involves exploring her personal memories of her own childhood nanny and her retrospective consideration of how socialized gender roles impact the subjectivity of white children, particularly boys, and the black women who cared for them. Siopis feels that representing, mourning, and integrating these losses may be done by painting the photocopied photographic negative and by exploring how the iconographic interacts with process-driven affects of paint and painting. The materiality and color of paint create empathic identifications that are not representational. In seeking to articulate ways in which lived experiences complicate psychological and social identities, and in engaging vulnerably with traumatic issues that have multiple perspectives, only some of which the artist herself has experienced, these works by Penny Siopis continue to warrant examination. ●

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Notes

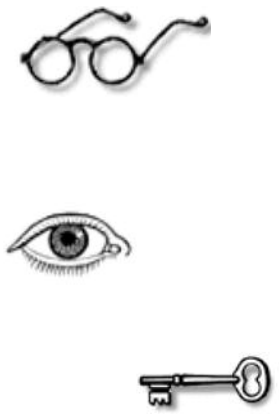
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1. Ernest Cole, *House of Bondage* (New York: Random House, 1967), 73.
2. A 'nanny' is a South African term for a black domestic worker whose primary duties involve the care of predominantly white infants or young children. Arguably more used during the 20th century, perhaps reflecting the practice of employing someone dedicated solely to childcare, the term is also associated with apartheid-era racial hierarchies, as is the term 'maid,' or, indeed, 'girl.' While the titles 'helper,' 'housekeeper' or 'domestic worker' are more commonly used in 21st century suburbia, such an employee may well have significant childcare responsibilities; she may, for instance, maintain the employer's home in the morning before collecting the child/ren from nursery or junior school at midday and looking after them until the parent/s return home. The term 'nanny' remains in use by both black and white South Africans, however, particularly when reflecting on intergenerational memories of having been cared for by a black female employee, or having a family or community member who cared for white children. In such cases, the term also conjures up the complexities of this particular care relationship. I use the term 'nanny' here to focus on this relationship between employee and child, and to remain truthful to the mid- to late-20th century period to which Siopis's work refers.
3. Penny Siopis, email correspondence with the author, April 24, 2014. The work was first exhibited in Siopis's solo show *Private Views,* Johannesburg, 1994.
4. Siopis produced a number of paintings and installations during 1985–95 that explored the pathologizing of feminine 'hysteria' and, in other works, issues arising from the story of Sarah Baartman. Siopis is one of many South African artmakers who have responded creatively to what has been recorded about the woman known as Sarah Baartman. See, for instance, the works in Senzeni Marasala's 2010 exhibition, *Beyond Booty: Covering Sarah Baartman and other tales.*
5. See, for instance, Sarah Nuttall, "The Shock of Beauty: Penny Siopis' Pinky Pinky and Shame Series." in *Penny Siopis* ed. Kathryn Smith (Johannesburg: Goodman Gallery Editions, 2005), 134–59.
6. For further reading, see Penny Siopis "Shame in the House of Freud," in *On Making: Integrating approaches to practice-led research in art and design*, ed. Leora Farber (Johannesburg: Univ. of Johannesburg), 23–246.
7. Recent solo exhibitions include Cape Town (2014, 2018), Brussels (2016), Mauritius (2016), Johannesburg (2015), Durban (2009) and London (2005). She has participated in many international exhibitions and biennales; notable group exhibitions from the past ten years in the USA include *The Lotus in Spite of the Swamp,* Prospect.4, New Orleans (2017), *Public Intimacy: Art and Other Ordinary Acts in South Africa,* Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco (2014) and *Black Womanhood: Images, Icons and Ideologies of the African Body,* Hood Museum, Hanover, NH; Davis Museum, Wellesley, MA, and the San Diego Museum of Art, San Diego (2008).
8. For instance, Angela Buckland, Steven Cohen, Claudette Schreuders, and Zubeida Vallie.
9. Penny Siopis, "Domestic Affairs," in *de arte* 55 (1997): 58–69; Penny Siopis, "Dissecting Detail," in eds. Brenda Atkinson & Candice Breitz, *Grey Areas: Representation, Identity and Politics in Contemporary South African Art* (Johannesburg: Chalkhill, 1999): 245–66. A number of in-depth interviews with Siopis allow her to elucidate her working methods and conceptual concerns: see Achille Mbembe, "The Place of Imagination: A Conversation with Penny Siopis," in Smith, *Penny Siopis*, 118–33; Sarah Nuttall, "On a Knife Edge: Penny Siopis in conversation with Sarah Nuttall," in *Journal of Contemporary African Art* 25 (2009): 96–105; Sarah Nuttall & Penny Siopis, "An Unrecoverable Strangeness: Some Reflections on Selfhood and Otherness in South African art," in *Critical Arts* 24, no. 3 (2010): 457–66.
10. Annie E. Coombes & Penny Siopis, "Gender, 'Race,' Ethnicity in Art Practice in Post-apartheid South Africa: Annie E. Coombes and Penny Siopis in conversation" in *Feminist Review* 55, no. 1 (1997): 110–29, 117; Annie E. Coombes, *Visual Culture and Public Memory in a Democratic South Africa: History after Apartheid* (Johannesburg: Wits Univ. Press & Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, 2003).
11. Jacklyn Cock, *Maids and Madams: Domestic Workers under Apartheid* (London: Women's Press, rev. ed. 1989), 8. For a sociological and historical account of domestic workers and the domestic labor (or service) sector in South Africa, during the apartheid and democratic eras, see also, for instance:; Cherryl Walker, ed., *Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945* (Claremont, SA: David Philip, 1991); Jennifer Fish, *Domestic Democracy: At Home in South Africa* (New York: Routledge, 2006); Shireen Ally, *From Servants to Workers: South African Domestic Workers and the Democratic State* (Scottsville, SA: UKZN Press, 2010).
12. Cole. *House of Bondage,* 73.
13. Coombes & Siopis, "Gender, 'Race,' Ethnicity," 117.
14. The T.R.C. was a court-like proceeding of three committees set up by the Government of National Unity in 1996 that heard testimonies of witnesses, survivors, and perpetrators of human rights abuses instigated in service of (anti-)apartheid ideologies, that sought to be a space of individual and national healing, and that processed applications seeking exemption from prosecution for politically motivated acts. Archbishop (now Emeritus) Tutu, the commission's chairperson, as well as others, has critically debated the purpose, merits, limitations, and successes of the T.R.C. proceedings. See Desmond Tutu, *No Future without Forgiveness* (New York: Doubleday, 1999).
15. Marianne Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture after the Holocaust* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2012), 16.
16. Sue Williamson & Ashraf Jamal, *South Africa: The Future Present* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1996), 130.
17. Ibid, 115. 'Nothando' recounts to Jennifer Fish how she was valued for her trust and capability by her employers for her care of their young child, but her presence was considered inappropriate at the young man's 21st birthday celebration: "[…] now you are nothing in that party. There is something very sad, it hurts you." 'Victoria' describes her life as a 'nanny': "Now you must care for their child, you must give the love you suppose to give to your child, you must give it to them. Like myself, I am very fond of this child, sometimes I feel like taking my things and go, but then it comes to this child, then I decide not to go, because we are very close the two of us." Both Jennifer Fish, *Domestic Democracy*, 88.
18. Coombes & Siopis "Gender, 'Race,' Ethnicity," 117.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid., 113–14.
21. Griselda Pollock, "Gleaning in History, or coming after/behind the reapers," in ed. Griselda Pollock, *Generations and Geographies in the Visual Arts: Feminist Readings* (London: Routledge, 1996): 266–88, 285.
22. Coombes & Siopis, "Gender, 'Race', Ethnicity," 117.
23. Ibid.
24. Dirk van den Berg, "Painting history: *Terra Incognita* as anti-Leviathan emblem," in *Acta Academica* 37, no. 1 (2005): 56–98.

Terra Incognita was first exhibited on the Cape Town Triennial, South African National Gallery, Cape Town, 1991.

25. Mbembe, "The Place of Imagination," 128.
26. Ibid.
27. Kim Miller & Penny Siopis, "'Fire, water, forests, swarms': Penny Siopis discusses 'Who's Afraid of the Crowd?' with Kim Miller," in Penny Siopis, *Who's Afraid of the Crowd?* [catalogue] (Woodstock, Cape Town & Braamfontein: Stevenson, 2011): 47–51, 50.
28. Griselda Pollock, "Thinking the Feminine: Aesthetic Practice as introduction to Bracha Ettinger and the concepts of matrix and metramorphosis," in *Theory Culture Society* 21, no. 1 (2004), 32.
29. Ibid., 50. "*Objet a*" in Jacques Lacan's psychoanalysis, stands for *objet autre*, and is the object of desire that can never be obtained.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid., 50–51.
32. Ibid., 12. Similarities between Siopis's *Tula Tula* (1994) and Ettinger's Eurydice series (1992–ongoing) led me to consider Siopis's work in a conceptual framework influenced by Ettinger, particularly to Siopis's libidinous color as a "borderlinking mechanism," a visual expression of Ettinger's proposed outro-phallic subjectivization. Pollock had already discussed in her essay how Siopis's feminist project, which integrates socio-historical situatedness with the modernist understanding of the emotive potentials of paint and painting, may be interpreted in relation to Ettinger's process of "metramorphosis." Pollock, "Painting, Difference and Desire in History," 60.
33. See Elizabeth Rankin, *Penelope Siopis: The Baby and the Bathwater: Motif, medium and meaning in the work of Penny Siopis* [catalogue] (Johannesburg: Penny Siopis, 1992); ed. Terry Kurgan, *Bringing up Baby: Artists Survey the Reproductive Body* (Cape Town: Bringing up Baby Project, 1998). Siopis first exhibited this work in-progress at the Albany, Grahamstown, 1992.
34. *At the Root* was first exhibited at Stevenson Gallery, Cape Town, 2011.
35. Miller & Siopis, "'Fire, water, forests, swarms,'" 49.
36. "Strange Fruit," by Abel Meeropol in the 1930s, protested lynchings of African Americans, and has been sung by, amongst others, Nina Simone, becoming a widely recognizable rallying cry against racism.
37. Miller & Siopis, "'Fire, water, forests, swarms,'" 48.
38. Griselda Pollock, "The Image in psychoanalysis and the archaeological metaphor," in ed. Griselda Pollock, *Psychoanalysis and the Image: Transdisciplinary Perspectives* (Malden, MA, US; Oxford, UK; and Victoria, AU: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2006), 10.
39. John Peffer, "Vernacular Recollections and Popular Photography in South Africa," in eds. Christopher Morton and Darren Newbury, *The African Photographic Archive: Research and Curatorial Strategies* (London & New York: Bloomsbury, 2015): 115–31, 128.
40. Fish, *Domestic Democracy*, 7.




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Fanny Palmer: The Life and Works of a Currier & Ives Artist

By Charlotte Streifer Rubinstein
Edited by Diann Benti
Syracuse University Press, 2018

Reviewed by Betsy Fahlman

In the nineteenth century, no commercial printmaking enterprise was more famous than that of Currier & Ives, which flourished between 1835 and 1901. The thousands of images they published defined American middle-class Victorian visual culture for nearly three quarters of the century. For twenty years, that firm employed an individual who was "the only lady lithographic artist" (ix) in America. That woman was Fanny Palmer (1812–76), and it was she who created many of their most famous images. *Fanny Palmer: The Life and Works of a Currier & Ives Artist* is the first scholarly monograph on this important figure. Author Charlotte Streifer Rubinstein (1921-2013) did not live to see the publication of her book before her death at the age of ninety-one, but her 424-page volume, ably edited by Diann Benti, with twelve chapters, five appendices, and 370 illustrations, 190 of which are in excellent color, gives her subject (to which she devoted many, many years of research) the full treatment she deserves.

Palmer was a creative and enterprising individual whose chronicle is positioned at "the intersection of social, business, printing, and art history" (x), and her prints "reflect the dreams and aspirations of Americans of that period" (xiii). Affordable and appealing, with a heavy dose of optimistic nostalgia, she and the other artists working for the firm created a panorama of American life.

Born in the market town of Leicester, England, she began her career as a commercial artist in 1840, mastering the medium of lithography, a process "far less expensive and time-consuming" (4) than woodcuts and engravings. She and her husband, Edward, whom she married in 1832, operated a lithography business, though it did not prosper. Hoping for better prospects in America, they left England in 1843, and settled in New York, where they soon opened a second business, which also struggled (Edward, an alcoholic, steadily becomes a marginal figure in her professional career).

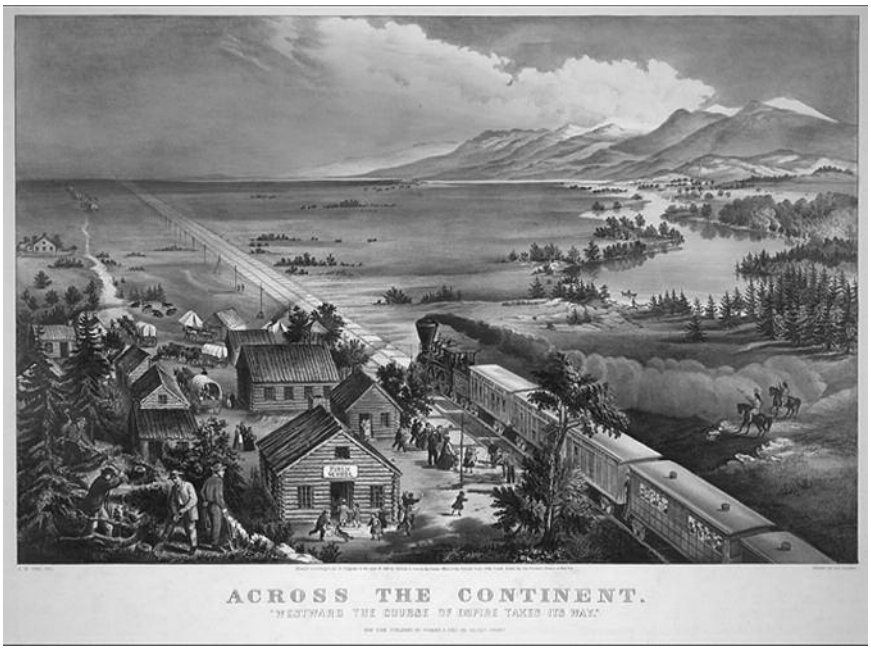


Fig. 1. Frances (Fanny) Palmer, *Across the Continent. "Westward The Course of Empire Takes Its Way"* (1868), colored lithograph, 24 1/8" x 32 5/8". Publisher: James Merritt Ives. Yale University Art Gallery, Mabel Brady Garvan Collection, 1946.9.1361.

Realizing that a woman hoping to pursue a fine art painting career faced many challenges in earning a living, the practical Palmer diligently kept "her nose to the limestone" (25). Her repertoire of subjects was broad, and this prolific artist advertised that she could: "execute every description of Lithography in the best manner and on lower terms than any other Establishment" (41).

She began working for Nathaniel Currier in 1849, the only female artist on staff at a time when "the market for lithographic images was exploding" (85). Currier, and his partner James Merritt Ives, who joined the firm in 1852, had a "keen sense of what the public wanted" (86), and they profitably marketed their popular and affordable prints of middle class life with great success. Palmer, a disciplined, skilled, and "extraordinarily productive" worker (126), helped the firm meet this need with her many works celebrating rural life of "Olde" New England. Many presented pleasing images "of life on the farm and in small villages" (92), even as the nation grew increasingly urbanized as the result of vigorous technological expansion. Her rustic scenes ignored "the muck and hardship of farm life" (113) as well as its "grinding toil from dawn to dark" (115).

The range of Palmer's themes is impressively extensive. Rubinstein's chapters have many subdivisions, some by type (farm scenes, Hudson River Images, and the Civil War), others by content (family and home, race and ethnicity, gender and class). The number of such divisions is distracting and compartmentalizes categories that have many substantial overlaps (for instance gender and race). Some chapters could also have been combined: a single chapter on her work in England and one on her work in America before Currier & Ives would have made the volume tighter.

Although she never left the New York region and depended on existing imagery for source material for her prints portraying the American West, one of her works remains an iconic allegory of Manifest Destiny aided by the transcontinental railroad: *Across the Continent: "Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way"* (1868; Fig. 1).

After 1868, the year she left Currier & Ives, she made no more prints. Suffering increasingly poor health, she died of tuberculosis in 1876, at the age of sixty-four. Rubinstein's chapter, "The Vicissitudes of Taste," charts the historiography of her work and reputation, including the decline in popularity of the prints she produced for Currier & Ives, to their revival as Americana during the twenties, to another decline after World War II with the rise of the New York School, followed by a renewed interest in the history of American printmaking and popular culture and the reclamation of women artists.

The last three chapters are devoted to "The Art of F.F. Palmer," "Ideology in the Art of Fanny Palmer," and "F.F. Palmer's Contributions to American Art," and are the most problematic. It makes no sense to separate her commercial work from a discussion of her "art," especially as examples for the latter are drawn from series discussed earlier. Material in these chapters would have been more effectively integrated into the general analysis of her life and work throughout the book. It is not clear why separate discussions of Family and Home" (145–51) and "Gender" and Female Bonding" (206–14) were necessary. Formal discussions of composition, color, light and dark, and pattern and decoration do little to further our understanding of this significant artist. A discussion of lithographic technique (188–90) curiously comes halfway through the book.

A gallery of her prints presents twenty-six full-page color plates of some of her best-known work. Five appendices provide checklists of the prints Palmer produced in England, those she executed in America, those she made for Currier & Ives, Currier & Ives prints attributed to her, and finally her drawings. There is a wealth of detailed primary material in this section. These are followed by an excellent bibliography and extensive index. Rubinstein's volume will serve as the essential source for future scholars pursuing thematic analyses of Palmer's imagery.

Before this admirable monograph, only a few articles had been published on Palmer, and the lack of substantial business archives for Currier & Ives has hampered research on figures like Palmer.[1] Rubinstein's volume fills a major scholarly gap and reclaims Fanny Palmer for the canon of American art history. ●

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Notes

1. See Dennis Raverty, "Frances Flora Palmer: The Pictorial Domestication of the West," *Woman's Art Journal* 38, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2017): 3–10.

Anne Brigman: A Visionary in Modern Photography

Edited by Ann M. Wolfe
Rizzoli Electa, Nevada Museum of Art, 2018

Reviewed by Sally Brown Deskins

The luscious format and design of *Anne Brigman: A Visionary in Modern Photography* evokes Brigman's style and aura of sensuality and mystery. Her photograph, *The Breeze* (1909), a dark curvy silhouette with arms pulling up or bringing down atop a misty, hilly landscape, claims the cover. Large iridescent silver print states her name, foreshadowing the beauty inside. Open the book to the same image along with appropriate lines of her poetry: "Close as the indrawn and outgoing breath are these songs / Woven of faraway mountains ... and the planes of the sea…"

The heavy book of almost 400 pages presenting images, poetry, and essays dedicated to the not-quite-well-known Modernist (1869–1950) is an artwork in itself. Released in conjunction with the eponymous exhibition at the Nevada Museum of Art (September 29, 2018 – January 27, 2019), "this book and major retrospective exhibition celebrate Brigman's life and make her work accessible to a broad general audience for the first time" (9).

To start, a double page spread of black offers an excerpt, "I wanted to be free." The poem continues on the following two pages in black and white, and finishes on a third with black text on white, "That was all I wanted," poignantly designed across from a scenic mountain photograph with a small ambiguous figure looking out, *Sanctuary* (negative, 1910, from *Songs of a Pagan*, Brigman's own art-poetry book).

