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Front cover: Frida Kahlo, *The Loving Embrace of the Universe, the Land, Myself, Diego and Lord Xólotl* (1949), oil on canvas, 27 1/2" x 25 5/8". Jacques and Natasha Gelman Collection, D.R. © Banco de México, Fiduciario en el Fideicomiso relativo a los Museos Diego Rivera y Frida Kahlo. Av. 5 de Mayo No. 2, col. Centro, alc. Cuauhtémoc, c.p. 06000, Ciudad de México.

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With great pleasure we invite our readers to enjoy outstanding examples of insightful new scholarship on subjects that cross over between historical and contemporary issues. We begin with a fresh interpretation of Frida Kahlo's compositions and those of her friend, the Mexican muralist Aurora Reyes. In deciphering Kahlo's complex imagery, art historians have probed biographical issues, including the tragic accident in Kahlo's youth that subjected her to many operations and the loss of several pregnancies, and the agonies from the betrayals by her husband, Diego Rivera, who indulged in numerous extramarital affairs, including one with Kahlo's own sister. Dina Comisarenco Mirkin here proposes another aspect to consider, one more philosophical and positive, related to Kahlo's lifelong friendships with Reyes and Concha Michel, a poet and political activist. Michel promoted the utopian idea of parity between men and women—that women should have the same authority and economic power as men because of their essential role as mothers.

Comisarenco Mirkin writes that "Some of the ideas that Michel developed about duality, motherhood, the defense of peace, and women's rights can … provide an interpretive key to the iconography of a number of works by Frida Kahlo and Aurora Reyes, two of the artists who were closest to Michel." While not claiming a "direct iconographic inspiration," Comisarenco Mirkin advocates for the "profound mutual understanding" that resulted in their "constructed theories." Michel viewed violence against women as the reason for the loss of the "duality" between the sexes, and this subject found disturbing realization in the works of both Reyes and Kahlo.

Lotte Jacobi was a Jewish photographer who emigrated from Weimar Germany to the United States in 1935. Earlier, she had traveled in Russia to explore a fascination with the Soviet advocacy of modernization. Distinguished scholar Rose-Carol Washton Long here presents some of Jacobi's two thousand photographs from a 1932 visit to Russia, specifically documenting the lives of Tajik and Uzbek women. Of particular interest to Long were Jacobi's photographs of the women of Central Asia in which she addressed the Soviet campaign to abolish face coverings among Muslim women. Long writes, "Knowledge of Jacobi's empathetic portraits of the so-called exotic other, a result of her complex interweaving of photographic attitudes from both the Weimar Republic and the Soviet Union, provides nuance to the problematic issue of how a photographer reacts to tendentious calls to proselytize while at the same time responding to individual desires to make artistically compelling works."

Reflecting a more contemporary focus on the personal as political, Israeli art historian Ayelet Carmi presents studies of intimacy and vulnerability in a male subject by the US photographer Sally Mann. In this case Mann's images are of Larry, her husband of fifty years. The *Proud Flesh* series (2008) documents changes in her partner's body resulting from muscular dystrophy. Photographs of male nudes by women are not common in the history of photography, and Carmi sets aside eroticism as explored in a gay context to concentrate on the sexuality of a married couple. Through a series of images dating from 1977 to the last decade, Mann initially depicts her husband standing in a contrapposto position, like Michelangelo's *David,* and progresses to fragmentary images of a suffering man.

Larry is presented in various poses revealing his increasing deterioration. Carmi's analysis supports her thesis that the white male is experiencing new vulnerabilities in American society. "Using her husband's body and their intimacy," Carmi writes, Mann "exposes the fragility of white masculinity, both as a cultural construction that requires constant defense of its ideas and values, and as a contemporary experience shared by many heteronormative white American men." Furthermore, Carmi explains, "Like Mann's family pictures, the *Proud Flesh* photographs blur the boundaries between private and public, personal and political, real and metaphorical. They create a tension between the representation of Larry as a symbolic construct of American white masculinity, and the contextualization of the works by Mann and others."

The career of US artist Vivien Collens has followed a decades-long trajectory, from painter and collagist to the fulfillment of a longstanding desire to create large-scale sculpture. Her vivid, exuberant constructions are now gracing public spaces in New York State and in New Orleans. Author Jared Rankin's narrative about Collen's "art of serious play" begins with her formal studies in the US and Mexico, travels through time spent at the Cleveland Museum of Art as an instructor and photo librarian, and includes a career-building sojourn at Yaddo artist colony. While marriage and children were among the personal experiences that helped shape the direction of her art, tenacity and inventiveness are the messages gleaned from Collens's broad and deliberative artistic production. On a recent visit to the artist's studio in Cornwall, New York, Rankin observed, "Here Vivien seemed completely at ease, in her endless repository of inspiration, in a boundless and eager sense of play."

Our new book review editor, Aliza Edelman, has done a fantastic job bringing together a dozen reviews to complete the issue, including volumes on well-known and unknown US artists as well as European and South American subjects. We salute Therese Dolan, a member of our *WAJ* Editorial Board, for her excellent review of two recent publications on the French Impressionist Berthe Morisot. Her assessment of the current state of scholarship on this too-often underrated artist is a major contribution to the study of Morisot and her contemporaries. With a strong feminist perspective, Dolan reminds readers that references to Morisot as a "Beautiful Painter" were not necessarily a compliment about her work, and that because this innovative artist among the Impressionists was frequently marginalized, it has taken a century to rectify the neglect. Without denying the importance of feminist authors who have noted the restrictions on women of Morisot's social class, the determination and the candor found in Morisot's paintings is astonishing. From the sadness and doubt evident in the mother watching her sleeping child in *The Cradle*, to the manifest sexuality of *The Psyche mirror*, Morisot is receiving at last much-deserved respect for her independent spirit and insights into the fears and passions of her gender. Hardly a "disciple" of Edouard Manet, she was his competitor, seeking her own recognition.

We thank Old City Publishing as the *Woman's Art Journal* celebrates our fortieth year of continuous publication.

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

Frida Kahlo and Aurora Reyes

Painting to the Voice of Concha Michel

By Dina Comisarenco Mirkin

We must reclaim a word,
a single word that lost its meaning
in the shipwreck of the first truth.
The word is neither Fatherland nor God:
it is the deepest root of solidarity.
The law that we merge from the multiple into the One
and return to the multiple in the fusion of Two.
It is the magic word, the sign of the Eternal.
The living word is the word Love!

—Concha Michel, *Dios Nuestra Señora*, 1966[1]



Fig. 1. Anonymous, *Concha Michel with guitar and Spanish Dress* (n.d). Courtesy of Citlaly Rieder Espinoza. Photo: Archivo Concha Michel.

Over the course of her life, the folklorist, singer, essayist, poet, peasant organizer, and communist militant Concha Michel (1899–1990) (Fig. 1) developed an interesting social theory: She upheld the need to restore the equality, complementarity, and solidarity that she believed had existed between the sexes prior to the rise of the patriarchal system. Michel advocated for recognizing the distinctive value of motherhood for women, maintaining that the economy is not just a social question of subsistence but also a biological or natural matter related to the important female function of reproducing and sustaining life. From her perspective on gender, those female characteristics were such that women shared a vision of the world that favored peace and the common good, in opposition to the individualist and competitive (primarily male) interests inherent to the capitalist system.

As an extraordinary activist, artist, and theorist, Michel was a central figure in post-revolutionary Mexico, particularly during the 1930s. Her courageous defense of women's rights as well as her charismatic personality allowed her to solidify a broad-based female intellectual circle made up of artists, writers, photographers, archaeologists, and other professionals.[2] Although it has not been noted in the national historiography of Mexican art, this group deserves consideration and study as an art collective made up of outstanding women whose ties to each other were not only amicable but also political and aesthetic.

Some of the ideas that Michel developed about duality, motherhood, the defense of peace, and women's rights can then provide an interpretive key to the iconography of a number of works by Frida Kahlo (1907–54) and Aurora Reyes (1908–85), two of the artists who were closest to Michel. This is not to say that her ideas served as direct iconographic inspiration, but rather as a significant element that enables us to approach the affective and cognitive tools that characterized the women artists close to the so-called Mexican Renaissance during the 1930s. In their many shared struggles, the three friends wove a profound mutual understanding, carried out critical analyses of reality, and constructed theories with their words, songs, and paintings. They also imagined possible worlds that are worth getting to know as a fundamental basis for recuperating the memory of other, more complete female genealogies.

Aurora Reyes and Frida Kahlo were classmates at the Escuela Nacional Preparatoria in the early 1920s—very briefly, as Reyes was expelled shortly after enrolling, apparently for getting into a serious physical altercation with another classmate. However, based on many photographs that captured them together in moments of happiness and intimacy (Fig. 2), the two shared a lifelong friendship, so that Reyes was part of the honor guard during the candlelight vigil in Kahlo's funeral at Bellas Artes in 1954.

Concha Michel met Diego Rivera even before his marriage to Lupe Marín. After Rivera married Kahlo in the late 1920s, she and Michel forged a profound, lifelong friendship. We know that the two sang duets on special occasions, such as at the inauguration of the mural featuring Kahlo's students—the Fridos—at the *pulquería* La Rosita in 1943, at Kahlo's final exhibition at Bellas Artes in 1953, and for the demonstration in favor of Guatemala's democratic government, on July 2, 1954, which was the last public demonstration in which Kahlo participated. Also, during Kahlo's cremation, Michel directed a chorus of comrades from the Mexican Communist Party, who bade her farewell by singing "La Internacional."[3]



Fig. 2. Bernice Kolko, *Frida Kahlo and Aurora Reyes* (1953), Fundación Zúñiga Laborde A.C. (México).



Fig. 3. Aurora Reyes, portrait of Concha Michel, detail of *Builders of National Culture*, mural cycle of the Auditorio 15 de mayo, Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación, 1962, temple, 326 m^2. Courtesy of Héctor Godoy Lagunes. Photo: the author.

Michel and Aurora Reyes began to pay each other visits in the late 1930s, during the presidency of Lázaro Cárdenas (1934–40), whom they both knew personally. At the time, Michel was the Secretary of Women's Action (*Secretaria de Acción Femenil*) for the National Peasants' Confederation, and Reyes was acting as Secretary of Women's Action for the National Teachers' Union (*Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación*, SNTE). Aside from their shared labor concerns, they immediately felt a "revolutionary ideological affinity" and a "similar concept of life," that drew them to each other, whereupon they became "friends and comrades forevermore." Although Reyes admitted that their relationship was not always easy, she found Michel's singing and personality absolutely irresistible.[4] Michel, she maintained, was attractive and inspiring, a "force of nature" [*potencia elemental*].[5]

Reyes made portraits of her two close friends at different moments of their lives. She captured Kahlo's image in an intriguing easel painting (1946; Pl. 1) that features the artist in a state of semi-undress, reflected in a mirror propped up on a dresser, upon which one can also observe a shell ("*concha*" in Spanish, also the first name of Michel), positioned very close to her pubis.[6]

Reyes included a portrait of Michel (1962; Fig. 3) in *Constructores de la cultura nacional* (Builders of National Culture), part of her mural cycle at the SNTE Auditorio 15 de mayo (1962), in which Michel appears beside other leading cultural figures. In the center she portrayed Nezahualcóyotl, the poet-king of pre-Hispanic Mexico, flanked by two other notable women—to his right, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, and to his left, Eulalia Guzmán (1890–1985), one of Mexico's first women archaeologists (Fig. 4). Guzmán had recently been attacked by the scientific community over her discoveries at Actateopan, Guerrero,[7] and by including her in the mural, Reyes sought to defend the indigenist stance that she represented.

Reyes also made an allegorical portrait of the close-knit friends, which she titled *Concha, Aurora y Frida* (1949; Fig. 5 and Pl. 2). Here each is allegorized through a different traditional Mexican handicraft. Frida is represented by la Catrina—a character emblematic of death, created by the printmaker Jóse Guadalupe Posada and popularized by Diego Rivera; Concha is represented by la Tlanchana—a siren figure with a guitar, modeled in clay, from Metepec, Toluca; and Aurora depicts herself as la Lupita—a papier-mâché doll painted and decorated with Otomí designs, originally from Celaya, Guanajuato. As Reyes suggests in the triple portrait, the "similar concept of life that we were mutually discovering, ended up [bringing us closer] and [turning us into] friends and comrades forevermore."[8] The three artists were further united by their political ideals, their active membership in the Mexican Communist Party, and the problems they all faced as a result.



Fig. 4. Aurora Reyes, L-R, Diego Rivera, Eulalia Guzmán, Nezahualcóyotl, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, Juan Ruiz de Alarcón, detail of *Builders of National Culture*, mural cycle of the Auditorio 15 de mayo, Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación, 1962, temple, 326 m2. Courtesy of Héctor Godoy Lagunes. Photo: the author.

A significant case within the alternative Mexican women's movement was the formation of The Women's Republic (*La República Femenina*), a political current created by the revolutionary, Juana Belén Gutiérrez de Mendoza (1875-1942). Unlike most of the feminist positions that characterized the era, such as the Sole Front in Favor of Women's Rights (*Frente Único Pro Derechos de la Mujer*), The Women's Republic maintained that women's liberation was to be pursued not by imitating men's activities but by recognizing women's own nature, thus advancing, for several decades, what today is known as the "feminism of difference."[9] (According to the historian Julia Tuñón, "this current struggled because it acknowledged that the antagonism between men and women had the same social importance as the antagonism between social classes, and because it contemplated the specific conditions that resulted in motherhood."[10])

Michel supported The Women's Republic, but also believed in the principle of the original duality of men and women. She pointed out that "for thousands of years, men have abrogated to themselves the right to direct women, and naturally they have done so poorly, because man is no more than man; his faculties do not encompass those of women, who have a profoundly important purpose, which is to defend and advance the species."[11] In this way Michel defended female difference, basing her position on "women's faculties as mothers and as those responsible for human beings," for which reason, in her opinion, "women must have the same authority and economic power as men."[12]

In Concha Michel, her friends found "a fertile teacher who, as Nature has done for others, must have [given us] endless themes, both in [our] work and in [our] everyday, mundane lives," since "for many a Mexican Ulysses, and a few foreign

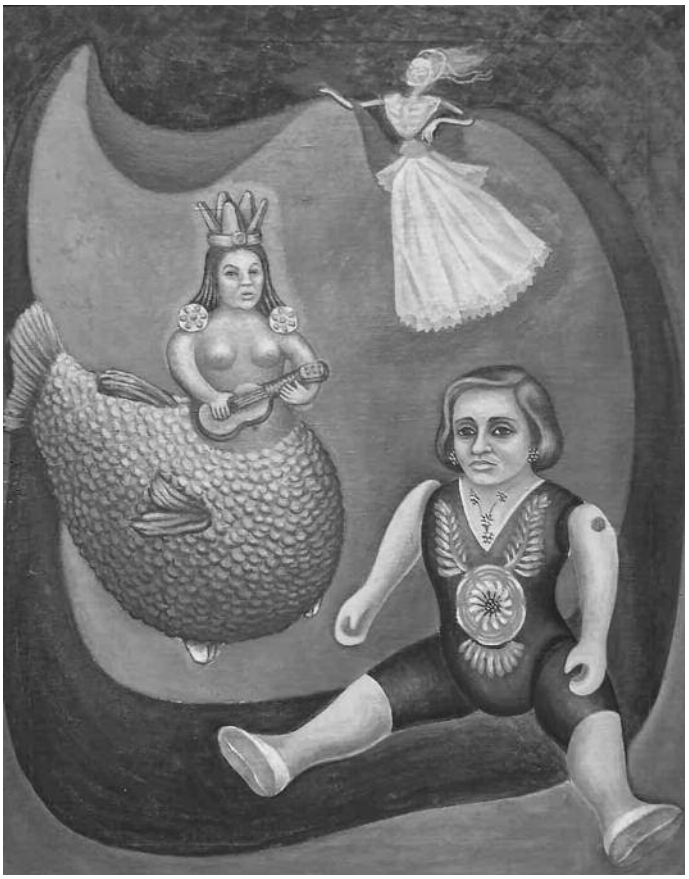


Fig. 5. Aurora Reyes, *Concha, Aurora and Frida* (1949), oil on canvas. Héctor Godoy Lagunes Collection. Courtesy of Héctor Godoy Lagunes. Photo: the author.

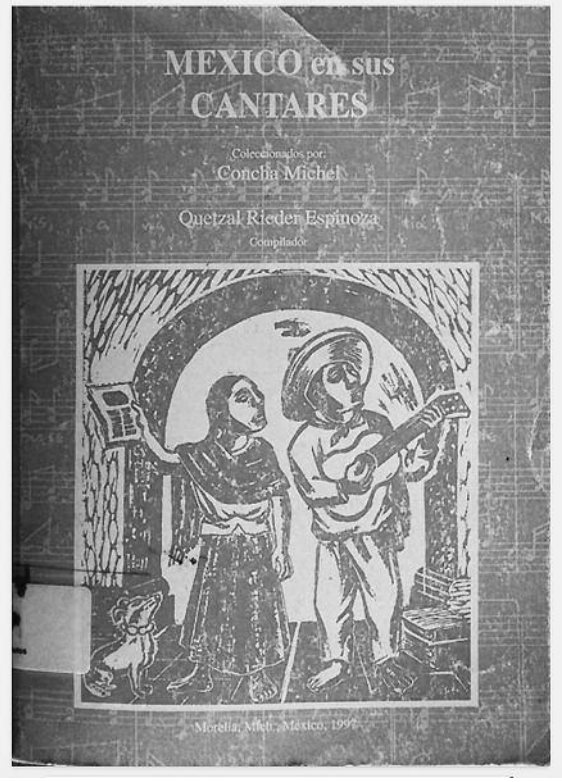


Fig. 6. Cover of Concha Michel, *México en sus cantares*, CCDMX, FONCA, Instituto Michoacano de Cultura y Quetzal Rieder Espinoza, 1997.



Fig. 7. Frida Kahlo, *Diego and Frida* (1944), oil on board, Mexico City, Private Collection, D.R. ©Banco de México, Fiduciario en el Fideicomiso relativo a los Museos Diego Rivera y Frida Kahlo. Av. 5 de Mayo No. 2, col. Centro, alc. Cuauhtémoc, c.p. 06000, Ciudad de México. Photo: FONDO FOTOGRÁFICO CENIDIAP/INBAL. Biblioteca de las Artes.

ones as well, she has been the siren whose voice demanded to be heard completely, whose presence drives creation, whose words make one think and immediately thereafter do or undo." Her words in works like *México en sus cantares* (Mexico through its songs) (Fig. 6), mattered. This is why many works of art feature "her face, her hands, her body as a generative force, [why] we perceive the trace of her melodies in many compositions, [why] we find her philosophical concepts (prose or poetry) based on the thesis of the Human Pair that she proclaims."[13]

Indeed, some works by Kahlo and Reyes can be read using Michel's theories as a key, particularly in relation to her utopian concept of the original duality, the denunciation of oppression, and the violence against women that caused that duality to be lost, as well as her understanding of motherhood as the origin of a solidary, pacifist society. I am not suggesting that we take these ideas and texts as specific iconographic sources, but rather as explicit testimonies that demonstrate some aspects of the worldviews shared by the three women, which also affected their everyday lives. These products of their creativity share certain elements, especially with regard to the relationships and differences that the group considered to exist between the sexes.

Beyond their individual experiences with their romantic partners, and especially with motherhood—Michel had a daughter who died at the age of a year and a half, and later had a son; Kahlo was never able to give birth; and Reyes had two healthy boys—all three elevated that biological concept to the level of a symbol, according to which individualist interests disappear in favor of a solidary connection with the other. This connection would perhaps have originated in what the artist and theoretician Bracha Ettinger calls the "matrixial borderspace," whose trans-subjective sphere all people experience—not necessarily as mothers, but certainly as children, since all human beings gestate in a woman's womb.[14] This relationship demonstrates a possibility of relating to the other that is diametrically opposed to the model of competition and domination that characterizes patriarchal society, referring us back to the original duality that Michel was describing in her writings.

Following is an analysis of works by Kahlo and Reyes that, I believe, exemplify the matrixial webs that were interwoven by the trio of friends. Based on their shared worldview and ethical principles, these works were oriented toward the expression and consummation of the ideal of a more just society that was characterized by greater equality between the sexes and thereby capable of constructing a culture of solidarity and peace.

In the BEGINNING is the DUALITY in all of life,
complementary forces are what first give birth to life

—Concha Michel, *Nueva Canción*[15]

With regard to "primitive," communist, and matriarchal—i.e., matristic—societies (in the sense that men and women were co-participants rather than opponents), Michel drew on historical examples like the Iroquois and ancient Mediterranean cases (studied by Lewis Henry Morgan), the Egyptians (Jean François Champollion), and pre-Hispanic Mesoamerica (Eulalia Guzmán), in which she observed the notion "that the principle of life is dual, female and male."[16] Acknowledging Guzmán´s ideas, Michel indicated that with no duality there is no life, and that the beginning is the Ome-Teotl—the female-male Dual God.[17]

Kahlo frequently alludes in her work to duality: in Mexico's pre-Hispanic and European roots, life and death, Sun and Moon, light and dark, past and present, and feminine and masculine, among others. Some of her many self-portraits display a dual character in which the artist represents herself with Rivera, constituting an iconographic dyad that, aside from whatever psychological readings it might invite, can also be interpreted in terms of the original duality between the sexes.

In *Autorretrato con Diego en mi pensamiento* (Self-Portrait with Diego in My Thoughts, 1943) and *Diego y Frida* (1944; Fig. 7) the couple's integration is total. In the former, Rivera is in front of Kahlo, like an obsession that is part of her being, while in the latter the two artists' faces merge into one. Kahlo's Tehuana garb in the earlier work alludes to the matristic tradition that was so valued by the aforementioned intellectual circle of women. Elsewhere, the snail shells with which she decorated the frame of her double portrait from 1944, which were for her a symbol of birth, fertility, and love, suggest the form of a flower or a uterus, within which she lovingly places the artist couple, which, as Michel indicated in the poem cited in the epigraph above, expresses "the law that we merge from the multiple into the One / and return to the multiple in the fusion of Two."

It is also worth pointing out that although the origin of Kahlo's *Moisés o El núcleo solar* (Moses, or the Core of the Sun) (1945; Pl. 3) was the book *Moses and Monotheism* (1939), written by the father of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud, Kahlo herself acknowledged that her painting features few direct references to Freud's text, which she interpreted quite freely. Rather, it seems likely that the artist was drawing instead on ideas that Michel frequently expounded. Indeed, at the center of the image Kahlo placed the embryonic physiological duality of two cells, a fertilized egg and another symbolizing cellular division, and between the two, the embryo, or the fruit of the union between both sexes. Michel pointed out that, during the colonial period, the Spaniards wanted "to attract indigenous people to the Europeans' conception of the principle of life, which consists of a Male God who was born of nothingness, and out of nothingness created the whole universe, as against indigenous wisdom, which consists in FEMALE-MALE DUALITY, Mother God / Father God, or complementary forces as is proved in the Vital Cell."[18] This is precisely the image that Kahlo's painting reprises.

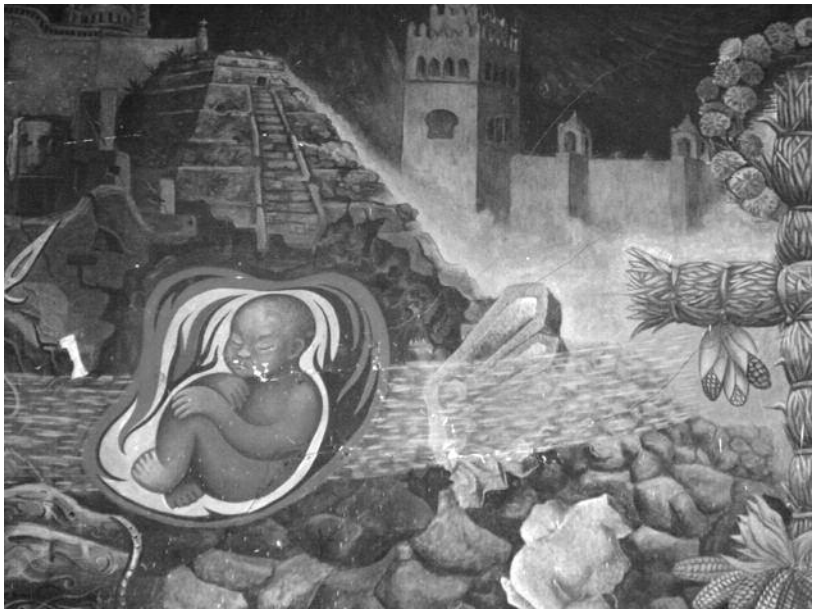


Fig. 8. Aurora Reyes, *Embryo*, detail from *Trajectory of Culture in Mexico*, mural cycle of the Auditorio 15 de mayo, Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación, 1962, temple, 326 m². Courtesy of Héctor Godoy Lagunes. Photo: the author.

Lower in the frame, along the same central axis, is the baby Moses in his basket. His mother, Michel once argued, had left him floating in the river, "certain of the female love that would protect and fortify him until he developed into the great man Moses was to become, the guide and miraculous savior of his people,"[19] thus alluding to female solidarity and the defense of life that characterizes women in accordance with the matristic perspective. In this way, Kahlo recognizes women's fundamental, leading role in the reproduction of the human species. That is, all men and women represented on either side of the composition—politicians and revolutionaries, intellectuals and working masses alike—came into this world thanks to the reproductive role of the women about whom Michel spoke, advocating for acknowledgement of the responsibility, physical strength and social courage entailed by this essential function.

Reyes, also, especially in fragments from her mural cycle at the Auditorio 15 de mayo (1962), expressed the supposed harmony of the original duality. This can be seen in the scenes corresponding to pre-Hispanic society—in which a king and queen govern their people equitably and in which both men and women work side by side, contributing to the well being of the community, and in some scenes of modern society, in which female and male teachers fight side by side in pursuit of the well being of their students. The metaphor of the embryo, as the fruit par excellence of the female-male duality, is also present in this work (Fig. 8 and Pl. 4).

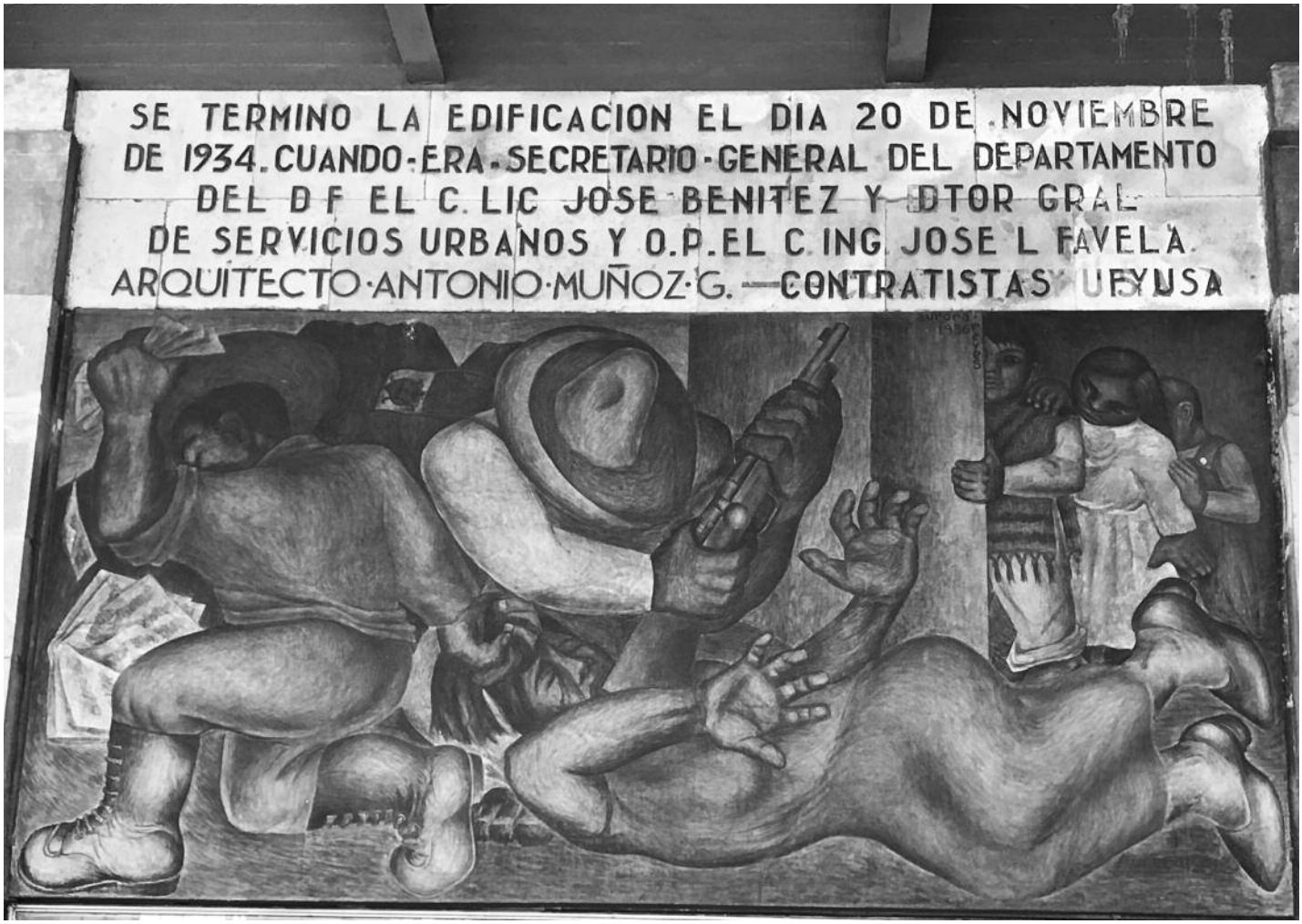


Fig. 9. Aurora Reyes, *Attack on a Rural Teacher* (1936), fresco. Centro Escolar Revolución, Courtesy of Héctor Godoy Lagunes. Photo: the author.

> *Where is Mother Protector?*
> *Where is Procreative Love?*
> *Who has cut the tie that bound*
> *the generations? Where is the kinship*
> *of the species? Where are the offspring*
> *of the mothers of the world?*
> *Where is he who is guilty of alienating Love? […]*
> *Accomplices of silence, all be quiet!*
>
> —Concha Michel, *Ome-Teotl*[20]

Concha Michel believed that the notion of a male God was imposed by the patriarchy and was thereafter used by the capitalist system to great effect, "reducing women to a sort of additional element, which they use even more irresponsibly than they do, for example, earth or water." It negated the idea that "human problems are solved as a pair: mother and father, who are fundamentally or primordially interested in their offspring."[21] Although trade arose after the first matristic or early communist societies, in which there was no private property, men transformed the original communal organization to benefit the few. This left women doubly crushed—by "the economic aspect of subsistence, which originated with private property, and the biological aspect, which originated with exclusively male organization, in which the relations between the sexes lost their natural purpose, becoming so deformed that they could not be degraded further."[22] She pointed out that after the original duality had been broken, "women [were] taken as a freely available force with which any man can do as he pleases, from the dirtiest to the most tragic of acts."[23] To forestall women's struggle to recover that which was taken from them, "the directors of social and religious politics [found] a way to mock that struggle, confusing it with an undifferentiated equality, which is the modern way of nullifying women's own, irreplaceable faculties and personalities."[24]

A significant example with regard to this oppression and violence is Kahlo's *Unos cuantos piquetitos* (A Few Small Nips) (1935; Pl. 5). Although the literature on Kahlo, including Hayden Herrera's biography of the artist, interprets this dramatic painting in exclusively personal terms (i.e., as an expression of her pain and a sarcastic response to Diego's



Fig. 10. Aurora Reyes, *Dramatic Argument* (1946), oil on canvas. Héctor Godoy Lagunes Collection. Courtesy of Héctor Godoy Lagunes. Photo: FONDO FOTOGRÁFICO CENIDIAP/INBAL. Biblioteca de las Artes.



Fig. 11. Bernice Kolko, *Aurora Reyes, painter* (1955). Photo: Fundación Zúñiga Laborde A.C.

infidelity with her own sister, Cristina),[25] it is plausible that the allegory also has a broader meaning—as a critical denunciation of gender violence in its most extreme expression: femicide.

Kahlo's painting was inspired by a news story about a man who had murdered his fiancée. At his trial, he claimed that the twenty fatal stab wounds he gave her were just "a few small nips." The murderer's crude defense of his action is expressed in the painting. With what looks like a smile on his face, he holds a bloody handkerchief, used perhaps to wipe blood from his face, blood that is still visible on the woman's body, on the bed, on his shirt, and even on the frame of the painting. Alluding ironically to the tabloid press of the era, in which femicide was often justified by suggesting that the woman had been unfaithful, or "was asking for it" in one way or another out of a presumed lack of virtue, Kahlo represented the woman in the nude, but wearing a high-heeled shoe and an ornate stocking, thus making explicit this prejudiced vision against female sexuality.

By consolidating male domination over women, the beginning of the patriarchy was also the beginning of prostitution, which Michel called "the female sex's most disgusting form of debasing itself." She went on to add that "in our Mexico ... this "'industry' must have generated half a million pesos or more each month, given how well it was organized," and that something so useful would be convenient to the capitalist system in any part of the world.[26] In her painting Kahlo thus denounced on the one hand women's sexual enslavement in its most extreme, femicidal expression, and the cynicism of the patriarchal system, which was incapable of recognizing its own interests and atrocious crimes.

The same can be said for two works by Aurora Reyes: *Ataque a la maestra rural* (Attack on a Rural Teacher) (1936; Fig. 9 and Pl. 6) and *Argumento dramático* (Dramatic Argument) (1946; Fig. 10 and Pl. 7), referencing a historical event and an allegorical one, respectively. In *Ataque a la maestra rural*, the first mural work completed by a woman artist in Mexico, the artist condemns the atrocious violence against rural women teachers by the most conservative sectors of the time. None of her male colleagues would have broached this theme, and certainly not in such an explicit way.[27] In the mural, a female teacher is being brutally beaten with the butt of a rifle by a peasant whose face is hidden by his sombrero, and from whose neck hangs a scapular indicating his religious fanaticism. At the same time, another fanatic is pulling the teacher by the hair—in this case a fascist. (He is recognizable by his "gold shirt," which marks him as a member of the violent 1930s Mexican Nazi group, the so-called Camisas Doradas, and by the shape of the swastika that his body itself forms.) Holding up a wad of cash in his other hand, the sinister figure symbolizes the capitalist system that, according

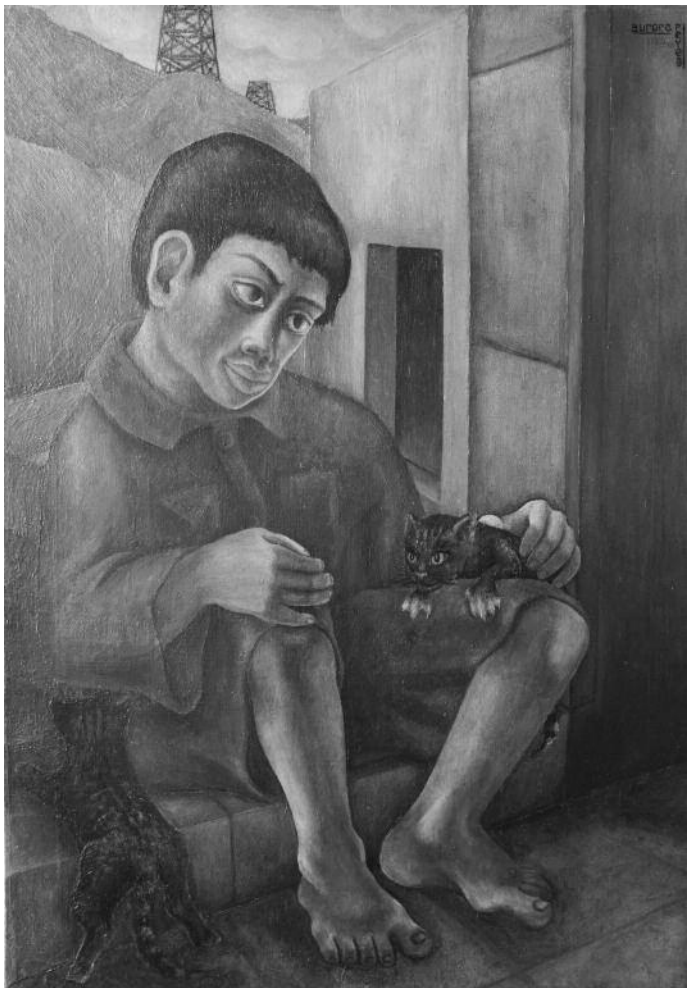


Fig. 12. Aurora Reyes, *Sick Child* (1936), oil on canvas. Héctor Godoy Lagunes Collection. Courtesy of Héctor Godoy Lagunes. Photo: FONDO FOTOGRÁFICO CENIDIAP/INBAL. Biblioteca de las Artes.



Fig. 13. Aurora Reyes, *Woman of War* (1937), oil on canvas. Courtesy of Héctor Godoy Lagunes. Photo: FONDO FOTOGRÁFICO CENIDIAP/INBAL. Biblioteca de las Artes.

to Aurora and her intellectual circle, lies at the origin of this social and gender violence.

Reyes's title, *Argumento dramático*, sheds light on the power of the force exerted by the patriarchal system against women. Here the vulnerability of the two female figures is manifested in their nudity and their soft forms, which prevent them from defending themselves from the brutal attack of the victimizer's whip.

The scene's spatial and temporal indeterminacy favors a symbolic reading of the painting as an expression of the different facets of the structural violence exercised against women in patriarchal society: State violence, domestic violence, and psychological violence. The whip, a traditional symbol "of judicial power and its right to inflict punishment,"[28] thus becomes the ironic metaphor of the "argument"—that is, of the attempt to rationalize violence, frequently "justified" by means of moral and religious questions that have served throughout history to hide countless instances of harassment, mistreatment, rape and femicide. *Argumento dramático* thus constitutes a powerful allegory of male violence as a practice of dominating women.

> *Manly God's descendants are all misshapen*
> *because they betray their mothers and fail to love her offspring,*
> *and so it is, and violence, wars and inhuman hatred.*
> *Everything is turned into business that makes a lot of money*
> *they call war an industry, and call the slaughterhouse art*
> *thousands of wars are unleashed against the entire world.*
>
> —Concha Michel, *Nueva Canción*[29]

Distinguishing herself from the suffragettes of the era, who, in her view, were generally co-opted by the most conservative parties, Michel espoused a matristic feminism of the sort advanced by such forebears as England's Hannah More (1745–1833) and Canada's Rose Henderson (1871–1937). They saw women's maternal condition as making them more respectful toward life and toward the care of human beings, values that were not confined to the domestic sphere, but also turned outward toward public action, thereby dignifying social life.

Michel believed it was not enough for women to be equal to

men in terms of rights and obligations, because "women are directly tied to the production of the human species and must re-conquer the place that nature itself has given them."[30] To dignify themselves, rather than taking men as a model, they should recognize their essential biological and behavioral differences and restore and value their social responsibility as producers and protectors of the human species.

What Michel was proposing was a harmonious, matristic society, without war, without weapons or fortifications, built around trust rather than hierarchies, and without the need to control women's sexuality. Reyes, while pregnant with one of her two children, wrote a letter to her unborn child, whom she imagined was to be a girl, quite movingly expressing her matristic gender consciousness:

> I call you my daughter because I want you to know that all women have dreamt of dignifying life, right now we must conquer a place of justice and respect in the face of the future, so that there will be balance and fraternity among our children, so that no wars arise out of clumsy ambitions, and we must destroy once and for all the chains of slavery formed by ignorance, hatred, and poverty.[31]

Reyes's paintings frequently asserted these ideas, as well as her frustration at the violence and poverty that undermined women's quest to dignify life, exemplified most atrociously in the suffering to which capitalist (Western) society subjects children. Like Kahlo, Reyes and Michel often adopted tehuana dress, a symbol of female independence and rejection of Western culture. Reyes painted a portrait of Estela Ruiz, nicknamed "La Tehuana," who appeared on the ten peso bank note for three decades (1955; Fig. 11). The expressive power of her *Niño enfermo* (Sick Child (1936; Fig. 12) and *Mujer de la guerra* (Woman of War) (1937; Fig. 13), for example, represent her concerns about these evils, which were also made explicit in some of the verses of Michel's corridos. *Niño enfermo* calls to mind Michel's words in her corrido to Lázaro Cárdenas, proclaiming

> *Nineteen hundred and thirty-four*
> *Cárdenas rose to power*
> *and seeing so much poverty*
> *he decided to push forward.*
> *Nineteen hundred and thirty-eight*
> *he nationalized our oil*
> *and then said to the people*
> *this belongs to all of us*.[32]

In the background of this image is part of an oil derrick, which adds a note of hope to the dramatic and tender scene in the foreground, in which a poor, pallid, melancholy and barefoot child finds the energy to pet a cat that accompanies his misery.

Another of Concha's corridos, *La maldición* (The Curse), is a strong rebuke:

> *Cursed be the governments*
> *who, in the name of justice,*
> *kill our children*



Fig. 14. Frida Kahlo, *The Loving Embrace of the Universe, the Land, Myself, Diego and Lord Xólotl* (1949), oil on canvas, 27 1/2" x 25 5/8". Jacques and Natasha Gelman Collection, D.R. © Banco de México, Fiduciario en el Fideicomiso relativo a los Museos Diego Rivera y Frida Kahlo. Av. 5 de Mayo No. 2, col. Centro, alc. Cuauhtémoc, c.p. 06000, Ciudad de México. Photo: FONDO FOTOGRÁFICO CENIDIAP/INBAL. Biblioteca de las Artes.

> *And it's all total injustice…*
> *Gentlemen, beware*
> *the terrible Curse*
> *that a mother put in writing*
> *with blood from her heart*.[33]

Reyes has translated these emotional words into imagery in *Mujer de la guerra*. Here a mother carries her lifeless child in one hand, while the other holds a rifle, a weapon of the terrible and justified "curse" with which she threatens the government that murders children.

The three friends—Michel, Reyes, and Kahlo—understood motherhood not only in a biological sense, or even in relation to a radical opposition to war, but also in broader terms, with symbolic connotations related to the protection and preservation of the human species.

In *El abrazo de amor del universo, la tierra (México), yo, Diego y el Señor Xólotl* (The Loving Embrace of the Universe, the Land [Mexico], Myself, Diego and Lord Xólotl) (1949; Fig. 14 and front cover), Kahlo, here dressed in red, represents her husband as a child in her arms. Both are in turn held by another maternal figure of monumental dimensions, a symbol of the Land of Mexico. Looming behind them is an even larger figure, intermingling with the light and dark sky,

from which two great hands emanate, seeming to shield the entire group in an act of solidarity, as though a symbol of the universe.

Once again, Hayden Herrera has interpreted this work in an exclusively personal sense—in this case as a reflection of Kahlo's decision to take on a maternal role in her complex relationship to her husband, thereby enabling her to grapple with his infidelities.[34] Nevertheless, the work can also be read in relation to Michel's ideas having to do both with the original duality and complementarity of the sexes, and with women's role as protectors and peacemakers. With this interpretive key, the representations of the Sun and the Moon, the light and dark sides of the sky, and the contrasting colors of the large hands in the foreground all seem to echo the original duality embodied by the coupling of Frida and Diego in the center of the composition. In an often-quoted passage from her diary, Kahlo wrote the following with regard to her husband:

> *Diego: principle*
> *Diego: builder*
> *Diego: my child*
> *Diego: my fiancée*
> *Diego: painter*
> *Diego: my lover*
> *Diego: "my husband"*
> *Diego: my friend*
> *Diego: my mother*
> *Diego: my father*
> *Diego: my son*
> *Diego = myself*
> *Diego universe,*
> *diversity in unity*[35]

In this explicit and poetic way, she expressed this unity that, in spite of diversity, brings us back to precisely the complementarity of their coupling, whereby love enables them to adopt different roles over time—like the simultaneous duality and unity to which Michel refers in the poem from which we cited the epigraph above from "*Dios Nuestra Señora*."

This pantheistic vision—which brings to mind ideas that she also expressed in *Ome-Teotl*—is made explicit in another entry from Kahlo's diary:

> We are nothing more than direction construction and destruction vectors to be alive, and to feel the anguish of waiting for the next minute and participating in the complex current of not knowing that we direct ourselves, through millions of stone beings—of bird beings—of star beings—of microbe beings—of beings that are sources of ourselves— a variety of the one, inability to escape the two—the three— the etc. always—in order to return to the one. But not to the sum (sometimes called god—sometimes freedom, sometimes love—no—we are hate—love—mother—child—plant—earth—light—ray—etc.—always—world-giving world—already universes and universe cells! [36]

The maternal role in which Kahlo represents herself bespeaks her sense of a profound union with nature that goes beyond the biological act of motherhood. After affirming that no one could ever know how much she loved Diego, another fragment of her diary states: "I am not just the mother, I am the embryo, the germ, the first cell… I am he, from the most primitive and most ancient cells, which over "time" turned into him."[37]

Also worth noting is the wound in the neck of the Frida figure, which extends into the deep crevasse in the personification of the Earth, referencing the vulnerability and the danger involved in losing the original harmony that feature both in Michel's texts and in some of the pieces by Reyes and Kahlo herself, as discussed above.

> *We must humanize the world, turn it into paradise,*
> *Animals show us how to live without conflict*
> *Organized around their base, which is MOTHER,*
> *FATHER and CHILD*
> *Whence the whole order of our lives derives,*
> *solidarity gives us a way out,*
> *it is the LAW of balance, it is humanity united.*
> —Concha Michel, *Nueva canción*[38]

From their respective creative fields, Concha Michel, Frida Kahlo, and Aurora Reyes all expressed their shared viewpoint. They imagined a matristic utopian society in which the sexes complemented each other; they defended women's rights; and they denounced women's oppression by the patriarchal society (in which we are still immersed today). The three friends fought epic battles not only with the conservative society of their time, but also with the core of the Mexican Communist Party and with the feminist movement of the 1930s, circumstances that seem to have drawn them even more closely together.

"The deepest root of solidarity"—a phrase taken from Michel's poem "Dios Nuestra Señora," is the source of this essay's epigraph and theme. Firstly, it refers to the balance and complementarity between the sexes, which she saw as having been broken at some point in the course of history by the patriarchy's deafening monologue, and which, she argued, must be recovered. It also refers to the dialogue between the three artists, three friends, which, with the passage of time, has been rendered all but invisible, almost erased from the historiography of Mexican art.

Throughout history, we have been deprived of the memory not only of our female artistic genealogy, but also, first and foremost, of the ties of female collectivity. Recovering them is a necessary, urgent task, a way to develop the agency necessary to act on reality and effectively to create new, different, and more just worlds than the one we know. It is a path toward restoring the compassion, empathy and sense of community that define our very essence as human beings—or to use Concha Michel's words once more, to "humanize the world" and thereby "turn it into paradise." •

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Notes

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1. Concha Michel, *Dios Nuestra Señora* (God, Our Mistress), (Mexico City: Secretaría de Educación Pública, 1966).
2. Concha Michel was personal friends with the writer Lupe Marín (1895–1983), who was the second wife of Diego Rivera; the photographer Tina Modotti (1896–1942); and the visual artists Frida Kahlo, Aurora Reyes, and Isabel Villaseñor (1909–53). As a member of the League of Revolutionary Writers and Artists (Liga de escritores y artistas revolucionarios, LEAR) and the Mexican Communist Party, Michel also interacted with other renowned women of the era, including the painter María Izquierdo (1902–55); the archaeologist, teacher, and feminist Eulalia Guzmán (1890–1985); the journalist and feminist Adelina Zendejas Gómez (1909–93); Frances Toor (1890–1956), the American editor of the influential cultural journal *Mexican Folkways* (1925–37); and the anthropologist and cultural promoter Anita Brenner (1905–74), author of *Idols behind Altars: Modern Mexican Art and its Cultural Roots* (1929). Outstanding women in other fields, including the actress Dolores del Río (1906–83), the singer-songwriter Chavela Vargas (1919–2012), and the novelists and journalists Magdalena Mondragón (1913–1989) and Josefina Vicens (1911–1988) were also part of the female artistic circle of 1930s Mexico City.
3. Raquel Tibol, *Frida Kahlo: una vida abierta* (Mexico City: Diversa, 1983), 24.
4. Ibid., 15–16.
5. Aurora Reyes, prologue to Concha Michel, *México en sus cantares* (Mexico City: FONCA, Instituto Nacional Indigenista, Instituto Michoacano de Cultura y Quetzal Rieder Espinoza, 1997), 15–19.
6. It is worth mentioning that around the same time, the noted photographer Lola Álvarez Bravo, another friend of Kahlo, also portrayed the artist gazing at herself in a mirror. See, for example, *Frida Kahlo ante un espejo (Frida looking into mirror)* (ca. 1944), *Frida Kahlo sentada en su tocador (Frida sitting at her dressing table)* (ca. 1945), and *Frida Kahlo y su reflejo en el guardarropa* (*Frida Kahlo and her reflection into her wardrobe*) (ca. 1945). Álvarez Bravo later photographed the mirror as an allegory of Kahlo's death, as in her work *Tocador de Frida Kahlo con esfera y esqueletos (Frida´s dresser with sphere and skeletons)* (1954).
7. Originally, Reyes had also included Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, whom she later replaced with Juan Ruiz de Alarcón. She also portrayed Valentín Gómez Farías, General Lázaro Cárdenas, José Guadalupe Posada, Orozco, Rivera, Siqueiros, Gabino Barreda, José Vasconcelos (with two faces), Justo Sierra, Narciso Bassols and Jaime Torres Bodet.
8. Reyes, prologue to Michel, *México y sus cantares*, 15.
9. After discussing the contributions of Clara Zetkin and Alexandra Kollontay in *Dos antagonismos fundamentals (Mexico City: Editorial de la Izquierda de la Cámara de Diputados, 1938)*, 68–74, Michel points out the importance of Juana G. de Mendoza in the Mexican context, and extensively cites several passages of that foundational text.
10. Gabriela Cano, "Más de un siglo de feminismo en México," *Debate feminista* 14, no. 7 (Oct. 1996), 352–53.
11. "Concha Michel habla sobre la dualidad," interview with Concha Michel by Araceli Nuri Torres and Delia Ortega de Dorfman, *Despierta mujer. Revista de la mujer trabajando* (March 4, 1977), reproduced in Olga Martha Peña Doria, *En busca de la dualidad. La obra literaria de Concha Michel* (Mexico City and Guadalajara: Silla Vacía editorial, and Centro Universitario de la Costa Sur de la Universidad de Guadalajara, 2015), 70–71.
12. Ibid.
13. Reyes, prologue to Michel, *México en sus cantares*, 15–17.
14. Bracha Ettinger, "Copoiesis," in *Ephemera | The Jump, or, What Is Art? Theory & Politics in Organization* 5, no. 10 (2005). Available online at http://www.ephemerajournal.org/sites/default/files/5-Xettinger.pdf, consulted Nov. 19, 2018.
15. Michel, "Nueva canción," in *México en sus cantares*, 214.
16. Michel, "Advertencias," In Dios-principio es la pareja, (God-beginning is the couple) (Mexico City: Costa Amic, 1974), 109–10.
17. The acknowledgment to Guzmán in Michel´s text is a general one; there is no explicit publication that she refers to.
18. Michel, *México en sus cantares*, 135.
19. Concha Michel, "La madre de Moisés y sus 10 mandamientos," part of "Génesis," published in *Dios-principio es la pareja*, 201.
20. Concha Michel, "Ometeotl," reproduced in Doria, *En busca de la dualidad*, 90.
21. Michel, "Advertencia," 96.
22. Michel, *Dos antagonismos*, 28.
23. Michel, "Advertencia," 96.
24. Ibid, 96–97.
25. Hayden Herrera, *Frida: A Biography of Frida Kahlo* (New York: Perennial Library, 1983), 187–89.
26. Michel, *Dos antagonismos*, 96–97.
27. See Dina Comisarenco Mirkin, "Aurora Reyes's 'Ataque a la Maestra Rural'" The First Mural Created by a Mexican Female Artist, *WAJ* 26, no. 2 (Fall 2005–Winter 2006), 19–25.
28. Jean Chevalier and Alain Gheerbrant, *Diccionario de los símbolos*, trans. Manuel Silvar and Arturo Rodríguez (Madrid: Herder, 2003), 629.
29. Michel, "Nueva canción," 214.
30. Michel, *México en sus cantares*, 48.
31. Aurora Reyes, Letter to her unborn child, consulted at The Fondo de Autor Aurora Reyes, CENIDIAP/INBA, from the Biblioteca de las Artes, CENART.
32. Michel, "Corrido a Lázaro Cárdenas," in *México en sus cantares*, 223.
33. Michel, "La maldición," in Ibid., 216.
34. Hayden Herrera, *Frida Kahlo: The Paintings* (New York: Harper Collins, 1993), 175.
35. *El diario de Frida Kahlo. Una nueva mirada*, (Mexico City: La Vaca Independiente, 2017), 38.
36. Ibid., 118–19.
37. Ibid., 85–86.
38. Michel, "Nueva canción," 214.

Dangerous Portraits?

Lotte Jacobi's Photos of Uzbek and Tajik Women

By Rose-Carol Washton Long

The images that the well-known Weimar Republic photographer Lotte Jacobi (1896–1990) took on her 1932 Russian trip offer an unusual opportunity to examine the conflicting dialogue between propaganda and experimental photography that engaged so many during the interwar years in the Weimar Republic and the Soviet Union. From the approximately 2000 shots that this experienced photographer took in Soviet Central Asia,[1] I've selected ones that focus on Uzbek and Tajik women. Jacobi's photos of these figures reveal both her fascination with Soviet promises of modernization as well as providing a rare window into the complexity of their disastrous unveiling campaign in Central Asia.[2] Moreover, they are a prime example of the problematic interactions between the Republic's leftists and the Russians. Yet, the few who have written about Jacobi pay little attention to the impact of Soviet Union photographic demands on her works, reflecting perhaps Jacobi's later fears, after she immigrated to the United States in 1935, of being called a Communist in a country that viewed the Soviet Union as a major threat. Even the German scholars Marion Beckers and Elisabeth Moortgat, in the only book on her 1932 Russian trip, do not examine the effect of Communist ideology on her photography.[3]

By 1928, after returning from studying cinematography at Munich's photo technological academy, Jacobi (1929; Fig.1) began to play a major role in her family's Berlin commercial photography business.[4] Her secular Jewish family had moved to Berlin from Poznan (where she was born) after World War I when the city became part of Poland, and she had decided in 1925 to follow her father's career as her 1916 marriage was dissolving. Her studies brought an awareness of the power of film stills as well as knowledge of the newest trends in photography to the Atelier Jacobi. Her photo of Lotte Lenya (1928; Fig. 2), taken just before Lenya's starring role in the premiere of Brecht's *Threepenny Opera* (which achieved lasting fame for the young actress), captured the aura of Weimar's New Woman. Jacobi's tight, crisp focus on the face and the dramatic contrasts of light and dark celebrated the lessons of the *Neues Sehen* (literally New Seeing), more commonly referred to as the New Vision, which had begun to dominate experimental photography in late-twenties Weimar.[5] Jacobi's contact with other professionals, as well as her mother Maria's (usually called Mia) solicitation of business, led to the appearance of her work in the illustrated weeklies such as *Berliner Illustrite Zeitung* (Berlin Illustrated Weekly), *Die Dame* (The Lady), *UHU* (Owl) among others.[6] Numerous other Weimar photographers, such as Erich Salomon, Ringl + Pit (Grete Stern and Ellen Auerbach), Yva (Else Simon Neuländer)—also secular Jews like Jacobi—took advantage of



Fig. 1. Lotte Jacobi, Self-Portrait of Lotte Jacobi, Berlin, 1929. © 2019, University of New Hampshire, Lotte Jacobi Collection.



Fig. 2. Lotte Jacobi, Lotte Lenya, Berlin, 1928. © 2019, University of New Hampshire, Lotte Jacobi Collection.

the opportunity to work in commercial publishing, which seemed freer from anti-Semitic challenges than other parts of Weimar society. The Jacobi family studio was in the newly modish west end of Berlin, with its multitude of cafés and bars, where Jacobi met Margarete Kaiser—the editor of the women's magazine *Die schaffende Frau* (The Creative/Productive Woman), whose 1929 cover featured a version of Jacobi's now canonical photo (Fig. 3) of Käthe Kollwitz, the first woman admitted to the Berlin Academy of Arts.[7] Less angular and softer than the photo of Lenya, Jacobi's centering of Kollwitz's head and direct focus on her formidable eyes capture the dignity of this socially committed and much admired artist.[8]

Jacobi's left-leaning political commitment swiftly allowed her to gain access to numerous Weimar Communists and radicals such as John Heartfield, who used several of her photographs in his and Kurt Tucholsky's 1928 photobook, *Deutschland, Deutschland über Alles* (Germany, Germany Above All). She had open access to Erwin Piscator's leftist theatrical performances, where she photographed the former Bauhaus teacher Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, who had produced scenery designs for that theater. Later she remarked of Moholy-Nagy that she "liked to be together with him" and admired his work.[9] Her admiration for the photographic work of Tina Modotti, a member of the Mexican Communist party, led Jacobi to open her studio to Modotti when she appeared in Berlin before traveling to Moscow. By 1932, she had photographed Ernst Thälmann, leader of the German Communist Party (hereafter KPD), and other KPD members like Egon Erwin Kisch, part of the international Comintern, known for his reportage on ordinary people living in Europe's major cities as well as Soviet Asia.[10] Although born in Prague, Kisch lived in Berlin during the mid and late twenties, traveling frequently to the Soviet Union. As a secular Jew born on the peripheries of German-speaking lands,[11] he had an outsized impact on Jacobi, who shared many of his views.[12]



Fig. 3. Lotte Jacobi, Käthe Kollwitz, Berlin, 1929. © 2019, University of New Hampshire, Lotte Jacobi Collection.



Fig. 4. Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, Portrait of Lucia Moholy, ca. 1926



Fig. 5. The Old and the New: Veiled Uzbek Women Joining the Co-Operative Society, USSR *in Construction* 7-8, 1930, 46.

Like many secular Jewish intellectuals in Weimar that moved in leftist circles, Jacobi was intrigued by Soviet promises of economic equality and justice for all peoples, naively believing that the Soviets could be the model for this transformation. She was not alone in wanting to photograph or visit the Soviet Union. In Germany, so many writers, journalists, politicians, and scientists wanted to visit the new Soviet Union that the term "revolutionary tourist" was coined to apply to them.[13] But Jacobi's close connections with other KPD members such as Max Hoelz, whom she photographed for the frontispiece of his 1928 autobiography, belie this designation of tourist. Both Jacobi and her mother, as well as Kisch, avidly supported Hoelz, whose imprisonment for his Robin-Hood like activities of robbing banks to give to the poor had made him a leftist symbol of Weimar injustice. A few years after his 1928 release from jail, Jacobi wrote to him that she was considering "working for the party," and, although she attended some party meetings, she never became a member.[14]

Nonetheless, Jacobi's approach to photography was close to Communist Party demands in both Germany and the Soviet Union for direct, documentary-like reporting that engaged with the everyday world.[15] Indeed, the cultural historian Katerina Clark reports that Comintern efforts in the late twenties and early thirties were focused on Berlin.[16] The 1931 issue of the Communist sponsored German periodical *Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung* (AIZ, Workers' Illustrated Newspaper) provided one direction with its allegedly fact-based photo essay, "24 Hours in the Life of a Moscow Worker Family," detailing the improvement in the lives of the ordinary Filippov family.[17] Still, the impact of Weimar photographers on Jacobi's work should not be discounted. While Jacobi's close focus and cropping of the head of Lotte Lenya reflected the experimental New Vision direction of the Berlin art world as typified by Moholy-Nagy's portrait of his wife, the photographer Lucia Moholy (1926; Fig. 4), her Central Asian work has a close kinship with the contemporaneous, representational photography of August Sander, who believed the portrait revealed an individual's place in society, and perhaps even



Fig. 6. Lotte Jacobi, Stalinabad street scene, 1932. © 2019, University of New Hampshire, Lotte Jacobi Collection.

conveyed political identification.[18] In Germany, fascination with physiognomic theories which related facial and body types to psychological and emotional attitudes resulted at the end of the twenties in numerous photobooks, of which Sander's 1929 *Antlitz der Zeit* (Face of Our Time) may be the most well-known. Other Weimar photobooks such as Helmar Lerski's purposely empathetic 1931 *Köpfe des Alltags* (Everyday Heads) also relate to the approach Jacobi used in her Central Asian portraits.[19]

Partly because her shot of Thälmann was used by the KPD for their election poster, Jacobi received their support, and then official Russian permission, granted to only one other woman photojournalist—the American Margaret Bourke-White—a year earlier, to travel and to photograph in the Soviet Union.[20] Through the efforts of Kisch, Jacobi was invited, when she arrived in Moscow in August 1932, to record the official banquet for the French Pacifist-communist Henri Barbusse.[21] Kisch was also responsible for introducing Jacobi to the vice president of the Tajik Soviet Socialist Republic, who in turn invited her to photograph in Stalinabad (now called Dushanbe).[22] The approximately 1,860-mile trip, made later that same year by the recently created train route and then by car,[23] took her from Moscow to Stalinabad, where she began her three-month photographic journey.



Fig. 7. Lotte Jacobi, Stalinabad marketplace, 1932. © 2019, University of New Hampshire, Lotte Jacobi Collection.



Fig. 8. Lotte Jacob, Veiled Uzbek women selling tyubeteikas (skullcaps), Samarkand, 1932. © 2019, University of New Hampshire, Lotte Jacobi Collection.



Fig. 9. Max Penson, Women in Burquas, Tashkent, 1930s.

Even before Jacobi began her trip, she was exposed to Kisch's laudatory books about Stalin's five-year plan to modernize and industrialize the feudal systems of Central Asia. Following the party line in his 1932 book *Asien Gründlich Verändert* (Changing Asia), Kisch blamed religion, especially the Muslim practice of secluding women and child marriages, as significant barriers to education for all and, as a result, for lowering productivity.[24] When Jacobi arrived in Stalinabad, party leaders were discussing how the banishment of the heavy head-to-toe horsehair and cotton veils— *chachvon* and *paranji*—that were required when women left their homes, could be done without alienating the population.[25] Although no law had been passed forbidding the use of veils, due in part to the survival of the Leninist position of encouraging some tribal customs,[26] nonetheless, lifting the veil was a sign for the "civilizing mission" of the Soviets. As one Communist leader elaborated: "the chadra [veil] is the shameful mask of … centuries of despotism and slavery, … an obstacle on the path toward the revolutionary advancement of the global working class."[27] It's not surprising that Russian magazines such as *SSSR Na Stroike/USSR in Construction* (1930; Fig. 5), intended in part for export and printed in several languages, would contrast an image of women wearing these heavy veils with a younger uncovered woman, and would write: "The Old and the New: Veiled Uzbek Women Joining the Co-Operative Society."[28]

Jacobi took numerous photographs of these encumbered women during this 1932 trip. In one (Fig. 6) she contrasts a covered woman with an uncovered man, both literally and figuratively walking away from that sign of modernity—the automobile. In another (Fig. 7), her attention to detail allows us to feel the weight of the *chachvon*. Comparing a Jacobi photo (Fig. 8) with Soviet photographer Max Penson's image of covered women (1930s; Fig. 9), we might notice that Penson gives these figures a heroic twist by centering them and showing them moving in sturdy boots.[29] Jacobi on the other hand, informed by New Vision photography, chose a vantage point from above to emphasize the women's subordinate position. Yet, in both of these photos, the ethnographic details of the exotic outsider intrigue and repel us simultaneously.

According to scholars of Soviet Central Asia, Douglas Northrop and Shoshana Keller, Uzbek and Tajik Communist Party leaders used a variety of methods to try to banish these heavy coverings, compelling women to attend meetings without veils, ordering Imams and even husbands to make their

Fig. 10 Lotte Jacobi, Uzbek people, 1932. © 2019, University of New Hampshire, Lotte Jacobi Collection.





Fig. 11. Lotte Jacobi, Uzbek woman removing her veil, 1932. © 2019, University of New Hampshire, Lotte Jacobi Collection.

women remove their veils,[30] a scene which Jacobi captured (Figs. 10 and 11). Her interest in this issue is indicated by the number of shots that she took of this couple, as she did not often take multiple images of individual situations.[31] We might be startled by the husband's tentative expression and the wife's somewhat quizzical look, an indication that this woman might not have been completely sure that she wanted to reveal her face. Could Jacobi be expressing sympathy for this puzzled figure?

For many Muslim women, unveiling triggered intensely negative reactions. As a result, despite all the urging, they often covered up again after they were forced to attend local Communist Party meetings. A satirical Uzbek song illustrates the problem: "On the 7th of March I tore off my veil. But before I reach home I bought three new paranjis. To veil myself more darkly."[32] Part of the problem was that many party members from western Russia did not speak the local language, and doctrinaire groups such as the unintentionally farcically named Union of Militant Godless from Uzbekistan, were often ignorant of the intensity of local customs.[33] For example, men whose wives unveiled were shamed by their tribes or groups, and those uncovered women who were not openly called prostitutes and killed were subject to a form of psychological abuse by being told that they would not be able to be buried or enter into heaven.

Should we consider Jacobi a propagandist for the Soviets, for her photos of these Tajik and Uzbek women? Aspects of her straight approach to photography related to the Soviet campaign against experimentalism and aestheticizing. Although Moholy-Nagy's well-known treatise, *Painting, Photography and Film*, was published in Russian in 1929, neither this book nor his portraits were viewed favorably by the Soviet critics, who referred to his work as formalist and out of touch with social needs.[34] Jacobi's work was at times close to the Soviet demands for clear visuals that confirmed the beneficial work of the Soviet state, an approach that began to be called Socialist Realism.[35] During her trip, Jacobi often photographed official gatherings such as this celebration of the October Revolution, showing a group of women in modern dress, holding their new flag (Fig. 12). She obviously was so taken with one of the young leaders that she took several individual shots of her. Similar to Soviet photographers such as Penson or Georgy Zelma's uplifting portrayal of women at work in that region,[36] Jacobi has a number of photos of seemingly cheerful women, posing as she photographed them. Jacobi's slightly smiling girl in a silk factory (Fig. 13) is not too different from Zelma's photo (Fig. 14) from the late thirties of a seemingly happy, confident young woman working her machines, taken at a time when Stalin demanded clear support of his attempts to industrialize, even if his policies were not successful. Like many of these Soviet photographers, Jacobi represented young women attending school and adults in education classes (with men and women separated) (Fig. 15), where Stalin's name occupies a key place in the upper portion of the photo.

The portrait of the aunt of the Communist party leader and banker Fayzulla Khodzhayev,[37] is one of the most carefully planned portraits that she took on her trip. She shot several different poses, including Fig. 16, and an image she later titled *Madonna* (Fig. 17), that indicates how Jacobi took a seemingly documentary snapshot and turned it into a daunting portrait.



Fig. 12. Lotte Jacobi, Tajlk women at 15th anniversary celebration of the October Revolution, Stalinabad, Nov. 7, 1932. © 2019, University of New Hampshire, Lotte Jacobi Collection.



Fig. 13 (left). Lotte Jacobi, Woman working in silk factory, Khujand, Dec. 1932. © 2019, University of New Hampshire, Lotte Jacobi Collection.



Fig. 14. (right). Georgy Zelma, "Textile Worker", 1939.

We know that local party leaders and their families were urged to be models for others, to be the trope for the new unveiled woman, and Jacobi's careful positioning of Khodzhayev's aunt's uncovered face may reflect her interpretation of this so called civilizing mission. In the *Madonna* image, Jacobi cropped the white cloth swaddling her head, making it more of a contrast with the dark background, and suggested closed eyes, giving Khodzhayev's aunt a slightly otherworldly quality, a sense of spirituality that perhaps other Muslim women could look up to. This version recalls the widespread interest of late-twenties Weimar photographers such as Sander and Lerski in using expressive close-ups not only as emblematic of specific types but also to humanize. The care with which Jacobi gave this aunt a solemn and sober expression reflects, for example, Lerski's *Cleaning woman* (1931; Fig. 18) from his photobook *Köpfe des Alltags*. Indeed, she endowed her portrait of this woman with the dignity and monumentality that she gave to her portraits of celebrities like Kollwitz. Since we know the titles were added after the fact—that is when she came to the United States—we may wonder whether Jacobi originally planned to use a Christian reference if the photos were to be circulated by the anti-religious bureaucrats of the Soviet regions. Still, the multiple shots of "Comrade" Khodzhayev's aunt may reflect some of the tensions behind the unveiling campaign.

At times, Jacobi's portraits might even be considered subversive. For example, she captured women engaged in individual work, a practice not celebrated at this time of forced collectivization. In a photo of a women selling flat bread (Fig. 19), we see a person whose head and hair may be covered but whose face is not, reminding us that not all traditional Uzbek and Tajik women wore face veils. Comparing this photo to one by Penson (Fig. 20), of a grinning cotton picker, a woman who is not only unveiled but reveals her hair, we notice how the inclusion of a worker culling cotton in the background made this a representation of not just an individual but of the total effort, i.e., the so-called happy result of collectivization.[38] Jacobi, on the other hand, used architectural details as a framing device, cutting off any suggestion of deep space, in order to focus the viewer's gaze entirely on the bread seller and her product. Her approach recalls Sander's method in his 1929 photobook *Antlitz der Zeit* (Face of Our Time) of flattening the illusion of distance to bring attention to his subject, as he did for example in *Proletarian Mother* (Fig. 21), a device he used to



Fig. 15. Lotte Jacobi, Adults studying mathematics, Central Asia, 1932. © 2019, University of New Hampshire, Lotte Jacobi Collection.