Brigman was renowned in California during her career, and amongst the popular Modernists in famed gallerist Alfred Stieglitz's circle. Her bold, nude female photographs were ahead of their time and sadly overlooked during the World War eras. Her work, primarily in nature (edited and manipulated)—photography of herself, her sisters, and friends in the Sierra Nevada Mountains—resembles the work of mid-century and feminist icons, albeit unknown to them. Previously included in group exhibitions and collected internationally, this is the first major celebration of her work.

A notable coupling begins with *Beneath the Waterfall* (1908), at left, a heavily dark image of a woman in flowing fabric, bubbles abound, coming at the viewer, with text at right: "New dimensions revealed themselves…" (69). Similarly juxtaposed on the next two pages are black on white text: "in the visualization of the human form…" (70), and *The Enchanted Tree* (1911), another dark image, a swirling old tree taking up most of the page with a nude woman standing in profile, looking up and away. Continuing such couplings on the next pages are her text: "as a part of tree and rock rhythms…" (72), next to *Via Dolorosa* (1911–12; Fig. 1), an image of a nude woman wonderfully juxtaposed next to a similarly curving old tree, eyes closed, facing up, seeming to be one with the tree.

Ann M. Wolfe's essay, "Laid Bare in the Landscape," places Brigman in an art

historical context as a preternatural inspiration and "antecedent" to future feminist art, certainly women photographers exploring the nude body in the landscape, and also performance artists, such as Carolee Schneemann (1939–2019) (164). A Hawaii native, Brigman found herself, after traveling with her mariner husband, in Oakland, California, where she discovered the camera. Brigman's first photographs followed the trend of conventional ideals of motherhood: her sister with her baby, her sister wearing floral garb. These photographs were published, and noticed by Stieglitz, who in 1903 awarded her membership in the Photo-Secessionists.

Separated from her husband by 1910—encouraged by her photographic success, she grew increasingly independent and risk-taking, bringing her friends and sisters on her excursions to the Sierra Nevadas. At this time, artistic representations of nude women were mostly depicted by male artists.

Brigman was challenging artistic norms and perspectives of the female form, while confronting her own fears, and accepting her own flawed body (Brigman was injured at sea with her husband, which resulted in the removal of one of her breasts), leaving these photographs as proof. The photographs reflect the romantic style of the time by editing the negatives to enhance and conceal figures and forms.

Susan Ehrens's essay, "Songs of Herself: Anne Brigman," contextualizes Brigman's life, environment, artist community, and inspirations: growing up in Hawaii, a short marriage, the impact of the San Francisco Bay Area art and culture, and her early work, exhibitions, and publication successes. Brigman's letter to Stieglitz, the founding photographer of the Photo-Secessionists, compliments him on his first issue of *Camera Work* (1902), proclaims her soul to be "afire with enthusiasm," and praises the photographs "so intensely human; both so radiant with soul" (190). Thereafter, significantly, as a new photographer, Brigman was one of two members from California in the elite New York based group. A selection of Stieglitz's and Brigman's personal and professional letters reflects their "shared spiritual quest for a personal freedom and artistic expression, along with a disdain for commercialism in art" (191). Ehrens's recounting of Brigman's love of nature, frequent Sierra Nevadas trips, "fearless" work back in her studio, trip to the East Coast, return to the West Coast, alignment with Modernism, photographs of the ocean, and Brigman's own descriptions and poetry, make for an enjoyable and poignant read.

Heather Waldroup's essay, "Hard to Reach: Anne Brigman and California Mountaineering," details the environment of the Sierra Nevada Mountains at the time, allowing a rich understanding of Brigman's perspective and how she sinuously integrated human form and nature in her imagery. A few of her clothed portraits evoke her dexterity: "Brigman's attire and sturdy shoes mark her as a capable trekker ... [she] presents herself as able adventuress in the mountains, both spiritually aware and powerfully and physically active" (231).



Fig. 1. Anne Brigman, *Via Dolorosa* (c. 1911/printed c. 1912). Michael and Jane Wilson Trust Collection.

Brigman's complex appreciation for urban and rural is explored in Kathleen Pyne's essay, "A Tale of Two Coasts: Anne Brigman's 'Wonderful Terrible.'" Brigman's time on both coasts is explored fully here, notably her time on the East Coast, where she discovered the "wonderful terrible" aspect of nature and her work, which she and Stieglitz realized made the grotesque beautiful. Pyne writes of the thrill in both aspects: "In this drama of the soul lay Brigman's mantra of seeking and finding life's 'wonderful terrible,' the pain and pleasure, the heaven and hell" (246). The duality is shown in Brigman's aged trees against sinuous figures.

The last essay, by Alexander Nemerov, looks at Brigman's poetry. Nemerov also discusses the potential of Brigman's work as exuding "imperial dominion," a significant aspect during this era of new vacationing (277). He explores this possibility through the range of her imagery, referencing the Victorian environment and even Greek mythology, keenly calling more into question rather than making solid conclusions. Nemerov's lyrical writing complements Brigman's poetry as he explores Brigman's relationship with her work, and further determines, " ... there is no difference between her life and art" (269).

The imagery in this book creates intimacy. The first 140 pages exhibit her portraiture in nature and nature photography, complemented by her poetry, with words matched exquisitely with the imagery to create a personal reading experience. At the back is an 84-page archive of early work, portraits, writings, letters, prints, process and negatives.

The strategically designed pairings of art and writing, both Brigman's and the essayists', wonderfully emit the artist's depth and connection to her art and to nature, offering not only a fitting tribute to Brigman but a much needed resource, inviting an increased interest and study of an artist clearly ahead of her time. •

Sally Brown Deskins currently serves as Exhibits Coordinator for West Virginia University Libraries. She serves on the College Art Association Committee on Women in the Arts. Her writing focuses on feminist and curatorial issues.

Berenice Abbott: A Life in Photography

By Julia Van Haaften
W.W. Norton & Company, 2018

Reviewed by Caitlin Davis

This reviewer happily and with great anticipation opened Julia Van Haaften's hefty biography of American photographer Berenice Abbott (1898–1991). Abbott's life and career spanned the majority of the twentieth century, paralleling photography's development and maturation as an art form. The reader is privileged to accompany Abbott on her lengthy and frequently tumultuous journey, from humble midwestern beginnings, to Paris and Berlin among the European avant-garde, New York in the heyday of the documentary style, and finally along various expeditions throughout the United States. Although scholars and art institutions have enshrined Abbott as one of the photographic giants of the twentieth century, Van Haaften, a respected curator of photography, chronicles a career rife with struggle, and demonstrates that Abbott's current reputation was not a foregone conclusion during her subject's lifetime.

The depth and breadth of Van Haaften's meticulous research is made evident from the first pages, as she recreates Abbott's unhappy childhood in Ohio. Abbott's broken home and contentious relationship with her mother prompted her to enroll at Ohio State University in 1917, where she forged friendships with more sophisticated classmates. At age nineteen, after a year at university, Abbott moved to New York City, joining OSU alumni in Greenwich Village. She found herself at the center of bohemian society, befriending members of the Provincetown Players (even performing in a production), taking up sculpture, and forging strong relationships with both Man Ray and Marcel Duchamp. Her friendships with these and multiple other influential personages, including the Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven, inspired Abbott once again to move afield: in early 1921 she decamped to Paris, with Man Ray serving as witness for her passport.

Van Haaften skillfully guides the reader through Abbott's crucial years of discovery in Paris, and to some extent, Berlin, where she also lived for brief periods during her nearly decade-long European stay. As throughout the entire volume, the meticulous nature of Van Haaften's research is in ample evidence; the life of the Parisian avant-garde is delightfully and abundantly recreated. Joyfully name-dropping, Van Haaften describes Abbott's experiences and friendships with worthies of the era; they are too numerous to list in this brief review but included Tristan Tzara, André Gide, Marsden Hartley, and Sylvia Beach. While Abbott was expanding her aesthetic and artistic taste, she was equally exploring (and conflicted by) her homosexuality. Van Haaften returns to this subject throughout the book; along with Abbott's difficult childhood, the reader may conclude that the photographer's shrouded lesbianism contributed to what even her close friends would describe as a difficult personality.

The first two years in Paris were defined by penury, with Abbott performing a myriad of odd jobs simply to survive, until Man Ray impulsively decided to take her on as his studio assistant. She knew virtually nothing about photography and learned through trial-and-error. Abbott providentially took to the craft "like a duck to water" (71). Learning the mechanics of the practice in Man Ray's studio made the "heart sing. I liked photography. Photography liked me" (72). An amazed Man Ray "thought her prints better than his" (72). So consumed was Abbott by her darkroom labors, that for some time she never considered authoring her own images. Around 1924, Man Ray encouraged Abbott to photograph, and offered the use of one of his cameras. Just as she had with darkroom technique, Abbott taught herself the craft of picture-taking through experimentation. The inherent absorption and intense focus provided her with a profoundly deep understanding of the mechanics of photography and darkroom practice, which would prove a boon for the remainder of her career. Her eventual success prompted her to break with Man Ray and establish her own studio. Van Haaften maintains that the relationship between the two was irreparably and lamentably damaged, poisoned by Man Ray's jealousy at the success of his former pupil. His reaction was not unique to Abbott: Man Ray withheld credit from the achievements of subsequent pupil Lee Miller, who remained unoffended and less desirous of recognition. Regardless, a portrait sitting with Berenice Abbott in 1920s Paris was beheld as the epitome of chic, with critics noting approvingly that Abbott's straightforward style was distinct from that of her erstwhile employer.

Around the same time, Abbott met Eugène Atget, whose influence would shape the totality of her photographic aesthetic. An entire chapter is devoted to Atget's artistic output, from the recording of antiquated Parisian architecture and monuments, to a later focus on modern urban subjects. When Abbott saw the late career images, she experienced "a sudden flash of recognition—the shock of realism unadorned" (110). She described the importance of these photographs: "The real world, seen with wonderment and surprise, was mirrored in each print. Whatever means Atget used to project the image did not intrude between subject and observer" (111). Upon his death Abbott managed, through a very great effort, to purchase Atget's precious archive and thus secure the preservation of his artistic legacy. Soon after the acquisition, she sailed home to America, in the hopes of quickly finding a buyer.

Here the most remarkable portion of the biography commences. Van Haaften masterfully relates Abbott's time photographing New York City, revealing, without tedium or repetition, her subject's life in granular detail. A full five chapters, comprising 112 pages, are dedicated to Abbott's decade in New York. Van Haaften meticulously breaks down the various urban subject matter and geography; Abbott's creative process, from location scouting through darkroom work to the ultimate storage

of the original negatives; the struggle to attain funding to enable her sweeping vision that eventually resulted in *Changing New York*, sponsored by the US Depression-era Works Progress Administration's Federal Art Project (WPA/FAP); and so much more. It came as a surprise to learn that Abbott's arguably most celebrated and recognizable image, *New York at Night* (1932–33), was not created under the auspices of FAP funding, but rather at Abbott's own expense, at a time when she was once again short of funds. Such pearls pepper the account, adding a satisfying depth and dimension to the New York City imagery, Abbott's most well-known body of work.

By 1939, Abbott switched her focus away from the documentation of New York. Wishing to serve as "a friendly interpreter between science and the layman" (241), Abbott attempted to depict scientific principles using photographic examples. A career-long pattern returned: Abbott's absolute belief in her specific aesthetic vision and her passion for the subject matter, in the face of a nearly universal lack of interest or support, compelled her, despite her restricted means, to personally fund her photographic efforts. It wasn't until two decades later that Abbott, hired in 1958 by the federally supported Physical Science Study Committee (PSSC), was remunerated for her efforts. The recounting of Abbott's time with the PSSC exists as an interesting slice of American history; a gratifying instance of art capturing and encapsulating the zeitgeist. Van Haaften explains: "By the late 1950s, science … was gaining a popular foothold as a rational way of viewing the world, in contrast to the irrationality of the McCarthy era" (347). One can perceive the era of Sputnik and the American-Soviet Space Race, as encapsulated within the PSSC, a government agency that was in a sense dependent upon the beautiful precision and simplicity of Abbott's unparalleled, groundbreaking images.

Abbott was an inventor at heart. In a fascinating chapter, Van Haaften details Abbott's creations, for which she either sought a patent or patented outright, including a darkroom distorter, a picture composer, a one-legged "tripod" (monopod), a jacket that effortlessly held a multitude of photographic equipment, a thumb camera, and a spring-loaded catch pole for mounting lights and other heavy equipment. Although, unfortunately, none of these gadgets earned revenue for her, the account of Abbott's creative process for each is fully absorbing.



Fig. 1. Berenice Abbott, *Berenice with a camera, rue Servandoni studio, Paris, 1928.*

Out of the twenty-three chapters in this biography, the final ten are separated by subject matter, while also overlapping chronologically, coming across as a bit scattered and leading to a slightly unsatisfying or disjointed reading experience. This closing portion proves less absorbing than prior sections, yet the segment in its entirety represents a necessary element of this fully comprehensive survey of Abbott's life and work. Loose ends are tied, and conclusions reached. It is also gratifying to read about Abbott's eventual success, recognition, and relative financial comfort in the approximately final two decades of her life.

One of the most profound takeaways from this biography is the fundamentally difficult essence of practically all facets of Abbott's life. Almost every aspect of every day conveys the impression of an uphill battle. By nature Abbott was straightforward, serious and prickly, and did not easily tolerate disagreement. The majority of her career was spent in the pursuit of an aesthetic and a choice of subject matter widely deemed unfashionable or undesirable. If critically appreciated, her work failed to generate sales, leaving Abbott, from childhood until an advanced age, chronically short of funds. Yet it is this perpetual conflict and struggle that defined her. The elegant simplicity and near-perfection of Abbott's most successful works absolutely belie the strife from which they arose. Van Haaften's detail-packed, meticulous account of the life and artistic practices of Berenice Abbott ably fills what had been a broad biographical gap in the art historical record of this visionary master photographer. ●

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Race Experts: Sculpture, Anthropology, and the American Public in Malvina Hoffman's Races of Mankind

By Linda Kim
University of Nebraska Press, 2018

Reviewed by Jennifer Wingate

Seven years after art historian Marianne Kinkel published *Races of Mankind: The Sculptures of Malvina Hoffman*, art historian Linda Kim gives readers more food for thought on this compelling subject.[1] The misguided and misunderstood *Races of Mankind* sculptural series—104 heads, busts, and full-length figures—made by artist Malvina Hoffman for Chicago's Field Museum as a viewer-friendly display of the world's varied "racial types," is no less problematic today than when it was first installed in 1933 (and when it was removed in 1969). Kim's book is a welcome complement to Kinkel's study and to the existing literature on sculpture and conceptions of race.[2]

The violent events of August 2017 in Charlottesville, Virginia, when white nationalists protested the city's plan to remove a sculpture of Confederate General Robert E. Lee, and of May 2017, when protestors firebombed a car owned by a contractor hired to remove four Confederate monuments in New Orleans, have lent new urgency to the real consequences of racist figurative sculpture in the public realm. Hoffman's *Races of Mankind* (1933) and *Robert E. Lee* in Charlottesville (1924) are two very different sculptural "monuments" that were the products of distinct agendas and negotiations between their respective artists and commissioning bodies. Kim's book nonetheless is useful for thinking about current monument controversies because "American thinking about race is not just a historical problem but remains an unresolved and pressing challenge for today's publics" (24). Despite not claiming the superiority of one race over another, the "racialism" embodied by Hoffman's sculptures, as opposed to the more openly "racist" ideologies embodied by Confederate monuments, do not exist without harmful social consequences, Kim points out. Thus she writes that "to *see* race and act on one's perception of race, even when these perceptions are not attended by any hostile or discriminatory motives, is ideologically freighted" (19). Kim's clarification of the frequently muddied distinctions between scientific, popular, and artistic conceptions of race in the 1930s, a time of evolving ideas about race in anthropological circles but increasingly inflexible thinking about race in everyday America, invites comparisons with thinking about race today.

Kinkel called her 2011 book a "cultural biography" because it traced the historical circulation of Hoffman's sculptures and reproductions. She examined their accrual of meanings over time, and showed, for example, how Chicago's Malcolm X College borrowed eleven life-size plaster casts in 1971 to support an Afrocentric curriculum.[3] Kim adds another chapter to the cultural biography of *The Races of Mankind* by covering its 2016 partial reinstallation in a long-term exhibition at the Field Museum titled, *Looking at Ourselves: Rethinking the Sculptures of Malvina Hoffman* (closed February 2019). Kim's analysis of this display and her interviews with visitors are significant because they demonstrate the persistence of "commonsense racialism." The confused take away by Field Museum visitors incidentally serves as a cautionary tale regarding the potential reinstallation and recontextualization of Confederate monuments in museum settings. Museums, lacking a tradition of neutrality, have no more power to neutralize incendiary Confederate symbols than they do to dissolve age-old misperceptions of race.

Kim's analysis of Hoffman's mediator role between the Field Museum's anthropologists and the public, and how the artist brought her own art expertise and racialist views to the *Races of Mankind* commission, is especially insightful. The Museum charged Hoffman with bringing life to the stale and unappealing specimens of its natural history displays. Viewers past and present admire

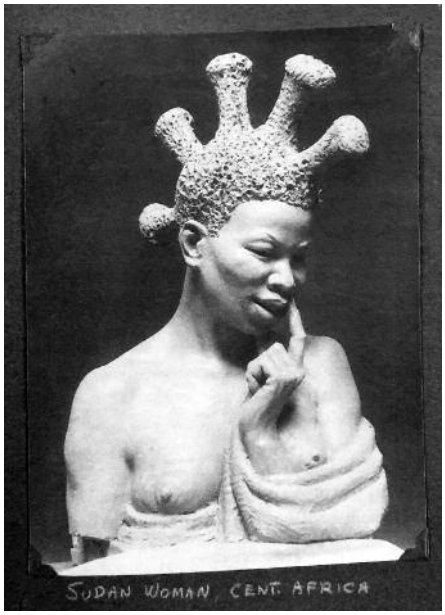


Fig. 1. Malvina Hoffman, *Sudanese Woman* from *The Races of Mankind*, 1930–34. ©The Field Museum. Photo: Courtesy of the Malvina Hoffman Papers, Research Library, The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (850042).

Hoffman's sculptures for their detail and their "realism." However, realism as an artistic style embraces both individuality and typicality. Thus, "to be *representative* Hoffman's sculptures needed to draw from the same fund of *representations* that her audience brought to the race exhibit. It was clear that viewers of the sculptures were convinced of their realism and lifelikeness due in large part to their ability to represent the racial types already available outside the museum" (123). To achieve such a level of familiarity, Hoffman drew from multiple sources for her "racial portraits": not exclusively from first-hand encounters while traveling the globe, but from circus performers in New York City, artists' models, and from a popular iconography known in advance to viewers from popular ethnographies, novels, and Hollywood movies. The danger, readers recognize, of "enfolding the type within the individual," is stereotyping (126).

Curators of the 2016 reinstallation of Hoffman's bronzes included, whenever possible, the names of the people who modeled for each sculpture to recover their individuality. Kim reminds readers, though, that Hoffman did not

know many of her subjects as individuals (306). I particularly like Kim's suggestion of adding additional labels to the sculptures. For example, alternative labels for *Sudanese Woman* (1930–34; Fig. 1), might read "Egyptian Woman, Malian Woman, Senegalese Woman, British Subject, and French Subject" to give "a more nuanced understanding of the rapid demographic, migratory, and political changes Africa was undergoing in the early twentieth century" and to encourage more active thinking about the construction of race and of stereotype (294). After all, Kim concludes (by citing Levi Strauss), "the great value of the sculptures is that they are good to think with" (307). ●

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Notes

1. Marianne Kinkel, *Races of Mankind: The Sculptures of Malvina Hoffman* (Chicago: Univ. of Illinois Press, 2011).
2. Another book that devotes two chapters to the *Races of Mankind* is Tracy Teslow's *Constructing Race: The Science of Bodies and Cultures in American Anthropology* (NewYork: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2014). Kim conceives of her book as complementing rather than superseding Teslow's and Kinkel's work on Hoffman's sculptures (318–19, fn. 36).
3. Kinkel, *Races of Mankind*, 4, 190–93.