Fig. 16. Lotte Jacobi, Aunt of Comrade Fayzulla Khodzhayev, Stalinabad, 1932. © 2019, University of New Hampshire, Lotte Jacobi Collection.



Fig. 17. "Madonna," Aunt of bank director, Comrade Fayzulla Khodzhayev, Stalinabad, 1932. © 2019, University of New Hampshire, Lotte Jacobi Collection.

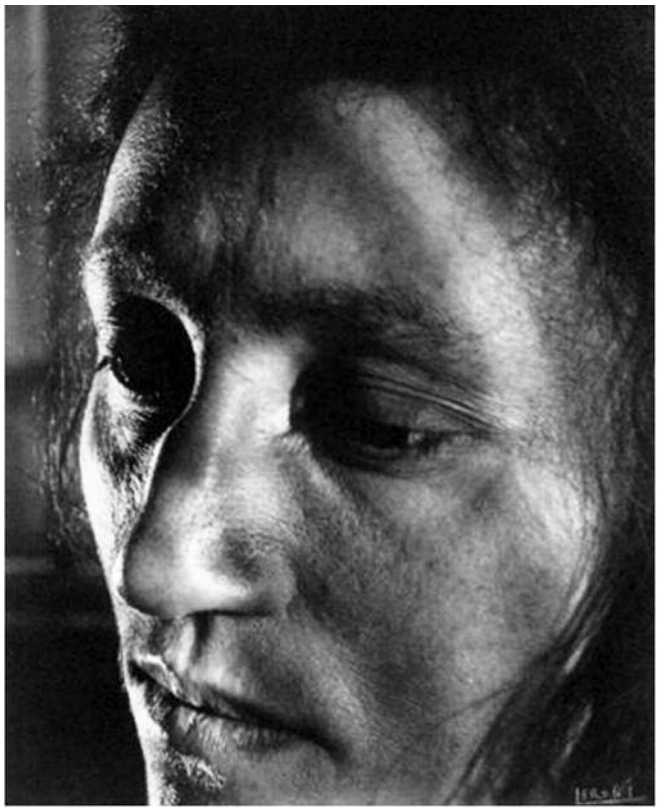


Fig. 18. Helmar Lerski, *Cleaning woman*, from Köpfe des Alltag, 1931.

dignify lower class workers as well as middle class professionals. Similar to the effect of her Weimar contemporary, Jacobi not only personalized her image of the bread-seller but also monumentalized her so she would be both emblematic of a specific type and compelling as well. Instead of fetishizing difference, Jacobi humanized her portraits of non-modern types by respecting their presence.

But all these portraits belie the problematic campaign against veiling in Soviet Central Asia. As Northrop and Keller detail, few women in these regions permanently removed their veils, and most of those who did were related to Communist Party officials. The attempt to banish face coverings met not only with resistance but actually strengthened the resolve of those who did not want to be "colonized" by the Soviets. In the end, even those who tried to carry out Stalin's policy were killed. Khodzhayev was arrested in 1938, along with many other Communist Party officials, for his failure with this campaign, and died in prison.[39] Jacobi of course would not have known of this when she left Germany in 1935, but after she returned to Berlin in January of 1933, she would have become aware of the mysterious death of Hoelz, most likely at Stalin's directive, because of his criticism of party regulations. Hoelz's death may be one of the many reasons that led Jacobi to choose to immigrate to the United States rather than to the Soviet Union when National Socialist restrictions against Jews became too cumbersome.[40]

Because of the Nazi electoral victories and subsequent takeover of the German government in 1933, Jacobi had only been able to publish a few of the over 2000 negatives that she took in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Photographs of the Soviet enemy would have been too dangerous to exhibit or print, especially by a woman of Jewish extraction, during that deplorable period in Nazi Germany. Luckily, she brought the negatives with her to the United States, but with the exception of the one book in German, the photos of Tajiks and Uzbeks have not been widely published or exhibited.

Becoming conscious of Jacobi's attempt to dignify these non-modern and subjugated women may allow us to rethink the complicated interactions between the West and Muslim traditions of veiling, which are still, as we are well aware, a concern today. Jacobi's encounter with the Soviet campaign to abolish face coverings reminds us of the difficulty in moving against religious customs despite the contradictions in the wish to do so. Knowledge of Jacobi's empathetic portraits of the so-called exotic other, a result of her complex interweaving of photographic attitudes from both the Weimar Republic and the Soviet Union, provides nuance to the problematic issue of how a photographer reacts to tendentious calls to proselytize while at the same time responding to individual desires to make artistically compelling works. While some of the 2000



Fig. 19. Lotte Jacobi, Woman selling flatbread at the bazaar, 1932. © 2019, University of New Hampshire, Lotte Jacobi Collection.

shots that Jacobi took on her Central Asian trip are merely factually descriptive, many others are arrestingly powerful and commanding portraits made in a dangerous time. •

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Fig. 20. Max Penson, Uzbek Woman, 1930s



Fig. 21. August Sander, "Proletarian Mother," from *Antlitz der Zeit, 1929.*

Notes

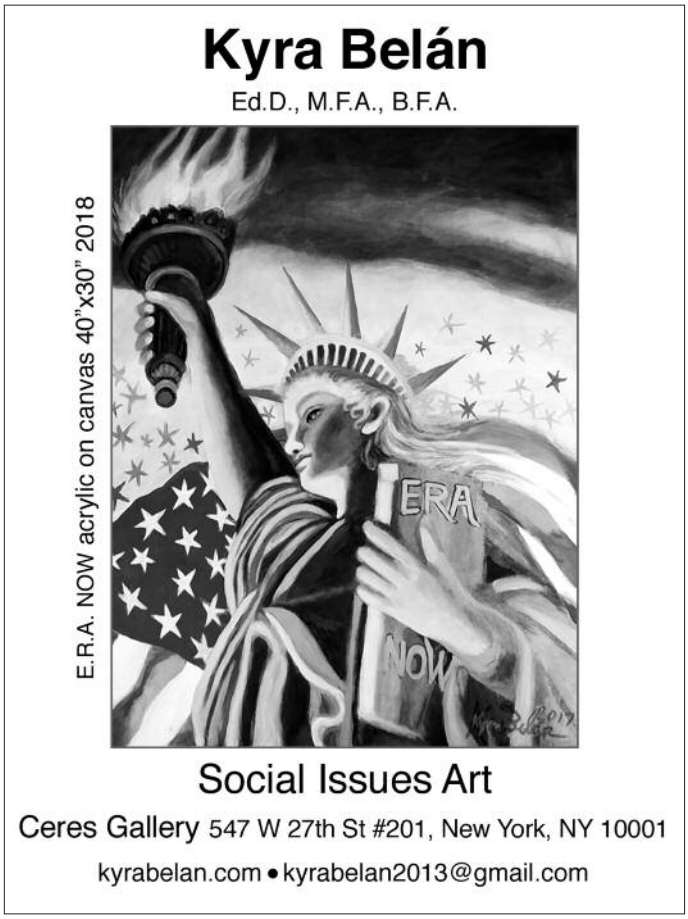
This article is an expanded version of a paper given at the 2018 German Studies Association Conference.

1. Only a few of these images were published before Jacobi left Germany in 1935, but she was able to bring the negatives to the US. For this essay, all the images from her Russian trip are taken from 35mm negatives held in the Lotte Jacobi archive at the University of New Hampshire. The titles were taken down by Gary Samson, photographer and former director of the archive, during interviews with Jacobi in the last fifteen years of her life.
2. Tajikistan was part of Uzbek SSR until 1929, when it became a separate region. Women wore similar veils in both regions, especially in Tajik urban areas. See Douglas Northrop, *Veiled Empire: Gender & Power in Stalinist Central Asia* (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell Univ. Press, 2004), 17–18; also Shoshana Keller, *To Moscow, Not Mecca: The Soviet Campaign Against Islam in Central Asia, 1917–1941,* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2001).
3. Marion Beckers and Elisabeth Moortgat, "Sie waren in Russland?," in *Lotte Jacobi. Russland 1932/33.Moskau, Tadschikistan, Usbekistan,* eds. M. Beckers and E. Moortgat (Berlin: Dirk Nishen - Das Foto-Taschenbuch 14, 1988), 7–25.
4. See Marion Beckers and Elisabeth Moortgat, *Atelier Lotte Jacobi Berlin-New York,* trans. K. Margolin, K.M. Madden, T. Toro (Berlin: Nicolai, 1998), esp. 19–40. Hereafter, *Atelier.*
5. For discussion of the terminology of *Neues Sehen*, see Matthew S. Wittkowsky, *Foto: Modernity in Central Europe, 1918–1945* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2007), 15–16; see also Andres Mario Zervigon, *Photography and Germany* (London: Reaktion Books, 2017), 104–19.
6. For information about the role of women photojournalists in the late Weimar Republic, see Ute Eskildsen, "A chance to participate: A transitional time for women photographers," in *Visions of the 'Neue Frau: Women and the Visual Arts in Weimar Germany,* eds. Marsha Meskimmon and Shearer West (Aldershot, UK: Scolar Press, 1995), 62–76; also Ute Eskildsen, ed. *Fotografieren hiess teilnehmen: Fotografinnen der Weimarer Zeit* (Essen: Museum Folkwang, 1994).
7. For a reproduction of the cover, see Beckers and Moortgat, *Atelier,* 47.
8. Unlike many other intellectuals, Kollwitz lived in a working class neighborhood and thought of herself as a socialist; see Käthe Kollwitz, diary entries, Dec. 8, 1918, Jan.19, 1919, Oct. 1920 in *German Expressionism: Documents from the End of the Wilhelmine Empire to the Rise of National Socialism,* ed. Rose-Carol Washton Long, (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1995), 185–88.
9. As cited in Sandra S. Phillips, "An Interview with Lotte Jacobi," *Center Quarterly* 3, no. 1 (1981): n.p.
10. For reproductions of Jacobi's photos of Thälmann and Kisch, see Beckers and Moortgat, *Atelier,* 116, 43. For succinct summaries of Kisch's books, see R. Seth C. Knox. *Weimar Germany between Two Worlds* (New York: Peter Lang, 2006), 73–133.
11. Knox, *Weimar Germany*, 6-9. Jacobi stayed in contact with Kisch even after she emigrated to the United States. See for example, Kisch letter to Jacobi, Feb. 18, 1936, Univ. of New Hampshire, Lotte Jacobi Collection.
12. Beckers and Moortgat also feel that Kisch had a significant impact on Jacobi, see *Atelier,* 41. Peter Moriarty is one of few writers who stressed Jacobi's left political and social beliefs; see his *Lotte Jacobi Photographs* (Boston; David R. Godine, 2003).
13. Beckers and Moortgat, "Sie waren in Russland?," 9. For discussion of the Soviet Union's contradictory attempts to engage with the West, especially with Germany, see Katerina Clark, *Moscow, the Fourth Rome: Stalinism, Cosmopolitanism, and the Evolution of Soviet Culture, 1931–1941* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 2011), 1–42.
14. Lotte Jacobi to Max Hoelz, ca. 1931; as cited in Beckers and Moortgat, *Atelier,* 117. For Jacobi's photo of Hoelz, see *Atelier*, 42 and also Max Hoelz, *From White Cross to Red Flag,* trans. F. A. Voight (London: Jonathan Cape, 1930), frontispiece. Manfred Gebhardt in *Max Hoelz* (Berlin: Verlag Neues Lebin, 1983) reports that Kisch helped to publish Hoelz's letters from prison, 197.
15. Cross-border relations affected photographers in both countries. Closer control in the Soviet Union led to the creation of opposing organizations of photographers, although exhibitions in both countries included members of opposing groups. For an account of the varying approaches to depicting everyday life, see Susan Tumarkin Goodman, "Ávant-Garde and After. Photography in the Early Soviet Union," in *The Power of Pictures: Early Soviet Photography, Early Soviet Film,* eds. Susan Tumarkin Goodman and Jens Hoffmann (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2015), 22–28; also see Margarita Tupitsyn, *The Soviet Photograph, 1924–1937* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1996), 99–126, and Christina Lodder, "Sergei Tret'iakov – the Writer as Photographer," *Russian Literature* 103-105 (2019), 95–117, for moving Soviet photo-journalism toward a factual orientation, albeit one affected by ideological demands, 95-117. See https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0304347919300043 (accessed July 24, 2019)
16. Clark, *Moscow, the Fourth Rome,* 62–67.
17. Erika Wolf, "'As at the Filippovs'; The Foreign Origins of the Soviet Narrative Photographic Essay," and also Rudolf Stumberger, "*AIZ* and the German Worker Photographers," in *The German Worker Photography Movement (1926–1939): Essays and Documents* (Madrid: Museo Nacional Central de Arte Reina Sofia, 2011), 124–30 and 80–93.
18. August Sander, "Photography as a Universal Language: A Lecture," 1931, in *August Sander – Seeing, Observing and Thinking* (Munich: Schirmer/Mosel, 2009), 29; for discussion about the varying interpretations of the meaning and layout of *Antlitz der Zeit,* see Rose-Carol Washton Long, "August Sander's *Portraits of Persecuted Jews," Tate Papers* 19 (April 2013), an e-journal: 1–14. See https://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/tate-papers/19/august-sanders-portraits-of-persecuted-jews (accessed July 24, 2019). The German Marxist critic Walter Benjamin referred to his work as an encyclopedia of socialism. Also see Daniel H. Magilow, *The Photography of Crisis: the Photo Essays of Weimar Germany* (University Park, PA: Penn State Univ. Press, 2012), 34–62, and 92–118, for a good discussion of the physiognomic revival but an alternate view of Sander's political position.
19. For a clear analysis of Lerski's emphasis on faces, see Pepper Stetler, *Stop Reading! Look! Modern Vision and the Weimar Photographic Book* (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 2015), 137–81.
20. Beckers and Moortgat, *Atelier,* 120; but Margaret Bourke-White in *Eyes on Russia* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1931) focused much more on celebrating European looking Russians and their industrial machines.
21. For a critique of Barbusse's role in helping to create the myth of Stalin as benefactor, see Michael David-Fox, *Showcasing the Great Experiment: Cultural Diplomacy & Western Visitors to the Soviet Union, 1921-1941* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2012), 228–33.
22. Beckers and Moortgat, *Atelier*, 117.
23. According to Beckers and Moortgat, the route from Moscow to Stalinabad was reached by train beginning May 1, 1929; see "Sie waren in Russland?," 19.
24. Egon Erwin Kisch, *Asien Gründlich Verändert* (Berlin: Erich Reiss, 1932); 1st English ed. *Changing Asia*, trans. Rita Reil (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1935).
25. According to Northrop, *chachvon* referred to the face veil, *paranji* was the body covering and draped over the head could hold the

chachvon in place; *chadra* could refer to both; see "Glossary" in Northrop, *Veiled Empire*, 365.

26. For further information on the attitudes of Lenin toward indigenous peoples, see Keller, *To Moscow, Not Mecca*, 199, 249; and Northrop, who reports that the veil was not officially outlawed in Uzbekistan until 1997-98, *Veiled Empire*, 285; see also 47–48. Lenin's wife continued to advocate against forced unveiling.
27. As cited in Northrop, *Veiled Empire,* 64.
28. *USSR in Construction* 7–8 (1930), 46. A few pages earlier, the Russian colonial attitude is clearly embodied in the stated goal of transforming the "secluded life of women, the quackery of religion, lack of culture …," 41. See also, Anja Burkhardt's analysis of professional photographers' use of ethnographic detail in the two journals *Sovetskoefoto and SSSR na stroike* reporting on the modernization campaign in the peripheral regions of the Soviet Union, "Picturing non-Russian Ethnicities in the journals *Sovetskoefoto and SSSR Na Stroike*" in *Russian Literature* 103–105 (2019), 209–33; and Erika Wolf, "When photographs Speak. To Whom do They Talk? The Origins and Audience of *SSSR na Stroike* (USSR in Construction)," *Left History* 6, no. 2 (1999), 53–82.
29. For an English survey of Penson's work, see Ildar Galeyev and Miron Penson, *Max Penson: Photographer of the Uzbek Avant-Garde 1920s–1940s* (Stuttgart: Arnoldsche Art, 2011). Also see Erika B. Billeter, *Usbekistan: Dokumentarfotografie/Documentary photography 1925–1945 von/by Max Penson* (Bern: Benteli, 1996).
30. See Northrup, *Veiled Empire*, and Keller, *To Moscow, Not Mecca,* especially the introductions and conclusions.
31. Jacobi took several shots of this couple, several of the woman alone holding her veil.
32. Uzbek satirical song ca. 1929; as cited in Northrop, *Veiled Empire*, 344.
33. Keller, *To Moscow, Not Mecca,* 194.
34. For example, Alexei Fedorov-Davydov, "Introduction to Moholy-Nagy's *Painting Photography Film,*" in *Photography in the Modern Era: European Documents and Critical Writings, 1913–1940*, ed. Christopher Phillips (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art/Aperture, 1989), 273–82. For discussion of the Soviet attack against formalism, see Masha Chlenova, "Staging Soviet Art: *15 Years of Artists of the Russian Soviet Republic, 1932–33,*" *October* 147 (Winter 2014), 38–55.
35. For discussion of the 1932 decree combining all Soviet visual and literary arts groups into one encompassing union that would direct efforts to propagate a more factual and elevated picture of the industrial progress of the Soviet Union, see Chlenova, "Staging Soviet Art," and also John E. Bowlt, "Toward Socialist Realism," in *Russian Art of the Avant-Garde: Theory and Criticism, 1902–1934,* ed. John E. Bowlt (New York: Viking, 1976), 288–94.
36. For reproductions of Central Asian photos by Penson, Zelma, and others, see Goodman and Hoffmann, *The Power of Pictures.*
37. I am following the spelling given to Samson by Jacobi. Beckers and Moortgat spell Khodhayev as "Khojeiff," see *Atelier*, 117, while the two major scholars of the modernization effort in Soviet Central Asia—Northrop in *Veiled Empire* and Keller in *To Moscow, Not Mecca*—use Faizulla Khojaev. Both the later two studies focus primarily on Uzbekistan, but they stress that women wore similar veils in both regions, especially in Tajik urban areas, see Northrop, 17–18, 51.
38. According to Natalia Gananl, the integration of centrally focused landscape and workers was meant to signify the unity of the collectivization process; see "Furrows of the Field–Lines of the Gaze: Central-Perspective Figurations of Subjectivity in *USSR in Construction (1930–1940),*" *Russian Literature* 103–05 (2019), 235–58.
39. Keller, *To Moscow, Not Mecca,* 235; and Northrup, *Veiled Empire,* 239. Both scholars discuss the many problems that complicated and compromised the unveiling campaign; see especially each author's conclusion.
40. When Jacobi returned to Germany in 1933, she was interrogated by National Socialist officials, and soon she and Atelier Jacobi had to publish under pseudonyms. When her father died in 1935, Jacobi and her mother and sister left (separately) for New York. Kisch also did not move to the Soviet Union.





Sally Mann

Looking at Him—An Exploration of Marital Intimacy and the Vulnerability of White Masculinity

By Ayelet Carmi



Fig. 1. Sally Mann, *Hephaestus* (2008), gelatin silver print, 15" x 13 1/2". ©Sally Mann. Courtesy Gagosian.

Considering the feminist art revolution of recent decades, one might expect to find a rich and diverse exploration of male nudes from a female photographer's perspective. Yet this is not the case. In the history of American photography, women rarely photographed naked men until the mid-1970s, and this is still a mainly male-dominated genre.[1] The contemporary female art-photographer Sally Mann (b. 1951) created in 2009 a unique series of photographs, titled *Proud Flesh*, which provides a fresh feminist perspective on this masculine photographic history. Mann who is mostly known for her family photographs, Southern landscapes, and decaying bodies, turns her camera this time on her husband, Larry, a white man who was sixty-one years old at the time, to whom she has been married for more than forty-nine years. The thirty-three silver gelatin prints (all made from wet-plate negatives) of the *Proud Flesh* series, including *Hephaestus* (2008; Fig. 1), were published in *Aperture* magazine and exhibited in the Gagosian Gallery in 2009. They are part of a larger investigation along with the unpublished project that Mann has titled *Marital Trust*, portraying the everyday life and intimacy of their marriage. Although both series depict the naked body of Larry, *Marital Trust* focuses on sexuality within marriage, whereas *Proud Flesh* rejects the erotic potential of the body. This later series explores the emotional expressiveness of the male body in performing loss and fragility, presenting Larry's fragmented body, or posing him in a posture that implies physical or emotional pain.

Art critics and Mann's gallerists framed the series as a personal exploration of Mann's relationship with her lifelong partner, whose body was changing as a result of his muscular dystrophy—and she was recording the body of her loved one as it was wasting away.[2] Thus, previous interpretations of this series have focused exclusively on the personal and the biographical aspects of these works. In my analysis of Mann's work, I want to emphasize that it is necessary to expand this interpretation, by demonstrating that the personal does not stand in opposition to the political, but rather is intertwined with it. I argue that Mann's *Proud Flesh* differs from previous representations of the white male body, made by both male and female photographers. Sharing what she sees when looking at him, she presents a unique female gaze that is characterized by a rare combination of compassion and critical distance. Using her husband's body and their intimacy, she exposes the fragility of white masculinity, both as a cultural construction that requires constant defense of its ideas and values, and as a contemporary experience shared by many heteronormative white American men. I will show that by proposing a counter-representation to mainstream images of masculinity and whiteness, this series problematizes their history and challenges gendered and racial demands for resilience and authority.

Emerging in the nineteenth century, the genre of the male nude in America has been dominated by a closed triangle of male photographer-subject-viewer. Throughout the history of the medium, photography functioned in a variety of social fields: academic studies for the use of painters or sculptors; medical, scientific or ethnographic documentary records; as an erotic and/or pornographic object, and as an object of artistic expression. Still, photographic depictions of the male nude were relatively few compared with other subjects of photography, especially that of the female nude. In fact, until the second half of the twentieth century, photographs depicting the naked bodies of white American men were rarely seen in the public space.[3] They were visible only to small audiences, mostly upper- and middle-class white men. Even when the subject of the male nude became more visible in the American art world and visual culture of the 1980s, it was again mostly the male photographers who received the majority of public attention. Photographers such as George Dureau, Bruce Weber, Robert Mapplethorpe, and Arthur Tress turned to the nude male body as an agent of desire, and enjoyment.[4] This tradition was created by and for gay audiences in 1950s and 1960s America, in works such as Robert Mizer's *Athletic Model Guild in Los Angeles*.[5] Building the eroticism of the male body around a sort of idealized representation, they created icons of youthful male beauty, heroism, and potency.[6] As the feminist scholar Susan Bordo noted, these contemporary photographic forms of the male nude celebrate masculine power, fetishize the macho aesthetic, and eroticize a detached façade and self-containment.[7]

Not only have the majority of these images been created by male photographers, who attributed to them masculine characteristics, to date they also enjoy far greater visibility than images of naked men by female photographers.[8] Only a few female photographers have focused their lenses on naked men and taken up the director's position of power to stage, capture and organize the male body. Among the most notable are Imogen Cunningham's (1883–1976) series of her nude husband, Dianora Niccolini's (b. 1936) black male nudes, Judy Dater's (b. 1941) black and white male nudes, Sarah Kent's (b. 1947) *Male Nude: California*, 1982, some of Diane Arbus's (1923–71) photographs of the residents of a nudist colony, Nan Goldin's (b. 1953) autobiographical works, such as *Bobby Masturbating*, 1980, and more recently, Lynn E. Letterman's *Construction Guy*, 2010, and Laura Hartford's (b. 1966) *Graham Reclining*, 2004. Most of these photographs operate within the aesthetic mode of the male body as a sign of ideal beauty, pleasure and desire (Niccolini, Hartford, Letterman), or portray the subordinate masculinity of queer subculture (Arbus, Golding). All of them depict attractive, youthful models. Even fewer female photographers have dedicated an entire series to the subject, or directed their cameras at their lifelong partners and fathers of their children, as Mann did. Cunningham, for instance, portrayed her husband, the artist Roi Partridge, naked on Mount Rainier, as the playful, "naughty" performance of a youthful artist in nature. But after her photographs elicited an outcry when published in the Seattle *Town Crier* in 1915, she kept them hidden for fifty years.[9]



Fig. 2. John Coplans, *Self-Portrait (Back with Arms Above)* (1984), gelatin silver print, 31" x 23". ©The John Coplans Trust.

Over the last four decades, several contemporary exhibitions in the US and Britain have shown art works by female artists with men as their subject. In 1975, the Queens Museum in Flushing, New York, organized a small exhibition, titled *Sons & Others: Women Artists See Men*; *Women Looking at Men*, which travelled to various British contemporary art centers in 1980, arousing much controversy.[10] In addition, *What She Wants: Women Artists Look at Men* toured Britain and Northern Ireland in 1993; *Girl on Guy: The Object of My Desire* opened at Chicago's A+D Gallery in 2007; the large exhibition[11] *Man as Object: Reversing the Gaze*, was shown at the SOMArts Cultural Center in San Francisco in 2011; and *The Female Gaze, Part II: Women Looking at Men* was shown at the Cheim & Read Gallery in New York in 2016. In spite of their pioneering approach to the subject, diversity of media, genres and styles, none of these exhibitions focused their attention on intimate, heterosexual relations. And none were dedicated to photography. *Sons & Others* featured paintings and sculptures. *Girl on Guy* depicted young men as part of its exploration of feminine desire and the objectification of men. *What She Wants* was framed in the context of the politicization of the male body through pornography debates, the AIDS crisis and the



Fig. 3. Sally Mann, *David* (2005), gelatin silver print, 15" x 12". ©Sally Mann. Courtesy Gagosian.

expression of sexual diversity.[12] *Man as Object* focused primarily on male sexuality from feminist and transgender perspectives, with specific attention to ethnicity and race.[13]

Contrary to the visual tradition of sexualization and eroticism associated with the male nude in contemporary American photography, Mann appropriates the visual conventions of Christian suffering to explore the male body's vulnerability, and particularly that of the white heteronormative man. The representation of men's pain and suffering through a distorted image of the male nude is a recurring theme in the Christian art tradition. In some of the photographs the lens zooms in on Larry's palms; in others, his postures mimic that of the crucified Christ; still others present a damaged, even violated, figure. An extreme example is *Hephaestus* (Fig. 1), which refers to the Greek god of fire, the only ugly and damaged god among the perfectly beautiful immortal Olympians. Here, Larry's head is cut off by the edge of the picture. His torso is partly obscured by a stain on the emulsion of the glass plate that runs from neck to groin. The chemical flaws leave a graphic blemish on the image and obscure his figure. Due to this photographic process, half of the body looks like it has been burned, or gnawed.

It should be noted that Mann was not the only photographer to challenge the representational conventions of the male nude by depicting the fragmented body of a white middle-aged man. In a series of black and white self-portraits made in the 1980s, the British artist John Coplans created a study of his own naked, aging, white body, changing the conventions of male nudity and male beauty. *Self-Portrait (Back with Arms Above)* (1984; Fig. 2), for instance, depicts the artist's back extended upwards in a solid rectangle, above which protrude two unexpectedly small, clenched fists. The framing of the image, fragmentation of the body, dramatic lighting and odd posture give the photograph a surreal appearance. But whereas Coplans deliberately avoided any kind of pose or gesture which may communicate a familiar message, Mann arranges Larry's body in a pose of weakness, even implying impotence. While Coplans used the genre of the male nude as a textured surface or surreal object, Mann uses it to explore vulnerability in heterosexual intimacy, and to reclaim the authority of a woman's constructed conception of masculinity. Unlike Coplans's practice of self-representation, Larry does not display his body, but rather he is exposed by the woman who is his lifelong partner.

Engaging a territory usually inhabited by male artists portraying their wives and female lovers, Mann challenges the gender power dynamic of looking and representing. As she put it, "the act of looking appraisingly at a man, studying his body and asking to photograph him, is a brazen venture for a woman; for a male photographer, these acts are commonplace, even expected."[14] Since the early 1970s, feminist scholars have argued that in Western culture women were represented as objects to be looked at, defined by a male gaze, rather than as subjects possessing the power of the viewer.[15] A female gaze, by contrast, was perceived as holding great danger when directed at a man, as the mythological tale of the petrifying gaze of Medusa symbolizes, and was tightly restricted by nineteenth-century British and French art systems.[16] Feminist film theorists claim that the female gaze is considered "dangerous," not just because it allows women to usurp a male position of power, but also because it reveals the weaknesses of the male body,[17] and thus feminizes it. If to be viewed is to be female, any object of the viewer "must" take on feminine qualities.

Mann disrupts the gender power dynamic of looking and representing far beyond the schematic reversal of the gender binary male and female, artist and subject. For a clearer understanding of her strategy, let us compare the *Proud Flesh* photographs with the work of the American female photographer Becky Cohen, who dealt with similar issues. Between 1974 and 1984, Cohen created a series of photographs, depicting her husband relaxing naked in a pool, titled *The Swimmer*. Caressed gently by the warm water, the man's arms are spreading, his palms open, with an expression of deep contentment and relaxation on his face. The camera lovingly portrays his powerful, broad, barrel chest, with soft and glittering rays of light. Being at ease, free from strains and burdens, the man's figure conveys his confidence in his physical and emotional safety, his trust in a world shaped for him, and his control over his surroundings, as befitting a man in his fortress (or a friendly environment). Like Mann, Cohen creates an intimate image of her middle-aged partner, who belongs to the upper-middle class and has the time and the means to engage in leisure activities. But comparing this flattering depiction to Mann's *David* (2005; Fig. 3), for example, reveals a

major difference. In *David*, the light illuminates the harsh angles of Larry's bony legs and swollen stomach, exposing his skeletal figure. Having been an athlete all his life, physically strong, and a man who worked with his hands taking care of their farm, Larry's body registers his impending death. And there is nothing in the photograph, no hand or soft fabric, to offer consolation or comfort. Unlike Cohen, Mann's look is intrusive rather than eroticizing, disturbing rather than empowering. Depicting her partner with a debilitating illness results in an image that creates an uncomfortable intimacy, implicating the viewer in the experience of mortality. The image calls for a viewer who can stare at such uncomfortable feelings with an unflinching directed gaze. In contrast to Cohen, who photographed her husband outside their house, Mann's description of the photographic process of *Proud Flesh* situates the production of the photographs within the private realm: "The studio's wood stove was insufficient, but he had two fingers of bourbon to warm him. No phone, no kids, NPR turned low, the smell of the chemicals, the two of us still in love, still at the work of making pictures that we hope will matter."[18] Situating Larry in the domestic space, the home—a sphere that traditionally belongs to femininity—further highlights his feminization.

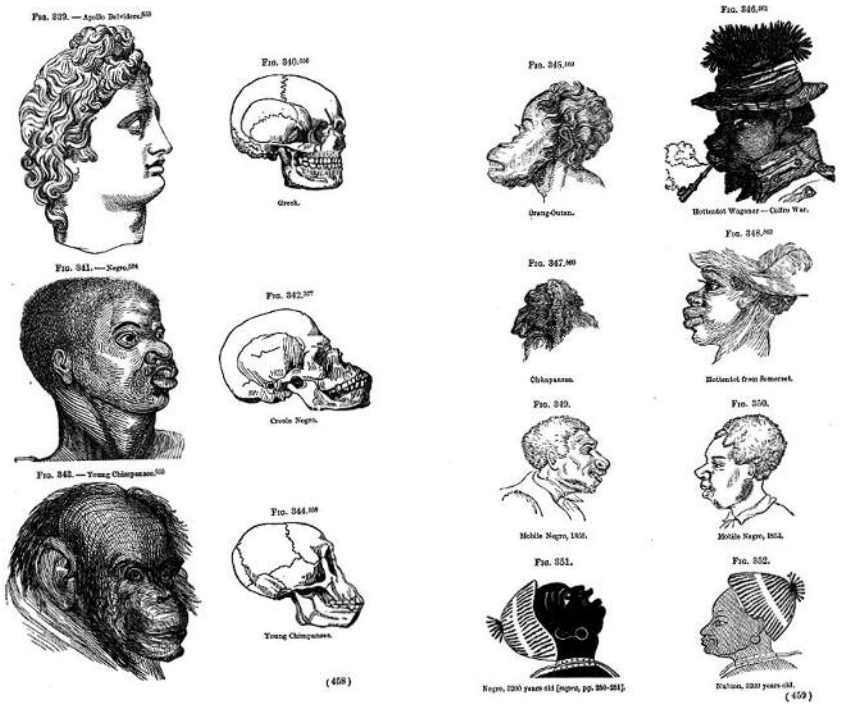


Fig. 4. Illustration from Josiah Clark Nott and George R. Gliddon, *Types of Mankind* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo & Co., 1854), pp.458–59.

Was it difficult for Mann to stage Larry in these poses, to witness and reveal his frailty and decay? Admittedly, women who are in long-standing, intimate heterosexual relationships have seen their partner's vulnerabilities. But exposing them to the public eye is different. It is only in the last few years that male athletes began sharing their mental-health struggles.[19] Men's tears, fears, and shame tend to remain hidden. There is a certain level of power relations and ethical concerns involved in exposing the bodies of sick loved ones. Although she often emphasizes their collaboration, it is Mann who is in the driver's seat, protected behind the camera. She is the famous, powerful, healthy one, and most likely the family's main provider. In line with this analysis, the photographs from *Proud Flesh* move beyond questions of representation. They rely on this contextualization, as well as on the viewer's familiarity with Larry's image (published in the national media throughout the 1990s and 2000s), to question the way in which heterosexual relationships are organized.

Like Mann's family pictures, the *Proud Flesh* photographs blur the boundaries between private and public, personal and political, real and metaphorical. They create a tension between the representation of Larry as a symbolic construct of American white masculinity, and the contextualization of the works by Mann and others, encouraging the autobiographical interpretation of a wife who photographs her sick husband. On the one hand, in interviews and documentary films, Mann describes the photographic production process as an inseparable part of their relationship and daily routine as a couple for the many decades they have been together. For example, in an article published in the *New York Times* Magazine in 2015, she wrote: "Almost the first thing I did after I met Larry Mann in 1969 was to photograph him, and I haven't stopped since."[20] On the other hand, unlike her previous family pictures and landscapes, whose titles refer to specific individuals and geographical locations, Larry's portraits are named after famous American poems and novels by Eudora Welty, T.S. Eliot, and Ezra Pound, or mythical figures. The titles are not accidental. For instance, *Hephaestus*, the god of fire and metalworking, is gesturing to Larry's personal biography, since before practicing law, he was a blacksmith. *Hephaestus* also gestures to the construction of white American masculinity through the features of classical Greek sculptures of heroes and gods. In the nineteenth century, this association was designed to assert an Aryan continuity between American and Greek heritage and civilization. A prominent example is the racist illustration from *Types of Mankind,* by Josiah Nott and George Gliddon (1857; Fig. 4), depicting Apollo of Belvedere, a Roman marble copy of a Greek statue, rediscovered during the Renaissance.

Mann's use of nineteenth-century wet-collodion technique plays a similar role as the titles, in emphasizing the racist construction of the white male nude and tracing its roots back to the turn of the century. It brings into focus the now-iconic locomotion studies made by Eadweard Muybridge during the 1880s (Fig. 5). Muybridge's photographs, which depict young men's bodies as active, virile, dynamic, and strong, were part of a larger endeavor in late nineteenth-century America of

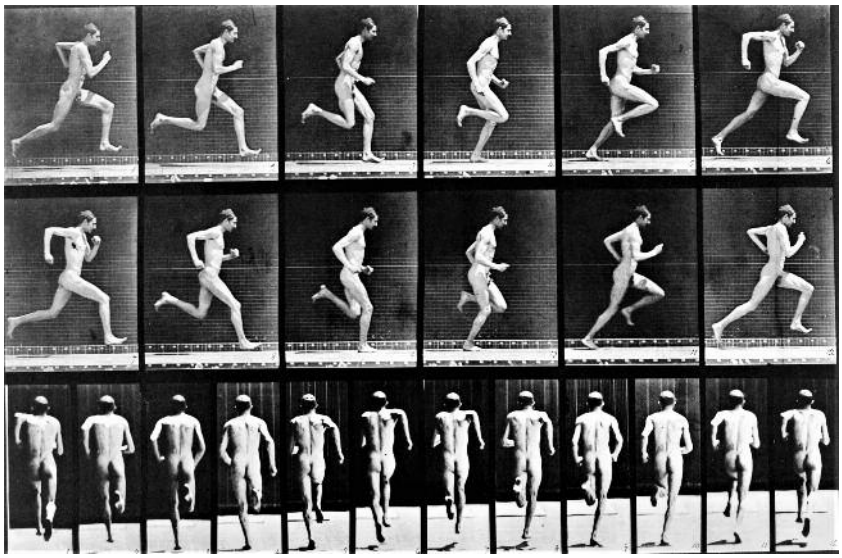


Fig. 5. Eadweard Muybridge, Nude Man Running at Full Speed (Animal Locomotion, pl. 62, 1887), Collotype print, 48" x 72".

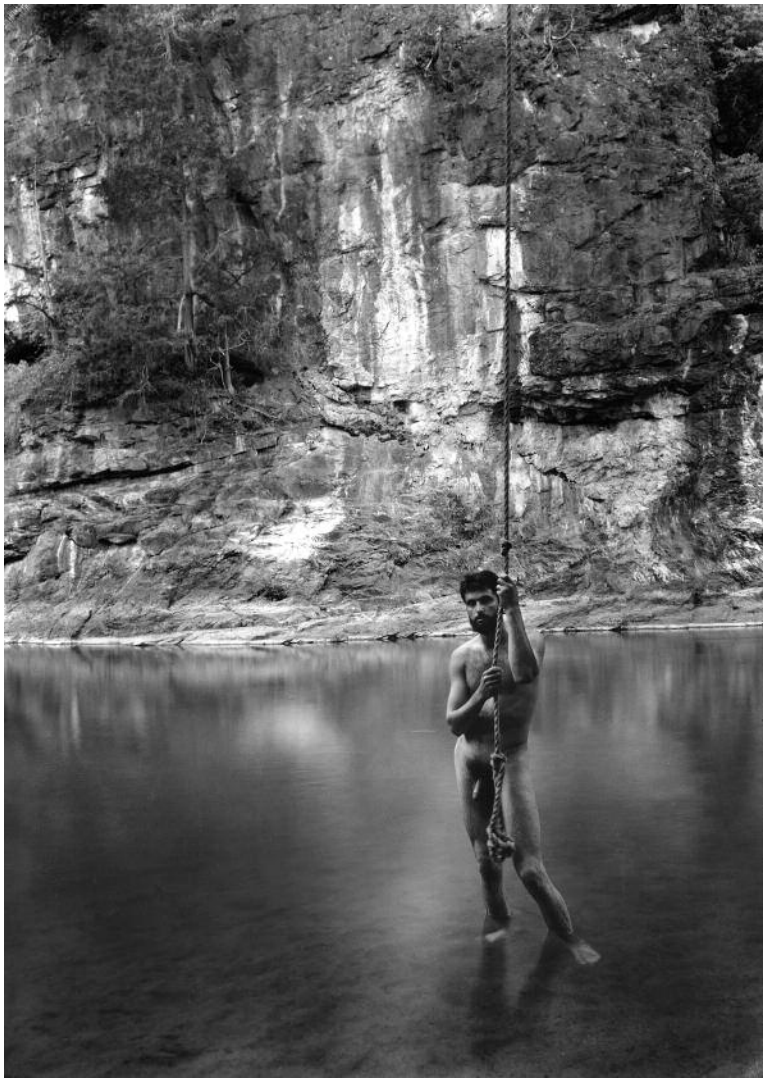


Fig. 6. Sally Mann, *Larry and Rope* (1977), gelatin silver print. ©Sally Mann. Courtesy Gagosian.

physical culture advocates to create a new, vigorous upper-class body, immune to neurasthenia and over-civilization.[21] Adopted from the Greek heritage, this athletic model was understood at the time as a protection against racial regression and the gender and sexual degeneracy of too much intellectualism.[22]

The omission of Larry's head in *Hephaestus* and other photographs affords him a degree of universality, as the individual character expressed in the face is shielded. Through the association of the male body to mythical and poetic contexts, Larry emerges as an Everyman figure, a term which originated in literature and drama and typically means a heteronormative, white middle-class man construed as "standard" and "neutral." While there is no one cultural model of masculinity, the "ideal" hegemonic version of American masculinity is still constructed along these lines. This masculinity, which Michael Kimmel calls the "self-made man," is characterized by physical strength, self-control, resilience, emotional detachment, toughness, and controlling qualities.[23] It is also deeply tied to national identity.[24] Countless Westerns, adventure stories, heroic sagas, and cultural images of the cowboy and the frontier reinforced this link, constructing white men as the embodiment of American identity and the American Dream. According to this ideology, it was the white man who built this country. He achieved great personal success by working hard and being an honest, talented, ambitious, and upstanding citizen.[25] All of this enabled him to contribute to the national strength. In contemporary contexts, this hegemonic masculinity includes military heroes, successful businessmen, and powerful politicians.[26]

Larry shares several characteristics with this cultural construction of masculinity. He was born in 1948 in the white wealthy suburb of New Canaan, Connecticut, into an upper-class family. "He knew how much to tip the washroom attendant at the opera, when to pick up the fish fork, how to cut in on the dance floor," Mann recalled in her memoir.[27] He studied law and worked as a country lawyer in their town, Lexington, Virginia, while raising horses, dogs, and other animals on their family farm. He has an American ideal body type: tall with long limbs, broad shoulders and long, straight torso. His forceful physical presence resembles Clint Eastwood—the ultimate American man's man.[28] We can see this resemblance clearly in previous photographs of him: *Larry and Rope, 1977* (Fig. 6), in which he stands in the classic contrapposto pose as Michelangelo's *David*, and the *Good Father* that casts him in the role of the benevolent patriarch, the family's protector, his daughters in his arms. In both pictures, the natural environment (the rock wall in the background, and the winding path

among the trees) serves to reaffirm the connection between masculinity and nature, shaping Larry's image according to the idealized forms of the male athlete and a modern outdoor life. Mann's description of what drew her to Larry at the age of eighteen resonates with this analysis. In her autobiography, she expresses her admiration for the physical strength she witnessed when her then-boyfriend brought Larry to the farm to move a huge rock.[29] Larry embodied this all-American masculinity more subtly in images such as *Hephaestus*. Despite the destruction of his figure, he still possesses a forceful appearance: a hard body without slackness or flaccidity. His clenched fist and open hand are placed on top of the desk with such force that the veins in his hands stand out.

Additionally, Larry's public persona, as it was expressed in interviews and documentary films, conveys a kind of modern version of the cowboy: his country lifestyle of farming and riding horses, casual country wear, groomed beard, middle-class profession, quiet manner, restrained and articulate way of expressing Mann's defense throughout the controversy over her family pictures—all constitute the ideal of middle-class, white, liberal, American masculinity. For example, in an NPR interview in 2011, he defines one of his roles as "to back Sally up, tell her 'just keep going,' when waves of self-doubt come crashing in, as they often do."[30] This example of a caring spouse supporting his wife also reflects the implicit social hierarchies of protective paternalism. Larry is positioned as strong, rational, in-control, a man who can be leaned on, and Sally as the dependent, insecure woman.



Fig. 7. Sally Mann, *Amor Revealed* (2007), gelatin silver print, 15" x 13 1/2". ©Sally Mann. Courtesy Gagosian.

The shared attributes of Larry and hegemonic white masculinity enabled the *Proud Flesh* photographs to participate in contemporary American discourses that wrestle with its status and characterization. Contrary to the history of whiteness and masculinity, which up until the post-1960s American-feminist revolution remained hidden behind the mask of "universality" and "normativity,"[31] Mann's pictures visualize it—placing the white male naked body center stage, exposed to scrutiny, critique, and even ridicule. Mann's *David* (Fig. 3), which depicts Larry's bony thigh and buttock, invites an ironic, and almost cruel, comparison with Michelangelo's perfect *David*. The peculiar black hand that looks like a glove does not seems to belong to Larry. It provides a troubling, strange image of human anatomy, transforming the familiar subject into an unfamiliar object. The partiality, blurriness and destruction of his figure in this image, and in others, indicates an iconoclastic quality. Since muscular physique has been seen in photography as the signifier of the male body, Larry's muscular dystrophy and Mann's intentional distortion of his figure could be interpreted as symbolizing an act against the stability and sustainability of hegemonic white masculinity.

This iconoclastic act against white masculinity can also be seen as responding to dramatic changes in recent decades in American society, economy, political system and forces of globalization, resulted in eroding the foundations on which this masculinity rested.[32] Although elite white men still hold most of the political and economic power in the United States, many white lower- and middle-class men lost their jobs during the economic crises of the 1990s, 2008, and 2012. The high rate of unemployment accompanied by the increasing entry of women into positions of authority undermined the heteronormative man's position as the main provider for the family. This state of affairs has radically shaken white men's established identity, because notions of masculinity have been attached to the jobs men held ever since the domestic-public dichotomy of the nineteenth century. Feminist, queer, and black critiques of the power structures of gender and race have further weakened the legitimation of white men's social and cultural status.[33] As recent feminist studies reveal, this new era of social vulnerability among white American men has come at a high cost to boys and men holding traditional views, narratives, and traits of masculinity. In a patriarchal society such as the United States, it results in male vulnerability to negative physical- and mental-health consequences.[34]

The *Proud Flesh* photographs uncover the increasing fragility and the price this masculinity pays—the violence and damage it causes, and the loneliness and vulnerability beneath it. For instance, in the photograph *Amor Revealed* (2007; Fig. 7), inspired by the mythological tale of Psyche and Cupid (Amor), Larry is curled up on his side; his fetal-like posture conveys the sense of a man immersed in his pain, and isolated by it.



Fig. 8. Sally Mann, *Ponder Heart* (2009), gelatin silver print, 15" x 13 1/2". ©Sally Mann. Courtesy Gagosian.

There is something almost "unnatural" in the way Larry is passively lying down. How different this is from the earlier representations of him as 'benevolent patriarch,' and 'male athlete.' In everyday life, we tend to associate the posture of lying down with helplessness and immobilization. It is usually a sign of death, injury, illness or sleep; in any event, it is a position in which one's ability to defend oneself is limited. In the history of art and photography, it is a posture we often see in the eroticized bodies of women and gay men.[35]

Shielding his chest with his right arm, Larry's left hand dangles over the edge of the cot, thus creating a visual barrier that divides the composition into two sections. HIs head and upper body that appear in the foreground are out of focus, blended, and barely distinct from each other. The photographic technique that violently eliminates his face serves as a symbol for the loss of identity and individuality. The background, showing him from the waist down, is more sharply defined, thus turning his old-man's flaccid penis into the main object of the viewer's gaze. The penis (its size, girth, shape, and proportion) is considered at the core of masculinity.[36] For many men in contemporary societies, the erect penis stands for male power and potency, whereas failure to achieve an erection is associated with shame and fear of failing to 'be a man.'[37] In photography, the penis almost always remains unseen.[38] Its display might threaten the male viewer, potentially exposing an unflattering comparison and making it visible and public.[39] Clothes, as Emmanuel Cooper reminds us, conceal the position in a society in which men rule virtually supreme. Therefore, their removal symbolizes the removal of male power and authority.[40]

Both the feminization of Larry, and the reverse gender power dynamic of a woman photographer's looking and representing, seem to embody the greatest fears of patriarchal masculinity. As Kimmel notes, the construction of white American masculinity was and still is about "the fear of being controlled [by other men], to be seen [by other men] as weak, timid, frightened and vulnerable."[41] In other words, to be perceived as feminine. Responding to the insecurity in the life of white lower-and middle-class men at the turn of the twenty-first century, *Amor Revealed* presents an image of vulnerable white masculinity—a man exposed, powerless to defend himself against the gaze of the camera. Thus, it challenges the culturally implicit assumption that white male bodies naturally possess a white man's right to wield power, and calls into question virility and male domination.

At this stage we may ask: is there a way to distinguish vulnerability and victimhood in relation to white masculinity in contemporary American culture? While Mann's ambiguous photographs of her husband offer a new way of seeing men in intimate heterosexual relations, and challenge hegemonic masculinity, they are also in danger of being perceived as advocating white men's victimhood in today's political climate. Some feminist historians and scholars of African-American studies view discussions of white men's vulnerability as overstated and cynical, recasting white men as victims rather than the social oppressors they actually are.[42] The words and actions of various men's rights activists, such as the Promise Keepers, the Incels group, and white supremacist movements in the US, bursting with rage and violence, certainly support this analysis. Despite their claims of discrimination, white American men are among the most privileged groups in the world. Furthermore, the United States is one of the world's wealthiest countries, and white American men possess the lion's share of its wealth.[43] And still, there is a profound distinction between the discourse of "white supremacist patriarchy under attack"[44] that held white women and people of color accountable for "white misery," and what bell hooks and other feminists have been saying for years, i.e., that patriarchy hurts men too. Whereas the former embraces a patriarchal notion of masculinity, the latter aims to dismantle it.

One particular image demonstrates this distinction. It is *Ponder Heart*, (2009; Fig. 8). It depicts Larry from behind. His arms and legs are not visible; all that remains is his wide, bony back. Chemical flaws at the center of the negative create vertical lines on Larry's back, like a thin, fine, physical wounding. The light circling around Larry's back (resulting from unsensitized paper in the shape of four triangles in the

corners, which set the image into a rounded frame), coupled with the tiny white dust motes, resemble a snow globe. This conveys the sense of an isolated, sealed glass prison, in which Larry's figure is trapped and cannot escape. The pose of his hand may be interpreted as protecting the body, but also as a sign of longing for contact, love, and intimacy.

The title refers to the 1954 novella *The Ponder Heart*, by the Southern writer and photographer Eudora Welty. It is a monologue, narrated by Edna Earle Ponder, a middle-aged spinster who runs a small-town hotel. Wishing to convince an unknown listener of her uncle's innocence of the murder of his wife, Edna laments over her family's decline and changes in Mississippi culture before and during the 1950s.[45] It is intriguing why Mann has chosen this story to frame her image. One interpretation is to see it as highlighting similarities between the simple-minded Uncle Daniel and Larry's figure, attributing the generosity of the former to the latter ("his Ponder heart" in the words of Edna, his devoted niece). In this reading, Mann, like Edna, is documenting the inexorable decline of the man she loves. Alternatively, we may interpret the literary reference as guiding our understanding of Larry as Edna's representative. Julia Eichelberger suggests in her analysis of the novella that Edna is a trapped woman. She is consigned to replaying the role Uncle Daniel expects her to play—taking care of him and indulging his whims.[46] Larry's figure is also trapped. According to Mann, throughout his childhood he felt trapped in the social ambitions his parents had for him, their manipulations and control, a prisoner as he described it. He was physically abused by his mother, who years later murdered her husband, Larry's father, and committed suicide.[47] Edna and Larry share another trait, more commonly associated with femininity than masculinity—they play the supportive role in their families, doing the emotional work required. But such an acknowledgement of Larry's devotion and the sacrifices he made (which enabled the making of this series of photographs, and Mann's career to some extent) are a tribute Edna could only dream of receiving from Uncle Daniel.

Like Welty's novel, Mann's ambiguous image moves between the real and the metaphorical, the particular and the socio-political. Larry and Edna are represented as unique individuals with their own experiences of life, needs and feelings, weaknesses and strengths. Yet, their narratives and imagery also highlight the ways gender identity, norms, and practices discipline individuals and harm them. As Eichelberger notes, Edna's gender ended up playing a major role in shaping her life path—a restrictive and destructive role in achieving fulfilment and happiness. It is ambiguous whether the chemical flaws on Larry's back, the signs of a wounded body, represent his illness, painful family history, or the violence of gender inscription. Nonetheless, considering photography's historic role in establishing and maintaining the ideology of the self-made man,[48] *Ponder Heart* shows both its falsity and high cost, creating a Dorian Gray-like mirrored reflection of this American ideal. Men do not create themselves but are created, so the image tells us by emphasizing the photographic act. And what kind of a man emerges from this image? Broken, wounded, hurt, a prisoner of isolation and alienation.

In conclusion, considering the androcentric character of the male nude in American photography, this article proposes that Mann's *Proud Flesh* presents a unique feminist view of intimacy between lifelong spouses, which deals with aging and mortality. The article further suggests that Mann's work exceeds the biographical interpretation attributed to it, intertwining personal aspects with political concerns. As I have argued, Mann's *Proud Flesh* series offers a critical photographic exploration of the way in which heterosexual relationships are organized, and exposes the vulnerability of white masculinity in contemporary America. By providing a still relatively rare perspective of the male nude by a female photographer, *Proud Flesh* contributes to expanding the biased history of American photography, and adds another aesthetic dimension to the ongoing development of feminist art revolution. •

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Notes

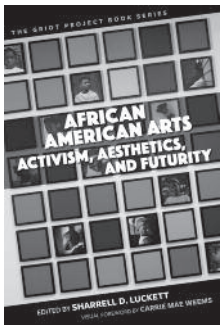
I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Professor Jennifer L. Roberts and Professor Ruth E. Iskin for providing helpful feedback and insights on earlier versions of this article.

1. Emmanuel Cooper, *Fully Exposed: The Male Nude in Photography* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 185; Claire Bonney, "The Nude Photograph: Some Female Perspectives," in *Woman's Art Journal*, 6:2 (Autumn 1985 – Winter 1986): 9–14; Lilly Wei, "The Great American (Male) Nude," in *ARTnews*, (Dec. 1, 2010).
2. Donald Kuspit, "Sally Mann at Gagosian Gallery," in *Artforum International* 48:5 (Jan. 2010): 198–99; Felicia Feaster, "The Naked Truth," in *Creative Loafing* 40:20 (2011): 29; Ariella Budick, "Gagosian Gallery New York," in *Financial Times* (Oct. 5, 2009). https://gagosian.com/media/gallery/press/2009/4c15e67b4077a9d148beec2eb273b81c.pdf (accessed July 5, 2019) .
3. The first exhibition in the US dedicated to the male nude by men and women artists, *The Male Nude*, opened in the Marcuse Pfeifer Gallery (Mann's first gallery) in New York.
4. See for example: Laurence Goldstein, *The Male Body: Features, Destinies, Exposures* (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1994); Kenneth Krauss, *Male Beauty: Postwar Masculinity in Theater, Film, and Physique Magazines* (Albany: State Univ. of New York Press, 2013); Jason Goldman, "'The Golden Age of Gay Porn': Nostalgia and the Photography of Wilhelm von Gloeden," in *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 12:2 (2006): 237–58; Jonathan Weinberg, *Male Desire: The Homoerotic in American Art*, ed. Howard W. Reeves (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2004).
5. Melody D. Davis, *The Male Nude in Contemporary Photography* (Philadelphia: Temple Univ. Press, 1991), 2. For an analysis of photography's role in the Gay Liberation Movement, especially male nude photography, see Richard Meyer, *Outlaw Representation: Censorship and Homosexuality in Twentieth-Century American Art* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press), 2002; James M. Saslow, *Pictures and Passions: A History of Homosexuality in The Visual Arts* (New York: Viking, 1999); Cooper, *Fully Exposed*, 10, 186–88.
6. Cooper, *Fully Exposed*, 195.

7. Susan Bordo, "Reading the Male Body," in Goldstein, ed., *The Male Body: Features, Destinies, Exposures*, 284–98.
8. Davis, *The Male Nude in Contemporary Photography*, 22.
9. Cooper, *Fully Exposed*, 10.
10. Sarah Kent, "Scratching and Biting Savagery," in *Women's Images of Men*, eds. Sarah Kent and Jacqueline Morreau (London: Writers and Readers Publ., 1985), 3–13.
11. The gallery exhibition featured 117 artists and an additional 89 artists were included in the exhibition catalogue.
12. Catherine Nash, "Reclaiming Vision: Looking at Landscape and the Body," in *Gender, Place and Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography* 3:2 (1996): 152.
13. Tanya Augsburg, "Introduction: Some Starting Points, Theories, and Themes," in *Man as Object: Reversing the Gaze,* ed. Tanya Augsburg, (New York: Women's Caucus for the Arts, 2011), 13–31.
14. Sally Mann, "Sally Mann's Exposure," in *New York Times Magazine* (April 16, 2015). https://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/19/magazine/the-cost-of-sally-manns-exposure.html (accessed July 5, 2019). A version of this article appeared in print on April 19, 2015, on page MM49 of the *Sunday Magazine* with the headline "Exposure".
15. See for example: John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: Penguin, 1972); Lynda Nead, *The Female Nude: Art, Obscenity, and Sexuality* (New York: Routledge, 1992); Alyce Mahon, *Eroticism and Art* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2007); Griselda Pollock, *Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism, and Histories of Art*, (New York: Routledge, 1988); Bordo, "Reading the Male Body," 266; Michel Foucault, "Seeing and knowing," in Michel Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception,* trans. A. M. Sheridan (London: Routledge, 2003 [1963]), 131-51.
16. Linda Nochlin's classic article "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?" demonstrates that the nineteenth-century British and French academic systems denied female artists access to nude models, and almost completely excluded them from formal academies and exhibitions. This institutional discrimination denied women the opportunity to present any profound challenge to male power and limited their ability to gain financial success and professional recognition. It was accompanied by the nineteenth-century legacy that established the female body in art and photography as the accepted object of male desire. Linda Nochlin, "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?" in *ArtNews* 69:9 (January 1971): 22-39, 67-71.
17. See the ongoing discussion of the female gaze in film studies: Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," in *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*, eds. Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen, (New York: Oxford Univ. Press., 1999), 833–44; Linda Williams, "When the Woman Looks," in *Revision: Essays in Feminist Film Criticism*, eds. Mary Ann Doane, Patricia Mellencamp and Linda Williams (Frederick, MD.: University Publications of America, 1984), 83–89; Ann Davies, "The Male Body and the Female Gaze in Carmen Films," in *The Trouble with Men: Masculinities in European and Hollywood Cinema*, eds. Phil Powrie, Ann Davies and Bruce Babington (London: Wallflower, 2004), 192–94.
18. Mann, "Sally Mann's Exposure," MM49.
19. Scott Gleeson and Erik Brady, "When Athletes Share their Battles with Mental Illness," in *USA Today* (August 30, 2017). https://www.usatoday.com/story/sports/2017/08/30/michael-phelps-brandon-marshall-mental-health-battles-royce-white-jerry-west/596857001/ (accessed July 15).
20. Mann, "Sally Mann's Exposure," MM49.
21. Elspeth H. Brown, "Racialising the Virile Body: Eadweard Muybridge's Locomotion Studies 1883–1887," in *Gender and History* 17:3 (2005): 627–56. The interest in training the upper-class male body also stemmed from the American adaptation of British ideals of 'muscular Christianity.' For further discussion of muscular Christianity see: Clifford Putney, *Muscular Christianity: Manhood and Sports in Protestant America, 1880-1920* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 2001), 23–24.
22. Brown, "Racialising the Virile Body," 627–56; E. Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1993); Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880–1917* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1995).
23. Michael Kimmel, *Angry White Men: American Masculinity at the End of an Era* (New York: Nation Books, 2013), 17–18.
24. As Gail Bederman has shown, throughout the nineteenth century, American masculinity forged connections between male power, civil rights and white supremacy, extending the rights of American citizenship only to white heterosexual men. Yet, one should also keep in mind that whiteness was, and still is, a contradictory category that has maintained its position of power by creating a racial hierarchy within the category itself (i.e., Irish, Jews, Italian, Arab, men, etc.). Gail Bederman, "Remaking Manhood through Race and "Civilization," in *Exploring Masculinities: Identity, Inequality, Continuity, and Change*, eds. C. J. Pascoe, Tristan Bridges (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2016), 59.
25. Kimmel, *Angry White Men*, 18.
26. Raewyn W. Connell, *Masculinities* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1995).
27. Sally Mann, *Hold Still: A Memoir with Photographs* (New York: Little, Brown, 2015), 45.
28. A survey, conducted for *Esquire Magazine* by Beta Research Corporation, of 20- and 50-year-old American men, found Eastwood to be the "coolest man" in America by a wide margin. "20/50: The Esquire Survey of American Men," in *Esquire* (Sept. 16, 2010). https://www.esquire.com/news-politics/a8463/facts-about-men-1010/ (accessed July 5, 2019).
29. Mann, *Hold Still*, 12.
30. Melissa Block, "From Lens To Photo: Sally Mann Captures Her Love," in *NPR* (February 17, 2011). https://www.npr.org/2011/02/17/133595585/from-lens-to-photo-sally-mann-captures-her-love (accessed July 5, 2019).
31. As scholars of whiteness and masculinity noted, to be a member of an "invisible" disembodied race and gender is to have access to privilege. In the words of Richard Dyer: "There is no more powerful position than that of being 'just' human." Richard Dyer, "The Matter of Whiteness," in *White Privilege: Essential Readings on the Other Side of Racism*, ed. Paula S. Rothenberg, (New York: Worth, 2002), 10. The privileged position of invisibility seems even more relevant in our troubling technological times of satellites, drones and surveillance. Hito Steyerl deals with the power of invisibility in our global, post-industrial world in her satirical video work *How Not to be Seen: A Fucking Didactic Educational*, 2013. The work illustrates strategies for becoming invisible, communicated in an authoritative narrative voiceover, as part of Steyerl's critical examination of the production, use, and circulation of images in the Information Age.
32. Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (3rd. ed.) (Oxford, UK and New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2012), 288.
33. Ibid., 1–9, 238–82.
34. For example, men are between three and five times more likely to commit suicide, or to engage in high-risk behaviors. Men are less likely to ask for professional help regarding their health, which leads to higher rates of death and illness than among women, regardless of income or ethnicity; and they are more prone to emotional isolation. In the last fifteen years, the mortality rate of white middle-

aged men with low levels of education has increased by 22 percent (mostly due to alcohol and drug poisoning, suicide, and overdoses of heroin and prescription opioids), whereas the mortality rate of non-whites in the same age group is decreasing. Anne Case and Angus Deaton, "Rising Morbidity and Mortality in Midlife Among White Non-Hispanic Americans in the 21st Century," in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 112:49 (2015): 15078–83. Also see: David R. Williams, "The Health of Men: Structured Inequalities and Opportunities," in *American Journal of Public Health* 93:5 (2003): 724-731; Will H. Courtenay, "Constructions of Masculinity and Their Influence on Men's Well-Being: A Theory of Gender and Health," in *Soc. Sci. Med.* 50:10 (2000): 1385-1401; Gary Barker, *Dying to Be Men: Youth, Masculinity and Social Exclusion* (New York: Routledge, 2005); Luoluo Hong, "Toward a Transformed Approach to Prevention: Breaking the Link Between Masculinity and Violence," in *Journal of American College Health* 48:6 (2000): 269-279; Michael A. Messner, *Politics of Masculinities: Men in Movements* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publ., 1997), 5–7.

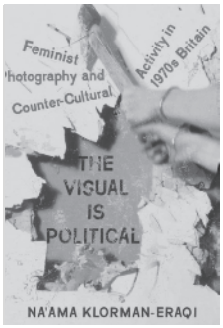
35. Cooper, *Fully Exposed*, 173.
36. Richard Dyer, "Don't Look Now – The Male Pin-Up," in *Screen* 23:3-4 (1982): 71; Eva C. Keuls, *The Reign of the Phallus: Sexual Politics in Ancient Athens* (New York: Harper & Row, l985).
37. Sharful Islam Khan, et al., "Phallus, Performance and Power: Crisis of Masculinity," in *Sexual and Relationship Therapy* 23:1 (2008): 37–49.
38. Bordo, "Reading the Male Body," 266.
39. Cooper, *Fully Exposed*, 9.
40. Ibid., 10.
41. Kimmel, *Manhood in America*, 5.
42. Sally Robinson, *Marked Men: White Masculinity in Crisis* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2000).
43. In 2013, white men earned 22 percent more than black men, and 37 percent more than Hispanic men. Compared with white women, white men earned 28 percent more, 37 percent more than black women, and 47 percent more than Hispanic women. Kimmel, *Angry White Men*, 7–8.
44. Ibid., 12.
45. Julia Eichelberger, "Historicizing The Ponder Heart," in *Eudora Welty Review* 1 (2009): 135–42. https://muse.jhu.edu/article/477129. (accessed April 1, 2019).
46. Ibid.
47. Mann, *Hold Still*, 47–60.
48. Kimmel, *Angry White Men*, 17-18. Frederick Douglass also associated the concept of the self-made man with photography. John Stauffer shows how he used his photographic portraits to reflect and convey his status as one of the nation's preeminent self-made men. John Stauffer, *Picturing Frederick Douglass: An Illustrated Biography of the Nineteenth Century's Most Photographed American* (New York: Liveright, 2015), xxvii.



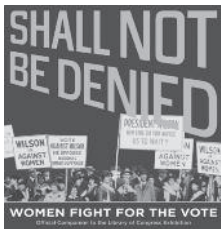
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THE VISUAL IS POLITICAL
Feminist Photography and Countercultural Activity in 1970s Britain
Na'ama Klorman-Eraqi

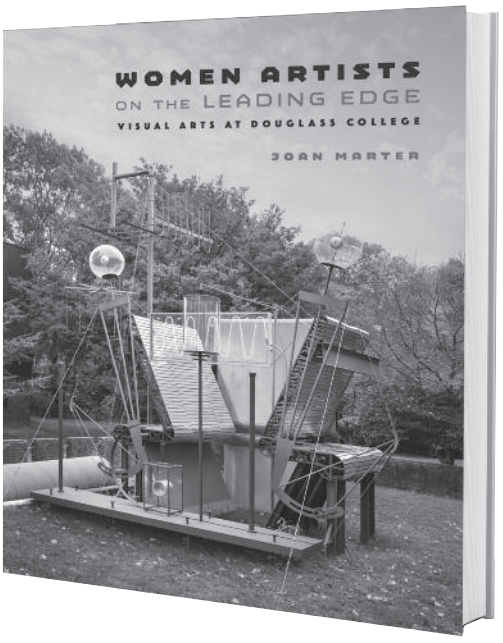


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— Ellen G. Landau, author of *Lee Krasner: A Catalogue*



WOMEN ARTISTS ON THE LEADING EDGE
Visual Arts of Douglass College
Joan Marter

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- Loretta Dunkelman
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Vivien Collens

The Art of Serious Play

By Jared Rankin

Painter turned sculptor, Vivien Abrams Collens is a prolific artist whose sprawling oeuvre continues to grow and take on surprising new forms. Marked by a sense of playfulness, solidified into her work is a childlike sense of wonder charged with mystery and meaning, as she takes joy in experimenting with the tangibility of objects, twisting and coloring them to see what they might become. Rather than reflecting the world, her art makes visible the basic impulse towards creation, bringing into view the active world of a practiced imagination. This playfulness is the quintessential characteristic of her work, the thread on which every variation is strung. Yet, undergirding Collens's work is a whimsical, idiosyncratic logic that guides choice of color and form, giving it rigor. It is an exercise in what might be called serious play.

Collens's career is marked by distinct periods in which she remained fixated on a particular idea, exploring its expressive potential until it yielded a vision of what could follow: the next preoccupation. As they overlapped, the work dealt concurrently with old and new ideas. Early on, Collens's paintings were becoming hybrid forms, using mixed media assemblage to challenge the notion of the canvas as a two-dimensional art form. It was only in 2015, following her City Blocks series, that Collens began to think of herself as a sculptor, producing forms that have remarkable resonance with her earlier paintings on canvas. Since that time she has placed a number of large public sculptures, most notably in New Orleans, including *Froebel's Gifts: Energized Cube* (2017; Fig. 1 and Pl. 8), and New York. To take a retrospective view is to see the clear progression of an artist working towards the limits of what abstract painting could represent as a three-dimensional object, and coming into her own as a sculptor.

Born in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1946, Collens took her BFA in Pittsburgh at Carnegie Mellon University before moving to San Miguel de Allende, Mexico. Living in Mexico for two years, from 1968 to 1970, she was producing paintings and prints that contained elaborate systems of symbols and self-referential schemes that presented a kind of visual puzzle for the viewer. *Family* (1970; Fig. 2) is one of a series of nine prints addressing the cycle of life. In this example, references to the creation of a child from the cells of two parents is suggested. At the same time that she created these prints, she was writing a master's thesis at the Instituto Allende on a history of symbols in visual art. Collens stayed abreast of the US art world through photographs, phone calls, and visits home. Intrigued by the



Fig. 1. Vivien Collens, *Froebel's Gifts: Energized Cube* (2017), powder coated aluminum, 16' 4' x 4'. Commissioned for the permanent collection of Kenner Sculpture Garden, New Orleans, LA.

work of such artists as Robert Morris, Collens returned to the US in the early 1970s, moving back to Cleveland.

Collens found work as an instructor and as photo librarian at the Cleveland Museum of Art, and for six years, beginning in 1971, she was the slide archivist and director of the media center at the Cleveland Institute of Art, which brought her into regular contact with contemporary art and New York artists. She found herself entering a cultural dialogue that was questioning the distinction between the canvas and other three-dimensional works of art.