Hilma af Klint: Paintings for the Future

By Tracey Bashkoff,
with many contributors
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, and
Hilma af Klint Foundation, 2018

Reviewed by Annika Öhrner

With her painting series *The Ten Largest* from 1907 (Fig. 1) placed in the gallery at the top of the spiraling Guggenheim Museum, New York, the Swedish artist Hilma af Klint (1862–1944) is finally, it appears, fully embraced within the art historical canon. Hilma af Klint was previously known to some members of the US audience through the presence of a few works in the 1986 traveling exhibition *The Spiritual in Art: Abstract Painting*, curated by Maurice Tuchman for Los Angeles County Museum of Art, or the elegant 2005 exhibition at The Drawing Center in New York, *3 x Abstraction, New Methods of Drawing by Emma Kunz, Hilma af Klint, and Agnes Martin*, curated by Catherine de Zegher and Hendel Teicher. In her native Sweden and the surrounding Nordic countries, however, several extensive exhibitions have been devoted to af Klint—including at the Nordic Art Centre, Helsinki, 1988; and Moderna Museet, Stockholm, 1989 and 2013 (which traveled to Berlin, Málaga, Humlebaek and Tallinn). In the late 1970s, the Swedish art historian Åke Fant of Stockholm University was the first scholar to investigate the artist's work, and his monograph *Hilma af Klint: Ockult målarinna och abstrakt pionjär* (Occult painter and abstract pioneer) (1989) remains the set piece. The discourse on her in Scandinavia has developed since then.

The Guggenheim retrospective connects to this long trajectory of presenting Hilma af Klint as a pioneer of abstraction, associating her body of spiritual work with that of artists like Malevich, Mondrian, and Kandinsky (18). After af Klint left the Royal Academy of Art in Stockholm, where she studied from 1882 to 1887, she jumped into a successful career as a portrait and landscape painter, while privately she developed her interest in theosophy and in spiritualism. In 1896, she and four friends, including the artist Anna Cassel (1860–1937), her close collaborator and patron, formed The Five (De Fem), an independent circle that undertook religious studies and séances that eventually resulted in contacts with named spiritual guides (19). In 1906, for example, the spirit "Amaliel" commissioned *The Painting for the Temple*, a visionary and ambitious project that was kept secret within the group (20).

When af Klint died, she left a large body of work with spiritual content of great beauty, expressed through figurative forms, abstractions, and diagrammatic structures. She had arranged for the work to be kept secret by her family until at least twenty years after her death, and the work has been



Fig. 1. Hilma af Klint, *The Ten Largest, no 3, The age of the Youth (De tio största, nr 3, Ynglingaåldern, grupp IV)* (1907), 124" x 92 1/2". Photo: Albin Dahlström/Moderna Museet. © Stiftelsen Hilma af Klints Verk.

supported and promoted within the Hilma af Klint Foundation. Since the 1970s, the public has responded accordingly to her "unsettled" position in the art historical canon, specifically as a pioneering woman artist, to use the term in the catalogue essay of Daniel Birnbaum, director of Moderna Museet (210). The audience now reckons with an impressive, large body of work that still manages to incite discussions and controversies over its artistic merit and spirituality, its contemporaneity and relevance, and, not least important, the

continued debates on modernist art history writings about it.

While this richly illustrated, well-designed catalogue repeats the characterization of af Klint as "abstract pioneer," its nine essays also confirm the *unsettled* reception of her work. The essay by Guggenheim curator Tracey Bashkoff presents a solid introduction to the ideas behind af Klint's work, and elaborates on the Theosophical evolution of her paintings alongside the mutual interests of Hilla Rebay (1890–1967), a key advisor to Solomon R. Guggenheim on his collection of abstract art (26). A conversation moderated by Helen Molesworth among various artists, curators, and art historians (Christine Burgin, Leah Dickerman, Lisa Florman, Josiah McElheny, R.H. Quaytman and Amy Sillman) has an energy that testifies to the contemporaneity that the work embodies (33–47). Despite occasional "faults of fact," the dialogue is respectful, open-minded and problematizing in a way the artist's unusual oeuvre deserves. For instance, McElheny, an artist, emphasizes in his observations af Klint's important early communal foundation among the women in The Five, "a community effort that she coalesced and synthesized" (38). Likewise, Molesworth, a curator, rightfully points out that her work is a case for the fact that art history without biography may be a fallacy, a problematic stance for recuperating a woman artist, but one that not only challenges the ideal of "solo authorship" but similarly opens various routes to the place of mysticism and her critical role as a medium, thus asking: "How seriously can we take the artist's understanding of herself as a medium?" (44–45).

The most important essays in the catalogue are those that detach themselves from the discourse of the modernist lineage of abstraction, one that has marked so much of af Klint's reception. The German art historian Julia Voss manages to ask questions that reveal completely new accounts of af Klint's work and help to restore important elements of the context of her oeuvre, especially centered on her travels. The questions are quite simple, such as: What if Hilma af Klint, whose family included well-respected officers in the Swedish navy, travelers, and publishers of the Swedish nautical atlas, actually was interested in the real, material world? What can be gained from triangulating her own diaries, sketchbooks, and writings with other public sources and publications? (52–62). The result is a fascinating account of an artist—far from the image of one locked up in secret rooms with a handful of female friends—one who during her studies at the Academy was already making trips in Norway, Holland, Belgium, Germany and Italy. Voss proves, through careful archival work, that af Klint and her circle were indeed interested in the world at large, and she cites a previously unknown exhibition of her spiritually based work, as early as 1928, at the World Conference of Spiritual Science and Its Practical Applications, in London (61). Voss's exceptional archival research contradicts the often-repeated statement (including elsewhere in this catalogue) that af Klint specified in her will that her work not be made public until twenty years after her death. She did not. Rather, Voss points to a specific notebook from 1932 that *suggests* that all works remain concealed from public viewing until twenty years after her death (51). However, Voss underscores the extent to which af Klint "painstakingly" and over a long period prepared her archives and practically staged her own historical presentation for future generations, ordering her documents and inserting herself in her "own historiography" (51–52).

In another important essay, using her bright naturalist painting *Spring Landscape-Scene from the Bay of Loma* (1892) as an example, David Max Horowitz dispels the prevalent idea that af Klint, before the spiritual commissions, was a thoroughly academic painter, uninterested in alternative approaches. He is thus challenging another reoccurring element in the reception of af Klint (both within and apart from this catalogue)—that is, the divide between af Klint's figurative and representational paintings and astract work (130). Briony Fer explores the chromatic diagramming, which appears in the somewhat schematic but very appealing works on paper of 1919–20, saying "that, as an artist, af Klint was less a code-breaker than a code-maker—less a programmer of a spiritual path, more a diagrammer of fictional abstract structures and processes" (167). Tessel M. Bauduin writes about af Klint's relation to scientific motifs and explorations, and modern occultism's interaction with science. Af Klint not only worked occasionally as a scientific illustrator but also practiced her own form of 'scientism' in her painting (an "appropriation of scientific rhetoric and concepts"), in works from series such as *Primordial Chaos* (1906–07) or later *The Atom* (1917) (188).

Andrea Kollnitz's essay gives an overview of the emerging avant-garde scene in Sweden directed towards Fauvism, Expressionism, and Cubism during the period following the shift toward abstraction in af Klint's work around 1910, although the artist was not at all engaged in these artistic circles or beholden to its growing art market (72). Vivien Greene follows another path, linking af Klint's work to the "revival" of Swedish folk art at the turn of the century, as inventive a suggestion in its proposals on the importance of Swedish folkloric and craft traditions as it is reductive in its "hermetic" connotations (98).

The characterization of af Klint as a neglected abstract pioneer has not always served her—or historical accuracy—well. That af Klint was "exhibited alongside the Russian artist's [Kandinsky's] abstract paintings in the Baltic exhibition in Malmö" in 1914 (27) is not only misleading but illustrative of the pitfalls of this characterization. The Baltic show was an immense, biennale-like exhibition, arranged in national sections and also by artist groups. Hilma af Klint exhibited with the Föreningen Svenska Konstnärinnor, the Association of Swedish female artists, of which af Klint was a leading member, while Kandinsky's work hung several rooms away in the exhibition's Russian section. To be appointed a "pioneer of abstraction" comes with a price, and if you are considered to have been a *neglected* abstract painter, you are doomed to a lesser place in history. It is my contention, however, that the project of Hilma af Klint

and her female colleagues was the result of great maturity, of confidence and collective efforts, performed both in work and in life, and which still remains to be fully researched. •

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Sophie Taeuber-Arp and the Avant-Garde

By Roswitha Mair,
translator Damion Searls
University of Chicago Press, 2018

Reviewed by Joanna Gardner-Huggett

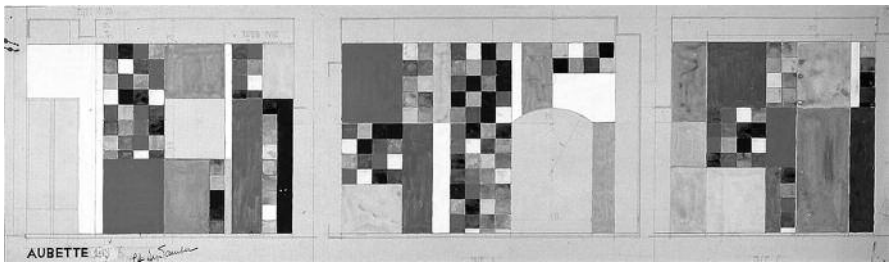


Fig. 1. Sophie Taeuber-Arp, Plan for Café Aubette, ground floor (1927), crayon and gouache on paper, (1927), 8 5/8" x 28 3/4". Photo: navigart.fr/mamcs.

Originally published in 2013 (in German), *Sophie Taeuber-Arp and the Avant-Garde*, unfortunately, does not benefit from the latest scholarship on the artist.[1] Nevertheless, written in accessible prose, this text will appeal to general audiences interested in modern art and specialists in Dada and geometric abstraction. The author, Roswitha Mair, does not explicitly take a feminist stance in evaluating Sophie Taeuber-Arp's (1889–1943) history, but offers some important insights regarding the lives of women artists.

Sophie Taeuber-Arp remains relatively understudied. A versatile artist, married to Hans Arp and affiliated with Dada, geometric abstraction, and the groups Cercle et Carré (1929–30) and Abstraction Créátion (1931–36), and who served as editor of the journal *Plastique* (1937–39), Taeuber-Arp drew no distinction between the fine arts, decorative arts, and interior design (115). Her work in applied arts, however, historically casts Taeuber-Arp within the realm of the decorative and feminine, keeping her on modernism's periphery. Mair aims to counter these biases and asserts in the Preface that, "this book attempts to sketch a biography of Sophie Taeuber as a singular figure, not a secondary player in the European avant-garde" (viii), and to varying degrees the author succeeds in achieving this goal.

The text offers a chronological account of Taeuber-Arp's life and career from birth to her death at age 54 from accidental carbon monoxide poisoning (188). It concludes with a brief epilogue explaining how Arp and his second wife, Marguerite Arp-Hagenbach, framed her artistic legacy, suggesting their efforts contributed to Taeuber-Arp being viewed as her "husband's misunderstood muse" (192). The biography greatly benefits from Mair's access to private diaries and letters, especially those from Taeuber-Arp's sister, Erika Schlegel, and Schlegel's son Leonhard, who is frequently cited as corroborating other sources of evidence.

The first chapter addressing Taeuber-Arp's early years is especially illuminating and reveals how her mother, Sophie Taeuber-Krüsi (1854–1908), modeled how to live an autonomous and creative life. Because Taeuber-Arp's father, Carl Emil Taeuber, died two years after her birth, her mother needed to work. First, Taeuber-Krüsi managed the large apartment building where they lived in Davos Platz, Switzerland, occupied by architects, florists, dressmakers, and paper merchants. In 1895 or 1896, the family moved to Trogen, near the city of St. Gallen, in a region known for its weaving and fine embroidery, and Taeuber-Arp's mother taught her to knit, embroider, crochet, and make lace. Taeuber-Krüsi also recorded the young lives of Sophie, sister Erika and brother Hans with a camera, developing her own photographs, and in 1900, she designed a new house for her family on land given to her by her brother-in-law, hiring an architect to execute her plans. Taeuber-Krüsi died from cancer two decades before her daughter Sophie would follow in her footsteps, designing her own home and studio in Meudon, outside of Paris (1929) (1-15).

Mair's biographical account effectively exposes the risks and challenges facing European women artists in the early twentieth century. For example, she examines Taeuber-Arp's dances at the Galerie Dada, donning Cubist masks created by Marcel Janco and costumes designed by his partner, Maya Chrusecz.[2] Already teaching in the textile department at the School for Applied Arts in Zurich, Taeuber-Arp was threatened with termination once the administration discovered she was performing at the Galerie Dada. She continued to participate in performances, which she deemed acts of political protest against the war, using a pseudonym and sneaking into the cabaret for fear of being seen (52—54). She collaborated with Hans Arp and Theo van Doesburg on the Café Aubette (1927; Fig. 1), supervising the entire project and designing the Tea Room; however, her role was rarely credited. Art historian and friend Willy Rotzler, for instance, acknowledged that Taeuber-Arp did most of the work but attributed the overall vision of the café to van Doesburg (109–14). Taeuber-Arp became all too familiar with these dismissals. When Hans Arp asked Peggy Guggenheim to visit Tauber-Arp's studio in Meudon, the collector bought one sculpture by Arp but described her work as dull and painful to contemplate (145).

Mair does not idealize collaborations between husband and wife, establishing that Arp's desires and goals always took

precedence. The author relates a revealing anecdote from Nelly van Doesburg, whom Arp woke up too early one morning. She in turn explains the term narcissist to Arp, "It's someone who only thinks about himself." Arp replies, "What else am I supposed to think about?" (178). In some parts of the book, Mair maintains this imbalance. For example, there is significant space dedicated to Arp's romantic obsession with Hilla von Rebay, who later helped found the Guggenheim Museum (49–51, 57-58). While this relationship undoubtedly affected Taeuber-Arp, at times the extended account makes her a secondary character in her own biography. Further, Mair portrays the couple in binary terms. Taeuber-Arp is cast as reserved and demanding control over her surroundings, while Arp took on the role of the fleeting flâneur (185). This characterization implies that Arp has the creative mind, while Taeuber-Arp lacks innovation and simply implements their designs, reinforcing the trope that women artists are merely producing works derivative of their male partners.

There is a considerable literature documenting the rise of the Third Reich in Germany and its impact on avant-garde artists, but Mair's biography offers a more complex picture of how Taeuber-Arp dealt with the loss of friends and family who chose to support the National Socialists. Her former boyfriend, for example, Adolf Ziegler, a conservative painter, coordinated the "Degenerate Art" exhibition and its counterpart, the "Large German Art Exhibition," in 1937 (151, 156–59). The choreographer Rudolf van Laban, with whom Taeuber-Arp studied dance for many years, became enamored of Nazi spectacle and worked for the regime (149). Most painful, no doubt, was her brother Hans, who accepted funds from Ziegler to purchase the Jewish book firm Gilhofer and Ranschburg in Vienna from Wilhelm Schab on the condition that he supply a "certificate of Aryaness." Taeuber-Arp soon broke off contact (161–63). At the same time, she is trying to survive World War II by accepting assistance from collectors, such as Guggenheim, and watching fellow avant-garde artists flee Germany, and ultimately Europe, for safety (164–68).

Although this biography provides a comprehensive account of Taeuber-Arp's life, this reviewer wished for expanded discussions of her relationships with female artists such as Chrusecz, Nelly van Doesburg, Sonia Delaunay, and Hannah Höch, who are discussed only in quick moments throughout the book. Mair briefly addresses how Taeuber-Arp and Delaunay held many things in common, such as an insistence on rigorous geometry and rich color schemes in their art, as well as not distinguishing design from "fine" art (126). These women also shared the reality of living as one half of an artist couple, and it would be interesting to learn more about how they supported each other. All too often, women artists' histories show them competing with their canonical male counterparts, and adding exchanges between female colleagues and friends might recalibrate the art historical dialogue and remove them from the inevitable status of the male artist's muse. ●

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Notes

1. See, for instance, the exhibition catalogue *Sophie Taeuber-Arp, Today is Tomorrow*, eds. Thomas Schmutz and Friedrich Meschede (Bielefeld: Kunsthalle Bielefeld, 2014); and Nell Andrew, "Dada Dance: Sophie Taeuber's Visceral Abstraction," *Art Journal* 73, no.1 (Spring 2014): 12–29.
2. Nell Andrew addresses debates regarding the exact location of Taeuber-Arp's performance and the attribution of the artists who created the original costume. Andrew, "Dada Dance," 14–17.

Jeanne Mammen, The Observer: Retrospective 1910–1975

Edited by Thomas Köhler and Annelie Lütgens
Hirmer, 2017

Reviewed by Jordan Troeller

In 1934, a year after Hitler became chancellor of Germany, the graphic artist Jeanne Mammen (1890–1976) stopped drawing. The animated line that she had developed while illustrating some of Weimar Germany's most widely circulated publications, including the women's bi-weekly *Die Dame* and the satirical *Simpicissimus*, gave way to thick impasto and fractured surfaces—often tempera on found cardboard as a consequence of wartime scarcity. Gone too were gritty scenes of Berlin, where she lived in a small studio apartment on Kurfürstendamm, then the epicenter of the city's vibrant bar and café culture, nightclubs, and cabarets. Prostitutes and drag performers, lesbian lovers and showgirls—often rendered with peering, impenetrable eyes—populate her Weimar pen-and-watercolor drawings. Women were her favored subjects, and she portrayed them with tenderness, but also wit and irreverence. Recalling the warped bodies of Otto Dix's and Christian Schad's canvases, but forging her own path, in which social critique did not necessarily mean pictorial deformation, in drawings like *Head of a Woman Looking Down* (c. 1930; Fig. 1)



Fig. 1. Jeanne Mammen, *Head of a Woman Looking Down* (c. 1930), pencil and pastel on paper, 13 3/4" x 12 3/4". Private collection.

Mammen portrayed her modernity with more breadth and nuance than these male contemporaries. Speaking to Mammen in the pages of *Die Weltbühne*, Kurt Tucholsky wrote: "the delicate and gossamer watercolors you publish in magazines and satirical reviews transcend the undisciplined scrawlings of most of your colleagues" (81). With the rise of National Socialism, those "delicate watercolors" gave way to fragmented bodies, geometric beasts and puzzleboard-like surfaces. Only after 1945 did she begin to illustrate again, designing the cover of the satirical *Ulenspiegel* on the occasion of Berlin's first free elections in October 1946.