She joined with several like-minded artists in a regional collective known as Assembled Propositions, which provided an artistic oasis in mid-seventies Cleveland. It was a unique group, and she liked that its members were "working in the narrow area between painting and sculpture … Some will call the work sculpture, but all pieces hang firmly on the wall in the tradition of painting."[1] Theirs was a strand of Abstract Expressionism where the emphasis was on the importance of the material itself, drawing attention to the flatness of the stretched canvas and going so far as to claim that the content of a work of art is revealed through the materials used. Assembled Propositions did not intend to draw observers' attention to the fact that they may be looking at a wood board or masonite or string as such. Instead, they endeavored to strip the materials of the connotations of their common use, and reveal the essential character or "presence" of the object by placing it in novel relationships with other common or found objects.[2] It was their goal to dispel the obscured character of material items thereby excavating the "meaning that is buried in the object and its construction."[3] In this sense, Assembled Propositions began to depart from debates around flatness in order to investigate a related issue, one which seemed to have been the domain of sculptors, and which followed more or less naturally from the Abstract Expressionist interest in the flat materiality of the canvas: how physical objects might become as evocative as two-dimensional works of art. This question would come to serve as an essential line of inquiry throughout Collens's career.

It was in this context, while holding a position as a slide archivist and director of the media center at the Cleveland Institute of Art, that Collens began to produce her own response to this cluster of art-historical quandaries, acquiring her first power tools, and working in her studio in the early morning hours before going to her job. She produced studies for what she would name her Penetration Series, small wooden structures that resembled bookshelves, rectangular frames further divided by three or four horizontal boards, with small strips of painted and unpainted canvas attached between the boards, and then mounted inside a Plexiglass box (1975; Fig. 3). The effect of this invented form on "objectifying" the two-dimensionality of the canvas was twofold. Reminiscent of a bookshelf, the frame appeared as a sort of archival tool for small scraps of torn canvas, as if they were discrete objects being stored for later examination or rearrangement. The archival effect was reinforced by the plexiglass box, which suggested that the strips of canvas were artifacts in need of protection, and that they required a different type of attention than that which is usually given to a painting.

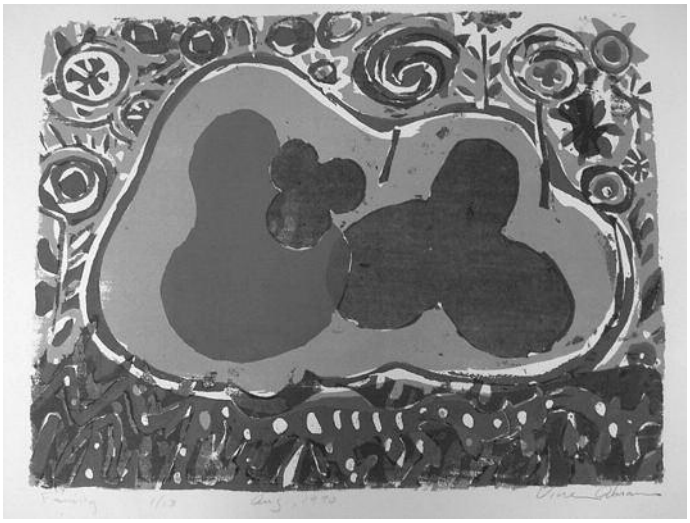


Fig. 2. Vivien Collens, *Family* (1970), serigraph, 9 1/2" x 12 1/2". Courtesy of the artist.

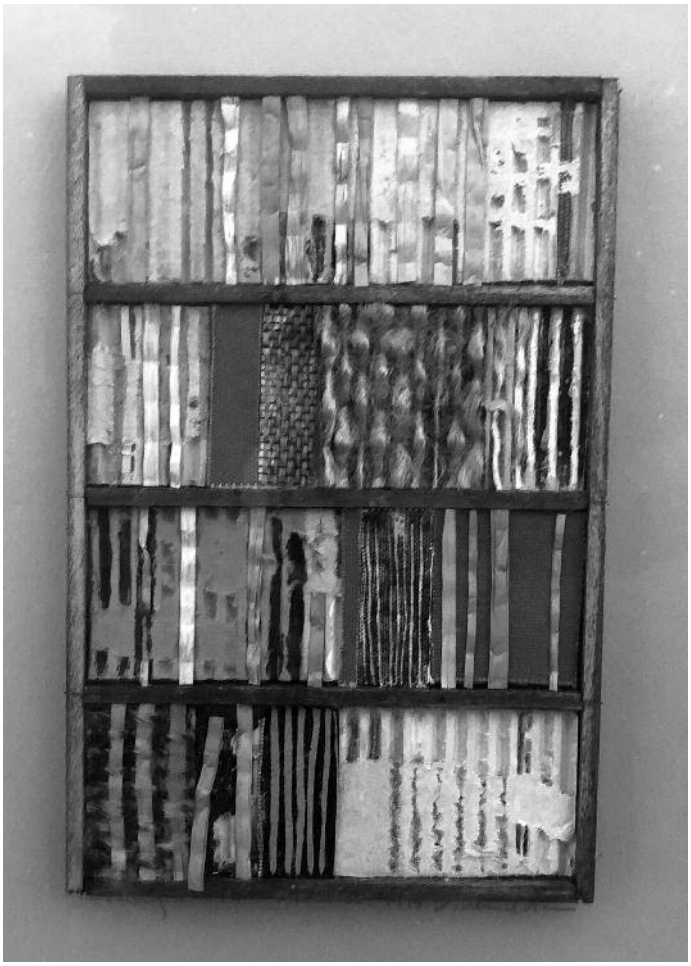


Fig. 3. Vivien Collens. *Study #15* (1975), wood, acrylic on canvas, plexiglass, 17" x. 14" x 2".

These studies laid the groundwork for her next, more sophisticated Second Penetration Series. Shown in 1975 at the first exhibition held by Assembled Propositions at the



Fig. 4. Vivien Collens, *Dipstych #7: Pivotal Decision* (1977), starched canvas, acrylic on wood, 71 1/2" x 73 1/2" x 3". Courtesy of the artist.

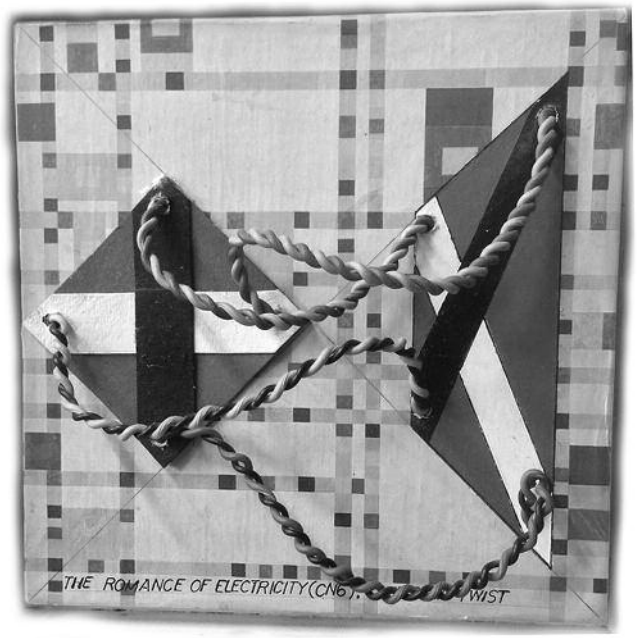


Fig. 5. Vivien Collens, *Tribeca Twist* (1979), collage, paint, wire assemblage, 6" x 6" x 3". Courtesy of the artist.

Tangeman Gallery at the University of Cincinnati, it later was exhibited at other Cleveland galleries, and most importantly in 1976 at the Akron Art Institute, in her first solo exhibition. The pieces were substantially larger than those in the first series, sometimes as large as 6 x 10 feet. Instead of the small bookshelf, Collens made large narrow wooden channels which she placed into rows, with the channels lengthening as they moved toward the center of the piece, forming large scalene trapezoids (1977; Fig. 4). In each channel she affixed a pleated strip of starched and ironed canvas, an addition that came to her as a result of her participation in a woman's consciousness raising group.[4] Each piece consisted of either two or three of these trapezoidal panels, which Collens intended the observer to read as diptychs and triptychs. Notably, she referred to this form not as sculpture but as a "wall installation."

Both large and unusual, the physicality of the works confronted viewers, presenting an obvious challenge to the way one would look at a painting. In a stroke of gentle irony, Collens reversed the roles of the frame and the canvas: the frames of the wall installations in the Second Penetration Series were painted while the canvas was left blank—yet the canvas was not untouched, it was pleated to take on a sculptural effect, made three-dimensional. Collens was meticulous in the construction of these works, as is clear from the drawings for her wall installations, which became works of art in and of themselves (1977; Pl. 9). Looking at these blueprints, another surprising element comes into view: on top of an already complex object, Collens had devised different schema by which she determined the colors for the wooden channels. The application of color as an element of the structure is most evident in the works Collens called "dipstychs." In these, two panels were separated by one to three wooden columns in which she represented the view of the outside edges of the installation through bars of color (1979; Pl. 10). Thus the observer could overcome what was a limitation of sculpture: not being able to see the whole work from one point of view. Through the use of color, "dipstychs" gave an obverse representation of the work as seen from left and right. As Collens described these works: "the structure is the image."[5]

In the autumn of 1977, Collens moved to New York City, in search of opportunities to show her work at some galleries that had shown interest. She went to work immediately with what she called the Projection Series. The wooden channels became a solid piece of wood, canvas was no longer affixed to the work, and the wooden framing that held the panels together was painted and moved to the front of the construction. Over the next two years, she continued producing wall installations, which were ultimately exhibited at the SOHO Center for the Visual Arts. The impetus for change came in 1979, when she had the opportunity for her first artist residency, at Yaddo, in Saratoga Springs, NY. Collens recalls arriving at Yaddo eager to begin working, but she began reading a book that was being passed around, *A Peep into the Twentieth Century*, by Christopher Davis. "The book cited an early pamphlet titled 'The Romance of Electricity," says Collens. "When I read that phrase, I had an amazing vision! In one minute I saw hundreds of images of my work transforming from the rigid geometric structures I had been using into dynamic forms with varying angles and curves."[6] This flash of inspiration led to her next series, The Romance of Electricity.

Collens's drawings at Yaddo in the spring of 1979 prefigured an interest in fluid, flowing lines that would occupy her for the next decade (1979; Pl. 11). The diptych

format remained but with the two images connected by many flowing or zig-zagging lines (1979; Fig. 5). Over the next ten years she would move further away from the meticulous, calculated style of the Penetration and Projection series. The changing forms also signaled a significant change in her process as she began to follow her intuition more freely, relying on found materials for inspiration so that the fluid forms reflected a fluid process. Collens continued creating wall installations for the Romance of Electricity Series, from early variations on the Projection Series with wires running across the surface of painted wood, to an interlude with horseshoe magnets attracting fields of lines, rings, and geometric shapes, their attractive power made visible by wires and nets emerging from the poles of the magnet (1983; Fig. 6). It is notable that the horseshoe magnet is one of the few objects represented in her work—holding in its field of attraction Collens's growing lexicon of abstract symbols.

Each new series seemed to elaborate on a lingering line of inquiry found in its precedents, and every turn in Collens's practice, no matter how subtle, represented a schismatic reckoning with form. In this way, she worked thematically inasmuch as she grappled with form laid bare, so that, for instance, rather than meditating on "roundness" or "all things round," she chose in the early 1990s to allow circles to drop into her field of vision like meteors, despite seldom appearing in her prior work. The artist had married David Collens in 1985, and by now, she wrote, "As a mother of small children, I found that circles reminded me of my children's little round heads, and also suggested bubbles, balls, hula hoops, play, and movement, all part of childrearing." Throughout that decade Collens embraced circles, as that form took on new associations, as in *Baby's Comforter* (1992; Fig. 7). As Collens had adopted fluid lines after linear symbols of energy and electricity flashed before her in a singular vision, circles now floated into her purview as though of their own accord, symbols for the spirit of childhood. This spirit of childhood, *play*, as it turned out, would emerge as a pillar of Collens's work, both as a means of evoking memory through stripped down, representational forms (in the same way stick figures do), and as an integral part of her process, where shapes served as building blocks, component parts that she played with to create something larger.

As she proceeded to study circles with increasing rigor, applying her usual thoughtful approach to formal preoccupations, Collens's methodology was twofold. First, like the Penetration blueprints that carefully mapped out her color logic in the seventies, Collens used her circles systematically. In the early 1990s, she produced a series of paper "paintings" that were in fact large circle collages (1995; Pl. 12). She described the tedious act of cutting out individual circles while attending her daughters' activities, writing that, "I then filed them by color, subject, or pattern for later collage use in the paper paintings." But just as the Penetration blueprints eventually manifested in a radical disruption by turning the wall structure made of painted wood channels around to display the other side, evolving towards the Projection works, Collens followed her rigorous circle inquiry with a simple "what if?" This experimentation



Fig. 6. Vivien Collens, *Magnetic Attraction* (1983), mixed media, 48" x 30" x 5". Courtesy of the artist.

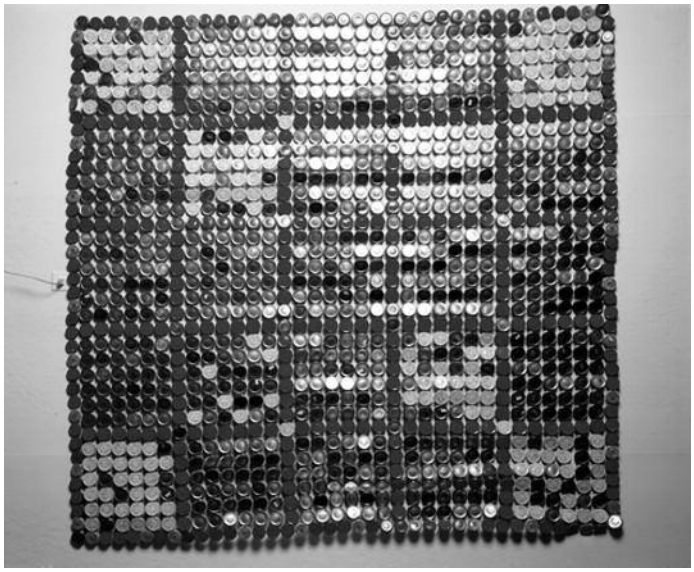


Fig. 7. Vivien Collens, *Baby's Comforter* (1992), baby food jar tops, paint, wire hanging on metal tube, 72" x 72". Courtesy of the artist.

gave way to Collens's most sculpture-like works up to that point in her series titled Just for Fun. She composed these circular assemblages of found objects, mostly small plastic toys, nestled in a web of wire mounted to a hula-hoop frame (1993; Pl. 13). Curiously, because these wall-mounted works sit at an intersection between sculpture and two-dimensional art, the series has the effect of formalizing the plastic toy. By preserving an otherwise disposable object (like trapping a bubble before it floats away), Collens—perhaps inadvertently—created a contemporary artifact of an otherwise fleeting material world in an age of consumption.

When she began working on the Lineation series in the mid to late nineties, Collens punctuated her circle moment with a series of diptychs with contrasting circles and lines. She was playing



Fig. 8. Vivien Collens, *Fusion* (2008), acrylic on canvas, 30" x 60". Courtesy of the artist.

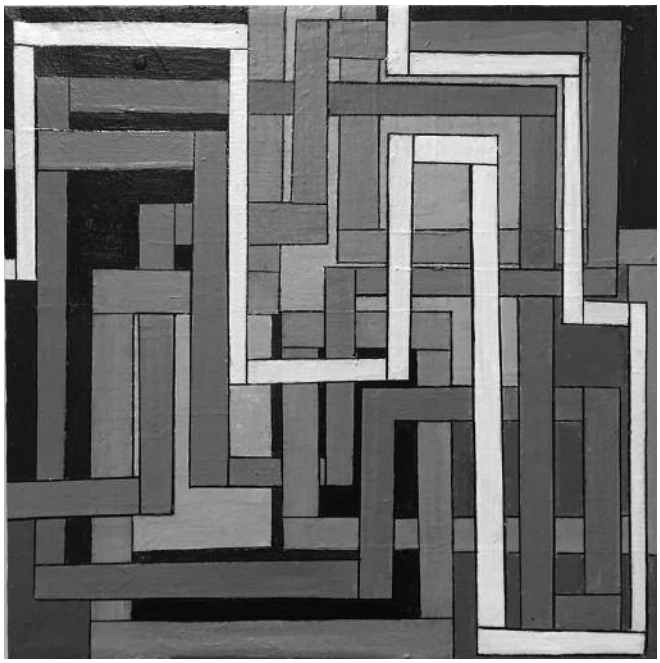


Fig. 9. Vivien Collens, *Skyview* (2015), acrylic on canvas, 12"x. 12" x 2". Courtesy of the artist.

matchmaker with shapes—if not circles with lines, then lines with polygons, and if not in contrast, then in harmony (1995; Pl. 14). What would it look like to put all of the shapes in the same room, on one canvas? Which one needs more attention? Collens chose to focus on lines during the second part of the series, perhaps because they resembled paths, a form that lends itself easily to transitions.

While it may seem a tenuous claim to say that Collens would willingly choose a form that has a symbolic resonance with her artistic direction (which was tied up inextricably with her daily life), changes in her personal life and practice were nearly always predicated by a telling symbol, whether consciously or not.

By the late 1990s, Collens's mother had fallen ill and her children were teenagers, so she could not devote much time or energy to her art making. As often happens with women artists, they find themselves as primary caregivers, and although she was not able to commit fully to pursuing her ideas, she continued working and taking advantage of opportunities to exhibit. By 2008, she had regained her footing with the Slides Series, large canvases that she began making very quickly. Oddly enough, the essential tool in her return to work was the sponge, which liberated her from all geometric forms and enabled her to commit to the fluidity with which she had experimented in the past (2008; Fig. 8). Along with the sponge, she fashioned her own tools to guide paint over the canvas, including brushes with notches cut out and others with small sponges affixed intermittently to the brush. In these paintings, she relied on the materials to guide her, the tactility of the paint and the quickness of the tools on the canvas became a jumping off point for her creativity and a means to rediscover her close affinity with these materials. Despite the "ad hoc-ism" of her approach, the Slides paintings had remarkable resonance with her earlier works—the intersecting lines of the Penetration and Projection series and the unruly, unfurling nets of Romance of Electricity.

In the three series that followed, Urban Studies, Passages, and Pathways, created over the five years, from 2011 to 2016, Collens made a distinct turn back towards geometric forms, and showed a renewed interest in the type of architectural drawing she had done early in her career. Passages and Pathways, as their names suggest, depict different perspectives on architectural forms. Passages gives the viewer an oblique view of different twisting hallways, receding rectangles that draw the observer into the image, trying to see what may be around the looming corner. In contrast, Pathways depicts, through the overlapping and meandering lines of interlocked rectangles, an aerial view of what Collens imagined as an urban landscape, "the infrastructure of a city … the roads, sidewalks, utilities, looking up, looking down,"[7] as in *Skyview* (2015; Fig. 9). These series were made contemporaneously as meditations, brief experiments in architectural perspective. Urban Studies contains the most extensive visual investigation of the visual conundrums in depicting three-

dimensional objects, including *House with Heavenly Views* (2014; Pl. 15). Not surprisingly, Collens, began making her first formal sculptures alongside Urban Studies.

Collens's first freestanding sculptures, City Blocks, were a group of small three-dimensional "sketches," none larger than 6 x 8 x10 inches, painted wooden blocks placed together into a wood frame (2015; Fig. 10). The idea for City Blocks developed as Collens was cleaning up her studio and playing with the scraps of wood, organizing them into small bins, when she realized that they resembled miniature cityscapes, or three-dimensional Mondrians.[8] With City Blocks, Collens was able to articulate and incorporate the fluid sense of play that animated so much of her work into the more rigid medium of sculpture.[9] Despite years of using power tools and constructing large wall installations, it was only after making City Blocks that Collens began to consider herself a sculptor.[10]

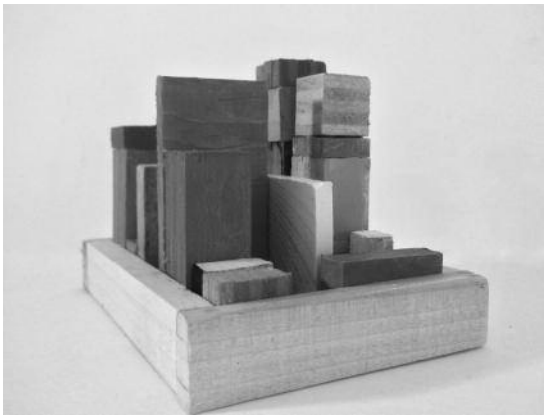


Fig. 10. Vivien Collens, a piece from the *City Blocks Installation* (2015), acrylic on wood blocks, 4" x 4" x 6". Courtesy of the artist.



Fig. 11. Vivien Collens, *Acrobats* (2019), painted aluminum, 18 1/2" x. 7 1/2" x 2 1/2". Courtesy of the artist.

Collens's sense of play would reach an apogee the following year in her next series, Froebel's Gifts. Inspired by the nineteenth-century German pedagogue Friedrich Froebel, known for his eponymous set of educational toys, called "gifts," Collens created a form she called a broken cube as a sort of adulthood addendum to Froebel's original set of gifts. By playing with this form, she proceeded to make large sculptures from this single building block in a variety of conjugations. The complexity of the broken cube allowed Collens to create sophisticated sculptural forms that were highly resonant with her previous two-dimensional works. *Energized Cube* and *Blue Circuit*, also from this series, are both installed in New Orleans, among the first of Collens's large public artworks, and since 2017 Collens has installed six outdoor sculptures in New York, including *Beacon Squirt* (2019; Pl. 16).

Collens is currently enjoying one of her most prolific years yet. As her sculpture, reflects an intuitive and confident practice, it is as though the years leading up to the present were preparation for a moment free of responsibilities where she could fully channel her wellspring of ideas into work. In May of 2019, she exhibited her work at Holland Tunnel Gallery in Newburgh, NY, in her first solo sculpture show. "As spectators make their way around the gallery," wrote a reviewer, "it becomes more evident that Collens has developed a particular visual language of forms that she deploys."[11]

Since 2015, Collens's technique as a sculptor has developed dramatically, the subtlety with which she can convey ideas enhanced by her increasing skill at welding, bending, riveting, and otherwise manipulating the aluminum with which she likes to work. There is no doubt that Collens has developed an extremely sophisticated lexicon of forms, and it is through this language that she conveys the importance of play, of practicing creativity (both 2019; Fig. 11 and Pl. 17). Walking through her exhibition in Newburgh, I recalled my earlier visit to her at her studio, wading through the piles of sketches, pieces of PVC, scrap metal, and pool noodles, occasionally laughing as she experimented with her haphazard building blocks. Here she seemed completely at ease, in her endless repository of inspiration, in a boundless and eager sense of play. As Collens recently told me, "I still have a lot more to say and do."[12] ●

Jared Rankin is an independent scholar and artist.

Notes

1. Elizabeth McClelland, "Assembled Propositions," *Assembled Propositions* 1 (Sept. 27, 1975), 3.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Vivien Collens, interview with the author, June 20, 2019.
5. Elizabeth McClelland, "Assembled Propositions," *Assembled Propositions* 3 (March 6, 1977).
6. Vivien Collens, "The Romance of Electricity," https://viviencollens.com/the-romance-of-electricity.html (accessed July 3, 2019).
7. Vivien Collens, "Pathways," https://viviencollens.com/pathways-2015-16.html (accessed July 3, 2019).
8. Collens, interview, June 20, 2019.
9. Brainard Carey, interview with Vivien Abrams Collens, WYBCX Yale Radio (March 8, 2016), audio, 14:00, https://museumofnonvisibleart.com/interviews/vivien-abrams-collens/ (accessed July 3, 2019). Talking about her City Blocks Series, Collens says, "I didn't measure one inch to one foot. I just put them together and made them, had fun making them, and for me that's almost a guiding sense in making any new series, I want to have fun, I want to enjoy making them. Sometimes later it's very hard to work to realize its ultimate form and presentation but in the beginning it always comes out of an idea and playing."
10. Collens, interview, June 20, 2019.
11. Tony Huffman, "Vivien Collens at Holland Tunnel Gallery," *Chronogram* (June 1, 2019). https://www.chronogram.com/ hudsonvalley/vivien-collens-at-holland-tunnel-gallery/ Content?oid=8477764.
12 Collens, interview with the author, June 20, 2019.

Berthe Morisot

By Jean-Dominique Rey,
Foreword by Sylvie Patry
Flammarion, 2018

Berthe Morisot: Woman Impressionist

Edited by Sylvie Patry with essays by Cindy Kang, Marianne Mathieu, Nicole R. Myers, Sylvie Patry and Bill Scott
Rizzoli Electa, 2018

Reviewed by Therese Dolan

Albert Barnes, who eventually would amass an incomparable collection of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist art, sent his former high school classmate William Glackens to Paris in 1912 with $20,000 to buy art. He largely left it to his friend's artistic judgment to choose the works that would include "pink cats, purple cows, cock-eyed houses, a few other manifestations of artistic genius," with a preference for the works of Auguste Renoir and Alfred Sisley.[1] Glackens returned with thirty-three works, among them Paul Cézanne's 1878–80 *Towards Mont Sainte-Victoire,* Vincent Van Gogh's 1889 version of *The Postman Roulin,* Pablo Picasso's 1901 *Woman with a Cigarette*, and Berthe Morisot's 1884 *Young Woman with a Straw Hat.* These works formed the kernel of the Barnes Foundation collection that would eventually number 181 Renoirs, 69 Cézannes, 59 Matisses, and 46 Picassos. Unfortunately, Barnes sold the Morisot painting in 1936, thus leaving his celebrated collection of masterpieces without a single representative example from one of the founding members of the Impressionist group whose work was deemed as the epitome of "impressionism par excellence" in 1882 by the renowned art critic Philippe Burty (34).[2] How gratifying then—and how fitting—that this painting should return to the Barnes Foundation in 2018 in the exhibit "Berthe Morisot: Woman Impressionist." Here the significance of her talents could be evaluated only footsteps away from the work of the artists with whom she exhibited in seven of the eight Impressionist shows, missing only one in 1879, due to the birth of her daughter Julie.

The physical separation of the body of her work from the main galleries of the Barnes in many ways emblematizes the critical distancing her work has received from critics and historians of the Impressionist movement from its inception, where she was quickly labeled a minor artist due more to prejudices against her sex than the vagaries of any stylistic deviance from the accepted painterly norms of the day. Théodore Duret, an early advocate of Gustave Courbet and Édouard Manet and an admirer of Morisot's work, defended her against Impressionist reviewers "who generally left her in the shade or considered her only a dilettante."[3] This was an injustice, he asserted. By her tireless pursuit of her craft, to which she gave her whole being, Morisot knew she was the equal of anyone else and secretly suffered from being treated as an amateur.[4] The public still has a way to go to catch up with Morisot's contributions to Impressionism and modern art. While the show was at the Barnes, I was more than once asked, "Who is Morisot?" No one has ever asked me who was Monet or Renoir, whose paintings so often supply the staple of framed reproductions in doctors' and dentists' offices. In many ways, the public's ignorance of Morisot is not surprising, given that the last major exhibition of her work in the United States occurred in 1987. She has figured in many retrospectives of Impressionism and largely in writings on the history of Impressionism, especially on Manet, who painted her more than any other figure, including his wife. Nevertheless, scholarship dedicated uniquely to Morisot still lags behind writings on her fellow Impressionists, as can be seen by a quick perusal of the current holdings of the Bibliothèque Nationale catalogue that lists a mere fifteen pages on Morisot. Degas gets 106 pages, Monet merits 226, while Renoir tops the others with 233.

Two highly gifted writers, Stéphane Mallarmé and Paul Valéry, promoted Morisot's work after her death in 1895, yet one had to wait until 1982 for the first serious biography and study to appear in French. Jean-Dominique Rey published *Berthe Morisot* with Flammarion, and an English translation also appeared that year.[5] In the 2018 edition of this book, Sylvie Patry in her Foreword hails Rey's essay entitled "The Beautiful Painter" as having "distinguished itself from a critical tradition that saw nothing but charm and refinement in Morisot's work" (11).[6] She cites a few examples of writings from Morisot's time where critics put her in a category of her own by applying to her art the decorous characteristics of refinement and elegance expected of a woman in nineteenth-century Parisian society. Patry cites Morisot's acknowledgment of the disappointment this caused her: "I do not think any man would ever treat a woman as his equal, and it is all I ask because I know my worth" (14). This statement, juxtaposed with a photograph of Morisot in an elegant evening gown, the epitome of the chic Parisienne, made an effective visual and intellectual point as it greeted visitors to the 2018 Morisot exhibit at the Barnes.

Rey writes of Morisot's "diffidence and restraint" in the opening paragraph of his essay (49). Diffidence—lack of confidence—recurs several times throughout his essay, but this is contradicted by the evidence of Morisot's statement of confidence in her own worth and her courage in exhibiting as the only woman with the Impressionist group. Morisot was enraged rather than grateful when Manet retouched the 1869–70 painting of her mother and sister, rejecting any notion that she played the role as his subservient pupil. Rey's second paragraph also mentions a combination of diffidence and restraint as he encourages the reader to look "at the beautiful face captured so delightfully by Manet, and which she herself tried, on several occasions, to approach in paint" (49). So, the reader of the essay is early led to the assumption that the beauty in Rey's title is biological rather than an aesthetic judgment on her body of work. After a lifetime of working on Manet, I have never come across anyone hailing him as "The Handsome Painter," nor can I recall anyone urging me as a reader to look at a portrait by Degas or Henri Fantin-Latour of Manet before scrutinizing his work. Why in a book on Morisot and her

art encourage the reader to consider her likeness by another artist when Morisot's own self-portraits were available? Rey undermines her talent when he says she "tried … to approach [her image] in paint."

Rey acknowledges Morisot's determination to follow her career, remarking that her work demanded effort and tenacity, but claims that the cost was never apparent: "Great art erases all trace of the road traveled, and allows us to see only the final flowering" (50). This implies the notion of a polished academic finish, the opposite of the freedom and spontaneity of her brushwork. Fortunately, Patry's Foreword, entitled "The Singularly Painterly Painter," implicitly corrects this allegation, where she highlights Morisot's gestures of rapidity and instantaneity that express a deep awareness of transience (43). When Rey turns to Morisot's biography, he remarks that "the fairies certainly seem to have heaped blessings on Morisot's cradle," and that her life unfolded so serenely that "biographers hungry for anecdote regularly break their teeth on the glassy, unruffled surface of an existence traversed by events that glide smoothly by, like swans on a quiet lake" (50). No Irving Stone agony and ecstasy for Morisot, because the *sturm und drang* of Michelangelo's or Van Gogh's life made for better press and movies. As a corrective, writings by Kathleen Adler and Tamar Garb,[7] Anne Higgonet,[8] Suzanne Lindsay,[9] Carol Armstrong,[10] and Patry[11] herself, to name a few, have provided context for the difficulties Morisot experienced psychologically and professionally due to her determination to be a painter, wife, and mother.

Rey does try to credit Morisot's originality and innovations by pointing out that Morisot's early canvases recorded aspects of Auvers, Normandy, and Pont-Aven, and that she discovered these sites before later painters made them famous. He also claims that her connection to Manet had often been misrepresented almost always to her detriment, tracing the bias back to Émile Zola's and Joris-Karl Huysmans's allegations in 1880 and 1881, respectively, that Morisot had been Manet's pupil. He counters that she in fact influenced him and became his link to the Impressionists, enabling him to understand what he had first rejected (59). Rey contends that in the early part of her career she was a painter of city life, suggesting that she may have overheard Charles Baudelaire's call to be a painter of modern life from Manet. He never speculates on the fact that she might have known this essay herself, as her letters testify to her familiarity with contemporary literature, as documented by Patry when she cites the Morisot sisters reading Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* during the summer of 1869 (24).[12] In *The Landscape at Gennevilliers* (1875) the city is pushed far to the background with a bucolic haystack dominating the painting, while boats in the river dominate *The Seine from the Pont d'Iéna* (1866) and any reference to the city is minimized other than the identification of the bridge. Rey's discussion of the *View of Paris from the Trocadero* (1872) and *The Woman and the Child on the Balcony* (1872) must await Kathleen Adler's distinction between suburb, city, and the social situation of women for an understanding of the restrictions inherent in the Baudelairean call to depict city life meant for a female painter of his era.[13]

Rey may have been the first to note that "there is something feminine in the very concept of impressionism" (64). Tamar Garb a few years later thoroughly explicated this concept,[14] but it is gratifying for its recognition despite the fact that its implications were not followed through, as it was not the purpose of Rey's chronicle at that time. He does well to point out several times throughout his text how many of Morisot's works predate the work of Manet, Degas, and Monet. He calls out Joris-Karl Huysmans for denigrating Morisot's oils in an unfinished state, describing them as "rough, unwholesome sketches, these surprising improvisations which we may, perhaps justly, qualify as hysterical" (93). He keenly identifies these same characteristics in Jean Des Esseintes, the corruptly decadent hero of Huysmans's novel *Against Nature.* Rey signals the dearth of images of men in Morisot's work. The same has



Fig. 1: Berthe Morisot, *Self-Portrait* (1885), oil on canvas, 24" x 19 11/16". Musée Marmottan Monet, Paris. Denis and Annie Rouart Foundation, CMR 169.

been said of her colleague Mary Cassatt, who joined the Impressionist group in 1879. The true reason for this, as Griselda Pollock pointed out in her 1980 study of Cassatt, stemmed from social conventions that deemed it unsuitable for a woman to be alone in a studio with a male, unless he was a close family relative.[15]

Rey concludes his study stating that she can stand with "the greatest, most inventive and creative painters of her day—Manet, Degas, Monet, Renoir" (134). Rey's words mark an improvement over a prior critic's condescending observation: "She transposed the message of Renoir and Manet to suit her frailer temperament. The staccato brushwork which Manet had adapted from Hals becomes, in her hands, the charmingly ruffled hair of a bambino."[16] Nevertheless, Morisot is still yoked to her male colleagues and her achievement assessed in relation to them instead of allowing her own achievements to stand for themselves. Rey inadvertently persists in demeaning Morisot when he writes of the "tender charm and femininity" of her work, declaring that "its superficial appearance, however delightful and attractive, simultaneously hides and reveals a depth concealed from over-hasty eyes by discretion and diffidence alone"

(134). Whoever made the editorial choice to have Rey's statements opposite a full-page reproduction of Morisot's 1885 *Self-Portrait* (Fig. 1) provided a cogent visual rebuttal to his words. Morisot faces the viewer with full confidence as a painter with palette in hand, justifiably proud to take her place in the lineage of artists who portrayed themselves with the instruments of their professional identity. No timidity here as Morisot adorns her dress with shapes that can be read as flowers but also, as Mallarmé astutely observed, function as a decorative medal hanging from a red ribbon. Her hand, brush, and palette are dynamic swirls of paint whose deliberation stands for the fierce resolve to create her own individual style. This is far from Rey's observation that Morisot was related to Fragonard with whom she shared "not only a preference for feminine subjects but also a certain similarity of style, with their light, decisive, rapid touch, as if the brush no more than skimmed the surface of the canvas, scattering colors like roses on a dress" (50). The determination and force of her self-portrayal with its vigorous style clearly demonstrate assurance and resolve.

Rey most likely derives Morisot's diffidence from letters early in her career that express doubts that have often been characterized as weakness. This perception continues today, as seen in a review of the exhibition in the December 2018 edition of the *The New Criterion*, where the author claims that "even the most bucolic tableaux—say, the late afternoon leisure of *Reading* (1888)—are infused with a staccato sense of doubt."[17] Manet constantly scraped and reworked his canvases throughout his career, yet no one to my knowledge has ever characterized him as self-effacing, just strategically inventive in search of a new language of modernism. Paul Cézanne spoke late in his life of his lifelong struggle to master his craft: "I could paint for a hundred years, a thousand years without stopping and I would still feel as though I knew nothing."[18] This from the man proclaimed as the father of modern art. Maurice Merleau-Ponty's now classic essay, "Cézanne Doubt," praises this aspect because it prompted the artist to launch the art work as if it were the first word. In the career of a male artist, doubt often denoted innovative thinking and pointed to pioneering changes in the art world. For a female artist such as Morisot, her often cited "pitched battle" with her canvas has been construed as a limitation or as a veiled threat to male hegemony, whereas at the age of twenty-one she wrote: "It is high time to act, to look upon the present moment as the critical moment, and to make of my daily torment, work, my perpetual pleasure."[19] There is no question from her writings that her worries about her abilities persisted throughout her life as they did with many male artists. Only her critics and early historians of Impressionism used this as a rationale to consign her to secondary status.

Berthe Morisot: Woman Impressionist was the first exhibition dedicated to Morisot in twenty-one years in the United States—although scholarship on Morisot picked up significantly in depth in the early 1980s and after the 1987 catalogue and solo exhibit of Morisot's work at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., the Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth, Texas, and the Mount Holyoke Art Museum in South Hadley, Massachusetts. Its appearance in Quebec marked the first solo showing of her work in Canada and, perhaps even more surprising, the first time since 1941 that a French national museum, the Musée d'Orsay, dedicated a one-person exhibition to her. In their Foreword to the catalogue for the show, the Directors call attention to the neglect Morisot has experienced, claiming that the show aimed to affirm her rightful place in the canon of great French artists and assure her legacy for generations to come. Thus, Sylvie Patry's strategy of starting her essay, "Berthe Morisot: 'Stimulating Ambiguities,'" with reference to the Guerilla Girls' 1989 protest about how few works by women were displayed in the Metropolitan Museum of Art deftly situates the lack of recognition of Morisot that has persisted in contributing to the public's unfamiliarity with her work late into the twentieth century.

Patry traces the first retrospectives and histories of Impressionism that eventually shunted Morisot into the class of "Secondary Impressionist Artists," even though she was highly praised during her lifetime. Patry acknowledges that 85 percent of Morisot's paintings remained in family hands, thus making access difficult. Yet Paul Seurat, who died at the young age of thirty-two and had very few major paintings, has received more scholarly attention than Morisot. Patry's essay provides a competently succinct summary of the challenges Morisot faced being a female painter in her time. She detects a reference to Dürer's *Melancholia* in Morisot's 1872 painting *The Cradle*, an allusion that deepens the meaning of the painting of Morisot's sister, Edma, who expressed her anguish for having chosen the life of a wife and mother over one as a professional painter, additionally echoing Berthe's own longing to have children. Rejections from the Salon and the lack of sales impelled Morisot to ignore Pierre Puvis de Chavannes's warning to avoid exhibiting with the renegade artists who would be labeled derisively as the Impressionists. Patry ends her essay by pointing out that Morisot retained her maiden name after marrying Eugène Manet in December 1874. Her essay situates Morisot in her generation, highlighting the social situation of a woman of her class who had to confront prejudices such as those articulated by Léon Lagrange in an 1860 issue of the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts:*

> Male genius has nothing to fear from female taste. Let men of genius conceive of great architectural projects, monumental sculpture, and elevated forms of painting. In a word, let men busy themselves with all that has to do with great art. Let women occupy themselves with those types of art they have always preferred, such as pastels, portraits or miniatures. Or the painting of

> flowers, those prodigies of grace and freshness which alone can compete with the grace and freshness of women themselves. To women above all falls the practice of the graphic art, those painstaking arts which correspond so well to the role of abnegation and devotion which the honest woman happily fills here on earth, and which is her religion ... To women, then, fall these "secondary arts," which are especially suited to their nature and character. For men's genius suffers from being restricted to such narrow genres; secret ambition devours them and pushes them to greater heights ... women are content to take second place.[20]

Morisot was undoubtedly determined and confident enough to ignore the implications of this misogynist observation by painting in oils, taking on major figure painting, and playing on a level field by exhibiting with so many male artists in seven of the eight Impressionist exhibitions.

Nicole R. Myers's essay, "'Extreme Novelty or Things of the Past'": Morisot and the Modern Woman," addresses the feminine bourgeois world that became the major topic of Morisot's art. She ties Morisot's concentration on the image of the elegant Parisienne to attracting a clientele for her paintings. Myers claims that in the 1876 Impressionist exhibition—referring to works such *The Psyche Mirror* (1876; Fig. 2)—Morisot's "novel focus on the intimate rituals of the toilette and the alluring appearance of bare shoulders, exposed ankles, and flirtatious fans seems destined to seduce her predominantly male audience" (Patry, 86).[21] While this speculation may be true because of her eagerness to sell paintings, Morisot may be providing her own visual and physical experience of gender and genre as she did throughout her career. As Peter Schjeldahl observed, "You see the distinction in her pictures of fashionably dressed Parisiennes, who are not spectacles but bodily presences in dresses that feel rendered from the inside. Rather than look at these women, you adduce what it's like to be them."[22] This rings true in the illustration on the page of Myers's statement, where a woman at her toilette offers none of the seductiveness or voyeurism of Degas's bathers as she sits in her negligee and cap hunched over the basin. The fan held by the model in *At the Ball* (1875) seems positioned more as a possible screen than a flirtatious device. Duret found that Morisot's work placed him in the presence of a feminine work by its delicacy and that it in no way acceded to the coyness and dryness that characterized the work of women.[23] Yet Myers is correct when one considers *The Mirror, Woman at Her Toilette* (1876) and *Young Woman at Her Toilette* (1875-70), where the exposure of the shoulder and the half-dressed women play into the tradition of allowing an alluring glimpse into rituals of self-adornment. But eroticism is tamped down, as Higonnet observed and Myers acknowledges, because almost nothing of the women's bodies is revealed.[24] Perhaps this lurks behind Louis de Fourcaud's frustration with the unfinished aspect of Morisot's work: "Paint me young women in their slips admiring themselves in their mirrors, and similar subjects if you wish, but



Fig. 2. Berthe Morisot, *The Psyche mirror* (1876), oil on canvas, 25 5/8" x 21 1/4". Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid.

have the courage to paint them through to the end. A sketch will never be anything but a sketch."[25]

The second part of Myers's essay is devoted to Morisot's association with Rococo art. Depending on the critic, this could be perceived either as a strength or a weakness. Morisot's works in the 1880 Impressionist exhibition caused Philippe Burty to declare that not since the time of Fragonard "have we seen a comparable intellectual audacity and clarity of tone" (93). Charles Ephrussi, evaluating the same paintings, discerns the opposite: "This fleeting lightness, this charming, sparkling, frivolous vivacity recalls Fragonard, though without the deep science, solidity of surface, and diffuse light that makes the master's paintings so homogenous" (93). These two critical reactions demonstrate how referencing the Rococo could serve as a double-edged sword, depending on the political and aesthetic temper of the times. Myers effectively summarizes the history of attitudes to the Rococo up to Morisot's time with ample reference notes to the abundant previous scholarship on the subject. In greater depth than previous scholars, she ties the impact of Rococo subject matter and style on Morisot's art to two important exhibitions, in May 1879 of Old Master drawings, and during the winter of 1883–84 of works at Galerie Georges Petit that prompted Félix Fénéon to exclaim that "these artificial painters from an artificial era were *realists*" (104). One wishes that the restraints on length of the essay could have allowed more speculation on this observation and what it meant at the time when academic and avant-garde art were in fierce battle with one another.[26] Morisot's ties to the Rococo can in some ways be linked to the neglect of her work in the history of modern art, as the association with the concept of the decorative, initially seen as an asset, gradually took on pejorative connotations in the writings of Clement Greenberg.[27] As Ann Gibson has demonstrated, cultural critics in the 1940s and 1950s deemed women's art as intrinsically decorative and declared that female artists "should study minor (decorative) arts like ceramics, textiles, weaving, leatherwork, and flower arranging. Women, in other words, were by nature precluded from being able to produce consequential art."[28] Back to the days of Léon Lagrange cited above and the erasure of women artists from the canon.

Cindy Kang reprises the concept of liminal spaces in Morisot's work in "Morisot on the Threshold: Windows, Balconies, and Verandas." Rather than defining borders as binary indicators of limiting confinement, Kang casts them as thresholds in the manner conceived by Arnold van Gennep, as spaces of both possibility and vulnerability, and Walter Benjamin's call for a sharp distinction between threshold and border with change, passage, ebb and flow that are embedded in the definition of threshold (120). After tracing the use of the window as a threshold space in the Haussmanization of Paris and in Edmond Duranty's seminal essay, "The New Painting," Kang analyzes Morisot's 1875 *In England (Eugène Manet on the Isle of Wight)* as an image of flow and fusion rather than inside-outside. Morisot has the potted plants on the windowsill function as elements that unite foreground and background so that the view through the window becomes a painting within a painting. In several ways, Morisot here anticipates Henri Matisse's 1909 *Harmony in Red,* where the pattern on the table and wall merge to emphasize the flatness of the canvas with its own window of a garden view that suggests a painting within a painting.

Kang introduces the notion of decorative scenic wallpaper as possible backgrounds for several paintings Morisot executed at Bougival in the 1880s that portray figures seated in front of windows overlooking greenery. This intriguing suggestion seems countermanded, however, by the presence of a shutter to the right of the female figure posed *In the Country (After Lunch)* (1881). The strange transparency of the figure's mid-section would seem to suggest the continued transparency of the window. The blinds in the upper left corner of *On the Veranda* (1884) would most likely be out of place in a wallpaper scenic design where illusion is paramount. The most convincing example is *Doll on the Veranda* (1884) with its vertical stripe, but again the window blinds in the upper right of the painting and the continuity of landscape between the wallpaper and outside would seem illogical (unless the artist was contemplating the visual trickery suggested by René Magritte's 1933 *The Human Condition*). Kang's suggestion, whether right or wrong, nevertheless reinforces the important notion of decoration as a marker of modern painting and leads one back to Louis Leroy's scornful observation that wallpaper in its embryonic state had more finish than Monet's 1874 *Impression: Sunrise*, the work that ultimately gave the movement its name.

Morisot once wrote that "real painters understand through the brush,"[29] and Bill Scott's essay, "A Painter's Painter," traces Morisot's stylistic development from her early apprenticeship with Joseph-Benoît Guichard, Achille-François Oudinot, and Camille Corot, when she and her sister Edma first tried their hands at making art. Scott gives more attention to Edma's talents than any other scholar to my knowledge, thus sharpening the painful decision that only female painters had to make between a professional career and marriage. He also remarkably sheds light on the artwork of Morisot's husband, Eugène Manet, providing examples of his work in watercolor, and speculating that his companionship allowed her to paint outside more frequently. Scott refreshingly pays less attention to Morisot's relationship with Manet and his painting—well-trod territory—and highlights the mutual admiration and influence of Monet. Morisot's struggles with getting her work into galleries after the demise of the Impressionist exhibitions brought out her rivalry with Mary Cassatt, who as an American enjoyed a large solo exhibit at the Paul Durand-Ruel Gallery in 1891, when she had been accorded just a few paintings hung poorly in his corridor. Scott highlights Morisot's role as mentor to her daughter and niece, guiding their first steps in drawing and copying works of older art, providing rare and delightful watercolors by Morisot's daughter Julie.

Each of the essays in the catalogue

assumes a minimum of prior acquaintance with Morisot's life, times, and art, filling out context for the unacquainted reader. Nevertheless, each author generously acknowledges prior scholarship and adds some new insight into Morisot's career. A thorough annotated chronology of Morisot's life and career by Amalia Wojciechowski appends the essays. While I would have preferred the color plates to be in one section rather than scattered throughout the essays for easier consultation, or better coordinated with their mention in the text, the catalogue is generously illustrated with high quality reproductions and informative details. Morisot's achievements stand on their own in this compendium of texts, and she is no longer treated as a satellite of her male Impressionist colleagues. This should help distance her from reviews with titles such as "The Beguiling Berthe Morisot at the Barnes Foundation," with their lingering whiff of feminine condescension,[30] allowing Patry's characterization of Morisot's "unflinching artistic rigor" (20) to be the prevailing account. The exhibition fortunately had this effect on Peter Schjeldahl, whose incisive review in *The New Yorker* proclaimed: "Today, she is the most interesting artist of her generation, for feats of form and depths of meaning that were still developing when she died from pneumonia in 1895."[31] Patry and Myers defended their use of the title *Berthe Morisot: Woman Impressionist* because they needed to inform museum-goers of her status. As Myers said, "We called it 'Woman Impressionist, but we hope it is for the last time."[32]

Me Too. ●

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Notes

1. Judith F. Dolkart, "William Glackens: 'Intensely Sincere and Intensely Brave,'" in Avis Berman, ed., *William Glackens* (New York: Skira Rizzoli in Association with the Barnes Foundation, 2014), 128.
2. As cited by Sylvie Patry in her Foreword, "This Singularly Painterly Painter."
3. "Les critiques, qui parlaient des expositions des Impressionnistes, la laissaient généralement dans l'ombre, ou ne la considéraient que comme une sorte de dilettante." See Théodore Duret, *Histoire des peintres impressionnistes* (Paris: H. Floury, Éditeur, 1919), 112–13. Translation mine.
4. Ibid.
5. Subsequent reprints appeared in 1988 and 2002. In 2010 an augmented edition with a Foreword by Sylvie Patry became available. This version was reissued in 2016 and again in 2018, which is the edition under review here.
6. Page numbers in this first section refer to pages in J-D Rey, *Berthe Morisot.*
7. Kathleen Adler and Tamar Garb, *Berthe Morisot* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Press, 1987).
8. Anne Higonnet, *Berthe Morisot* (New York: Harper and Row, 1990).
9. Suzanne Glover Lindsay, "Berthe Morisot: Nineteenth-Century Woman as Professional," in T. J. Edelstein, ed., *Perspectives on Morisot* (New York: Hudson Hills, 1990), 79–90.
10. Carol Armstrong, *Manet Manette* (New Haven and London: Yale Univ. Press, 2002).
11. Ingrid Pfeiffer and Max Hollein, eds., *Women Impressionists* (Frankfurt am Main: Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt, and Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2008).
12. Morisot's sustained interest in contemporary literature continued throughout her life, as noted by Charles F. Stuckey in Charles F. Stuckey and William P. Scott, with the assistance of Suzanne G. Lindsay, *Berthe Morisot. Impressionist* (New York: Hudson Hills, 1987), 106.
13. Kathleen Adler, "The Suburban, the Modern and `une Dame de Passy,'" *Oxford Art Journal* 12:1 (1989): 3–13.
14. Tamar Garb, "'L'Art Féminin': The Formation of a Critical Category in Late Nineteenth-Century France," *Art History* 12, no. 1 (March 1989): 39–65 and "Berthe Morisot and the Feminizing of Impressionism," in Edelstein, *Perspectives on Morisot,* 57–66.
15. Griselda Pollock, *Mary Cassatt* (New York: Harper and Row, 1980).
16. Pierre Schneider, "Art News from Paris," *Art News* 60 (May 1961): 44.
17. Mario Naves, "Exhibition Note, 'Berthe Morisot: Woman Impressionist,' The Barnes Foundation, Philadelphia," *New Criterion* 37, no. 4 (Dec. 2018): 57.
18. Cézanne as cited in John Elderfield et al., *Cézanne's Portraits* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 2017), 235.
19. Morisot, as cited by Higonnet, *Berthe Morisot,* 36.
20. Léon Lagrange, as translated by Beth Genne, "Two Self-Portraits by Berthe Morisot." *Psychoanalytic Perspectives on Art*, vol. 2 (Hillsdale, NJ: The Analytic Press, 1987), 158–59.
21. Page numbers in this second section refer to pages in Sylvie Patry, ed., *Berthe Morisot: Woman Impressionist.*
22. Peter Schjeldahl, "Peerless. The Paintings of Berthe Morisot," *The New Yorker* (Oct. 29, 2018), 72.
23. "L'ensemble est d'un grand charme. On se sent là en présence d'une œuvre féminine par sa délicatesse, mais qui ne tombe point dans cette mièvrerie et cette sécheresse, que laissent généralement voir les ouvrages des femmes." Duret, *Histoire des peintres impressionnistes,* 112.
24. Anne Higonnet, *Berthe Morisot's Images of Women* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press), 1992), 168.
25. Léon de Lora (Louis de Fourcaud), *Le Gaulois* (April 10, 1877) as cited in Charles S. Moffett, *The New Painting, Impressionism 1874–1886* (San Francisco: The Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco, 1986), 229.
26. I do not intend this as a criticism of Myers as her essay and its many references demonstrate the thoroughness and thoughtfulness of her research.
27. Clement Greenberg, "Avant-Garde and Kitsch" (1939), in *Perceptions and Judgments*, 1939–1944, vol. 1 of John O'Brian, ed., *The Collected Essays and Criticism*, 4 vols. (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1986), 5–22. Additionally, of distinct importance in this discourse is Steven Z. Levine, "Décor /Decorative/ Decoration in Claude Monet's Art," *Arts Magazine* 51, no. 6 (Feb. 1977): 136–39.
28. Ann Eden Gibson, *Abstract Expressionism: Other Politics* (New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press, 1997), 37.
29. As cited in William P. Scott, "Morisot's Style and Technique" in Stuckey and Scott, *Berthe Morisot. Impressionist*, 189.
30. Nicole Anderson, "The Beguiling Berthe Morisot at the Barnes Foundation." *The Magazine Antique* 185, no. 6 (Nov. – Dec., 2018), 34.
31. Schjeldahl, "Peerless. The Paintings of Berthe Morisot," 72.
32. Rachel Cohen, "Rooms of Her Own." *Apollo* 188, no. 667 (Sept. 2018): 77.

City of Women: Female Artists in Vienna from 1900 to 1938 (Stadt der Frauen: Künstlerinnen in Wien, 1900-1938)

Edited by Stella Rollig and Sabine Fellner
Prestel, Munich, and Belvedere, Vienna, 2019

Reviewed by Roberta K. Tarbell

This beautifully designed and richly illustrated catalogue accompanied a spectacular exhibition of works by fifty-six female Austrian modernist painters, sculptors, and printmakers, held at the Lower Belvedere in Vienna from January 29 to May 19, 2019. Although, collectively, they elevated the achievements of modern art in Austria, these women are largely excluded from its history, though sometimes represented by a token work or two, in more than a dozen recent, substantial books about art created in Vienna between 1890 and 1940. Those authors invariably focused on the painters Gustav Klimt, Egon Schiele, and Oskar Kokoschka, and Wiener Werkstätte founders Kolomon Moser and Josef Hoffmann.

The nine essays in *City of Women*, complemented by 232 color illustrations and 90 in black and white, go a long way to redress this omission. They inform us that, although women artists were disallowed from voting membership in the three major artist associations in Vienna—The Secession, Künstlerhaus, and Hagenbund—they exhibited frequently with them, in art galleries, and with associations they founded specifically for women. Acht Künstlerinnen (Eight Women Artists), for example, exhibited the work of artists including Olga Wisinger-Florian (1844–1926), Marie Egner (1850–1940), and Teresa Feodorowna Ries (1874–1956) regularly between 1901 and 1909 at the Pisko Salon, the prestigious Ringstrasse gallery of Gustav Pisko, and several women had solo shows there. Under Klimt, as president of the Vienna Kunstschau (Vienna Art Show), women made up one third of the artists in the outstanding 1908 art and craft show. The VBKÖ (Vereinigung bildender Künstlerinnen Österreichs/Austrian Association of Women Artists), founded in April of 1910 to advance its members' professional interests, managed its own exhibition space, which was continued after 1926 by its progressive offshoot, Wiener Frauenkunst (Viennese Women's Art).

In the lead chapter, the exhibition curator Sabine Fellner emphasizes how highly these artists were regarded in their own time. Most had successful careers despite significant obstacles in a male-dominated art scene (23). Fellner cites dozens of publications and exhibitions that collectively should have brought these Viennese women artists to the attention of art historians. She highlights the deeply researched histories published by Julie M. Johnson and Sabine Plakolm-Forsthuber, the authors of the next two essays in *City of Women*.[1] Johnson, a professor at the University of Texas, San Antonio, points out that the VBKÖ, in its first exhibition, in December 1910, placed on view in the Secession building, "Die Kunst der Frau" (The Art of the Woman), a historical retrospective of 300 works by female artists from the Renaissance to the present, a feat not repeated until the 1970s (40).

Although women in Austria gained the vote in 1918, the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna did not admit female students until 1920. Plakolm-Forsthuber, in "Education, Associations, and Networks," describes the founding, curricula, and the importance of schools that pioneered studio classes for women, including the Vienna School of Art for Women and Girls and the Vienna School of Applied Arts, which was open to modernist concepts and led directly to opportunities in the Wiener Werkstätte. These artists chose widely varied life models, career strategies, and aesthetic choices (25). Tina Blau (1845–1916), Egner, and Wisinger-Florian worked closely with established Viennese male artists and organizations.[2] Many benefitted from husbands as working partners who offered financial stability, mentoring, studios, and opportunities for exhibition and travel to avant-garde centers. These female artists wanted recognition only for their work, and not because of gender, social class, ethnicity, or religion (51).



Fig. 1. Louise von Motesiczky, *Model in Vienna* (1929), oil on canvas, 14 3/4" x 11 1/8". Belvedere, Vienna. Gift of the Marie-Louise Motesiczky Charitable Trust. ©Belevedere Wien. Photo: Johannes Stoll.

Some sculptors gained recognition as well. Silvie Aigner, editor of the art magazine *Parnass*, writes that, although "the female sculptor as a type was incompatible with gender expectations," several thrived as independent artists with international venues (107). Russian-born Ries's life-size white marble, *Witch Doing Her Toilet on Walpurgis Night* (1895) elicited controversy when shown at Künstlerhaus in 1896 because of its unconventional subject (cutting her toenails) and its unidealized forms (108). Elza Kövesházi-Kalmár's (1876–?) lyrical bronze figures expressed the free motion of modern dancers such as Isadora Duncan, who had performed in Vienna.

Painter and sculptor Elena Luksch-Makowsky (1878–1967), the first female member of the Wiener Werkstätte, trained at the academy in St. Petersburg, Russia, and in Munich, where she was in class with Marianne Werefkin (1860–1938) in the art school of Anton Ažbe. Belvedere curator Alexander Klee compares this art education to the more conservative training available to women in Vienna, where Luksch-Makowsky moved in 1901 and exhibited frequently with the Secession (119–20). Modernist painter Helene Funke

(1869–1957), who exhibited with Matisse and the Fauves in Paris, introduced the vibrant hues of Fauvism to Vienna after she moved there in 1911, writes Elisabeth Nowak-Thaller (131).[3]

In Paris, between 1925 and 1930, inspired by Dada aesthetics, Austrian-born designer Stefi Kiesler (1897–1963) invented geometric compositions created with black and red typewriter ink on paper, writes Dieter Bogner (199). She published these "Typo-Plastiks" under the pseudonym Pietro Saga in Theo van Doesburg's avant-garde journal *De Stijl*; five of these works became part of the collection of the Société Anonyme, the organization founded in New York in 1920 by Katherine Dreier, Marcel Duchamp, and Man Ray. Gabriela Nagler, a frequent contributor to catalogues for exhibitions at Austrian museums, in "A Rare Look at Work and Poverty," discusses Hermine Heller-Ostersetzer's (1874–1909) and Lili Réthi's (1894–1971) graphic depictions of "the grim reality" of hard labor, and Mariette Lydis's (1887–1970) etchings of gloomy criminals (189–90).

In "The Long Road to the Belvedere" Katharina Lovecky recounts that the predecessor of the Belvedere museum, the Moderne Gallery, founded in 1903, purchased works by women artists for its permanent collection from the Secession, the Künstlerhaus, the Hagenbund, Pisko Salon, and other major galleries, exhibition venues and associations, continuing into the 1930s (211–12). The stories of how these Viennese women artists and their works survived are compelling. Marie-Louise von Motesiczky (1906–96), and most others who were of Jewish heritage, left Vienna abruptly after the Anschluss in 1938, when Germany annexed Austria and abolished all women's associations. Atypical is the salvaging of Motesiczky's oeuvre, including *Model in Vienna* (1929; Fig. 1), painted just after her return from studying with Max Beckmann in Frankfurt. This bold feminist portrait composed only of neutral and flesh tones (except for scarlet red lips) communicates the fortitude and determination of these activist women artists.

A brother, Karl, shipped her paintings to London, where she had established her home in 1939, before he was transported to Auschwitz. (Of the fifty-six artists, she is the only one with a published catalogue raisonné.[4]) Another victim of anti-Semitism was Trude Waehner (1900–79). She had studied with Paul Klee and Wassily Kandinsky in the Dessau Bauhaus in 1928 and 1929, and was active with avant-garde artists in Berlin until 1933, when she returned to Vienna. In 1938 she fled to Zurich and then to the US, where she taught art in American universities. With so many stories to tell about these artists, *A City of Women* can not contain them all, but the ample footnotes and several appendices direct readers to resources. The book is a clarion call for us to become familiar with these pioneering master artists. ●

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Notes

1. Sabine Plakolm-Forsthuber, *Künstlerinnen in Österreich 1897-1938: Malerei, Plastik, Architektur* (Vienna: Picus, 1994), and Julie M. Johnson, *The Memory Factory: The Forgotten Women Artists of Vienna 1900* (West Lafayette: Purdue Univ. Press, 2012). See also Johnson's "'The Art of the Woman': Women's Art Exhibitions in Fin-de-Siècle Vienna" (PhD diss., Univ. of Chicago, 1998); Megan Marie Brandow-Faller, "An Art of Their Own: Reinventing 'Frauen' in the Female Academies and Artist Leagues of Late-Imperial and First Republic Austria, 1900-1930" (PhD diss., Georgetown Univ., 2010); and Plakolm-Forsthuber's catalogues for the exhibitions *Exposed: A Century of Nudes by Austrian Women Artists* (NŐArt, 1998/99), and *Century of Women: From Impressionism to the Present, Austria 1870 to Today* (Vienna: Kunstforum, 1999/2000). Indispensable for historical context is Harriet Anderson, *Utopian Feminism: Women's Movements in Fin-de-Siècle Vienna* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1992).
2. See also Helga H. Harriman, "Olga Wisinger-Florian and Tina Blau: Painters in 'Fin de Siècle Vienna," *WAJ* 10, no. 2 (Fall 1989–Winter 1990), 23–28.
3. See also Julie Johnson, "Rediscovering Helene Funke: The Invisible Foremother," *WAJ* 29, no. 1 (Spring-Summer 2008): 33–40.
4. Ines Schlenker, *Marie-Louise von Motesiczky: A Catalogue Raisonné of the Paintings* (Manchester, VT: Hudson Hills Press, 2009).

Kay Sage, Catalogue Raisonné

By Stephen Robeson Miller, Edited by Jessie Sentivan, Essay by Mary Ann Caws
Delmonico Books-Prestel Verlag, 2018

Reviewed by Salomon Grimberg

In 1983, art historian Stephen Robeson Miller lent, for microfilming, his meticulous research on American artist Kay Sage (1898–1963) to the Archives of American Art (AAA), including his master's thesis, "The Art of Kay Sage," completed the previous year at Boston University. No one before Miller had researched Sage's life and work with such devotion; and no one since has written about the artist without consulting his definitive research. And now, the long awaited catalogue raisonné has finally been published, and the wait has been worthwhile. Intuitively designed by Eileen Boxer of Boxer Design and exquisitely produced by Mark Kelman and Hollis Taggart, the publication might have been conceived by Sage herself as it mirrors her elegant work. Providing not only priceless information, it is a work of art in itself. Easy to read and a feast for the eyes, the book is covered in a pale shade of sage green silk with embossed letters that simply read "Kay Sage catalogue raisonné." The layout of the book could not be more user-friendly: the verso page includes relevant information on the work, reproduced on the opposite page. (When blank, pages read "no reproduction known.")

Following a brief introduction by Kelman, Miller provides a chronology of Sage's life, richly illustrated with personal photographs, from her childhood and family; in art school, in Italy; with her first husband, Prince Ranieri di San Faustino; with Yves Tanguy whom she married in Las Vegas, and from their last years together, while



Fig. 1. Kay Sage, *I Have No Shadow* (1940), oil on canvas, 25" x 21". Worcester Art Museum.

living in Connecticut—and more. Mary Ann Caws, whose primary interest is Surrealism, interweaves a thoughtful interpretation of Sage's life and painting, rightfully drawing the reader's attention to the element of "danger" in her life and work. "When you are writing about a great creator who has had enough life, you are tempted to permit the end to hang over the rest. I have used that temptation frequently," Caws writes, "… and I believe that the works created are finally—and I use that word carefully here—more urgent to address than their cessation" (28). However, I disagree with the title of her essay, "Kay Sage: Passing Through." Sage did not just "pass through." During her productive years, she created a significant body of work, a unique contribution to Surrealism, as this catalogue raisonné amply shows.

A user guide to entries antecedes sections on Paintings, Collages, Works on Paper, Objects, and Object-Collages; an Exhibition History, a Bibliography, and an Index. The catalogue opens with a Selection of Early Works, Sage's early drawings and paintings—all portraits—introducing her considerable skill. Despite being mostly of academic interest, without evidence of her future style, they are still admirable in her ability to portray sensitive renderings of each sitter's personality.

Italian art largely influenced Sage's iconography. The Paintings section opens with *Untitled* (c. 1935), a panoramic view of Siena's Late Gothic Piazza del Campo rooftops. Her future work will be imbued more and more with the eeriness De Chirico conveys in his airless dreamscapes. And throughout, there is the elegant palette of the same gray spectrum often used by Giorgio Morandi, and drawn from Masaccio and Masolino's Brancacci Chapel's washed out frescoes.

Kay Sage's internal reality is mirrored in her personal iconography, characterized by barren landscapes, unfinished structures, neglected anvils of buildings, scaffoldings, or draperies, partial structures that belie the vital breath held within, only to be discerned by the mind's eye that sees past painted surfaces. A feeling of emptiness permeates the work. They represent foreboding states of mind suspended in a deafening silence. They explain Sage's debt to De Chirico's Metaphysical Period, where he portrays the detached emotional content of the unconscious. The accurate reproduction of the works, particularly of the more successful paintings, transmits the haunting immediacy that characterizes Sage's work. Some of the paintings are brutally direct; they demand the viewer's attention and foretell that living with them will be difficult. Interestingly, a number of the drawings and watercolors, despite repeating Sage's disquieting forms, are not intimidating; if anything, they are quietly mysterious. The iconography of the collages provides a diverse assortment absent in her other work. For example, the composition of an untitled five-piece collage she made for Tanguy, as a Valentine Day's gift, revolves around each initial of his name. Centered at the bottom, is the "Y" suspended within a golden rococo frame, which balances below a star, several geometric shapes and a candle at the top, the flame painted with the colors of the French flag. Other collages, such as the *Blood Machine* (1942) or *Butterfly Machine* (1942), are nearly identical to the 1938 exquisite corpse collages done by Jeannette Tanguy, Yves Tanguy, and André Breton. In the *Objects and object collages*, Sage attempts to create, three dimensionally, constructions that resemble her paintings. On *Passionnément, pas du tout* (1961), Sage takes a flat surface and lays down wooden sticks creating spaces she fills with metal shapes. The work evokes the same haunting feeling of the paintings of unfinished structures that although alive have been abandoned. Sorely missed is an essay on Sage's work by Miller, who knows her life and work better than anyone.

Katherine Linn Sage was born on June 25, 1898, in Albany New York, the younger of two daughters, eighteen months apart. Her parents, Anne Wheeler Ward and Henry Manning Sage, ex-senator of New York, provided their daughters with a privileged childhood, thanks to the wealth his family had amassed a generation earlier in the redwood industry. In contrast, the Sage's marriage was poor and ungiving. The girls were constantly uprooted from one school to another, from one country to another, deprived of interactions with peers. They learned French before they learned English because they saw more of their nannies than of their parents. For this developmental gap, Sage paid all her life, living an isolated existence, despite being surrounded by people. Her awkwardness and alienation were often interpreted as aloofness, and her inadequacy made her a future target for neglect, rejection, or hostility from others. As a child, Sage "developed an inflammation of the nerves resembling an allergy … I was allergic to myself. No other doctor has been able to find a better explanation," she recalled. "Everyone is incomplete," wrote Sage to herself, "like a glass with a big piece broken out of it. Whether we are aware of it or not, we are always looking for the piece that will make us whole."[1]

In Sage's *I have no Shadow* (Fig. 1), painted shortly after her return to America, in 1940, the year in which she married Tanguy, she recreates De Chirico's persistent theme of two tiny persons in the distance, opposite each

other; their insignificance and aloneness is enhanced by an empty, larger than life, cityscape. In the title, Sage says what she believes about herself: "I have no shadow" (I don't exist).

But Kay Sage does exist, and her art casts a giant shadow. •

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Notes

1. The quote is from her autobiography, Kay Sage, *China Eggs (Les Oeufs de Porcelaine)*, trans. Elisabet Manuel (Charlotte, NC and Seattle: Starbooks/Editions de l'Etoile, 1996), 114–16.

A Dream and a Chisel: Louisiana Sculptor Angela Gregory in Paris, 1925–1928

By Angela Gregory and Nancy L. Penrose
University of South Carolina Press, 2019

Reviewed by Gabrielle Rose-Curti

Angela Gregory (1903–1990) stands as one of Louisiana's most prominent and prolific sculptors. Her public monuments, bas-reliefs, and other sculptural works can be found readily in New Orleans, Baton Rouge, and throughout her home state. Beyond Louisiana, Gregory earned recognition and visibility with gallery and museum exhibitions in the US and France. *A Dream and a Chisel,* co-authored by Angela Gregory and Nancy L. Penrose, published as part of the Women's Diaries and Letters of the South series, is a richly textured account of Gregory's pursuit to become a sculptor. Her resolve would lead her to become the only American student to study in the private studios of Antoine Bourdelle, one of France's most acclaimed sculptors and teachers of the 1920s (Fig.1).