In one of her few autobiographical statements—she only gave one interview in her entire lifetime—Mammen described this shift in 1934 as "the end of my 'realistic' period and a transition to an aggressive painting style … a contrast," she dryly explained, "to officially sanctioned art" (12). Willfully abandoning her career, she registered as unemployed and accepted a meager income cutting leather for orthopedic shoes and painting puppet heads, all while continuing to make art furtively in the privacy of her small studio apartment. These sculptures, paintings, and mixed-media collages embrace a painterly idiom that Hitler had disparaged in his description of contemporary culture as "kubistische Fratze [the grotesque face of Cubism]" (160). It was Picasso of the 1930s in particular to which Mammen looked during these dark years: in 1935, she began to read and translate texts on the French artist, including Picasso's interview with Christian Zervos in the journal *Cahiers d'art*, and in 1937, she traveled to Paris to see *Guernica* in the Spanish Pavilion, returning to Germany deeply impressed by his biting refutation of fascism in paint. For the next twelve years, she showed this eclectic experiment in cubist form to no one but her closest friends, including one who described her works as "huge, half-finished paintings, covered with degenerate art" (20). When Mammen exhibited these works for the first time, in February 1947, reviewers sardonically dubbed her "Madame Picasso."

All this is wonderfully reconstructed in the catalogue, *Jeanne Mammen, The Observer*, published by the Berlinische Galerie on the occasion of the eponymous exhibition that was on view in Berlin in Fall 2017. The book itself is impressive in size and scope. It is extremely well illustrated, with numerous color plates, in addition to contemporary photographs and reprinted pages from the illustrated press that feature Mammen's work. There is also a helpful timeline and bibliography on Mammen, as well as a checklist for the Berlin show. Spearheaded by Annelie Lütgens, who in 1991 wrote her dissertation on Mammen (the first—and still one of the few—monographs on the artist), the volume surveys Mammen's life and work, which in its structure reflects that pioneering doctoral research: six parts, each with one to three short essays by Lütgens and outside contributors, explore the major phases of Mammen's life and work: her early debt to French Symbolism and fashion design in Paris, where the Berlin-born artist spent her childhood and adolescence; her work for illustrated magazines in the Weimar Republic; a series of portraits completed around 1930; her "inner emigration" in the 1930s and 1940s; Mammen's ambivalent postwar reception in a divided Berlin; her late work, defined by a return to book illustrations and to the relation between abstraction and poetry; and a final section on the Berlin studio where she lived for more than fifty years before her death in 1976.

The breadth of scholarship is formidable. Not only is it the first study on Mammen to appear in English, it continues a recent surge of interest in Mammen's work beyond her commercial illustrations, for which she is best known.[1] We learn much more about the figures with whom Mammen kept company, her interlocutors in matters of art and social critique, including the artist, Communist, and imprisoned dissident Hans Uhlmann. This scope is accompanied by attentiveness to particular moments in Mammen's oeuvre. Lütgens and her fastidious curatorial assistants (Kathrin Aurich, Greta Kühnast, and Julia Schubert) did an excellent job cueing the reader into pivotal works with page-length analyses of selected paintings, drawings, and collages. Mammen's illustrated version of the F. Scott Fitzgerald short story "Rags Martin-Jones and the Pr–nce of W–les," as it was translated into German in the pages of *Ulhu* in 1927, is here reprinted in full. There is also a short section on an unfinished film script that Mammen wrote in 1937, of which fifteen pages and only three sketches survive (Lütgens herself found it in 1990 among Mammen's papers).

At times, however, the biographical structure frustrates the deeper exploration of themes within Mammen's career. One series that is given particular attention is Mammen's drawings of Barbette, the Texas-born drag performer and trapeze artist who revealed himself as male only at the end of his act. He was widely popular in interwar Europe (he was also the subject of works by Jean Cocteau and Man Ray). That Barbette is described in the somewhat awkward terms, following Mammen's title, of a "female impersonator," leads one to wonder about terminology—why the deliberate avoidance of "drag"? Is that somewhat sanitized terminology faithful to the period or a reluctance to grapple with the politics of sexuality in Mammen's Weimar Republic? What was the status of this performance for someone whose work was also published in Curt Moreck's *Führer durch das 'lasterhafte' Berlin* (Guide to 'immoral' Berlin), the period's best-known guide to Berlin's gay and lesbian scenes? An essay on the politics of homosexuality in Weimar Germany and the place of Mammen's drawings in that would have been enlightening.[2] At the same time, we don't learn enough about Mammen's biography: I kept looking for answers to her own sexuality, given this context of her work and the fact that she never married or had a family of her own. What was Mammen's relation to this dimension of Weimar modernity? If one chooses to take a biographical approach, then what impact, if any, did biography have on her choice of subject matter?

The volume's strength is to have pointed to a central paradox in Mammen's work that invites further research—especially for scholars working in English who now have access to the German scholarship on Mammen. The description of the artist as "Madame Picasso," which opens Lütgens's introductory essay and is

repeated in several contributions, points to an artistic dilemma that structured Mammen's reception (as it did that of many other female artists of the period): they were not taken seriously unless they engaged with the canon, and yet any attempt to do so was often construed as derivative. On the other hand, to refuse this demand was to resign oneself to obscurity, only to be "rediscovered" decades after one's death (if at all). This relates to the entire dimension of Mammen's Francophilia, which also merits further exploration (and not only along the lines of "influence"). Mammen not only engaged with the Picasso of the 1930s, she also translated Rimbaud's *Illuminations* and *Une saison en enfer*. As someone who grew up in Paris and attended school in Belgium, French modernism cultivated her critical eye, allowing her to see Weimar Germany with the insight of an outsider that one rarely finds in her male counterparts: "In 1916," she wrote, reflecting on her experience moving back to Germany, "Berliners were still living entirely under the thumb of Wilhelm II: the grand bourgeois, the petit bourgeois, the prole bourgeois, the beggar bourgeois, all washed clean, shaved, and brushed … Even the bohemians in the Café des Westens were finely polished and ordered their drinks from the waiter with an amiable reserve. They toadied to money, and anyone who didn't have any was 'scum'. After many years in Paris, I felt so 'foreign' that I sighed to myself: 'No, I *cannot* live here'" (27).

French culture kept Mammen's art alive, and it did so in a way that resembles German modernism more generally, going back at least to Harry Graf Kessler's defense in 1906 of Rodin's watercolors of naked women to a moralizing audience in the city of Weimar. The next task of Mammen scholarship, nicely prepared by the present volume, is to specify Mammen's contribution to this aesthetic internationalism. Of all the modernizing tendencies in Germany during these decades, what was unique about *her* social critique? What vision of class, gender, and sexuality did it promote? And how was this vision distinct from that of her contemporaries like Georg Grosz and Tucholsky, much less precedents like Toulouse-Lautrec, with whom she is often compared? Answers to those questions will require a more astute vocabulary than that which we have inherited from a male-dominated reception of Weimar graphic illustrators. It will also require expanding definitions of critique, as well as of "modernity," which many have already begun[3]: some of her drawings made me think of Ben Shahn—*Two Young Women* (1930), for instance—and the more ambivalent relation to the body that isn't so much deformed, as it is in a Grosz caricature, as much as it is denatured. Another series, of drawings she made on the streets of Moscow during her visit in 1932 and published in the German edition of *Pravda*, oscillate between tenderness and reportage, suggesting a different kind of graphic criticality than that of Grosz. We can thank Lütgens's publication, which makes much of this work accessible to a broader audience, for having paved the way for such potential scholarship. •

Jordan Troeller received her PhD from Harvard University with a dissertation on the politics of the photographic archive at the Bauhaus. Her two current research projects examine Lucia Moholy's exile photography in England, and Ruth Asawa's sculpture in postwar San Francisco.

Notes

1. See *Jeanne Mammen: Paris, Bruxelles, Berlin*, ed. Jeanne-Mammen-Stiftung (Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2016), a publication of conference proceedings on French elements in Mammen's work, which took place in 2014.
2. Efforts in this direction include Katharina Sykora, "Jeanne Mammen and Christian Schad: Two Illustrators of Homosexuality in Berlin's Twenties," in *Among Men—Among Women*, ed. Mattias Duyves, et al. (Amsterdam: Sociologisch Instituut, UvA, 1983), 537–47.
3. See Marsha Meskimmon, *We Weren't Modern Enough: Women Artists and the Limits of German Modernism* (Berlin: I.B. Tauris, 1999), which also discusses Mammen's Weimar-era work.

Charlotte Salomon: Life? or Theatre? A Selection of 450 Gouaches

Essays by Judith C.E. Belinfante and Evelyn Benesch
Taschen, 2017

Charlotte Salomon and the Theatre of Memory

By Griselda Pollock
Yale University Press, 2018

Reviewed by Judith Zilczer

Charlotte Salomon (1917–43) composed a single masterwork, *Leben? oder Theater? Ein Singspiel* (*Life? or Theater? An Operetta*) that merits recognition among the most ambitious and compelling creations of twentieth-century modernism. As a stateless Jew living in exile in the Italian occupied south of France during World War II, the Berlin-born and academically trained Salomon produced 1,325 gouache paintings between 1940 and 1942.[1] From those she selected and artfully arranged 784 sequentially numbered sheets signed with the gender-neutral monogram "CS" to form a narrative cycle of female self-discovery in defiance of familial and political history. Merging text and imagery with cues to classical and popular music, the hybrid format of *Leben? oder Theater?* resembles both a play and an illustrated book; yet the work transcends the bounds of conventional artistic genres. In its historical scope, aesthetic impact, and philosophical resonance, *Leben? oder Theater?* rivals the best of modern literature, while its component paintings reveal its author's sure command of expressionist visual narration.

That Charlotte Salomon's achievement remains marginalized from the art historical canon and the larger culture is not simply a consequence of the usual patriarchal bias. Over the more than seven decades since Salomon perished at Auschwitz in October 1943, a considerable body of scholarship, including a biography and multiple editions of

Leben? oder Theater?, has arisen in concert with international exposure in exhibitions of the inherently fragile paintings.[2] Nonetheless, the story of the artist's personal life and tragic fate, as well as unfortunate anomalies surrounding the 1971 donation of her artistic estate to the Jewish Historical Museum in Amsterdam, have overshadowed the meaning of Charlotte Salomon's art.

In substance and methodology, the two volumes under review represent divergent approaches to Salomon's art. Published on the occasion of the artist's centenary under the auspices of the Charlotte Salomon Foundation and the Jewish Historical Museum in Amsterdam, *Charlotte Salomon: Life? or Theatre?* reflects the biographical interpretive framework of much of the Salomon literature. That perspective is understandable, given that Salomon devised a chronicle of the fictional Knarr and Kann families modeled on her own assimilated, upper middle class Jewish family and their social circle in Berlin in the years preceding and during the rise of National Socialism in Germany. Featuring two introductory essays, by Judith C. E. Belinfante, former Director of the Jewish Historical Museum, and art historian Evelyn Benesch, the well-illustrated volume includes reproductions of 450 representative gouaches with English-translation text captions from the narrative cycle. Preceded by a painted title page and a playbill-like program with a cast list, the Prologue opens in 1913 (four years before the birth of the protagonist) with the suicide of the main character's maternal aunt and namesake, and then follows the childhood and youth of "Charlotte Kann," the aspiring art student (1940–42; Fig. 1) usually identified as the artist's double. The Main Section revolves around the evolving relationship between the fictional Charlotte and her stepmother's voice teacher, Amadeus Daberlohn, a World War I survivor, womanizer, and proponent of an Orphic theory of creativity through near-death suffering. Set against the backdrop of increasing Nazi persecution of the Jewish community, the section concludes with Charlotte Kann's forced departure from



Fig. 1. Charlotte Salomon, Prologue painting no. 192 (1940–42), gouache on paper, 12 3/4" x 9 7/8". The Jewish Historical Museum, Amsterdam. Inventory no. M0004351.

Germany in 1938 in the aftermath of Kristallnacht. The Epilogue encompasses her experiences living in exile with her maternal grandparents, the Knarrs, in the south of France. There she seeks to prevent and then witnesses her grandmother's suicide, learns from her grandfather of the concealed family history of suicide—including that of her own mother—and determines in spite of all to renounce death and instead to choose life.[3] The final image of the young artist painting by the seaside is inscribed: "And from that came: Life or Theatre?"

Belinfante's lead essay, "What Is Life? or Theatre?," is based on the premise that Salomon created a "dramatized autobiography" whose "essential subject is the artist's own life in relation to the rise of National Socialism, ... anti-Semitism, and the outbreak of the Second World War" (7).[4] Belinfante, therefore, treats the psychological and philosophical dimensions of the work as secondary to its value as a primary historical document. Her essay serves as a documentary record of the history of the Salomon archival collection, from the inception of Salomon's masterwork under the patronage of an American expatriate, Ottilie Moore, to its wartime preservation by the doctor to whom Salomon had entrusted the trove of artwork, Moore's returning that material in 1947 to the artist's parents (who had survived in hiding in Amsterdam), and its eventual donation in 1971 to the Jewish Historical Museum. Belinfante explains how the museum staff reconstructed the narrative sequence after the gouaches had become disarranged in initial handling for early exhibitions of Salomon's work. She also reveals how in the 1970s, the filmmaker Franz Weisz and Judith Herzberg were granted access by Salomon's stepmother to materials excluded from the family's gift to the museum. The pair transcribed a twenty-five-page painted text, now known as "the letter to Amadeus Daberlohn," written by the fictional Charlotte Kann in 1943. While Salomon's stepmother promised additional material to the museum after 1971, the complete letter was never added to the museum's holdings after her death in 2002. Thus, although the museum collection includes sixteen of the original twenty-five pages of this epistle, the full transcription in Franz Weisz's possession contains the fictional artist's confession to poisoning her grandfather, who "symbolized for me all I had to resist" (593). This startling revelation, first made public in the 2012 premiere of Franz Weisz's documentary film commissioned by the Jewish Historical Museum, *Leven? of Theater?*, has upended Salomon scholarship and called into question the relationship of "the letter" to the narrative cycle.[5] Belinfante offers a less than convincing explanation of Charlotte Salomon's presumed crime as a mercy killing "to spare her grandfather the agonies ... of an extended old age" (45).

The companion essay by Evelyn Benesch delves into the narrative style and structure of Salomon's work and explores the art historical sources, ranging from German Romanticism to Edvard Munch, for her imagery. While Benesch posits the work as "a Mirror of Art and Culture in Berlin in the 1920s and early 1930s," she credits Salomon with a larger purpose: "By way of the metaphor of the descent into the Underworld ... Charlotte Salomon discovered an artistic process: the possibility of truly knowing more of

the world ... and thereby ... gaining the strength to go on with life" (74). The essays are supplemented by a useful Chronology, Notes, a concise Bibliography, and a concordance of the illustrations with the inventory of images in the Jewish Historical Museum that are now accessible on the museum's website.[6]

Where Belinfante and Benesch frame Salomon's work as historical and biographical, feminist scholar Griselda Pollock argues forcefully that *Life? or Theater?* must be understood primarily as a groundbreaking creative invention that she terms a "theater of memory." To emphasize the imaginative dimension of Salomon's project, Pollock adopts historian Mary Felstiner's designation of the authorial voice of the narrative as "CS," the monographic signature Salomon inscribed on each sheet of her cycle.[7] Pollock thus separates the artist-creator from the historical person Charlotte Salomon. In twelve densely written chapters, Pollock then analyzes the narrative structure, visual sources (including notably cinema), and deeper meanings of Salomon's work. She convincingly demonstrates that the third-person narration, chronological scope, and retrospective conclusion of Salomon's epic cycle fall outside the parameters of either a diary or an autobiography. Perhaps Pollock's greatest contribution to the literature is her close reading of key images that serve as focal points for each of her chapters. Equally significant is her revelatory, not to say courageous explanation of the "confession" in the suppressed and now missing portion of the "letter to Amadeus Daberlohn." Using the internal evidence of imagery and text in *Life? or Theater?* overlooked by all previous scholars, Pollock detects a theme of the grandfather's incestuous abuse of the children/women of the fictional Knarr family. In Pollock's telling, Herr Knarr emerges as the embodiment of male exploitation, and it is his sexual abuse, as much as his bourgeois pretentions, that accounts for his granddaughter Charlotte's deep antipathy.

As significant as Pollock's contribution is to the advancement of Salomon scholarship, the monograph suffers from the overly determined and at times confusing theoretical framework that Pollock has chosen to build her argument. Raising questions about "namelessness" and seeking to fit Salomon's narrative into a feminist opposition of "The Event" and "The Everyday," Pollock nearly overwhelms Salomon's voice (or CS) with her own theoretical digressions. In a similar vein, she has assigned her own titles to Salomon's images, a practice that, while a descriptive convenience, is at variance with accepted museum and archival standards (25, 519). At the same time, Pollock is exceptionally generous—not only in acknowledging the work of other scholars, but also in sharing her own thought-processes in researching this monograph over many years. The amply illustrated volume contains an Appendix tracing Pollock's prior publications on the subject, as well as copious notes and a full bibliography. Pollock's incisive interpretation grounded in meticulous scholarship will provide a springboard for future studies of this remarkable artist and her incomparable achievement. •

Judith Zilczer, Curator Emerita of the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, received the George Wittenborn Memorial Book Award of the Art Libraries Society of North America for *Visual Music: Synaesthesia in Art and Music Since 1900* (2005). Her most recent publication is *A Way of Living: The Art of Willem de Kooning* (2014, 2017).

Notes

1. Under the stringent Nazi-imposed quota, Charlotte Salomon was the lone Jewish student admitted to the Vereinigte Staatsschulen für Freie und Angewandte Kunst (United State Schools for Fine and Applied Arts) in 1935, but she left the school in 1938, after she was denied a prize because of her identity.
2. Not only are gouache paintings on paper light sensitive, but also Salomon affixed transparent tracing paper sheets with her text narrative to some of the painted images. In publication, these text sheets were transcribed as captions, but were finally reproduced in facsimile in the 2015 French and Dutch editions of the work. See below, n. 5. For a list of the multiple editions of the work through 2015, see the Bibliography in *Charlotte Salomon: Life? or Theatre?*. The definitive biography is Mary Lowenthal Felstiner's *To Paint Her Life: Charlotte Salomon in the Nazi Era* (New York: HarperCollins, 1994). See also Ruth Weisberg, "*To Paint Her Life: Charlotte Salomon in the Nazi Era* by Mary Lowenthal Felstiner," *Woman's Art Journal* 17, no. 2 (Autumn 1996-Winter 1997): 51-52.
3. The fictional Charlotte, like her real-life counterpart, endured temporary internment with her grandfather in a camp for enemy aliens, but that experience is represented only indirectly in scenes of the pair's journey back to Nice from the camp.
4. Belinfante borrows the term "dramatized autobiography" from Darcy C. Buerkle, *Nothing Happened: Charlotte Salomon and an Archive of Suicide* (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 2013): 1.
5. The letter was subsequently published in 2015 in the French and Dutch editions of *Leben? oder Theater?* See *Charlotte Salomon: Vie? ou Théâtre?*, Frédéric Martin, ed. (Paris: Le Tripod, 2015), and *Leven? of Theater?*, with an Epilogue by Emil Straus (Amsterdam: Cossee, Uitgeverij, 2015). An English edition including the letter appeared in 2017: *Life?or Theater?* (New York: Overlook Duckworth, 2017).
6. The complete cycle is available on the Museum's website: www.jck.nl/en/charlotte.
7. See Felstiner, *To Paint Her Life*.

Mona Hatoum: Terra Infirma

By Michelle White and Anna C. Chave, essays by Adania Shibli and Rebecca Solnit
Yale University Press and The Menil Collection, 2018

Reviewed By Donna Stein

The ideas manifest in Mona Hatoum's artworks, which thread together the politics of exile, postcolonialism, feminism, and a critique of modernist modes of production, are at the intersection of so much contemporary discourse. Consequently, her work has become progressively more relevant and finds special urgency given the current political and environmental instability (global and domestic) and the breakdown of assumed order and norms about what is acceptable and familiar in both the public and private spheres.

Terra Infirma documents a retrospective masterfully curated by Michelle

White for The Menil Collection in Houston that traveled to the Pulitzer Foundation for the Arts in St. Louis. The insightful catalogue, copiously illustrated in color and elegantly designed by Michael Worthington, contains two art historical essays, by Michelle White and Anna C. Chave. White with some help from Tamara Schenkenberg, Associate Curator at the Foundation, contributed sixteen short essays that focus on "family groups," articulating the primary ideas behind individual works (dating from 1989) and their "network of relationships," from literary and art historical sources as well as Surrealist and Minimalist inspirations. Two imaginative and politically charged essays, by Rebecca Solnit and Lebanese author Adania Shibli, complete the commentary. The volume ends with the artist's biography, a selected bibliography, and a good index. The book is very readable even though the font is small.

Hatoum chose the title, *Terra Infirma*—a term used in cartography since the fifteenth century to indicate unexplored landmasses—for its metaphoric and poetic potential to engage with the phenomenon of instability and liminal, unexplored places. As White's essay, "All That is Solid," explains, the title, replete with meaning, is the opposite of the Latin term "terra firma," meaning "solid earth," and garnered political agency during the 1980s and 1990s, as it conceptually informed how colonialism and geography shaped and upended "the dominant histories written by those in power" (27). These ideas were explored by Edward W. Said, the renowned Palestinian-born cultural critic in *Orientalism* (1978), a foundation text for postcolonial theory, and the essay "Reflections on Exile" (1984), both of which provided Hatoum with a framework for the investigation of her own identity as a Palestinian artist living in the West. Said posited, "Exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience. It is the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home; its essential sadness can never be surmounted." Heartbreaking, and, he went on to argue, hopeful, because it occupies a liminal position, the in-between or the *terra infirma* (32). This statement became Hatoum's source for the exhibition's title.

As White argues, Hatoum's life story remains inextricable from her dynamic art practice. She was born in 1952 into a Christian Palestinian family that had been uprooted from the Haifa region of northern Israel during the Arab-Israeli War of 1948. She grew up in Beirut, Lebanon, a postcolonial Arab setting where she experienced a hybrid culture. Hatoum's art is thus a rich assemblage of literary and art historical sources. The point of entry to Western art was Surrealism, which she studied as a child, especially the art of René Magritte and the writings of Carl Jung and Sigmund Freud, among others. They were the starting place for her investigations of psychological disorientation. From the Surrealists she learned how to "upset perceptions of normalcy by disrupting the everyday," leading to her use of surprise, incongruity, duality, juxtaposition, humor, and irrationality (20). From Freud, she learned to refine the process of condensing multiple dreams, symbols, and images into a single dense and rich composite (29), which she manipulates to great effect in her installations. The contemplative aspects of Eastern philosophies and the opposing forces of yin and yang, which she read about during the late 1970s in the *Book of Changes*, the Chinese *I Ching*, were an important source of ideas, eventually appearing in her work in the 1990s, such as *+ And -*, an object from 1994.

Anna C. Chave's essay, "The Devices of Mona Hatoum," takes a closer look at the artist's pedagogical education and artistic influences in London, placing central emphasis on the presence of feminist artists, notably Mary Kelly, alongside the burgeoning Conceptual art scene in Britain. Hatoum had attended Beirut University College, studying commercial art to satisfy her father's wishes, even though she always wanted to be a studio artist (48). In 1975, while traveling in London, civil war broke out in Beirut; unable to return home she decided to attend the Byam Shaw School of Art (now Central Saint Martins College of Arts and Design), followed by the Slade School of Art (University College, London). Because the war continued for fifteen years (1975–90) Hatoum settled in London, which has been her home base ever since. As early as 1987 she claimed, "in general my work is about my experience of living in the West as a person from the Third World, about being an outsider, about occupying a marginal position, being defined as 'Other' or one of 'Them'" (62, fn44).

Chave argues that it was at the Slade that her involvement with feminist groups evolved into a global awareness leading to her own "analyzing power structures, first in relation to feminism, and then in wider terms as in the relationship between the Third World and the West," as Hatoum recalled in a 2014 interview (49, fn13). At the Slade, she discovered Marcel Duchamp and became seduced by the reductive approach of Conceptual and Minimalist art, both of which had their antecedents in Duchamp (48). Some of her preferred devices, including economy of form, a finely tuned sensitivity to the properties of materials, ambiguity and ambivalence rather than concrete answers as well as manipulation of scale, evolved from Minimalism. From 1980 to 1988 she also created performance–based works that deconstructed widespread systems of power and control (patriarchy), reconciliation, and the trauma of displacement and destruction caused by war (49).

In the "Works" section, the shorter entries by White and Schenkenberg take an engaging approach to the eclectic theoretical and interdisciplinary relationships in Hatoum's oeuvre as it evolved over four decades. Growing up in Beirut, she was acutely aware of the limitations of her gender and faced the rising idea of home as a restrictive space. In her work she rebelled against these middle class restrictions. For her, home is also an analog for interior psychological space (22). Artworks are produced by her own hands or those of commissioned artisans and fabricators employing a texturally diverse artistic lexicon, including marbles, grids, grenades, chairs, light bulbs, rebar, blown glass, cribs, electricity, beads, barbed wire, human hair, steel, finger nails, kitchen utensils, circles, maps, soap,

toy soldiers, borders, fences, and weaving. From the start of her career, Hatoum addressed paradoxes found in the concept of "home" as a place of comfort and support through furniture (chairs, benches, cribs and beds) and kitchen tools and cooking devices, referencing literary luminaries like Jean-Paul Sartre, Franz Kafka, and George Sand, as well as wide-ranging artistic sources including Duchamp, Alberto Giacometti, and Joseph Cornell. In the *Giant Mill* (1999), based on an object found in her mother's kitchen, she transfers an ordinary food mill into a towering insect-like creature by creating a mammoth sculpture that suggests a biomorphic presence. In *Greater Divide* (2002) cheese and vegetable graters scaled to the length of a standing body are transformed into dangerous pieces of furniture, retaining just enough of the referents to evoke larger dangers, such as "political division, international aggression, and violence" (77). As a feminist response to conservative politics that were challenging reproductive rights, for example, Hatoum created *Silence* (1994), which is constructed with clear glass tubing to convey the fragility of a child's crib and the danger to a viewer as a site of potential disaster. Her culminating domestic tableau, *Homebound* (2000; Fig. 1), questions how one can belong to a place that no longer exists or has radically changed.

Hatoum uses her own hair to weave complex narratives, inserting an individual presence into her work that critiques Minimalism's impersonal, sterile language (92). With works like *Jardin public* (1993), modeled after wrought-iron furniture commonly found in Parisian public gardens, hair is used to draw bodily features on the seat, metaphorically suggesting that, according to Hatoum, "women's genitalia are always on public display" (83). The title employs surrealist wordplay between public and pubic to augment the interpretation. Because of Hatoum's broader interest in depicting female agency, taboos surrounding hair function as a "symbol of unrestrained sexuality in certain cultures" (95, fn8) provide the artist with a weapon in the fight against control. *Hair Mesh* (2013) illustrates a debt to Piet Mondrian, Sol LeWitt, and Agnes Martin. Hatoum constructed a grid comprising 180 individual squares of human hair fastidiously woven to create a shimmering effect.

Hatoum belongs to a generation of postmodern, postcolonial artists working in the 1980s, including Alighiero e Boetti and Miguel Angel Rios, who also utilized maps as a means of questioning power and the limits of meaning. The installation *Present Tense* (1996), her first example using cartography, suggests maps as stable, truthful measured space with only "the appearance of objectivity" (151). Here the artist demonstrates the "historical mutability of mapping," as Chave contends (60). On a bed of Nablus olive oil-based soap forming a grid of 2200 chunks on the floor, Hatoum used red glass beads to form a map of the Palestinian territories, showing Israeli-occupied lands that were designated to be given back to the Palestinians for restitution, as outlined in the 1993 Oslo Accords. Because of the precariousness of Israeli-Palestinian relations and the contested land, the artist chose an "inherently unstable material," since overtime the soap will disintegrate and the map will collapse (152). *Turbulence (black)* (2014) is another floor piece, made of different-sized handmade black glass marbles that suggest an undulating liquid surface. These landscapes constructed with marbles, whether geometric forms like this circle, or maps, seem to struggle against their borders and are a metaphor for instability and imbalance (141). These works are inherently volatile as they belie Minimalist stability and the grid.

With few exceptions, there is very little color in Hatoum's work besides red, which she considers archetypal, with rich poetic, oneiric, and symbolic potential. Choice of materials plays a significant role in the artist's ability to suggest destabilization, meaning, and thwart functionality of a referenced subject. Unlikely surfaces are used to further amplify the ideas behind the sculptures and installations.

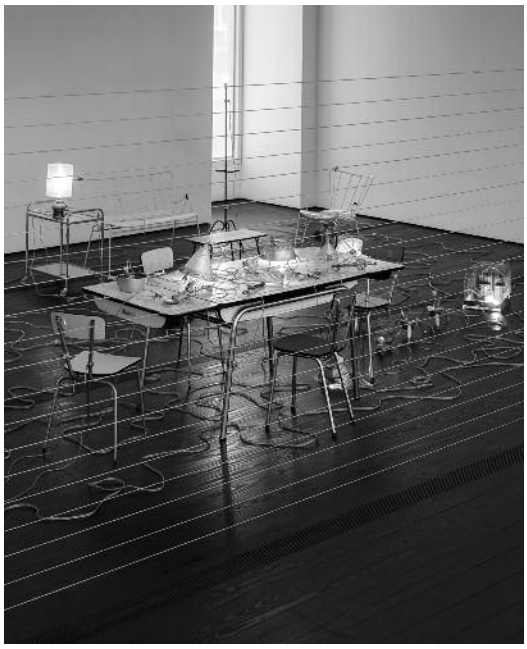


Fig. 1. Mona Hatoum, *Homebound* (2000), kitchen utensils, furniture, electrical wire, light bulbs, dimmer unit, amplifier, and two speakers, dimensions variable. Installed at the Collection, Houston, 2017. Rennie Collection, Vancouver.

As White evocatively summarizes, Mona Hatoum may be one of the most respected and thought-provoking artists working today. Her works resist easy interpretation. She juxtaposes beauty and danger, material intrigue and bodily harm, familiarity and strangeness, the shaky and paradoxical. Her artistic sensibility is a "dance between hard and soft, big and small, organic and institutional, dangerous and comfortable, the ordinary and the extraordinary" (67). Through her lifelong investigation of the intersection of the personal and the political, she has consciously cultivated a liminal space, reconciling historical events with individual personal memories. •

Donna Stein, former Deputy Director of The Wende Museum of the Cold War in Culver City, CA, is currently writing a book about living and working in Tehran from 1974 to 1977 as art advisor to the Shahbanou of Iran on Western acquisitions currently held by the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art.

Leonora Carrington and the International Avant-garde

Edited by Jonathan P. Eburne
and Catriona McAra
Manchester University Press, 2017

Reviewed by Caroline I. Harris

In a series of essays that reframe and problematize readings of the artist's paintings, graphic arts, and writings, *Leonora Carrington and the international avant-garde* offers a welcome take on its subject. A particular strength of the volume is its emphasis on the artist's literary works, including novels and short stories. In their introduction, editors Jonathan P. Eburne and Catriona McAra quickly move past a rehearsal of Carrington's life: English, born 1917; participated in the Surrealist movement in Paris; escaped Nazi-occupied France through Spain and Portugal; lived in Mexico City from 1945 until her death in 2011. The essays then forgo lengthy discussions of well-trodden mythopoetic paths like her relationship with Max Ernst or her incarceration in a Spanish mental institution. Instead, the texts provide fresh interpretations of well-studied works like the memoir *Down Below*; invitations to consider understudied examples, particularly of the artist's literary output; and startling re-readings (willful misreadings?) of Carrington's oeuvre through the lenses of radical feminism, posthumanism, and contemporary art practice.

Down Below, first published in 1944, chronicles Carrington's insanity diagnosis and her horrific incarceration in an asylum in Spain. The text has been normatively discussed in terms of André Breton's writings and Surrealist interest in madness. Natalya Lusty's "Experience and knowledge in *Down Below*," while acknowledging those precedents, sets aside the usual interpretations to consider the text through close readings of the works of physician, writer, and anthropologist Pierre Mabille (to whom Carrington addressed the text). Mabille worked as a surgeon in the Caribbean during World War II and the French government eventually named him Cultural Attaché to Haiti. His writings and theories helped to shape the Surrealists' interests in science, hermetic systems, sociology, and anthropology. He, like Carrington, was a force in the redefinition of the movement toward a global context as its original adherents adjusted to their exile from Europe during World War II.

Lusty cites Mabille's *Mirror of the Marvelous* (1940) in relation to *Down Below*, suggesting that his elaboration of the Surrealist term "the marvelous" as, in Lusty's definition, "a personal journey reconciling the inner self with the outside world and as a collective mythic knowledge," resonates with Carrington's account (64). At stake as well is Mabille's sense that such a journey could be confronting, even harrowing. While devastating, Carrington's text acknowledges the transformative potential of her destructive experiences. She employs Mabille's trope of the mirror as a means to connect her trauma to the outside world with the ultimate goal of creating a shared knowledge. Equally important for Lusty, Mabille provided a model for Carrington to frame the war in terms of a fluidity between personal and communal anguish.

As Lusty's essay suggests, one of the goals of this volume is to shift the discussion of Carrington's work away from the anecdotal to a more intellectual approach and to explore her dynamic role as an intersecting point between European and Latin American modernism. After her arrival in the Americas, she became a vital participant in the Mexican avant-garde while playing a key part with the Surrealists-in-exile. She exhibited with the latter in New York, and *Down Below* first appeared in the magazine *VVV*, which was published in New York during 1942–44, and edited by David Hare in collaboration with Marcel Duchamp, André Breton, and Max Ernst.[1]

In "Dissecting *The Holy Oily Body*: Remedios Varo, Leonora Carrington and *El Santo Cuerpo Grasoso*," Tara Plunkett suggests a way to unpack Carrington's complex relationship to Surrealism and the Mexican avant-garde. *The Holy Oily Body* is a play, written circa 1947 by Carrington, Remedios Varo, one of her closest collaborators, and Hungarian photographer Kati Horna. Like Carrington, Varo was associated with the Surrealist movement in Europe before moving to Mexico. The action unfolds in a court on mount 'Pico di Oripipi,' the name a scatological play on Mexico's highest peak, el Pico de Orizaba. The holy oily body of the title is a magical substance invented by Queen Nesfatalina's scientist that, when applied to the buttocks, reveals a person's soul. The oil would be used to tell which suitor—the text makes clear the suitor could be male or female—should marry the Princess Pelomiel, who is a dove. The play enthusiastically transgresses the gender norms of fairy tales *and* Surrealism, parodying the Surrealist femme-enfant and the passive Princess (Pelomiel), the femme fatale and vile temptress (Nesfatalina), and the hyper-masculine hero (Von Aguilota).

While explicating its clear debt to Surrealism, Plunkett also grounds the work in the three artist-playwrights' new position as part of intellectually diverse, if often related, artistic communities in Mexico and beyond. Indeed, Plunkett also suggests that the characters' hybrid bodies blur boundaries between the human/animal and body/soul, which might suggest the cultural complexity of the avant-garde circles in which Carrington, Varo, and Horna moved (75). The suitor, Von Aguilota, serves as a literal representation of that idea. He has war wounds on his buttocks that have led to the replacement of the skin with a collage of animal hides. When rubbed with the holy oily body, this patchwork gives rise to his soul in the form of a butterfly.

Abigail Susik provides the most specific discussion of Carrington's contributions to the Mexican avant-garde in "Losing one's head in the 'Children's Corner': Carrington's contributions to *S.NOB* in 1962." Founded and edited by Salvador Elizondo, with editorial assistance by Emilio García Riera and artistic direction from Juan García Ponce, *S.NOB* reflected international trends in progressive art and culture and critiqued class, social privilege, and politics. Carrington contributed drawings and short prose texts to the publication, and Susik convincingly demonstrates that she helped shape the aesthetic of the publication.

Anna Watz's "'A language buried at the back of time': *The Stone Door* and poststructuralist feminism" offers a provocative reading of the artist's first novel from the mid-1940s through the discourse of radical feminism. Like all Carrington's fiction, *The Stone Door* (first published in French translation in 1976, and in its original English in 1977) resists simple explication (90). Chapter one introduces three men who live in a deep forest where they appear to determine the operations of the universe, called "the plan." In Chapter two, a woman named Amagoya reads the diary of another woman. Amagoya both reads the diarist's dream narratives and enters her own, confounding time and location. The last chapters of the novel deal with Zacharias and his epic (and disjointed) journey to locate and open the stone door, destroy "the plan," and unite with the nameless woman. Zacharias encounters elements from dream imagery in earlier chapters and morphs into Böles Kilary (a Wise King), a figure from the diarist's dreams (95).

Watz recognizes that Carrington's esoteric imagery can be read in terms of Surrealist practice and her study of the occult. For example, an egg gives birth to a non-gendered white child in the novel, a detail clearly drawn from the alchemical tradition. Yet, Watz argues that *The Stone Door* can be read through poststructuralist feminist thought, and "the plan" resonates with the notion of patriarchy. She explains that throughout her oeuvre, Carrington challenged monosexual discourse and created fragmentary, intertextual, and metafictional works like *The Stone Door* and *The Hearing Trumpet* (1950). Her language defies fixed interpretation, creating a space outside traditional phallocentric discourse. Watz contends that Carrington's aesthetics thus provide a link between French/Mexican Surrealism and 1970s feminist avant-garde writing, anticipating one of the key questions engaging feminist and non-feminist thinkers, "the pursuit of a speaking position of non-complicity with phallocentric ideology" (101–02).

In another thought-provoking essay, "Carrington's sensorium," Janet Lyon proposes that the artist's works may be read in terms of contemporary discussions of the post-human and disability theory (these are positions reliant on the artist's "critique of humanism," a "dissolution" of the normatively reductive terms on "embodiment," wherefore "no right or wrong body" exists in life [163–64, 169]). Carrington's *The Lovers* (1987; Fig. 1) speaks to this "indeterminate" exploration of bodily 'disability' (171). Watz and Lyon do not suggest a direct philosophical connection between Carrington's work and these theoretical frameworks. They imply that something in Carrington's practice makes her works uniquely useful to such avenues of inquiry. As McAra suggests in her essay, "A nonagenarian virago: quoting 'Carrington' in contemporary practice," for twenty-first-century artists, Carrington's influence rarely functions in the way art historians might want: as active transmission and passive acceptance. Rather, hers is an oblique resonance. In McAra's terms, Carrington functions more as "a 'medium' to be worked in and through" (195).