Extensive oral interviews Penrose conducted with Gregory in the 1980s, in the years before her death, form the memoir's dominant voice and structure. Gregory's retrospective narration threads together excerpts from her 1920s letters and diaries, providing insights into her formative years. The first chapter chronicles the nurture of her artistic sensibilities in New Orleans, including her education in art at the Newcomb College for Women. Gregory's captivation with Bourdelle's work and determination to study stone-cutting with him set into motion the events of the following chapter, which gets her to Paris in 1925 and, by April of 1926, to Bourdelle's studio. Her lengthy apprenticeship with Bourdelle constitutes the remaining five chapters, and indeed, the thrust of this memoir. With absorbing detail, Gregory relates her strenuous engagement with sculpture's variant technical and artistic demands, and importantly, her artistic transformation through Bourdelle's traditional, yet modern sculptural vision, penetrating critique, encouragement, and friendship.

Ultimately, Gregory's story is one of exceptional convergence. Her tenacity to succeed in the ultra-masculinized field of sculpture is met with unflagging commitment from not only Bourdelle but other teachers, parents, family, and numerous friends that take her professional aspirations seriously. Significantly, strong, independent-minded women abound within this supportive network—including Gregory's artist mother, Selina Brès Gregory, and sculptor Cléopâtra Sevastos Bourdelle. Many tangential experiences (remarkable and mundane) add resonant dimensions to this already intricate account of artistic pursuit and mentorship, illuminating cultural intersections and contrasts, and offering glimpses of the vibrant, yet economically and politically strained climate of Paris in the 1920s.

An appendix containing a complete inventory of Gregory's sculptural oeuvre is a welcome contribution. Penrose's prologue and Judith H. Bonner's foreword provide useful contextualizing framework around Gregory's artistic formation, with added discussion of her later work and professional practice. There are a few missed opportunities in these essays for more substantive critical examination of Gregory's expressed viewpoints, particularly regarding her sculptural outlook vis-à-vis Bourdelle. Ultimately, however, *A Dream and a Chisel* succeeds admirably at its own crucial task, as Carol Bleser, founding editor of the Women's Diaries and Letters of the South writes in her preface, "…to enable women to speak for themselves…." (n.p.) In so doing, an invaluable repository now exists for future study of this significant American sculptor. •



Fig. 1. Angela Gregory with *Beauvais Head of Christ* (1926-28) in Antoine Bourdelle's studio, Paris, France, 1927. Courtesy of Angela Gregory Papers, Louisiana Research Collection, Tulane University.

Gabrielle Rose-Curti is Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Art at Simpson College. She received her Ph.D. in Modern Art from Rutgers University, and wrote her doctoral thesis on the 1900–1931 critical promotion of Antoine Bourdelle.

Anni Albers

Edited by Ann Coxon, Briony Fer and Maria Müller-Schareck
Yale University Press, 2018

Reviewed by Barbara Stehle

Anni Albers (1899–1994) originally wanted to become a painter not a weaver. But in 1922 the Bauhaus offered few options for women: weaving, bookbinding, and pottery. The last two departments were short-lived. Weaving on the other hand, nicknamed the "Women's department," was to be the longest standing and most commercially successful of all Bauhaus workshops. The production reflected the visual identity of the school with students' designs influenced by Johannes Itten, Paul Klee, and Wassily Kandinsky. At the time, making textiles was considered key to modern living, an essential part of any architectural project.

For all its avant-garde qualities, the Bauhaus had some old fashioned ways. The students' progression was based on a system of medieval guilds: apprentice, journeyman, and master. Only one woman ever got the title of Bauhaus Master: Gunta Stölzl (1897–1983). She became the head of the weaving workshop. Although Anni Albers never became a "master," she spent a lifetime weaving, exploring the discipline, thoughtfully and inventively developing its process and treatment of materials. She expanded the field and brought it into the future of design, past the category of crafts and into the arts.

The exhibition *Anni Albers* was organized by the Tate Modern and the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf, in collaboration with the Josef and Anni Albers Foundation. It is the second survey in the last couple of years to make space for the rediscovery of this important artist. The editors of the accompanying exhibition catalogue, Ann Coxon, Maria Müller-Schareck, and Briony Fer, have created a dense volume with closeups and diagrams as well as documentary photographs to visualize the weavings in situ. With two long essays and eleven shorter texts, the book is as much a feast for the eyes as it is an important contribution to scholarship.

Coxon and Müller-Schareck co-wrote the introduction chronicling Albers's life work. Briony Fer analyzes Albers's pioneering practice at the intersection of abstraction, architecture, and technology, and writes a short text about Albers's classes at Black Mountain College. Magdalena Droste traces the timeline of the Bauhaus weaving workshop. T'ai Smith discusses Albers's diploma project. Jennifer Reynolds-Kaye tackles Albers's passion for Pre-Hispanic and Pre-Columbian works. María Minera writes about *Monte Albán* (1936; Fig. 1), an early wall hanging. Brenda Danilowitz makes a link between Albers's knot designs and knot theory. Nicholas Fox Weber recalls his conversations with Albers and her investigation of printmaking. Priyesh Mistry researched the exhibition history of Albers during her lifetime. At the end, the curators take over again: Maria Müller-Schareck looks at writings on threads and Ann Coxon examines Albers's temple commissions and the artist's legacy.

It is reasonable to say that Anni Albers is better known than other weavers of her generation. That is due to her immense talent and to the fact that she had a luckier path. Annelise Fleischmann (Albers) came from the affluent, assimilated Jewish haute bourgeoisie in Berlin. Her father was a furniture manufacturer and her mother one of the heirs of the Ullstein Publishing Company. Culture and art were omnipresent in her childhood. She studied briefly with Oskar Kokoschka (who did not think much of her work) and went on to the Bauhaus. Paul Klee would become her artistic mentor. In Weimar, she fell in love with Josef Albers, eleven years her senior and a Catholic from a modest background. Josef was one of the Bauhaus's most gifted students and soon to be a master. They married in 1925.

In 1931, with the National Socialists on the rise, Gunta Stölzl was forced to resign. She left for Switzerland, where she continued weaving and struggled to make ends meet. Albers stayed on, working with Lilly Reich (1885–1947), Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's lover, who had taken on the direction of the workshop. A couple of years after, the Bauhaus was shut down, Otti Berger (1898–1944), a dear friend of Albers, died in a concentration camp (14). The Alberses had impressed architect Philip Johnson when they met in Berlin. After asking Anni if they would be interested to move to the US, Johnson convinced Black Mountain College in Asheville, North Carolina that the couple would be great additions to the faculty.[1] His words carried weight, they were both hired and emigrated to the US. Johnson remained extremely supportive, including giving Albers her first exhibition at MoMA in 1949, which was the first textile show hosted by the institution, and a year later he commissioned curtains from her for the Rockefeller Guest House (43, 131).

In her examination of weaving as a modern project, Briony Fer points out the close relationship Albers entertained with architecture. Beyond Johnson, she was in contact with some of the most important modernist architects, including Walter Gropius, Hannes Meyer, Mies van der Rohe, Luis Barragán, Marcel Breuer, and Le Corbusier (38). Albers thought and wrote in architectural terms about her creative practice. In her seminal book *On Weaving* (first published in 1965), she reflects on the "principles of textile constructions" and the "building up" of the fabric.[2] She always liked to remind her students that textiles had in many civilizations acted as roof and walls.[3] Albers's own creations dialogued with different architectural spaces, both public and private. They could do so in multiple ways, creating thresholds or accompanying one. Fer notes the parallel between modernist architecture's obsession with glass and Albers's intense study of weaving's optical qualities (43). Albers's expertise on the interaction of light and construction of materials—shine, transparency, opacity, light and heavy weight—may be one of the keys to understand the admiration Johnson (architect of the Glass House and the Brick House) had for her.

While her husband created an exceptional art department at Black Mountain, and continued on at Yale after 1949, Anni Albers also was teaching, lecturing, writ-

ing, or making or designing textiles, jewelry, and prints. As Fer points out, she was as interested in the historical and the theoretical, the artistic and the technological (22). She approached weaving as a process-oriented art. Remembering Albers, Nicholas Fox Weber underlines that when she spoke of abstraction and process, Albers was always passionate (153). These were the two driving forces of her work. Albers knew some of the twentieth century's greatest abstractionists and was married to one. She too was creating works of abstraction and was keenly aware of the particularity of her material. Weaving has its unique preoccupation. Every fabric is the result of the character of the fiber and the construction of the weave. A fiber turned into thread comes with various physical properties and influences the formal propositions.

Albers's paper studies and weaving works explore a large registry of lines, from line of type to curvilinear forms. In a fascinating essay, Maria Müller-Schareck notes that the tactile surface of Albers's weavings functions like text and vice versa. Albers "talked repeatedly about the relationships between verbal and non-verbal communication, between text and textile" (137). The communicative role of textile in civilizations without a written language especially fascinated Albers.

Further connecting texts and textile, Ann Coxon observes that some of Albers's most direct references to language appear in her religious weavings: a couple of ark coverings commissioned by two Jewish temples and six prayer pictorial weavings for the Jewish Museum, New York, to commemorate the Holocaust. The scroll-like format of these works and their composition make clear reference to the written form (145, 147).

Brenda Danilowitz writes about line crossings in suites of knots, tangles, braids, loops, and links (87). The threaded line seems to take on signifiers, symbols, and punctuations. Danilowitz sees in them possible mathematical explorations. Albers's designs look often like linear choreography. The artist spoke of the "event of a thread," something akin to the development of a line.[4] Like Ruth Asawa, a favorite Black Mountain student, Albers pushed further the possibilities of a line in space.

For sixteen years in North Carolina, Albers turned the lack of funding into an opportunity for creative research. Fer, in her essay about "Black Mountain College exercises," documents the many inventions Albers came up with to explore the possibilities of materials, forms, and structures (65). Albers was a strict teacher with an innovative curriculum. She used grass, newspaper, and corn kernels to create unexpected threads and constructions (66). The monochromatic compositional studies made in her class—perforating papers with a pin—announce Minimalism by no less than a couple of decades. Their delicate beauty and hypnotic patterns relate to Albers's printing practice of the later years.

Fer remarks on Albers's constant championing of Latin American techniques and esthetics (85) at Black Mountain. Albers was already familiar with Pre-Hispanic art in Berlin, but her interest took on a new dimension once in America. Fer notes that in 1939 Albers and Alexander Reed, one of her students, traveled together to Monte Albán, where they saw jewelry made with gold and pebbles.[5] The association of precious and common materials delighted them. Sometime in the 1940s, Albers and Reed made a series of unusual necklaces made out of repurposed ready-mades. Albers recalled that since they were not goldsmiths, they had to experiment to find new ways to link and suspend parts, surprising themselves with the results.[6] In one of these neck pieces, a metallic chain usually used for sinks is the running thread onto which bobby pins hook. The necklaces make references to the radial structure and unexpected material combinations of Pre-Columbian jewelry as well as the spirit of European modernism (Duchamp and Surrealism) and the modular structure of Minimalism.

Albers's expertise had extensive geographical and cultural scope; Fer refers to this knowledge as a "visual Atlas" (21). Above all, Albers gravitated toward Latin American art. As Reynolds-Kaye discusses in "Anni Albers as Collector," both of the Alberses loved South America and were inspired by its artistic production. They traveled repeatedly to Mexico, Peru, and Chile for a total of fifteen trips (107). Albers considered ancient Peru the "greatest culture in the history of textiles."[7] From *Monte Albán* (1936) and *Red Meander* (1954) to the pyramidal patterns of some of her prints, Albers's references to Latin America abound (76). She also built up two textile collections made of contemporary and Pre-Hispanic examples, which includes her personal one and a teaching collection at Black Mountain College (now at Yale). She regarded them as an important part of her legacy.



Fig. 1. Anni Albers, *Monte Albán* (1936), silk, linen and wool, 57½" x 44 1/8". Harvard Art Museums/Busch-Reisinger Museum, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Richard G. Leahy. © The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. 1981. BR81.5.

Albers wrote two books in her lifetime. The first, *On Designing*, is an anthology of short essays on design fundamentals. The second, *On Weaving*, is a meditation on weaving throughout world history. With this book, Albers hoped "not only to reach weavers but all those whose work in other fields encompasses textile problems."[8] Some of Albers's own work illustrates *On Weaving*. Her output encompassed wall hangings, yard fabric, room dividers, and pictorial weavings. The later ones were

to be considered solely for their esthetical purposes. They are a kind of "portable murals," large and flexible (22).

Despite all the work and publications, recognition was slow to come. The art world was not ready to consider textile at par with other arts. The field had little visibility and was undervalued. Albers persisted for over forty years. In the 1960s, while in Connecticut, she sized down her creations. Her health and space accommodations made things more difficult. Eventually, she turned fully to printing and her battle for visibility finally grew easier. In a late interview she offered: "I find that when the work is made with threads, it's considered a craft; when it's on paper, it's considered art ... Prints gave me greater freedom of presentation ... As a result, recognition comes more easily and happily, the longed for pat on the shoulder" (18).

Time has shown that Anni Albers was a precursor. The "women craft" she had been relegated to during her studies proved to be fundamental to modernism and its post era. Albers brought weaving into new territories, away from a mere feminine craft, toward an empowered field with an international background. Fiber art is now a recognized category, mostly animated by women, and represented in the most important museums in the world. Many contemporary artists quote Albers as an enduring inspiration. The writing in this catalogue makes the case for much more to come. •

Barbara Stehle is the Founder of Art Intelligentsia. She writes essentially on German art, architecture, and women's contributions to the artistic fields.

Notes

1. Nicholas Fox Weber, "Anni Albers to date," in *The Woven and Graphic Art of Anni Albers* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1985), 20.
2. Anni Albers, *On Weaving* (London: Studio Vista, 1974), 38.
3. Ibid., 52
4. Ibid., 15.
5. Anni Albers, "On Jewelry," talk at Black Mountain College, March 25, 1942, http://albersfoundation.org/teaching/anni-albers/lectures/ (accessed August 18, 2019)
6. Ibid.
7. Anni Albers, "Constructing Textiles," in *Anni Albers*: *On Designing* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan Univ. Press, 1961–62), 12.
8. Albers, *On Weaving*, 13.

Ninth Street Women: Lee Krasner, Elaine de Kooning, Grace Hartigan, Joan Mitchell, and Helen Frankenthaler: Five Painters and the Movement That Changed Modern Art

By Mary Gabriel
Little, Brown and Company, 2018

Reviewed by Ellen G. Landau

Published in the wake of the #MeToo Movement and at a time when record numbers of American women were running for Congress and other elected offices around the country, Mary Gabriel's *Ninth Street Women* has garnered a great deal of publicity for the author and numerous positive reviews, particularly in popular magazines and other mainstream sources. "The Canvas Ceiling," a multi-page feature in *The New Yorker* of October 8, 2018, characterizes it as a study of "New York's postwar female painters and the obstacles they faced." Gabriel's focus on accomplished but overlooked women in her three prior books—suffragist and mid-nineteenth century presidential candidate Victoria Woodhull, noted Baltimore art collectors Etta and Claribel Cone, and the undervalued partnership of Jenny Marx in helping her husband Karl to birth a revolution—as well as the last-named joint biography's nomination for a Pulitzer Prize, has also served to generate widespread attention for the goal of her latest project. Gabriel, a former Reuters editor, has wanted for quite a long time to resurrect the reputations and key role played by first and second generation Abstract Expressionist women in New York's supposedly macho mid-century takeover of the mantle of artistic innovation from Paris.

While Gabriel apparently worked directly on this book for at least seven years (and her first conversation with Grace Hartigan, its inspiration, took place in 1990), the painters chosen for this study (three are seen in Fig. 1) had recent starring roles (amongst a total of twelve) in the well-received 2016 Denver Art Museum traveling exhibition, *Women of Abstract Expressionism*, where they got new and original art historical attention in an accompanying catalogue. That more than sixty years ago these five had—along with many other both male and female sculptors and painters—exhibited in a landmark 1951 Manhattan exhibition known as the *Ninth Street Show* allowed Gabriel a hook on which to hang her somewhat overstated assertion that it is the particular women named in her subtitle who should now be recognized as constituting or fostering a "movement" that totally "changed" modern art.



Fig. 1. L–R, Joan Mitchell, Helen Frankenthaler, and Grace Hartigan at Frankenthaler's solo exhibition opening at Tibor de Nagy Gallery, New York, Feb. 12, 1957. Burt Glinn, photographer. Courtesy Magnum Photos. Artwork copyright © 2018 Helen Frankenthaler Foundation, Inc. / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

All of her selected women protagonists, Gabriel declares at the start, "formed part of a new breed existing unapologetically outside the mainstream of American life at mid-century." And each, it's stated, "was as unique as the work she produced" (11), one of a great many generalizations that an art history professor would caution students not to indulge without substantial proof. The extensive chronicle that follows is replete with (admittedly sometimes juicy) stories of these women's trials and tribulations to be accepted alongside their male peers—many of whom were also romantic partners. These circumstances have already been exhaustively investigated by scholars in the field, whose original interviews, art historical detective work and in-depth analysis of primary source material Gabriel liberally quotes. Throughout, the text is significantly weighted down with historical context (such as the ongoing progress of World War II) whose detail can interrupt the narrative flow, and there is, unavoidably, a great deal of discussion of the work of pertinent male colleagues, particularly Jackson Pollock (the husband of Lee Krasner), Willem de Kooning (Elaine de Kooning's on-again/off-again spouse), and painter Robert Motherwell as well as critic Clement Greenberg in relation to the career of Helen Frankenthaler. None of this (including Joan Mitchell's fractious relationship with Canadian painter Jean-Paul Riopelle with whom she lived in France and whose children she helped raise before eventually her career eclipsed his) is unknown information, nor does Gabriel's treatment of it expose particularly noteworthy new ways to think about how these women's personal lives affected their creativity. Despite a daunting abundance of factual material in over 700 pages, encompassing an obvious attempt on the author's part to provide multiple contexts that take into account art world, global, and gender politics, in the end it is hard to identify exactly what might constitute unique explanation on the author's part as to how exactly the works (mostly abstract) created by her protagonists under such circumstances developed to a level that would back the claim of her title. Ending her primary discussion in 1959, Gabriel's epilogue disappointingly concludes with a brief précis of what happened to these women in the following decade. Other than vaguely stating in a prologue that "the stories told in this book might be a reminder that where there is art there is hope" (xv), she doesn't adequately, to my mind, finish by telling the reader why bothering to get the details right on the career trajectories of her so-called "Ninth Street Women" actually matters today. As Claudia Roth Pierpont points out in her *New Yorker* review, many institutions, including the Museum of Modern Art, are just now getting around to rehanging their galleries to include more women (and people of color). A British newspaper writing last year upon notice of the first retrospective of Lee Krasner scheduled in London since 1965, which opened in May 2019, announced it with the exact same language, "Jackson Pollock's Artist Wife to get Major Barbican Exhibition," as the press surrounding her Whitechapel show more than half a century earlier. After reading *Ninth Street Women*, what should we make of that? Thankfully, once the Barbican show actually went on view, Krasner (as an artist "finally out of Pollock's shadow") and the exhibition itself have uniformly collected media raves.

Many art historians and artists interested in twentieth century innovation have asked me if I've read Gabriel's book, almost all telling me their copy of *Ninth Street Women* has been sitting on the night table for months waiting for them to open it. It is clearly an aspirational read for a certain segment of the art world, as well as others interested in feminist art history and/or mid-century modernist artistic production. Even if there is less on offer than what we might desire in terms of truly innovative thinking on the subject, Mary Gabriel's latest book can serve as a useful summary in one place of what's out there on a topic of recent special interest. •

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All-Women Art Spaces in Europe in the Long 1970s

Edited by Agata Jakubowska and Katy Deepwell
Liverpool University Press, 2018

Reviewed by Ksenia Nouril

The volume *All-women art spaces in Europe in the long 1970s* roots itself in Michel Foucault's concept of heterotopia, which is defined as a single site that can host, literally or figuratively, multiple other sites. Historically, this strategy of simultaneous multiplicity has proven essential to the flourishing of minority groups excluded by gender, racial, class, or other biases. Editors Agata Jakubowska, Associate Professor in the Department of Art History at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznán, and Katy Deepwell, Professor of Contemporary Art, Theory, and Criticism in the School of Art and Design at Middlesex University in London, along with an additional ten contributors expound upon the importance of women building their own worlds within the heteronormative male-dominant worlds in Europe during the 1970s. The book takes what is now a very popular "long" view of the 1970s, factoring in events from 1968 to the mid-1980s. The inextricable connection between art and politics at this time underpins the entire compellation. Pivotal to this book's temporal framing is the United Nation's commemoration of 1975 as the International Women's Year. Using Foucault's heterotopia, which is effortlessly woven through the introduction and several chapters, the book's introduction

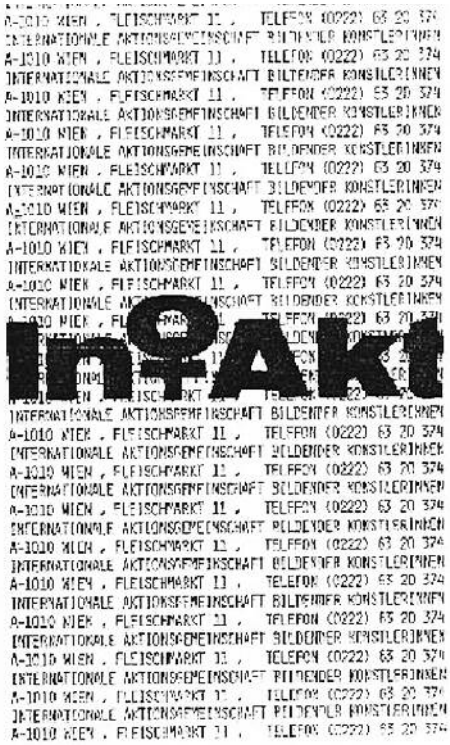


Fig. 1. In♀Akt catalogue cover, 1979.

"proposes that all women's art initiatives be considered in relation to questioning or interrogating existing spaces of femininity" together with the social, political, and economic status quo (9). It successfully treats women's art and the spaces it creates as distinct, without collapsing them into feminism or the dominant (male-centric) cultures at the time.

The idea for *All-women art spaces in Europe in the long 1970s* originated with the panel "All-women art spaces as heterotopias," which Jakubowska organized at the Fourth Conference for the European Network for Avant-Garde and Modernism Studies (EAM) at the University of Helsinki in 2014. All of the authors are veritable authorities in the field, offering the reader tightly crafted insights into long-term research projects that stem from dissertations, full-length publications, and other scholarly outputs. Although the book's eleven chapters are not comprehensive, each shares one or a number of case studies grounded in a specific context, demarcated along one of eleven national lines. From Sweden in Northern Europe and London in the British Isles to the Catalonian Mediterranean and the cities of Poznań, Wrocław and Erfurt behind the Iron Curtain, the variety in geographical locations addressed in the book presents a dynamic picture of women's art and activities through the lens of exhibitions and other collective efforts in the benchmark period known as second wave feminism. The book's case studies also tackle a range of ideological constructs, capitalism, socialism, and fascism. Because art historical discourse today frequently falls victim to the homogenizing effects of the global turn, the book's emphasis on the sociopolitical character of specific locations is responsible and commendable. It aims to challenge and revise our understanding of the role of women in twentieth-century art.

Fabienne Dumont considers the formation of women's groups in France as a political act aimed at garnering recognition and respect. She describes how, even in this relatively leftist country, women had to fight for equality. Using five art collectives and the journal *Sorcières* (1976–81) as examples, Dumont traces how these activities increased confidence and self-determination among women.

In Sweden, Annika Öhrner sparingly stresses the role of institutional structures in advancing the development of women's art through exhibitions. Although Sweden's most prominent museum, Moderna Museet, did not support women's art in the 1970s, other venues welcomed the work, which flourished in this para-socialist and hyper-inclusive country. Öhrner's examples of textile art and handicraft, such as in the works of Sandra Ikse-Bergman (b. 1945) and Gunwor Nordström (b. 1947), who were trained under Marxist-Leninist ideals at the Valand School of Fine Art, as well as artistic expressions of motherhood, which were clear in the work of Monica Englund (b. 1935), embrace the concept of a specifically women's culture.

The similarly left-leaning politics of Denmark allowed the flourishing of *Kvindeudstillingen XX på Charlottenborg* (The Women's Exhibition XX at Charlottenborg), a truly international exhibition of women's art in that country in the momentous year of 1975. By reviewing its contents gallery by gallery, Monika Kaiser explains how both well- and lesser-known women artists alike co-opted the spaces of the exhibition itself for international, dialogic exchange beyond the confines of the white cube.

This hopeful utopian outlook was also intrinsic to the work of the Schule für kreativen Feminismus (School of Creative Feminism) and the Stichting Vrouwen in de Beeldende Kunst (Women in the Visual Arts Foundation) in West Germany and The Netherlands, respectively. Founded by the visionary Ulrike Rosenbach (b. 1943), who was influenced by Judy Chicago's Feminist Art Program in the United States, the former had high aspirations of inverting culture through experimental practices. Its emphasis on steadfast unity among women is echoed in the cover of Rosenbach's 1980 book *Beispiel einer autonomen Kulturarbeit* (Example of an autonomous cultural work), which is pictured on the cover of *All-women art spaces in Europe in the long 1970s*. The link, albeit self-consciously constructed, between the two publications is interesting to note.

Editor Katy Deepwell further explores the difference between official culture and women's culture in her text on British collaborative projects. Her examples from the Tate Gallery and South London Gallery are contrasted by group initiatives, such as the Hackney Flashers Collective at the Hackney Town Hall. Deepwell amplifies and uplifts women's culture and its spaces as having the political gumption lacking in venues of official culture in the United Kingdom under the leadership of Margaret Thatcher from the late 1970s through the 1980s.

Two chapters are dedicated to the collective actions of women in Vienna, Austria. In the first, Elke Krasny meditates on the origins of the International Action Community of Women Artists, which is still active and known today as In♀Akt (Fig. 1), and its near militant efforts toward greater social justice for women on the local and national levels. In the second, Nina Hoechtl and Julia Wieger, the only two

contributors who self-identify as a practicing artist and architect, respectively, regale readers with a dramatic script for a lecture performance based on the archives of the Austrian Association of Women Artists (VBKÖ). Hoechtl, Wieger, and their cast of characters bring this dense and complicated scene alive, allowing the reader to reflect on VBKÖ's long history and recognize how much urgent work is left to be done under increasing conservatism in Europe today.

Fascism and communism as political forces come into play in the book's final four chapters. Considering Italian and Spanish examples, Katia Almerini posits a definition of separatism that is specific to the region based on literal linguistic and ideological exclusions. Of note is Almerini's extensive use of women theorists native to these countries. Márcia Oliveira contrasts this movement of women's empowerment in the eastern Mediterranean with the very fraught position of women artists in Portugal. She presents the scene as divided with both men and women embracing individuality over a group identity as evinced in local exhibitions as well as the popularization of certain Portuguese women artists abroad. Editor Agata Jakubowska also questions the impetus for collectivity among women artists in Poland through a thorough analysis of two exhibitions from 1978. While Jakubowska does not apologize for the situation, she acknowledges the impacts of state socialism on the life and work of women in the Polish People's Republic, where social life was more or less limited to the nation and the immediate family or group of friends. The unique circumstances of totalitarian regimes are also stressed by Susanne Altmann in her explication of the Erfurt Women Artists' Group in East Germany. Yet, their work, which brings the book's contents up through the late 1980s, embodies a carefree punk aesthetic buoyed by performances, films, concerns, and runway shows that appear to astonishingly defy the rigidity of the communist quotidian.

It is difficult to criticize such a robust volume that seamlessly brings together so many disparate voices in a brilliantly kaleidoscopic view of one of the most critical periods in the history of feminist art. Nevertheless, it is important to note its minor lacuna, which can be useful in directing future scholarship and publications. Even though the editors frame the book as "a partner in transcultural exchanges" (3), the essays, with, perhaps, the exception Katia Almerini's look at the Mediterranean as a region, are not inherently transnational.[1] Deeply grounding each text in a single European country's context lays the foundation for a thorough and genuinely informed assessment; yet it often leaves the reader to make her own connections across the heterogeneous landscape of the continent and beyond. Thus, the book is best directed at a reader with a solid background in women's art of the 1970s. Feminism, feminist art, and other feminist-driven endeavors as they developed concurrently in the United States as well as contemporary examples, such as the 2007 survey exhibition *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution*, are frequently cited as counterpoints throughout the book. The impact of these references would be lost on someone who did not have predisposed knowledge of the subjects. More attention overall could be paid to lesbian art and activism, postcolonial debates, and the economics of both womanhood and the art market. While women's labor within the home and the so-called "art world" are noted in a few of the essays, including those by Deepwell and Öhrner, it is not parsed as in other related scholarship.[2]

These points aside, *All-women art spaces in Europe in the long 1970s* is an ambitious and invaluable contribution to the fields of art history and gender studies that acknowledges the diverse practices of women artists and enriches our understanding of this transformative period in the history of art and feminism. As Kathleen Wentrack, a contributor of the book, writes in a recent op-ed published by *The Brooklyn Rail*, the organization and motivation of collective practices among women serves as a timeless model not only for other artist groups but also society at large, which "in the current political climate … may be the only way forward."[3]

Ksenia Nouril is an art historian, curator, and writer specializing in global modern and contemporary art. She is the Jensen Bryan Curator at The Print Center in Philadelphia. Previously, she worked at the Bruce Museum, Zimmerli Art Museum, and The Museum of Modern Art, where she co-edited and contributed to *Art and Theory of Post-1989 Central and Eastern Europe: A Critical Anthology* (2018). •

Notes

1. While Kathleen Wentrack's text comprises two case studies from West Germany and The Netherlands, her text is not aimed at a comparison of the cases, which are not framed as regional.
2. See Angela Dimitrakaki, "Feminism, Art, Contradictions," *e-flux* journal 92 (June 2018), accessed August 11, 2019, https://www.e-flux.com/journal/92/205536/feminism-art-contradictions/
3. Kathleen Wentrack, "Women's Art Collectives: Framing the Future," *The Brooklyn Rail* (March 2019), accessed August 11, 2019, https://brooklynrail.org/2019/03/criticspage/Womens-Art-Collectives-Framing-the-Future

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Rosana Paulino: The Sewing of Memory

By Valéria Piccoli and Pedro Nery
Pinacoteca de São Paulo, 2018

Reviewed by Talita Trizoli

The contemporary multidisciplinary artist Rosana Paulino (b. 1967) is currently one of the most significant figures on the Brazilian art scene. She is known for the consistency of her artistic production and militant stance representative of the Black movement in the visual arts. With considerable presence at primary Brazilian art institutions and inclusion in important exhibitions, such as the recent *Afro-Atlantic Histories* at the São Paulo Museum of Art (MASP) in 2018, Paulino, a graduate of the University of São Paulo, has developed her career not only as an artist, but also as an educator, mentor, and curator. She holds a singular position in the Brazilian "arts system," an apparatus falsely promoted as one of "racial democracy," as the curators Valéria Piccoli and Pedro Nery point out in their introductory essay (9). This timely retrospective covers over twenty years of Paulino's art and does more than establish her career. It proves that the urgent topics of colonialism, memory, and race pursued by the artist have legitimacy as a historical framework at a major Brazilian museum. The bilingual catalogue (Portuguese and English) addresses the racial complexities she articulates and the ethical forces that govern them. In addition to the presentation by the museum director, Jochen Volz, and the curators' introduction, the catalogue's three additional contributors sought to condense the main artistic references and documentation of Paulino's career.

The essay by Juliana Bevilacqua, a Brazilian researcher who has emerged as one of the most coherent and committed voices in the study of African and Afro-Brazilian art, most resembles Paulino's own political strategy in dealing with topics that are still underexposed in Brazilian society, especially in the case of structural racism and its perverse reverberations in artistic subjectivities. Bevilacqua addresses Paulino's mobilization of materials and techniques linked to the feminine, popular culture, and Afro-Brazilian religions from the artist's life, such as her use of the *patuá* or amulet, and emphasis on sewing and textiles in her series Embroidery Hoops (1997; Fig. 1) (149–50). Bevilacqua emphasizes the metaphorical "voids" denounced by the artist: the absence of black subjects, especially women, in the field of culture, whether as figures and archetypes, or as creators of these narratives and indexes of social markers, aggravating the relations between domestic violence, invisibility, and exclusion. The author observes the political emphasis on the restitution of subjectivities and reparation of memory as a central core of Paulino's pieces, evoking how "the void becomes a metaphor of anonymity, of the process of emptying ... enslaved women's individual histories" (158).



Fig. 1. Rosana Paulino, *Untitled* (1997), from the series *Embroidery Hoops*, photocopy transfer on fabric, wooden embroidery hoops and sewing thread, diameter 11 3/4". Collection of Juliana and Francisco Sá.

The essay by Fabiana Lopes develops in two distinct phases. First is a history of scholarship on the African diaspora and its centrality in Paulino's works as cultural agents in Brazil, through images based on ancestral slave ships, black indigenous bodies, and the Portuguese imaginary, for instance (166). The second part offers a platform of visibility for other contemporary black artists lacking widespread institutional support, such as Musa Michelle Mattiuzzi (b. 1983), Paulo Nazareth, Lídia Lisboa (b. 1970), and others who are consistent with Paulino's own trajectory and artistic investigations and also deeply committed to teaching and creating dialogues on Brazilian art history. Lastly, Adriana Palma's essay is a loose if somewhat underdeveloped critical history of Paulino's career, introducing a patchwork of writings and exhibitions by Aracy Amaral, Luana Tvardovskas, Tadeu Chiarelli, and Emanuel Araújo, among others.

It is important to underscore the graphic design of the catalogue, which establishes a visual connection to Paulino's production. The white background for the book and prominence of reproductions facilitate a dialogue with the artist's research on Brazil's racist history and suggest an homage to a symbolic figure of resistance.[1] Additionally, the curatorial choices of Piccoli and Nery connect coherently with the production of a pivotal figure such as Rosana Paulino, who intersects topics of memory, femininity, and pain that emerge from experiences of racial trauma and fear. As the curators point out, Paulino's artistic choices are bravely strategic in the face of Brazil's social contradictions: "The stitching represents the fragile bonds of a split society, where tugging on any loose thread risks undoing everything" (10). •

Talita Trizoli is an art historian and curator based in Brazil. She received her doctorate from the University of São Paulo with a research focus on the feminist production of Brazilian women artists during the military dictatorship.

Notes

1. While Paulino is considered one of the most important feminist artists of her generation, it is important to note that the artistic history of black artist Maria Lidia Magliani (1946–2012), who worked in painting and engraving during the Brazilian military dictatorship, was only recently recuperated. That condition shows that there s still a long road to investigate in Brazilian art history.

Joan Jonas

Edited by Julienne Lorz and
Andrea Lissoni
Hirmer, 2018

Reviewed by Liz Kim



Fig. 1. Joan Jonas, installation view of *Stage Sets* (1977), wooden frame with paper, paper walls, wooden poles, hoop, tin cones, light, wooden chairs, other materials; dimensions variable. Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania.