Fig. 1. Leonora Carrington, *The Lovers* (1987), oil on canvas, 30" x 40 1/2". Private collection, Mexico. © 2015 Estate of Leonora Carrington / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Leonora Carrington and the international avant-garde provides challenging new readings and fecund analysis of Carrington's little-studied written texts, juxtaposed with consideration of her painting and graphic work. Yet, paradoxically, the authors remind the reader that Carrington's oeuvre notoriously resists the interpreter's desire to "tame" it into tidy explications. As Eburne explains in his fascinating "Poetic Wisdom: Leonora Carrington and the esoteric avant-garde," she steadfastly opposed what she called "dogmaturd," knowledge that suggested totality or systematic comprehension. Thus, while savoring these astute scholarly investigations, we are cautioned to refuse (as Leonora did) the closing of the hermeneutic circle. In this regard, it seems apt to give Carrington's son, scholar and artist Gabriel Weisz, the last word. In "Shadow children: Leonora as storyteller," he describes his mother's works as "savage objects," rightly warning us—and it is profound advice for anyone engaged in writing about visual art: "If to define is to set a safe vantage point from where one can observe art without any risk, then let us hail the savage object, since the empire of interpretation belongs to a power system that legitimates that ownership of a small turf aggressively defended by specialists" (139). ●

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Notes

1. On Carrington's 18-month stay in New York, beginning in July 1941, see Salomon Grimberg, "Traveling Toward the Unknown, Leonora Carrington Stopped in New York," *WAJ* 38, no. 2 (Fall-Winter 2017), 3–15

Rachel Whiteread

Edited by Ann Gallagher and Molly Donovan
Prestel, 2018

Reviewed by Mary Trent

Rachel Whiteread's *Untitled (House)* (1993), a concrete cast of a condemned East End London Victorian terrace house, initiated public controversy but also resulted in her being the first female artist to win the Turner Prize. This new monograph, published in conjunction with a major retrospective of Whiteread, organized jointly by Tate Britain and The National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., explores new information about this groundbreaking work while also expanding appreciation of Whiteread's career-long pursuit of the negative spaces of homes and their everyday objects.

Edited by the exhibition organizers, Ann Gallagher and Molly Donovan, the catalogue is beautifully designed, with crisp, brilliant photographs of Whiteread's art. It includes a range of essays that explore various points of access into her work. The catalogue offers fresh, in-depth context and insights into Whiteread's famous casts of London working-class homes, and for readers unfamiliar with the artist's oeuvre, it also introduces interesting early work and recent projects. The book's design, however, makes it a bit challenging to review the chronological development of Whiteread's art. The full-page photos advance chronologically, but they do so disjointedly. They are interspersed between the essays, whose in-text illustrations break their flow. As Briony Fer notes in her essay, "Eyes Cast," Whiteread's work is remarkably coherent over time. Had the plates not been broken up by the essays, one would have been able to view them seamlessly and thus better explore subtle changes to the work over time.

The book starts with Gallagher's essay, "Material Culture," a solid overview of Whiteread's career and the key themes of her practice. Gallagher identifies the artist's lifelong project as "fusing everyday vernacular forms with personal as well as universal experiences and memories" (10). Molly Donovan's eloquent piece, "Vies Trouvées (Found Objects)," follows. It digs in deep to get at the heart of *Ghost*, the artist's first cast of an inhabitable space, made in 1990 in London and now held in that city's National Gallery. Donovan begins by telling the story of the people who had lived in the house from which *Ghost* was made. Her thoughtful reading insightfully links Whiteread's sculptures to both Minimalism and Surrealism, arguing that the artist "invents a new type of work, creating an impossible form by turning habitable air space into an impenetrable mass" (42). According to Donovan, Whiteread's imprints of domestic spaces read as uncanny, as both familiar and unfamiliar, comforting and disquieting at the same time. Following Donovan's insights is a revealing interview of Whiteread and James Lingwood (Whiteread's collaborator on *Untitled [House]*), conducted by Gallagher. They discuss the time before, during, and just after the production of *House*, including the controversy that arose around it. Of all the contributions, this excellent interview gives the clearest picture of Whiteread's intentions, the complex calculations that went into the creation of one of her touchstone works, and what her work has meant to the public. Lynn Zelevansky's essay, "Sense and Sensibility," nicely situates Whiteread within a post-Minimalist context, which Zelevansky distinguishes from its predecessor by its use of metaphor, among other things. Additional essays delve further into Whiteread's memorials and small sculptural and site-specific works, and the importance of chance and time to her process.

Among the plates, some of the most delightful images come at the beginning and end. Her early casts of the interior of hot water bottles and mattresses have clear analogies to the bumpy, fragile human forms at repose in the bedroom. Yet, set in plaster, they stand as cool, smooth, solid forms in the gallery. These early works illuminate Donovan's and contributor Linsey Young's arguments about the resonances between Whiteread's work and the Surrealists. Uncanny objects, they read as self and other, intimate and distant. These sculptures and their references to the body, the home, and the uncanny also bring to mind the art of Louise Bourgeois, whom Donovan makes reference to in her essay. Bourgeois's *femme maison* drawings of uncanny joinings of female bodies and house resonate with Whiteread's own drawings (some of which are reproduced in the catalogue) and her shared interest in homes as capsules for memory.



Fig. 1. Rachel Whiteread, *Due Porte* (Two doors) (2016), Galleria Lorcan O'Neill, Rome. ©Rachel Whiteread

Donovan refers to Whiteread's sculptures as "impossible forms" in the sense that they transform space that is lived- and breathed in into solid and impenetrable masses. In her earliest works, the "impossible forms" she creates around objects, like the bathtub in *Untitled (Yellow Bath)* (109), appear as clean, precise, and geometric. But, of course in the real world, that negative space was not so orderly. It would have had smells, noises, moisture, and temperature, and it might have been cluttered with objects and the comings and goings of people. Whiteread's works are successful partly because they arouse shock from turning that lived-in space into a quiet, geometric, formal study. The sculptural rendering of the negative space of *Untitled (Yellow Bath)*, for example, results in the bathtub's absence reading as a pit, a sucking-in, a sarcophagus, precisely because the work simplifies the space around the tub into a minimalist form.

In art from the last decade, Whiteread has made colored, resin casts of doors

(2016; Fig. 1) and windows. These beautiful pieces are restrained and quiet, but they make a statement. The catalogue's excellent photographs capture the filtering of light through the resin, so that one can see their shadows on the back gallery wall. They play with light and color in ways not present in her opaque concrete casts. Unlike those more earthbound pieces, these new resin works filter the gallery lighting into something more ethereal and end up reading like a distant, modern descendant of the cathedral's stained glass window.

With Whiteread's work being so quiet, it offers viewers the opportunity to sit, reflect and perhaps find something in the work of themselves. In Brian Dillon's essay, "The Dream Site," he refers to this aspect of her art as giving the viewer "impossible imaginary places in which to think" (199). For Dillon, the cast sculptures make us wonder, even dream, about what is inside them. Whiteread's works, to some degree, offer themselves up as vessels to fill with the viewer's own remembrances and resonances. Dillon's claims about Whiteread's "impossible, imaginary places" and "dream sites" seem to take hold in the diversity of perspectives offered by the catalogue essays. Upon finishing the text, the reader has a range of options for how to dream these works historically (Minimalist, Surrealist, post-Minimalist, etc.). The reader is also left confident of Whiteread's importance to the history of art. The extended commentary on *Ghost* and *House* along with the captivating imagery of her work and the thoughtful essays all affirm her body of work as extensive and significant. A remarkably consistent artist, Whiteread offers a restrained and minimal but also richly tactile career-long meditation on the lived environment and its casting in specific times and places. •

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Junctures in Women's Leadership: The Arts

By Judith K. Brodsky and Ferris Olin
Rutgers University Press, 2018

Reviewed by Anne Swartz

This much-needed volume, with its primary focus on visual arts professionals, brings attention to a group of women whose biographies have not been joined before. Many of the names among Judith K. Brodsky and Ferris Olin's selections for *Junctures in Women's Leadership: The Arts* fall outside the familiar. There is no Betty Parsons or Peggy Guggenheim, no Faith Ringgold or Maya Lin here. Instead, in thirteen chapters, they take as their fourteen subjects women who each made some brilliant contribution to her time and profession. Philanth-ropist Bertha Honoré Palmer (1849–1918), activist and collector Louise Rosenfield Noun (1926–2002), artist and art historian Samella Sanders Lewis (b. 1924), theater founder Julia Miles (b. 1930), actor and theater founder Míriam Colón (1936-2017), Native American artist and curator Jaune Quick-to-See Smith (b. 1940), gallerist Bernice Steinbaum (b. 1941), museum director Anne d'Harnoncourt (1943–2008), artist and gallery director Martha Wilson (b. 1947), choreographer and dance company founder Jawole Willa Jo Zollar (b. 1950), print artist and papermaker Kim Berman (b. 1960), arts administrator Gilane Tawadros (b. 1965), and textile entrepreneurs Veomanee Douang-dala and Joanne Smith (both b. 1976) are mostly known within their spheres of activity as visual arts, arts administration, theater, film, and dance professionals. (The Latinx artist Yolanda M. López [b. 1942] is a fifteenth defacto subject, since the inclusion of her well-known *Portrait of the Artist as the Virgin of Guadalupe* (1978; Fig. 1) makes a visually compelling cover, while adding another woman's accomplishment to the collection.)

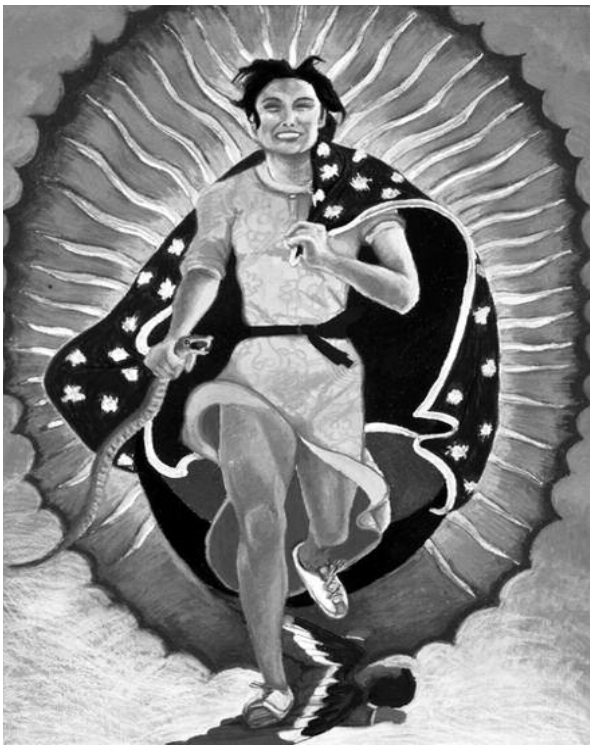


Fig. 1. Yolanda M. López, *Portrait of the Artist as the Virgin of Guadalupe*, from the Guadalupe series (1978), oil pastel on rag paper, 22" x 30". ©1978 by Yolanda M. López. Photo: Courtesy of the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center Press.

I liked learning about the experiences of each woman. The book is less than 300 pages, making each chapter relatively short, and I found myself wanting to know more about each woman, which will prompt further study. Brodsky and Olin combine thoughtfully written and carefully researched analyses with provocative commentary on women's lives during the period of the mid-nineteenth century through to the present day. They use their subjects as microcosms for the greater trends and transitions in the inequalities, gains, and difficulties women have experienced in society and in the arts and related institutions. The authors use occasions in the women's lives to intermingle

related cultural moments, people, and theories. (Iconic figures ranging from Obama to Mandela to Hillary Clinton show up.)

Recognized as leaders in their own right, both Distinguished Professors Emerita at Rutgers University, Brodsky and Olin promote social justice, particularly gender equity, in their teaching, curating, writing, scholarship, and art. Both continue to play central roles in their respective professional associations in the visual arts and related fields, particularly in espousing opportunities for women.

While women's involvement in the visual arts professions remains heady, the literature on leadership remains scant. The profiles share complementary characteristics, the authors note, including childhood support fostering interest, commitment to culture by women in their families, dedication to education, direct experience with gender discrimination, mentorship, and the influence of social movements.

Part of Rutgers University Press's Junctures: Case Studies in Women's Leadership Series, (previous publications in the series include women in social movements and business), the proscribed format requires that the case study be organized into a background section, "which describes the protagonist's rise to leadership and lays out a decision-making juncture or problem" (xiii), followed by the resolution and the legacy. However hampering this cumbersome framing might seem, the authors enliven it with their fondness for their subjects, even interlacing their autobiographies in the preface, noting similar circumstances. The approach of bringing one's autobiography into dialogue is a useful tactic commonly employed in feminist popular writing, as in Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards's *Manifesta: Young Women, Feminism, and the Future* (2000).

This ordering system provides a game plan. The authors give us the goods, not shying away from realities, as when they describe how the performance artist Martha Wilson founded Franklin Furnace, a major Brooklyn-based arts organization and archive supporting emerging and established avant-garde artists, after a friend provided a pilfered mailing list from the Clocktower, the precursor to the current MoMA PS1 (173). The section on artist Jaune Quick-to-See Smith details how:

> ... she undertook strategies that provide models for future leaders to consider. She understood that it would be more effective to gather together a group of artists whose work belonged in the mainstream and establish an alliance rather than only to promote her own work. So she created a colla-borative of Native American artists living in the Albuquerque area who, like Smith herself, were integrating motifs from their Indian heritage with Modernist style (112).

The authors take every opportunity to emphasize the import of what their subjects did and stress its value. For example, Smith's centrality as an organizer and activist are given their due. By detailing the artist's steps along the way, the authors make clear that the artist's achievement of success is the result of her sheer determination, effort, and hard work, not luck or serendipity. This book will probably become a textbook, given this blueprint-type framing for feminist visual arts leadership and drawing out these details.

Besides representing a variety of professions, the subject selection offers some diversity, with one Asian, one Latinx, one Native American, one Middle Eastern, two Black, and eight white women—all but four are from the US. These case studies depart from true biographies, centering primarily on the professional life of each featured woman. The authors acknowledge that 'feminist' is not a designation all the women claimed for themselves, yet they are included in this study because of the force of their convictions about overcoming gendered limitations and discrimination (xv).

Access to opportunity was not equal for all of these women, whether because of race, class, education, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. While not all components of identity get due consideration, some realities of racial or economic inequities form a subtext in the book. Sexuality is glossed over, save the occasional mention, like how sexual abuse proved transformative to Martha Wilson, who was unwilling to allow the experience to confine her (169), or Kim Berman's homosexuality causing her to flee her native South Africa, where it was still criminalized (210). The role of marriage or partnership is mentioned, both when important, as in the instance of Bertha Honoré Palmer's financial mobility coming from her marriage (1), or not, as with Bernice Steinbaum, when mention of her unnamed husband casually occurs following the listing of her accumulated degrees, though there is careful analysis about her concerns of avoiding homemaker status (128–29). Motherhood is noted as a defining life experience, never a limiting one, with children a reality, not an encumbrance or obstacle. That there are scant remarks about disability suggests only that it was not relevant in the experience of these particular women.

The sources and references range widely; the authors relied on primary source material including personal interviews when possible. Their sound scholarship is essential to advancing the understanding about the contributions of these women as well as the general contributions of women in the arts. No similar books offer case studies on women leaders across different professions with this focus. Hopefully, more such accessible tomes will follow. •

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"I'm Not Myself at All": Women, Art, and Subjectivity in Canada

By Kristina Huneault
McGill-Queens, 2018

Reviewed by Carolyn Butler Palmer

As a thematic survey of the history of women artists in Canada, *"I'm Not Myself at All": Women, Art, and Subjectivity in Canada* fills a major gap in the literature. It builds on a legacy of scholarship that dates back to Dorothy Farr and Natalie Luckyj's 1975 curatorial project, *From Women's Eyes: Women Painters in Canada*, and has grown to include Maria Tippett's *By a Lady: Celebrating More than Three Centuries of Art by Canadian Women* (1993), and more recently, Alicia Boutilier and Tobi Bruce's *The Artist Herself: Self Portraits by Canadian Historical Women Artists* (2015). Huneault's work adds to this critical dialogue by situating women artists and their subjects within the fluctuating space of identity formation, and specifically Indigenous-colonial-settler relations. The book is most timely, given the recent release (in 2015) of Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission report on Indigenous-Settler relations. Rooted firmly in the discourses of feminist art history, Huneault deftly weaves together two distinctive theoretical traditions.

This well-illustrated, 400-page volume is organized in two parts, with a total of six chapters, a separate introduction, and a concluding coda. Huneault opens with the early nineteenth-century story of English colonist Lady Henrietta Martha Hamilton (1781-1857), who was married to the governor of Newfoundland and resided there for five years, and Demasduit (Mary March) (d. 1820), a young Beothuk woman who was captured and ordered released but died of an imported disease before she could be returned to her home community. Hamilton painted a miniature portrait of Demasduit in 1819, during a brief period when their lives intersected due to the devastating forces of colonialism. Huneault insightfully points out that nothing in the portrait conveys any sense of Demasduit's brutal capture, though Hamilton would have been well aware of it.

The book ends with the story of Sewinchelwet (Sophie Frank) (1872–1939), a basket maker, known within Canadian art history as a close companion of the painter Emily Carr (1871-1945). Huneault shifts the focus from speculation on their relationship to Sewinchelwet as an artist (1914; Fig. 1). The chapter closely connects the process of basket making to renewing ties with the land through conventional practices of sustainable harvesting, for example, even as White settler encroachment was growing. Sewinchelwet's baskets drew on traditional motifs as well as being inspired by settlers' building designs, demonstrating the fluidity of basket making as an art form.

The difference between the stories of Demasduit and Sewinchelwet as identities of imposition and assertion showcases the book's two major themes—"Identity" and "Forces"—the titles of Parts I and II, respectively.

Part I (Identity) also addresses topics such as travel and identity in relation to the work of English-born Frances Anne Hopkins (1838-1919) in conjunction with the voyager-paddlers with whom she travelled through the regions now commonly known as Quebec and Ontario. Huneault's insightful reading goes well beyond the then common literary theme of travel as an act of emancipation for the "Victorian lady" by locating some of Hopkins's paintings, for example *Minnehaha Feeding the Birds*, (c.1880), within the colonial-settler trope of "indigenization" at a time the balance of power increasingly favored colonialism. Similarly, Huneault situates the Impressionist-style paintings of deaf artist Helen McNicoll (1879–1915) within the competitive history of French and English imperialism in Canada and its artistic heritage in conjunction with orality versus visuality. Huneault calls attention to the paradox of McNicoll's impressionistic work, which was often identified as English due to her return to England, although McNicoll was, in fact, Canadian.

Part Two (Forces) opens with the chapter titled "Diversity," which traces



Fig. 1. Emily Carr, *Sophie Frank* (Sewinchelwet), (1914), watercolor on paper, 9 3/8" x 7 3/8". Collection of Mrs. Jane Williams. Photo: Courtesy of the Art Galley of Greater Victoria.

historical connections between women as flower painters and the rise of women as botanical illustrators and amateur scientists. The possibility of the "lady botanical scientist" was on the rise in Canada from the mid-nineteenth century onward. As Huneault observes, despite the similarity of subject matter, the work of individual artists was quite varied. Quebec artist Harriet Campbell Sheppard (d. 1853) created herbarium specimens from flowers she collected and pressed on paper, and corresponded with and informed the work of prominent scientists such as British botanist William Jackson Hooker and his American counterpart, John Torrey. Calgary-based Marion E. Moodie (1867–1958) collected and drew botanical specimens in a style that resembled the pressed flowers of a herbarium. Moodie also mobilized her knowledge of plant life through the meetings of Calgary Natural History Society, in exhibitions at the local Carnegie library, and by sending specimens to herbaria kept at Harvard and Stanford, the Smithsonian, the New York Botanical Gardens, and the Field Museum. The work of Victoria's Sophie Pemberton (1869–1959) exudes a more commemorative sensibility as she

compiled albums of flower paintings created during summer visits with family members while studying in Paris. The study of nature, and specifically the study of flowers, was thought a means of coming to know oneself as a woman. Surprisingly absent from this chapter is any discussion of how representations of flora and fauna entered into textile designs such as embroidery and Indigenous beadwork.

In the following chapter, subtitled "Maternity, Reverie, and the Art of Being-With," Huneault takes up the subject of motherhood, an important force of women's self-definition, one that separates women's self-identities from those of their male counterparts at a foundational level. Unlike the autonomous sense of self that so inflected male notions of selfhood—notions that also appear the work of women artists such as Marion Long (1882–1970) in her painting, *The Fan* (1914)—Huneault calls attention to the interconnectivity with others that is central to women's sense of identity. This is similarly exemplified in maternal portraiture, such as Laura Muntz's (1860-1930) watercolor *Mother and Child* (c. 1885), depicting an intimate scene of a young woman transfixed by the child she embraces. Paradoxically, like many women artists, Muntz herself was not a mother, having chosen to pursue her professional life as an artist. Huneault notes that in a painting by Mary Bell (1864–1951) entitled *Happiness* (c. 1892), although the interconnection between child and mother is expressed through physical contact, the mother is simultaneously absorbed in thought. Huneault observes that maternal portraits of this period rarely allow for a full complement of emotions such as anger or sadness, rendering motherhood as a rather compressed state of being.

The book itself is a beautifully crafted object, with 147 high-quality color plates and details that do much to support Huneault's close reading. The book is suitable for use in classes at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. *"I'm Not Myself at All": Women, Art, and Subjectivity in Canada* promises to reinvigorate discussions about feminist art history in Canada for a new generation of students. •

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The Art of Feminism: Images that Shaped the Fight for Equality, 1857–2017

Edited by Helena Reckitt
Chronicle Books, 2018

Reviewed by Jessica Holmes

Defining and collating art that has come out of feminist practices is a notoriously difficult task. Just as it is nearly impossible to distill "feminism" into a single definition, so too the long lineage of art created by feminist and activist artists cannot be grouped together under one rubric. Helena Reckitt, chair of the Women's Art Library and a senior art lecturer at Goldsmiths, University of London, has therefore undertaken a daunting task in her editorship of *The Art of Feminism: Images that Shaped the Fight for Equality, 1857–2017*.

To be clear, Reckitt declares at the outset that she has no intention of the book's being an exhaustive history, but rather the first to present "feminist interventions in art and visual culture from the nineteenth century to the current era" (8). What follows is indeed a brisk, unsentimental sweep through the Western art tradition from the Victorian period through today. After a brief preface by Maria Balshaw, director of the Tate, and foreword by Xabier Arakistain, the renowned Spanish feminist curator, along with Reckitt's introduction, the book launches into the formidable task. It is divided into three sections, each authored by a different scholar deriving from a British institution, focusing on her area of expertise. Reckitt notes that the book's scope is limited to artists working within the Western tradition, but nonetheless, in an age where we are coming to understand just how much has been lost or omitted from the historical chronicle by the arrogance of the presumed superiority of this viewpoint, many readers may wish the approach had been broadened. The authors do in fact take great care to be inclusive across races and nationalities, nonconforming genders, and sexualities, but for the most part the many artists cited throughout the book worked (or are working) within the value systems of European and North American artistic and cultural spheres.

This is most evident in part one, "Suffrage and Beyond 1857–1949," written by Lucinda Gosling, head of Sales and Research at the Mary Evans Picture Gallery, London. Her history is heavily weighted towards the women's suffrage movement and artistic circles of the United Kingdom and their contemporaries in the United States. Gosling offers a bracing account of the efforts by women of this period to earn their right to vote alongside men, along with the cunning visual propaganda that issued from these movements and furthered the cause. She also offers a poignant portrait of art school culture in the nineteenth century, relaying both how art schools (especially in the US) offered relatively progressive atmospheres for women in which to exercise their practices, while also making clear how quaint these principles were by contemporary standards. Recounting the societal liberties women were afforded as a result of suffrage and their labor during the two World Wars, she resurrects the work of many female artists, including some who are lesser known such as Bertha Newcombe (1857–1947) and the Australian artist Hilda Rix Nicholas (1884–1961). Rosa Bonheur (1822–99), who caused a sensation at the 1855 Paris Salon with her massive painting, *The Horse Fair*

(1855), is given her due, as is Claude Cahun (1894–1954) a photographer working in the late 1920s and 1930s who self-identified as gender neuter. Gosling is particularly strong in her treatment and assessment of the provocative visual propaganda that emerged from the British suffragette movement, such as the poster image *Bugler Girl* (1908; Fig. 1) by the British illustrator Catherine Watts (1868–1919), which was subsequently adopted by the US suffragette movement. However, the first part of the book feels especially conscripted in the history it chooses to relay, and one can't help but wonder about the artistic practices and feminist movements even in other Western countries—let alone beyond them—whose histories are essentially unmentioned.



Fig. 1. Catherine Watts, *Bugler Girl* (1908), poster. Photo from Lisa Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women: Imagery of the Suffrage Campaign 1907–14* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1987).

The book's second part, "Defining Feminism 1960–1988," is covered by Amy Tobin, Faculty Lecturer in the History of Art at Cambridge and a curator. The structure of this section differs from Gosling's, with Tobin's own writing interspersed with brief essays on specific feminist artists working within the period written by other authors. These include essays by Catherine Spencer on Marta Minujín (b. 1943) and Veronica Ryan (b. 1956); Rachel Warriner on Nancy Spero (1926–2009); Alice Correia on Chila Kumari Burman (b. 1957); Irene Revell on Pauline Oliveros (1932–2016); and Flora Dunster on Tessa Boffin (1962–93). It makes for a piecemeal compendium of what is arguably the most visible and recognized period of feminist art. While Tobin and her cohort of writers admirably include lesser-known artists, foundational pieces of the feminist canon are strangely given short shrift. Judy Chicago's *The Dinner Party* (1979), for instance is relegated to one brief mention, while the seminal *Womanhouse* is explained in its entirety thusly: "*Womanhouse* (1971) by the students and teachers of the California Institute of Art's Feminist Art Program used the space of the artwork to create immersive environments that recreated the suburban home as nightmare … *Womanhouse* featured mannequins quartered by linen closet shelves and buried in bathtubs of sand" (99). To students of feminist art practices, the description is easily identifiable as a supremely abridged assessment, but to a casual reader—for whom this book generally seems aimed—it's a glossing over of a complex project that involved nearly two dozen artists working, performing, and installing in an overtaken building for more than a month at the height of the 1970s Women's Liberation Movement.

In the final section, "Redefining Feminism 1989–Present," Hilary Robinson, Professor of Feminism, Art, and Theory at Loughborough University, takes on the challenging task of synthesizing recent events, many of whose repercussions are still unfolding and are as of yet still impossible to quantify. Events in the US, including September 11, 2001, the Trayvon Martin affair and the subsequent founding of Black Lives Matter, and the election of Donald Trump to the presidency, among others, are taken into account and provide a context for the most recently produced feminist imagery. Robinson deftly incorporates into her discussion the significance of more mainstream, pop cultural, feminist tropes alongside the work of contemporary visual artists. Thus, the production of pop singer-songwriter Beyoncé's 2016 album *Lemonade*, with its feminist anthem, "Formation," for instance, is considered in a similar context to artists such as Martha Wilson (b. 1947) and Lenka Clayton (b. 1977). Thanks to the increased globalization of the art world in the age of the Internet, Robinson brings artists working throughout the world more fully into the discussion.

The writing and distribution of information are uneven, and the structure—much like feminism itself—is a sometimes-messy patchwork, but the book's largest strength is its copious imagery. Hundreds of artworks are reproduced, many by artists who have little or no name recognition outside of small, scholarly circles. *The Art of Feminism* could be poised to become a visual primer of female-identified artists that have until now been lost to time or are presently emerging outside the Western art world. For general readers looking to move beyond the popular narratives of feminism, *The Art of Feminism* may be worth their investigation. •

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Women Artists in Paris, 1850–1900

By Laurence Madeline
Yale University Press and American Federation of Arts, 2017

Reviewed by Lauren Jimerson

With indulgent irony, we are asked how many great female artists there have been. There have been many, gentlemen! And it's surprising given the enormous difficulties that they have encountered.

—Marie Bashkirtseff

In 1881 the Russian artist and diarist, Marie Bashkirtseff (1858–84), penned this enduring assessment as she argued for women's acceptance into the preeminent French national fine art school, École des Beaux-Arts (264).[1] Bashkirtseff, like thousands of other women, came to Paris in the latter half of the nineteenth century to study and establish a career in art. The epicenter of the art world, that city offered many establishments for artistic training, exhibition venues, as well as a burgeoning art market. Yet, there were still many obstacles impeding a woman's success. They were barred from the École des Beaux-Arts until 1897, a commonly cited fact. Familial obligations often became an impasse, and there was always the lingering threat of illness, disease, or complications from childbirth. Increased opportunities were met with new demands, making this a period that was both liberating and challenging for women. Although late-nineteenth-century female painters (especially those associated with the Impressionists) have received considerable scholarly attention by feminist art historians since the 1980s, never before has the subject been tackled so comprehensively. Represented in the catalogue are thirty-seven painters from eleven different countries, their stylistically disparate work showcased in eighty-nine full-scale color illustrations. A compilation of essays—by Laurence Madeline, Bridget Alsdorf, Richard Kendall, Jane R. Becker, Vibeke Waallann Hansen, and Joëlle Bolloch—examines key female figures within the sociopolitical context of their time. *Women Artists in Paris 1850–1900* persuasively demonstrates the profundity of women's involvement on the artistic stage in late nineteenth-century Paris.

Curator Madeline notes the resounding parallels between Bashkirtseff's aforementioned quote and Linda Nochlin's landmark essay, "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?"[2] Writing over four decades later, Madeline's more inclusive approach is distinct from Nochlin's, however. She expresses the aims of the exhibition as "offering a detailed account of a crucial historical episode when women painters from around the world came together in one specific location, during one specific time, to pursue their artistic ambitions" (2). She admits that "a true assessment is difficult, not least because the images we still have provoke a certain discomfort. Many are mediocre, mawkish, or trivial works" (19). The exhibition is thus limited to painters whose works "transcend both genre and gender" (20). Portraits (besides those of artists) and still lifes are excluded, as well as sculpture, printmaking, and other media besides painting. Attention is given to "modern subjects," "private life," the "depiction of light," as well as "the recurring image of the young girl" (21). The nude outside of academic convention, while less frequent, is surprisingly not explored. The sole nude in the exhibition, *Mater Triumphalis* (1892) by Annie Louisa Swynnerton (1844–1933), is an academic yet highly sensual depiction of the female body. It seems incongruous with the other paintings, and would have merited further contextualization. It is later stated that Swynnerton was "an active suffragette" (256). Overall, a more detailed study of the historical context would have been informative, including the contemporaneous battle for women's rights in France and the myriad, often paradoxical, responses from women artists to bourgeoning feminism.



Fig. 1. Ellen Thesleff, *Echo* (1891), oil on canvas, 24" x 17 1/8". Anders Wiklöf Collection, Andersudde, Åland Islands

Bridget Alsdorf examines the representations of female artists as well as their absence in late-nineteenth-century French painting. Victoria Dubourg Fantin-Latour (1840–1926) was a painter who experienced success in Paris and London. Nevertheless, she does not figure in any of the group portraits by her husband, Henri Fantin-Latour. Even in his individual portraits of her, she is not shown as a professional artist. Alsdorf argues that including Dubourg in his group portraits or even portraying her as an artist would have necessitated a consideration of his wife's position as an artist relative to his own and, furthermore, would have required him to "publicly recognize her significance to his work" (29). Alsdorf cites other such examples where female artists have been omitted from group portraits or where their professional status has been evaded in individual portraits. "As these paintings make clear," she argues, "the status of women artists was contested not only in the realm of social life and institutional politics but also in works of art" (29). A rare exception, Rosa Bonheur (1822–99), skillfully negotiated her role as a female artist and consciously shaped her own image. The "matriarch and role model

for all women artists from the mid-nineteenth century forward," she achieved unparalleled success financially and critically on both sides of the Atlantic (35). Alsdorf argues that "no woman artist in the nineteenth century or since has managed to do what she did" (35). She analyzes portraits of the *animalière* by Édouard Louis Dubufe and Consuélo Fould (1862–1927) in which Bonheur collaborated with her portraitists, "taking her image into her own hands" (35). She displayed her virtuosity by painting the animals that accompanied her, and "[upstaged] her image-makers" (36). Bonheur effectively negotiated a self-image through which she could be perceived "not for her gender or for her appearance but for her *work*" (36).

Two essays are devoted to the women most directly involved in Impressionism—Marie Bracquemond (1840–1916), Mary Cassatt (1844–1926), and Berthe Morisot (1841–95)—all of whom exhibited in at least three of the Impressionist exhibitions. Richard Kendall examines each artist, tracing their careers, participation in the group shows, critical reception, and the manner in which they navigated the complex role of woman artist. As Griselda Pollock argued in "Modernity and the Spaces of Femininity," gender and class determined in many ways the subject matter female artists could treat.[3] More restricted, by comparison with her male counterparts, Morisot painted her immediate surroundings—women and children in domestic interiors or enclosed gardens. Anything but monotonous, her work evinces "an increasingly intense engagement with the act of looking and with the physical practice of painting, as one human being confronted others, using vibrant lines, colors, and marks to respond to their presences" (48). Despite similar restraints, "Cassatt came from a background that encouraged her to test social boundaries" (50). As an elite expatriate, she enjoyed certain freedoms. She frequented the museums and theaters of Paris and was drawn to new urban subject matter, depicting women alone at the Opéra Garnier (*In the Lodge,* 1879) and even using public transportation (*In the Omnibus,* 1890–91). (Regrettably, even though these works are illustrated, they were not included in the exhibition.)

Bracquemond, the least well known of the trio, treated the domestic landscape with a penchant for women in elaborate dress, such as in *Three Women with Parasols* (c. 1880). Kendall describes this painting as "a highly deliberated statement rather than a spontaneous creation, which seems to reflect something of Bracquemond's problematic existence" (51). Although the work appears more staged than spontaneous, it nevertheless reveals a singular approach in depicting light and texture. Short brushstrokes slice in all directions emulating the weave of the women's dresses, while an intensity of warm hues captures the light filtered through a pink parasol. Bracquemond's adverse marital experience is the focus of Jane R. Becker's essay. We learn that Bracquemond "pursued first an academic style" (55). She met Ingres as a teenager and was invited by him to exhibit her drawings as a "student of Ingres" at the 1857 Salon (56). Working in Ingres's studio, her early output reflects the kind of lessons she would have absorbed there. In 1869 she married Félix Bracquemond, an artist in the domains of printmaking and decorative arts. Through him, she met several soon-to-be Impressionists. Bracquemond subsequently adopted an Impressionist palette and brushstroke and exhibited with the group in 1879, 1880 and 1886. In 1886, Gauguin taught Bracquemond new techniques for capturing atmospheric lighting effects, evident in *Under the Lamp* (1887). Unfortunately, her husband remained "her main obstacle" (55). His relentless discouragement was overbearing, and she abandoned painting entirely by 1890. Readers are left yearning to learn more about Bracquemond's oeuvre itself, marked by loose, mercurial brushwork and dazzling color.

Vibeke Waallann Hansen turns her attention to the Nordic women who pursued artistic study and careers in Paris. She begins by providing key historical insight into the nascent feminist movements in the various Scandinavian nations, and notes some of the individuals who helped to bring about progress for women. Advancements in gender equality in Nordic countries mostly anticipated those in France (including women's suffrage), large numbers of Scandinavian women artists moved to Paris from the 1870s onward. The metropolis afforded more opportunities than the smaller northern capitals. They attended Académie Colarossi, Trélat, and especially Académie Julian, where drawing after the nude model was offered. The prevailing style amongst these artists was the *juste milieu,* a compromise between academicism and Impressionism. Others broke with convention, exploring plein-air painting. Fanny Churberg (1845–92), and Kitty Kielland (1843–1914) are two examples with remarkable landscapes featured in the catalogue. Ellen Thesleff (1869–1954) is not mentioned in Hansen's essay, perhaps because she arrived in Paris later, in 1891; her magnetic *Echo* (1891; Fig. 1), featuring a young girl bellowing against a misty landscape, serves as the cover illustration of the catalogue. A Finnish artist who trained in Paris and exhibited widely throughout Europe, the publication would have benefited from a fuller account of her life and work.

The majority of the catalogue is devoted to lush illustrations of the paintings. Though organized thematically, the layout highlights the breadth of styles and approaches of the thirty-seven geographically disparate artists represented. Certain shared subjects are emphasized: the self portrait, depictions of fellow artists, women reading or working in the domestic sphere, "la toilette," images of children, the modern landscape, academic history painting, as well as girlhood and adolescence. The appendix features artist biographies, which offer succinct but comprehensive biographical information on each artist in the exhibition. This section offers illuminating details on the lives of lesser-known artists, such as Jane Gardner Bourguereau (1837–1922), an American who skillfully navigated France's Salon system and married a preeminent French painter. Lastly, there is a thorough

analysis of female artists' participation at the Paris Salon from 1848 to 1900. By the close of the century, the women included in the painting and graphic arts categories in the Salon reached nearly 30 percent. Joëlle Bolloch asks provocatively, "has the inclusion of women in the arts actually improved today?" (264). A study of the FIAC (*Foire Internationale d'Art Contemporain*) demonstrates that only 23.7 percent of exhibited artists in 2015 were women.

Women Artists in Paris 1850–1900 is a groundbreaking catalogue that sheds light on a wide range of important women artists, many unknown to the public and even to art historians. The publication is a considerable contribution to the study of nineteenth-century painting and will undoubtedly spark further scholarship. The task of locating, selecting, and assembling eighty-nine paintings by notable female artists must have been a tremendous undertaking. Yet, one wonders why the works of certain artists, such as the French painter, Suzanne Valadon (1865–1938) or the American expatriate, Ellen Day Hale (1855–1940), are excluded. Lilla Cabot Perry's (1848–1933) images of her children appear in the exhibition, but her stunning plein-air landscapes are absent. Attention is disproportionately paid to the most well known female painters, while other intriguing artists receive only a passing mention. Illustrated in the catalogue are early twentieth-century paintings by Paula Modersohn-Becker (1876–1907), Helene Schjerfbeck (1862–1946), and Ellen Thesleff. These works mark a decisive stylistic shift from both Impressionism and academicism and suggest, moreover, that the story does not end in 1900. Indeed, women played an increasingly active role in the French art world in the early twentieth century. An exhibition on the contributions of modern women artists in Paris from 1900 to World War I would be an apt sequel. •

Lauren Jimerson, a Paris-based art historian, currently is writing a book on women artists in early twentieth century France and their representations of the nude.

Notes

1. Marie Bashkirtseff, quoted in Paulien Orell, "Les femmes artistes," *La Cityoenne*, no. 4 (March 6, 1881).
2. Linda Nochlin, "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?," republished in *Women, Art, and Power and Other Essays* (New York: Harper and Row, 1989).
3. Griselda Pollock, "Modernity and the Spaces of Femininity," *Vision & Difference: Femininity, Feminism and the Histories of Art* (London: Routledge, 1988).

A Capsule Aesthetic: Feminist Materialisms in New Media Art

By Kate Mondloch
University of Minnesota Press, 2018

Reviewed by Ellen K. Levy

The fields of art, science, and technology are increasingly porous to each other, and Kate Mondloch insightfully explores the artistic interfaces where such exchanges occur in *A Capsule Aesthetic: Feminist Materialisms in New Media Art*. The author focuses on the work of three artists of the same generation, Pipolitti Rist (b. 1962), Patricia Piccinini (b. 1965), and Mariko Mori (b. 1967), who, respectively, probe some of the implications of embodiment, biotechnology, and neuroculture through creating powerful affective and haptic experiences with roots in feminism. Mondloch's recurrent overall position is that the art she most values causes us to reflect about ourselves, each other, and the technologies that surround us.

The context for Mondloch's analysis is the new materialism in feminist art, examined by such theorists as Stacy Alaimo, Diana Coole, and Samantha Frost, all of whom concentrate on the significance of feminism as a social movement that stresses the human body as a site of self-reflection and knowledge. In the first two chapters, Mondloch shows how feminism and new materialism provide a framework to explore embodied experience, ethics, and politics in art and to theorize interrelationships between human bodies and technologies. The book notes that feminist scholars such as Donna Haraway and N. Katherine Hayles fostered these inquiries over several decades of research. They and many practitioners and art historians provide reasons why the context for art today necessarily includes complexity dynamics and new dimensions of systems theory. Mondloch analyzes key works of the three artists that explore such issues.

The title of Mondloch's chapter about Rist is appropriately named "Critical Proximity" and emphasizes the importance Rist gives to the viewing experience, itself. Many of her exhibitions have pillows on the floor and encourage the viewers to look up at projected images on the ceiling spilling over onto the walls. Mondloch stresses that Rist's staging of overpowering museum installations facilitates the recognition of co-experiences among spectators and their dependence on the illuminated media environment and digital media apparatus that otherwise tend to be unnoticed.

Rist is known for creating video works and installations on a grand scale that are characteristically immersive, colorful, transgressive, embracing, and sensuous. She addresses issues of feminist identity, frequently using herself as a model. For example, Rist's 2008 installation at New York's Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), *Pour Your Body Out (7354 Cubic Meters)*, bombards us with images that explore female bodies, and she pans and enlarges them, often disrupting spatial orientation. In *A Capsule Aesthetic*, Mondloch explains that Rist's installation accomplishes such changes through image juxtaposition and superimposition, lavish hypersaturated color, the remixing of images, and hallucinatory soundtracks. Through them, we, the audience, are

enabled to empathetically share in the frequent shifts of orientation. Mondloch vividly describes how the enveloping ambience developed by Rist appears to animate and create a kind of flocking among reclining viewers, whose sensitivity to those nearby may increase. Whereas critics may cite the obvious popular appeal of electronic music and oversized phenomena in promoting such behavior, Mondloch tends to dismiss some of the New Age aspects of Rist's presentation. She downplays the hippie-like aspect of Rist's work that causes it to be received as a sort of holistic religious or meditative quest even while acknowledging that MoMA provided yoga workouts during the exhibition with Rist's approval. Mondloch views Rist's installations as functioning well beyond their obvious qualities as media spectacle, finding them conducive to perceiving ourselves in new ways.



Fig. 1. Patricia Piccinini, *Subset Red (Portrait)* (1997), from the series *Protein Lattice*, Type C photograph, 31 1/2" x 31 1/2". Photo: Courtesy of the artist.

Mondloch next examines the work of Piccinini, concentrating on her seminal art work, *We Are Family* (2003). Piccinini asks to what extent our empathy can be extended across the human-animal divide. Mondloch points out that Piccinini probes the science-fiction-like implications of radical difference rather than the, by now, commonplace understanding that we share our genetic material with many other animals. The typical example cited is that over 95 percent of genes found in humans have counterparts in the mouse.[1] Mondloch titles her discussion of the essay on Piccinini "Unbecoming Human," a possible reference to a group exhibition, *Becoming Animal*, held at Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (MASS MoCA) in 2005. Nato Thompson curated that exhibition, in which artists not only explored the character of interspecies relationships, but also the human capacity to treat animals with willful neglect. I recall that Kathy High's contribution focused on the plight of mice raised to be experimental subjects in science. Mondloch's point is that Piccinini's art looks at the other side of the humanist/empathy coin, namely our inability to relate to the grotesque. For example, Piccinini's photograph, *Subset Red (Portrait)* (1997; Fig. 1), presumably enlists the viewer's revulsion by portraying the infamous Vacanti mouse—tissue-culture engineered to have an ear on its back—perched like a pet on a woman's shoulder. This photographic pairing of human and nonhuman features a fashion model and a synthetic rat inspired by the Vacanti creature.

Although Mondloch's supplementary notes yield a wealth of important, additional facts, placing some of this information within the main text rather than in notes would have enabled the reader to make important comparisons. For example, within the notes for "Unbecoming Human" is the information that bioartists Oron Catts and Ionat Zurr use actual tissue culture engineering techniques in contrast to Piccinini's symbolic sculptural depictions (134). That information constitutes a pivotal distinction between the literal and largely metaphoric use of tissue culture engineering technology and would have been more accessible if placed within the text. (As a related aside, Catts and Zurr worked in Charles Vacanti's laboratory at Harvard, where he created the monstrous-appearing controversial mouse. This little-known information (not included in *A Capsule Aesthetic*) may now add to the viewer's appreciation of Piccinini's inclusion of the image of Vacanti's mouse in her photograph.) As a rule, the notes did not identify related media and bioart work by artists who typically exhibit at media venues such as the International Symposium of Electronic Arts (ISEA), Ars Electronica, and other international art events (e.g., Michelle Jaffee, Jill Scott). Working outside the mainstream contemporary artworld, they, too, cogently address underexplored issues of empathy and neuroscience but lack museum and gallery support comparable to the artists in *A Capsule Aesthetic*.[2] Such comparisons could well constitute the subject of another book.

Notwithstanding these few reservations, Mondloch consistently makes valuable observations throughout her book. She views Piccinini's art as enabling us to empathetically experience qualities that cannot easily be assimilated into the humanist canon. She offers clear support for her conclusion that Piccinini's art, replete with characteristics that we humans find repellent, can offer a "model for ethical accountability to humans, animals, and technological beings in everyday life."[3]

Mori is the third artist Mondloch discusses at length, examining neuroculture in her chapter, "Mind Over Matter." In it she analyzes *Wave UFO* (2003), Mori's well-known installation, which is a staged event. Participants are ushered up eight stairs by helpers in white laboratory coats into what Mondloch refers to as a pod. It is a tear-shaped futuristic structure (akin, perhaps, to those found in Hieronymus Bosch paintings). Participants are fitted with EEG devices that record electrical frequencies in their right and left hemispheres. Colored spherical shapes

are projected on the ceiling of a futuristically designed architecture, while other images show the degree of synchronicity among the viewers as they watch the shapes. Largely due to the synchronicity, Mondloch claims *Wave UFO*'s "dynamic neurofeedback loop effectively puts affective contagion on display."[4] (Comparisons with media artists similarly pursuing synchronicity, including works by Tali Hinkis, and Kyle Lapidus (LoVid), Suzanne Dikker and Matthias Oostrik with Marina Abromovic, and by Nina Sobell would have been of interest to readers.)

In this chapter, Mondloch also points out the limitations of functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI). Epistemic issues regarding fMRI stem from the fact that, during the performance of a cognitive task, fMRI detects changes in blood flow in various brain regions, but it cannot fully determine the origin of the signal.[5] However, there is nothing in the chapter to suggest that Mori's work shows or produces an awareness of the limitations of neuroscientific imaging (73). But I do accept Mondloch's overall insight that because Mori makes "a series of deliberately nonnormative choices of both *what* to depict and *how*" she encourages the viewer to adopt a critical attitude to technology (99). Mori does this through technicolored brain images set in dramatically designed environments that contrast greatly with the neutral settings of clinical research. The unasked questions prompted by this chapter are: To what degree must artists present artworks that propose correct information as understood by current scientific knowledge? Does that make the art better or more effective as art? Mondloch raises these questions obliquely, and she leaves the answer open.

Mondloch has brilliantly seized upon the icon of the capsule, offering it as an apt metaphor of how the interchange across disciplines seeps into our consciousness. While reading *A Capsule Aesthetic*, I was particularly intrigued by the word "encapsulation" that is reiterated throughout. By fortuitous coincidence, that word appeared within an article I was reading by the late microbiologist, Carl Woese. The following passage 'encapsulates' his holistic view of science.

> The great problems of 19th century biology were of two conceptually quite different types, and this difference would be greatly enhanced in the climate within which 19th and (especially) 20th century biology developed. On the one hand were the "encapsulatable" problems, those of the gene and the cell. Understanding here lay very much in the parts. On the other hand were the holistic problems, evolution and the genesis and nature of biological form (organization), where the parts don't give a real sense of the whole."[6]

In 2004, Woese explained that a balance between technological advance and a guiding vision is essential to science. Here, I believe, is the pertinence of Woese's view to Mondloch's position about art today. As in science, a properly balanced relationship between technological advance and guiding vision is essential to the successful development of an artform. Woese claimed that the molecular era was centered on the "encapsulatable" problems of the gene and the cell, which meant that those biological entities could be studied in isolation."[7] However, he continues to say that reductionism is no longer adequate in many cases. Much the same can be said of art.

I believe that although Mondloch uses the word 'encapsulated' in a somewhat different way from Woese, they both aim to foster a salutary porosity among different fields, which will lead to complexity and self-reflection. Contemporary science has transformed essential ideas of self, affect, memory, and consciousness in recent decades. It broadens the scope of art, which then, in turn, reframes these ideas. We see the constant replay of this cycle, and Mondloch shows that we can benefit by art that is in line with contemporary currents of philosophic and scientific knowledge. The works of Rist, Piccinini, Mori, and many other artists suggest that a reductionist strategy cannot address some of the most fundamental problems in culture. Holistic problems are being brought to the fore, and Mondloch provides a portrait of the ways this shift is occurring.

I strongly recommend *A Capsule Aesthetic: Feminist Materialisms in New Media Art*. Mondloch contributes a deep wealth of knowledge to studies of feminism and of art, science, and technology, and her book serves as a very useful resource for transdisciplinary undertakings. Using artworks created by three well-established artists in the art world as case-studies, Mondloch elaborates knowingly upon each of these artist's affective visions. Mondloch has provided readers with a valuable introduction to subjects little explored. She essentially discusses art as a model for creating co-constitutive relations with the non-human and for embodied encounters with the material world. These are extraordinarily ambitious undertakings and define hers as a holistic approach to the many social upheavals and technological developments that are occurring today. ●

Ellen K. Levy, a NYC artist and former President of the College Art Association (2004–06), has exhibited, lectured, and published widely on art and complex systems. With Charissa Terranova she is co-editing an anthology on the influence of D'Arcy Thompson's *On Growth and Form* (2017) on contemporary culture and is creating a related art project.

Notes

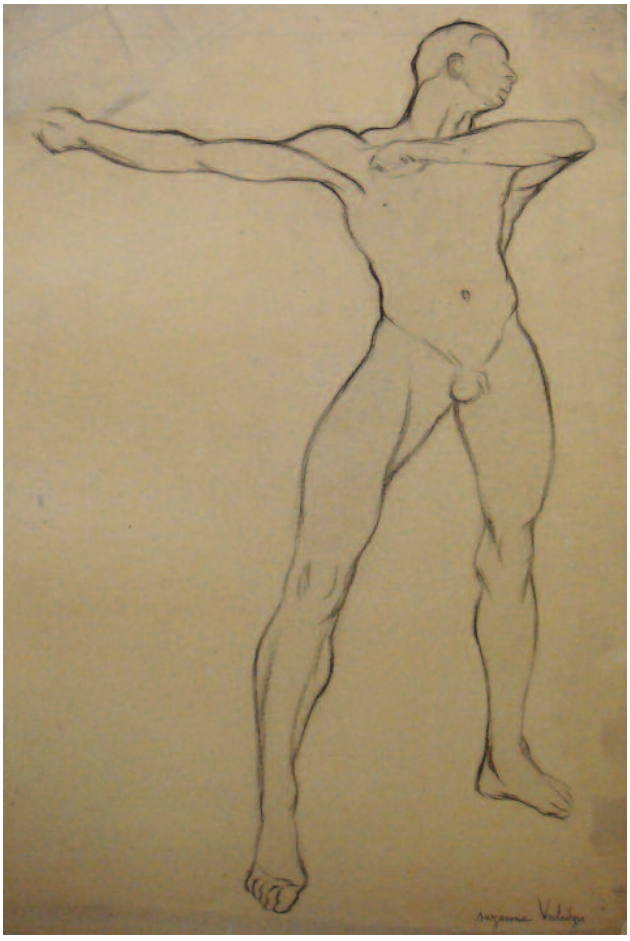
1. Sarah Graham, "Mouse Genome Sequenced," in *Scientific American* (Dec 5, 2002).
2. Edward A. Shanken, "Contemporary Art and New Media: Digital Divide or Hybrid Discourse?" in Christiane Paul (ed.), *A Companion to Digital Art*, (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2016),463–80.
3. Ibid., 67.
4. Ibid., 101.
5. David Attwell & Constantino Iadecola, "The Neural Basis of Functional Brain Imaging Signals," in *Trends Neurosci* 25 (2002): 621–25.
6. Carl R. Woese, "A new biology for a new century," in *Microbiol Mol Biol Rev* 68 (2004):173–86.
7. Ibid., 174.



Pl. 1. Suzanne Valadon, *Le Lancement du filet* (1914), oil on canvas, 79 1/8" x 118 1/2". Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Pompidou, Paris.



Pl. 2. Suzanne Valadon, *Study for Le Lancement du filet* (1914), charcoal on tracing paper, 24 5/8" x 14 9/16". Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Pompidou, Paris. Photo: Lauren Jimerson.



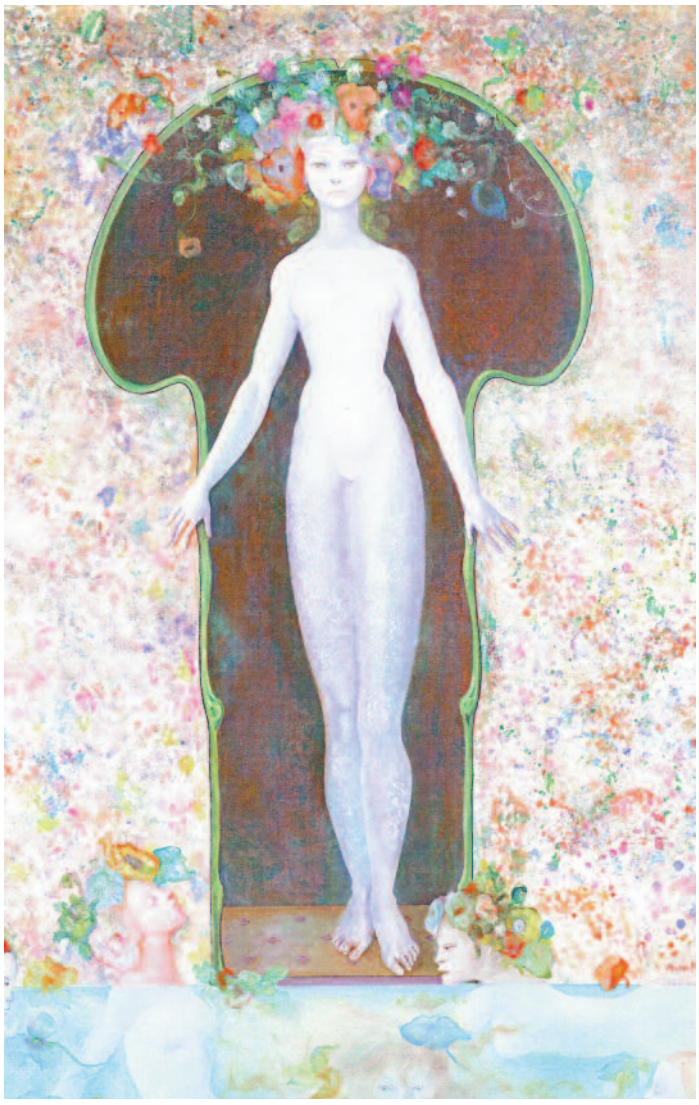
Pl. 3 Suzanne Valadon, *Study for Le Lancement du filet* (1914) charcoal on tracing paper, 23 5/8" x 16 1/2". Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Pompidou, Paris. Photo: Lauren Jimerson.



Pl. 4. Leonor Fini, *The Alcove – Interior with Three Women* (*The Black Room*), (1939), oil on canvas, 36" x 27 7/8". Collection of the Edward James Foundation, Sussex. © Estate of Leonor Fini, 2019.



Pl. 5. Leonor Fini, Costume design for Proserpine, *Leonor's Dream* (1949), pencil, ink, chalk, and gouache on paper, 13" x 19 1/4". © Estate of Leonor Fini, 2019.



Pl. 6. Leonor Fini, *The Lock* (1965), oil on canvas, 45 5/8" x 31 7/8". Verenneman Collection, Brussels. © Estate of Leonor Fini, 2019.



Pl. 7. Leonor Fini, *The Fitting II* (1972), oil in canvas, 59 1/16" x 59 1/16". private collection.
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Pl. 8. Leonor Fini, *Vesper Express* (1966), oil on canvas, 45 5/8" x 31 7/8". Private collection.
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Pl. 9. Leonor Fini, *The Mutants* (1971), oil on canvas, 57 7/8" x 37 3/8". Private collection. Image courtesy of Neil Zukerman, CFM Gallery, New York.
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Pl. 10. Pan Yuliang, *Nude in front of the Window* (1940s), oil on canvas, 9 3/8" x 13". National Art Museum of China, Beijing. Photo: in *Fine Arts selection of Pan Yuliang* (Nanjing: Jiangsu Art Publishing Press, 1988), p. 30.



Pl. 11. Pan Yuliang, *Nude in Red Qipao* (1955), ink and watercolor on paper, 14 1/8" x 10". Collection of Musée Cernuschi, Asian Art Museum of Paris.



Pl. 12. Pan Yuliang, *Self-portrait* (1940), oil on canvas, 35 3/8" x 25 1/4". Anhui Provincial Museum, Anhui. Photo: in Eric Lefebvre, *Song of Spring: Pan Yu-Lin in Paris* (Hong Kong: Asia Society Hong Kong Center, 2018), p. 56.



Pl. 13. Pan Yuliang, *Self-portrait* (1963), oil on canvas, 12 3/8" x 10 1/8". Photo: *The Art of Pan Yu-Lin* (Taibei: National History Museum, 1995), p. 114.



Pl. 14. Penny Siopis, *Tula Tula I* (1994), photocopy, photograph, steel wool, found object and oil on board. 44" x 26". Collection of the artist. Photo: Courtesy of Penny Siopis and Stevenson Gallery.



Pl. 15. Penny Siopis, *Plum Cream*, from the Cake series (1982), oil on board, 59" x 79". Private Collection. Photo: Courtesy of Penny Siopis and Stevenson Gallery.



Pl. 16. Penny Siopis, *Dora and the other Woman* (1989), pastel on paper, 47" x 60". Private Collection. Photo: Courtesy of Penny Siopis and Stevenson Gallery.



Pl. 18. Penny Siopis, *Terra Incognita* (1991), oil and collage on board, 71" x 79". Collection of Johannes Stegmann Art Gallery, Bloemfontein. Photo: Courtesy of Penny Siopis and Stevenson Gallery.



Pl. 17. Penny Siopis, *Who is Pinky Pinky?* (2002), oil and found objects on canvas, 60" x 36". Private Collection. Photo: Courtesy of Penny Siopis and Stevenson Gallery.



Pl. 19. Penny Siopis, detail of *The Baby and the Bathwater*, panel 5 (1992), mixed media on board, 98" x 315". Collection of the artist. Photo: Courtesy of Penny Siopis and Stevenson Gallery.

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