Joan Jonas is one of the most celebrated American artists active today, known best as a key performance and video pioneer for much of her career, particularly in the context of feminist art of the 1960s and the 1970s.[1] With this catalogue for the latest Joan Jonas retrospective, organized by the Tate Modern, Haus der Kunst Munich, and Serralves Museum of Contemporary Art, these institutions move to historicize her work as post-Minimalist. It is a deceptively ambitious catalogue that raises complex questions regarding art history of the 1970s being written today.

Given Jonas's accomplishments over the years, there are numerous existing catalogues and monographs on her, including the recent *In the Shadow of a Shadow* from 2015, a definitive large-format monograph edited by Joan Simon. Instead of retreading some of the same ground, this new exhibition catalogue is a functional book designed for portability and access. The catalogue consists of a foreword and two new essays—one by the curators of the exhibition, Andrea Lissoni and Julienne Lorz, and another by Catherine Wood; a section devoted to the works in the exhibition with short accompanying texts for each work; and eight interviews with Jonas, ranging in dates from one conducted by the curators of Jonas's 2003 Queens Museum retrospective to a new interview by the curators of the 2018 exhibition.

The cataloguing function of the book is well-executed for its size. The works in the exhibition are described with image reproductions and short half-page texts, written by Monika Bayer-Wermuth. The interviews flesh out Jonas's complex body of work, supplementing and complicating the descriptive texts. Seven of the eight interviews are reprinted from other sources, meaning that about half of the book functions as a collection of these. The conversations serve as both synchronic and diachronic mechanisms to understand Jonas's works, criss-crossing her oeuvre and forming a more complete picture of her practice over time. This is a good approach, as Jonas's works are better understood conversationally, given her narrative, surrealist, and spiritual ways of working and using durational media. This also provides a chance to understand, through the artist's own words, some aspects of her work that may be difficult to unpack, such as her practice of borrowing from other cultures. Overall, the book's design is a successful attempt to appeal to a mass market while providing a complex overview of Jonas's works.

On the other hand, the book's conceptual aim, to re-align Jonas's work as post-Minimalist, beyond her pioneering performance, video, and feminist work, can be considered emblematic of the thorny issues surrounding the field's ongoing reassessment of the 1970s. The two essays and the new interview work together to shift the interpretation of her work in art historical terms, exploring her use of space to activate subjectivity and experience as post-Minimalist practice. Pivoting on the argument, they also designate Jonas as a pioneer of installation art, shaping her fragmentary media practices as a precursor for the experiential art of the 1990s. This is an important and necessary realignment to recognize the full extent of Jonas's legacy, but unfortunately, the essays fall into the trap of institutionalizing Minimalism as the main turning point in the use of space in postwar American art. This comes at the expense of the political use of space in the 1960s and its legacy in the feminist art of the 1970s.

The essay by Lorz and Lissoni uses Minimalism as an anchor for Jonas's complex and category-defying practice. With an exhibition that focuses "particularly on the trajectory of Jonas's transformation of works from spatial manifestations to installations," the curators come to characterize the artist's overall approach as "fluid" and shape the understanding of her practice as continually challenging the notion of space through duration, orientations of objects, and shifting subjectivities developed over the course of her career (11, 26). It is notable that they turn to the writings of Robert Morris and Michael Fried to make this point. In referring to their texts, the authors use Jonas's installation *Stage Sets* (1976/2018; Fig. 1) and her accompanying poetic text to build the case that her earlier works dealt with the same spatial concerns of the Minimalists, but that she further emphasized and recognized the subjectivities of the viewers themselves (14).

The historicization of Jonas's work through Minimalism continues with Catherine Wood's essay, where she frames the artist's works using Rosalind Krauss's theories on media. Wood writes that Jonas's work prefigured the technologically experiential world of today in her use of media to activate the subjective positions that the viewers occupy, forerunning the subjective identities of the digital present. Wood refers to Fried's famous objection to the "theatrical" in Minimalism when she writes that Jonas is constantly remaking her works in a state of perpetual presentness (90).

These post-Minimalist readings of Jonas's work in themselves are not problematic. This is a necessary realignment, in that Jonas was in fact reacting to Minimalism (147). What does become an issue is that the authors activate the post-Minimalist reading of Jonas's work by minimizing its place in feminism and feminist art.

The essayists' only engagements with gender are brief. Lorz and Lissoni's discussion of gender is limited to recalling Jonas's *Organic Honey* (1972/1994) as "the feminine subject that [she] was exploring" (18). In the second essay, when referring to Fried, Wood simultaneously recalls Peggy Phelan's notion that performance art is "art of the present tense" (85), an oblique reference to a feminist reading of Jonas's work, and ends the essay by saying that the artist activated the present as a way to question "female imagery," as "the artist who made the myth of the Electronic Erotic Seductress" (91). Although this ending necessitates a deeper engagement with the history of gendered imagery, there is no follow-through. In all, the two essays reinforce a mostly formal reading of Jonas's work through Minimalism. The fact that feminist context was entirely missing in the catalogue essays, particularly one made for mass-market potential, is a significant omission.

This omission correlates with the description on the back cover of this catalogue, which begins: "Joan Jonas emerged in a rich and experimental 1960s New York art scene that included such luminaries as Richard Serra, Gordon Matta-Clark, John Cage, Philip Glass, and Merce Cunningham." This is symptomatic of its key problem: Minimalism, especially in museum contexts, is almost exclusively white and male. When feminism is brought into this narrative, unfortunately, it becomes subsumed under this patriarchal framework, as Anna Chave has carefully argued.[2] Despite the continuation of scholarship working to break apart Minimalism's narrative, including Chave's field-defining work over three decades, as well as Jo Applin's more recent reassessment of the 1960s, institutionally, Minimalism has become solidified as a defining marker for American art of the 1960s, and the catalogue reinforces this tendency.

This tendency drowns out the fact that *space* was far from the exclusive domain of Minimalists in the 1960s, as it was inexorable from that political and social moment. It's not enough to allude to feminism when discussing Minimalism—feminism must be explicitly addressed, and this applies to Jonas's use of space as well.

It is notable that Jonas does not engage with feminism or with post-Minimalism explicitly when curators bring up these specific points in their interview, whether regarding the "gaze" in relation to Jonas's representation of women's bodies in the 1970s (253), or regarding Krauss and her notion of grids (249). Out of these avoidances, only post-Minimalism made it into the main concept of both catalogue essays, which further indicates that there may have been a missed chance to discuss Jonas's feminist legacy, particularly in relation to post-Minimalism. There are fuller engagements with these topics in some of her earlier interviews, and it's up to the viewers to find these themselves, which help complicate the dominant theme of post-Minimalism.

Despite the criticism, it is clear that the exhibition was organized with sensitivity in mind for the representation of women, particularly in that women curators and writers were chosen to write about Jonas's work. Engaging with feminism in a more meaningful way in discussing the historical context would only have enriched the catalogue.

Overall, this catalogue provides a key shift in the reading of Jonas's work, and in an accessible format. Notably, in attempting to complicate Minimalism, the argument put forward in this book replicates and affirms its gender bias, and in doing so, undermines its efficacy. Despite this, the work is a welcome, ambitious, and interesting catalogue that would provide good food for thought for a wide range of readership, from casual readers to late twentieth-century art specialists. •

Liz Kim is an assistant professor of art history at Texas Woman's University. Specializing in American art with an interest in the global, her current projects include a book manuscript on video art theory, research on regional women modernists, and ongoing work on the history of media activist groups.

Notes

1. The Directors' Foreword for this catalogue also affirms this narrative. For other recent examples, see the introductions to Valerie Smith and Warren Niesluchowski, *Joan Jonas: Five Works* (New York: Queens Museum, 2003) as well as Joan Simon's *In the Shadow of a Shadow* (New York: Gregory R. Miller & Co, 2015).
2. Anna Chave, "Minimalism and Biography," *Art Bulletin* 84, no. 1 (March 2000): 149–63. See also Chave's groundbreaking "Minimalism and the Rhetoric of Power," *Arts Magazine* 64, no. 5 (January 1990): 44–63, as well as Jo Applin's *Eccentric Objects* (New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press, 2012).

Howardena Pindell: What Remains To Be Seen

Edited by Naomi Beckwith
and Valerie Cassel Oliver
Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago
and DelMonico Books + Prestel, 2018

Reviewed by Heather E. Mathews

This is a groundbreaking monograph published for the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago's retrospective on Howardena Pindell (b. 1943). The editors, Naomi Beckwith of the MoCA Chicago and Valerie Cassel Oliver of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, have produced an invaluable resource that examines developments in the artist's diverse production over nearly six decades of work while locating the artist firmly in the present. High-quality images, including many two-page spreads and full-page details, make the complex surfaces of her artwork beautifully legible. Documentary sources situate the artwork in Pindell's personal and professional life, and they foreground her intent. The catalogue's nuanced scholarly essays, in turn, make cogent use of that documentary material.

For the organizers, the catalogue is an effort to understand Pindell's artistic production as well as her activism, and to place the artist within the history of contemporary art (27). Sarah Cowan's chronology that introduces the catalogue provides an excellent framework for the project, punctuated with evocative documents, snapshots, and artwork linking historical moments and cultural events to developments in Pindell's work.

Lowery Stokes Sims's "Synthesis and Integration in the Work of Howardena Pindell, 1972–1992: A (Re) Consideration," is a return to an earlier analysis by the author, and frames the catalogue's renewed and expanded examination of the artist's career. Sims tracks the developments in medium and content that punctuate this two-decade period, highlighting a tendency towards the processes of "construction/deconstruction/reconstruction" (54) that manifest across Pindell's production and in multiple forms and media. Alongside the painted and collaged work, Sims examines the *Video Drawings*, begun in 1973, in which labels, numbers, and directional lines form a matrix over pixelated and blurred images from a television screen, including sports broadcasts, movies, and the nightly news. The work highlights Pindell's engagement with technology and current events as well as her analytical combin-ation of disparate materials. Sims further highlights the artist's exploration of self through her work in *Autobiographies* from the 1980s in which she utilizes various media to create evocative references to the formation of the "self" via personal history and outside influences and pressures. In this series the artist incorporates "encounters with racism, sexism and issues of class," ideas explored in April Kingsley's groundbreaking 1981 show, *Afro-American Abstraction: An Exhibition of Contemporary Painting and Sculpture by Nineteen Black American Artists* (74). The *Autobiographies* are manifested in shaped canvases encrusted with various materials, creating complex surfaces evocative of the emergence of identity through struggle (1988; Fig. 1). Indeed, as Sims summarizes, Pindell "has evolved in a uniquely synthetic way that allows her to meld her role as both creator and subject for her art" (78).



Fig. 1. Howardena Pindell, *Autobiography: Air (CS560)* (1988), acrylic, tempera, oil stick, blood, paper, polymer photo transfer, and vinyl on canvas, 86 x 84". Detroit Institute of Arts, Founders Society Purchase, W. Hawkins Ferry Fund, with funds from Joan and Armando Ortiz Foundation, Friends of Modern Art, Avery K. Williams, Lynn E. Weaver, Ronald Maurice Ollie, and Kimberly Moore.

Naomi Beckwith's contribution, "Howardena Pindell's Ways of Seeing," proposes the term "errant forms" to describe the artist's unconventional materials and "illegible" abstractions, by comparison to the dominant forms of her contemporaries (90). Beckwith questions how best to "reconcile" both the form and the politically aware content of Pindell's work. She looks critically at the artist's engagement with visuality, suggesting a focus on the work's somatic, or bodily, tendencies, citing Pindell's materiality and process-based techniques and her struggle to "invest the object with a sense of gesture and bodily movement *sans* the outsized heroic antics of expressionism" (91). Similarly, Beckwith argues that Pindell's work avoids the anonymity of historical forms of abstraction by positing a specific viewer rather than modernism's universal viewer, seeking a way for viewer and artwork to have a "specific, multivalent relationship in their engagement with each other" (95). Turning to Pindell's *Memory* and *Autobiography* series, Beckwith emphasizes that Pindell "reconstitutes her life memories in tandem with the reconstruction of her artistic identity as a political subject," as for example in her now iconic video piece, *Free, White, and 21*. As she interrogates her position as a woman and as an African American, Pindell's artworks "constantly evade the power discourses implied in the gaze" (107).

Valerie Cassel Oliver's essay, "The Tao of Abstraction: Pindell's Meditations on Drawing," looks closely at the artist's relationship to abstraction via a consideration of the meditative process and content of her works on paper. After a brief framing of Pindell's early artistic development—her transition from figuration to abstraction in graduate school, her interest in the color theory of Albers and

the intense engagement with color in the art of Ad Reinhardt and Larry Poons—Cassel Oliver proceeds to a closer examination of Pindell's mature work. The author notes Pindell's shift to a focus on the geometric forms of the ellipse and circle, often utilized to resist the organizing principle of the formalist grid; for Cassel Oliver, this "stylistic *de rigueur*" emblematized Pindell's "unlikely presence as a black woman in the field of abstraction" (111). Together with biographical elements as inspiration, geometry and color remain constant touchstones throughout Pindell's career, manifesting first as drawn elements and then, expressed in the circular paper punches, the paper chads, that form the compositional material of so many of her mature works, whether alone or in conjunction with the accretion of other collaged materials. Cassel Oliver sees this tension between abstraction and social awareness as an overarching duality within Pindell's body of work that introduces "questions of sightedness, tackling cultural and artistic blindness to systemic injustice" (131).

Pindell's negotiation of painting and collage is at the heart of Charles Gaines's contribution, in which he reads the linkage of these two distinct artistic approaches as evidence of the critical and discursive nature of Pindell's abstractions. Gaines looks closely at the multimedia compositions, where, against the modernist grid, the materiality and technique of collage allows a new expressive potential for painting. For Gaines, this mutually beneficial "binary" demonstrates a means of pushing against the Kantian definitions adopted by modernist art theory in which "aesthetic" and "rational judgment" are distinct and irreconcilable. Pindell, he writes, embraces these seemingly oppositional and dialectical approaches choosing to follow not theory, but the personal experience out of which her techniques developed. Thus the artist's emphasis on the discursive elements of abstraction, Gaines asserts, informs a "meaningful relation with content and iconography. The conditions for a dialectical linkage are expressed within the narrative of her experiences as a black person and, more specifically, as a black woman" (143). Moreover, African art was a foundation to re-imagine abstraction and representation in different contexts than those structuring minimalism and conceptualism, which excluded many African American artists.

Grace Deveney's essay also looks at Pindell's *Video Drawings*, which continue the thread of drawing that leads through all of her art while engaging the contemporary interest in video as subject, as source, and as medium. The author notes that this series came into being almost accidentally, as a side project developed while Pindell was resting her eyes from the endless project of inscribing tiny numerals on the paper chads that build the surface of so many of her works from this time. As Deveney described the process, Pindell started these works by drawing on a piece of acetate that adhered statically to a television screen, then photographing from various distances, seeking out the most evocative ones. The resulting images are blurred, jittery, and mysterious, the directional lines seemingly explicating what we see, but without presenting any obvious meaning. For Deveney, these drawings represent a shift in the passivity with which we consume television, offering how "the very structure and process of the photographs enacts a political gesture through the refiguring and reframing of the televisual" (157). She links these drawings to such projects as Richard Serra and Carlota Fay Schoolman's *Television Delivers People*, also from 1973, a scrolling color video about corporate culture and media control. By comparison, in Pindell's drawings, television is made strange, encouraging the viewer "to think through what they are looking at, to become active in their visual engagement" (161).

Finally, Pindell's landmark video, *Free, White and 21*, is the subject of Brian Wallis's contribution to the volume. In the piece, Pindell embodies multiple representations of herself and of the white feminists who refused to acknowledge her experience as an African American woman. Wallis places the video in the context of feminist art politics in New York in the late 1970s, framing Pindell's work against the activist background in which she participated and which should have been a protection and support for her own personal and professional development. Instead, Pindell found herself increasingly alienated from white colleagues; the video registers her dissatisfaction while also thematically addressing processes of obscuring and revealing identity as Pindell's characters cover and uncover their faces with various materials: medical gauze, nylon, a thin film of glue. For Wallis, the video is the artist's first overtly political work, and Pindell's approach here is a demonstration of language as a "tool for deconstructing unequal power relations" (171). At the same time, it reflects the artificiality of race as it functions "as a social construct, a fiction, a stereotype, a comic ideal" (175). Documenting Pindell's activism within and against the New York art world, Wallis's argument reframes how Pindell's life and work intertwine.

The collection of documentary materials that follows the scholarly contributions in the catalogue further broadens and deepens the historical and personal context against which the exhibition was constructed. Through the excerpted roundtable discussion, transcripts of interviews with the artist, and examples of her writing—on both her own art and the art of her contemporaries—this volume firmly anchors Pindell's remarkable body of work in its time. It provides an essential expansion of our understanding not just of the artist's creative and intellectual production, but also of the ways in which racism within the art world has limited, and continues to limit, the possibilities open to artists of color; this is critically necessary scholarship for our time. •

Heather Mathews is Associate Professor of Art History and Chair of the Department of Art and Design at Pacific Lutheran University, where she oversees the exhibition program of three campus galleries. Her current research examines the exhibition of contemporary art as a cultural and political force in the Cold War-era Germanies.

Becoming Mary Sully: Toward an American Indian Abstract

By Philip J. Deloria
University of Washington Press, 2019

Reviewed by Cynthia Fowler

This monograph is an invitation by historian Philip Deloria (Dakota descent) to consider the art of his great-aunt, Mary Sully (Dakota Sioux) (1896-1963), through an exhaustive array of possibilities determined by Sully's lived experience and the historical and cultural conditions of the first half of the twentieth century. Born Susan Mabel Deloria, Sully took her mother's name in a strategic act that both connected her own status as an artist to that of her great-grandfather, European American painter Thomas Sully, and acknowledged her strong connection to her mother's mixed blood ancestry. Although largely unknown during her lifetime, Sully produced an impressive body of work beginning in the late 1920s and continuing into the late 1930s that was preserved by her family, largely consisting of drawings inspired by celebrities and ethnographic illustrations for her sister Ella's anthropological writings. Throughout his book, Deloria argues for the significance of Sully's work in spite of her obscurity. He concludes, "Sully, though completely unknown, arguably offered the stiffest aesthetic resistance to modernist primitivism, creating instead a powerful form of antiprimitivist Indian modernism" that was "grounded in Indian futurity" (273–74).

Grappling with Sully's mental health issues, Deloria wonders if her work might be considered a form of aesthetic synesthesia (205). However, Deloria moves beyond a psychobiographical reading of Sully's work. He argues that although Sully's work has almost nothing in common with that of better known American Indian artists, such as contemporaries Stephen Mopope (Kiowa Six) and Awa Tsireh (Pueblo, San Ildefonso), she was far from an outsider artist. In spite of her limited training and limited connections to the art world, either European American or American Indian, Sully was strongly connected to the currents of her time. Her very close relationship with Ella, an ethnographer and linguist who worked with anthropologists Franz Boas and Ruth Benedict, resulted in a dynamic intellectual exchange between the two sisters that is evident in Sully's work. Sully was no stranger to modern art either, which, according to Deloria, she learned about from newspapers and magazines and by presumed museum and gallery visits, particularly during the time that she lived in New York, intermittently throughout the 1930s. Furthermore, Sully was well versed in American Indian quillwork and its affiliated arts, including beadwork and basketry. As Deloria convincingly argues, all of these influences, and more, are revealed in Sully's drawings.

Sully's largest body of work is comprised of her "personality prints" (there are more than four hundred), which are actually drawings made with colored pencil and graphite on paper. Each personality print is comprised of three drawings taped together in a vertical arrangement to read as an interconnected whole. Although there are continuities of color and geometric form, each has a unique style. The top drawing, which Deloria categorizes as "signifying abstract," represents "a desire to communicate some central aspect of a person or idea through a constellation of signifiers" (106). The middle drawing, a form of "geometric abstraction," shares similarities with modern commercial design, although later in his book, Deloria adds to his somewhat reductive interpretation of "decorative" design by connecting the middle drawing to ideas explored by Ruth Benedict in her book *Patterns of Culture* (1934). Most significantly, Deloria identifies the bottom drawing, which he calls "American Indian abstract," as inspired by the artistic tradition of Plains Indian women.

Deloria effectively positions Sully's personality prints in dialogue with the pervasive fascination with celebrity culture that defined the American mass culture industry in the 1920s and 1930s, and as he persuasively demonstrates,

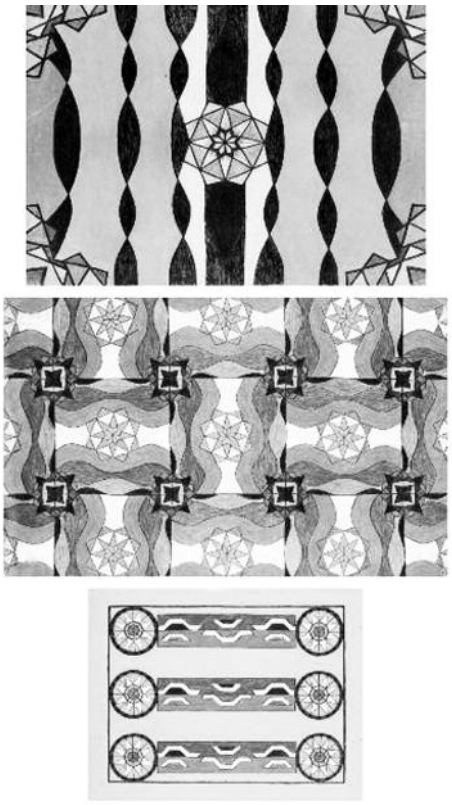


Fig. 1. Mary Sully, *Annie Stein* (c. 1930s), three-panel drawing in pencil or graphite on paper, top: 18" x 12 7/8", middle: 19" x 12", bottom: 12" x 9 1/2".

they are most significant in that their perspective is "from the point of view of an anthropologically informed American Indian critic" (224). Even more, an essential element of his argument is that we must read the prints from top to bottom (rather than from bottom to top). This arrangement places the American Indian abstract panel as the final one, which suggests a stylistic development from a more generalized modern abstraction to a specifically American Indian one, a development that is a "radically innovative, culturally overdetermined, futurist vision that claimed [for Sully] both the right to represent as a Native woman and a full claim of the ability to shape modern art itself" (143). According to Deloria, two historical works by Sully, separate from her personality prints, *The Indian Church* and *Three Stages of Indian History: Pre-Columbian Freedom, Reservation Fetters, the Bewildering Present* (after 1938), "offer a kind of master key" into our

understanding of how Sully engages Indian arts and epistemologies, and they, too, are meant to be read from top to bottom. Comprised of three panels like the personality prints, they construct an historical narrative that moves from colonial domination, represented in the top panels, to an "Indianness" that "will overcome the barbed wire of past and present" in the bottom panel. There are radical implications here in reading the panels in this specific direction: It disrupts the pervasive view of Indian art as being merely foundational to modern art, which a bottom to top reading of the panels might reinforce, and constructs an imagined future for American Indian culture.

The issue of gender is central to Deloria's interpretation of Sully's life and work. Indeed, Deloria concludes that "one should read Sully's work through a lens of gynocentrism that we might take as evidence of an early articulation of Indigenous feminist consciousness" (259). Sully emphasized women's roles in both *Three Stages of Indian History* and *The Indian Church*, and a large number of the celebrities she selected for her personality prints were women, many of whom were "high-achieving and often non-conforming women" (77). For example, Sully created portraits of aviator Amelia Earhart, mountain climber Annie Peck Smith, nurse Clara Barton, and Patsy Kelly, an openly lesbian actress. Deloria positions Sully as "surrounded by three critical figures of queer modernism" in that she created a personality print of Gertrude Stein, and her series shares similarities with the modernist portraits of Charles Demuth and Marsden Hartley (218). In regards to the queer community, it's worth noting here that Ruth Benedict, an important colleague of her sister Ella, was a lesbian.

As Deloria describes it, Sully herself was non-conforming. She redefined herself from Susie Deloria to Mary Sully, a productive, if unrecognized, artist. Sully and Sully's sister lived very independent lives in that they were financially self-supporting, even if it was a hand to mouth existence, and they traveled extensively around America, from New York City to South Dakota. Thus, it is a disappointing part of the book that we are left with little information about possible relationships that might have existed beyond the close bond between the two sisters. Deloria speculates that Sully might have had at least one personal connection to the New York art world in the visual artist Annie Stein, suggested by Sully's personality print of her (1930s; Fig. 1) . However, overall, we are left with a view of Sully as isolated and "childless" as a product of her marginalized status. Deloria argues that Sully's marginal position "both challenged her and gifted her with a penetrating and revelatory vision" (222). Might it also have led her to prefer the alternative lifestyle she had constructed for herself over a more traditional one?

In his evaluation of Sully and her work, Deloria leaves no stone unturned. What results is a compelling model—grounded in comprehensive historical and cultural analyses—for evaluating the works of women artists disconnected from larger art movements. In the case of Mary Sully, our understanding of her art and life reveals a unique approach by a bicultural woman that rejects limited views on American Indian art in favor of one grounded in an imagined American Indian futurity that should most certainly lead us to question our understanding of American modern art as a whole. ●

Cynthia Fowler is an art historian and professor of art at Emmanuel College, Boston, MA. Her scholarship focuses on women's artistic production, and her most recent book is titled *The Modern Embroidery Movement* (Bloomsbury, 2018). She authored the chapter "Gender, Modern Art and Native Women Painters in the First Half of the Twentieth Century," in *American Women Artists: Gender, Culture, and Politics 1935-1970*, edited by Helen Langa and Paula Wisotzki (2016).

We Wanted a Revolution—Black Radical Women, 1965–85: New Perspectives

Edited by Catherine Morris
and Rujeko Hockley
Duke University Press, 2018

Reviewed by Deborah Frizzell

The powerful and long overdue exhibition of the artwork and voices of women of color, *We Wanted a Revolution: Black Radical Women, 1965–85,* organized by the Brooklyn Museum, displayed an entire swath of black women's cultural and sociopolitical work from a crucial two-decade era of radical social questioning that remains all-too-relevant today.[1] This significant historical period interrogated representations and discourses around race, feminism, gender, political action, art production, and art history. With careful and considered scholarship, Rujeko Hockley, then-assistant-curator of contemporary art at the Brooklyn Museum and currently Assistant Curator at the Whitney Museum of American Art, and Catherine Morris, senior curator of the museum's Sackler Center for Feminist Art, created a groundbreaking traveling exhibition of nearly 250 artworks, encapsulating the heart and vital imaginaries of black women's liberation that sought to disrupt the discourses of feminism shaped primarily by white, middle-class, heterosexual women. Despite being marginalized, black women artists fostered individual and collective modes of expression via self-determination and networks of care and mutual support. The artists of color featured in *Revolution* held a space for each other as a means of survival through their friendships, their complex emerging identities, and experiences of shared political realities. The fierce determination and courage of the artists themselves is palpable in both the exhibition and its documentation.

Instead of the standard exhibition catalogue or a simplified narrative, the

Brooklyn Museum published two volumes related to *We Wanted a Revolution* that anthologize the artists' voices, their art and photographs, letters, collective magazines and pamphlets. *A Sourcebook,* published in 2017 and packed with rare primary documents from the era by artists, critics, art historians, and writers, captures the pulse and voices of black radical women.[2] *New Perspectives,* created after the exhibition opened in response to the Museum's public symposium, contains contemporary scholarship contextualizing the artists' practices, engaging critical issues emerging from the artists' historical roots and within today's discourses on art. The essays examine the conjunction of artists' lives with their art projects, often revealing the rich collaborative networks of dedicated women and the cultural venues supporting women of color. *New Perspectives* features two new poems by Alice Walker, followed by essays by Aruna D'Souza on Third World feminism and by Kellie Jones on the career of Elizabeth Catlett (1915–2012); a memoir by Lisa Jones on the mid-1980s performance collective Rodeo Caldonia High-Fidelity Performance Theater; and Uri McMillan's account of Senga Nengudi (b. 1943) and Maren Hassinger's (b. 1947) performance collaborations and the connections forged between New York and Los Angles through their friendships and the Just Above Midtown Gallery. These essays trace artists' and artist collectives' political and philosophical concerns as they shifted across generations.

Alice Walker's poems, "In This Incarnation" and "If You Can Stand The Wait," were written to commemorate the lives of artists and activists whose voices fought on behalf of those who were, and continue to be, the most vulnerable in our society. Walker captures historical trauma inflecting the present, while seeking to imagine our planet as it could be. Her poems suggest that failure of the imagination when tied to aesthetics and empathy is the most consequential of moral defects.

In her essay "Swimming With E.C.," curator Kellie Jones frames Elizabeth Catlett as a foremother of artists who came of age in 1960s and beyond. Jones creates a complex narrative of Catlett's life, her studio practice and exhibition record, and her teaching and mentoring within historical contexts spanning eight decades. The essay traces her "calling" as an artist back in time to her female ancestors who offered a black radical inheritance. Early on, Catlett's art confronted the most disturbing injustices against Black Americans, including lynchings and brutal beatings. One of Catlett's most recognized works is a bronze sculpture, *Target* (1970), the head of a black man in the crosshairs of an implied gun, made in response to the police killings of Black Panther Party members Fred Hampton and Mark Clark in 1969.



Fig. 1. Senga Nengudi, still from *Ceremony for Freeway Fets* (1978), chromogenic print (documentation of performance), 12" x 18". Courtesy of the artist, Lévy Gorvy Gallery, New York, and Thomas Erben Gallery, New York. Photo: Quaku/Roderick Young.

Jones follows Catlett's career from New Orleans to Chicago and New York before settling in Mexico with her second husband, the artist Francisco Mora. She relocated to Mexico in 1945, after receiving a grant from the Rosenwald Foundation, but her commitment to social issues led the US government to deny her a travel visa for nearly a decade, declaring her an "undesirable alien." In Mexico she worked closely with Taller de Gráfica Popular, the People's Graphic Arts Workshop, a group of artists dedicated to promoting sociopolitical change, generating works that were low cost and widely accessible. In addition, Catlett's art, especially her figurative sculpture, accentuated black pride in the female body. Jones examines the nuances of Catlett's artistic development within a sculptural language that emphasized a celebratory embodiment for black women, reclaiming the black and brown female body as powerfully beautiful, expressive, and varied.

Aruna D'Souza's essay, "Early Intersections: The Work of Third World Feminism," analyzes interlocking systems of oppression and the evolution of US Third World feminism as a perspective from which women of color could view their own emergent forms of feminism in the context of worldwide movements for decolonization and within diasporic experiences. D'Souza discusses movements and organizations such as the National Black Feminist Organization, the National Alliance of Black Feminists, and the Third World Women's Alliance developed as alternatives to mainstream feminist organizations led mostly by white women. By the 1970s, activist and writer Barbara Smith's Boston-based queer black feminist group, the Combahee River Collective (CRC), was inter-

sectional before that term was defined by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989). Smith, Audre Lorde, and CRC articulated an analysis that animated the meaning of intersectionality, the idea that multiple oppressions reinforce each other to create new categories of suffering.[3]

D'Souza discusses the centering of the female body as both the agent of identity performance and, for many black and brown women artists, as the nexus of resistance to white patriarchal domination. Howardena Pindell's (b. 1943) *Free White and 21* (1980), a 12-minute video, interrogates through witness and autobiography the psychic violence of racism and the slow degradation of the spirit in the face of casual, everyday racism, exposing the political as deeply embedded in personal trauma. The video debuted In *Dialectics of Isolation*, Ana Mendieta's (1948-85) 1980 exhibition of Third World women artists, at A.I.R. Gallery, which brought together artists such as Judith Baca (b. 1946), Beverly Buchanan (1940–2015), Senga Nengudi, and Pindell to offer an explicit critique of what she called "mainstream feminism" as a predominantly white, relatively privileged, heterosexual movement.[4]

Uri McMillan's essay, "Sand, Nylon, and Dirt: Senga Nengudi and Maren Hassinger in Southern California," focuses on two pioneering artists' collaborations in performance, ritual, and assemblage projects. Nengudi's formal aesthetics, referencing many cultures, embodied sociopolitical concerns about representing the body and its invisible spiritual aspect. Connecting multiple cultures—including African ceremonial dress, jazz improvisation, Japanese minimalism, and an array of Western vernacular vocabularies—Nengudi's collaborations at Studio Z in Los Angeles, especially those with dancer and sculptor Hassinger, activated her sculptural relationships to the female body and its fluidity of gesture and movement. Hassinger moves and contorts her body in tension with and through Nengudi's installation of nylon pantyhose: tied, stretched, filled with sand and variously pinned to the wall. In *Ceremony for Freeway Fets* (1978; Fig. 1), a collaborative happening Nengudi staged under an overpass in Los Angeles, she deployed nylon and fabrics, designed costumes and had artists improvise music as they transformed materials into extensions of their bodies in ritualistic movement. McMillan discusses the two artists' separate and collaborative studio practices, their call-and-response negotiations, and their formal and conceptual experimentation. Hassinger's sculpture *Leaning* (1980), made from bundles of wire, often twisted or unraveled, alludes to similar transformations of materials, the body, and the connections between communities and families.

Lisa Jones's engaging essay, "When the Rent Was Cheap & The Art Was Everything: Remembering Rodeo Caldonia," takes the reader behind-the-scenes of the founding of the black collective experience that was Rodeo Caldonia High-Fidelity Performance Theater in Fort Greene, Brooklyn, in the 1980s**. (**Rodeo's broader radical circles included the Black Rock Coalition and the young Spike Lee, Jones's father.) Famed conceptual photographer and video artist Lorna Simpson (b. 1960), a Rodeo member, recently discussed the strength and ambitions of its women: "We were of a mind that you were never going to get permission to create the world you wanted to live in. But people of like mind were just going to go for it."[5] Rodeo Caldonia comprised seventeen women of color who wanted to create experimental feminist work that focused on their identities. During their time together, they produced two plays written by Jones: "Carmella & King Kong" and "Combination Skin," a biting comic satire, a game show to choose the "$100,000 tragic mulatto" from three female contestants named Specimens 1, 2 and 3. Jones continues to explore the aspirations of her middle-class urban peers with large doses of irony and wit seen through their stories and her own.

New Perspectives is a handsome publication with ample illustrations and a good bibliography (but no index). The two volumes—*We Wanted a Revolution: A Sourcebook*, and *New Perspectives*—provide a vital compendium of primary resources, artists' and art historical perspectives, and installation documentation that are extremely valuable in opening up discourses on contemporary art, encouraging and supporting further research. The overarching themes of *Revolution* highlight an ethical acknowledgement of the interdependency of people, exploring personal expression without indulging in mythologies of complete personal autonomy. The radical women of color featured here pursue sustainable, empathetic strategies in supporting social inclusivity and activism. These artists are shown to negotiate their artistic practices while they establish social and political strategies and to delve into psychological and practical needs to revolutionary ends. •

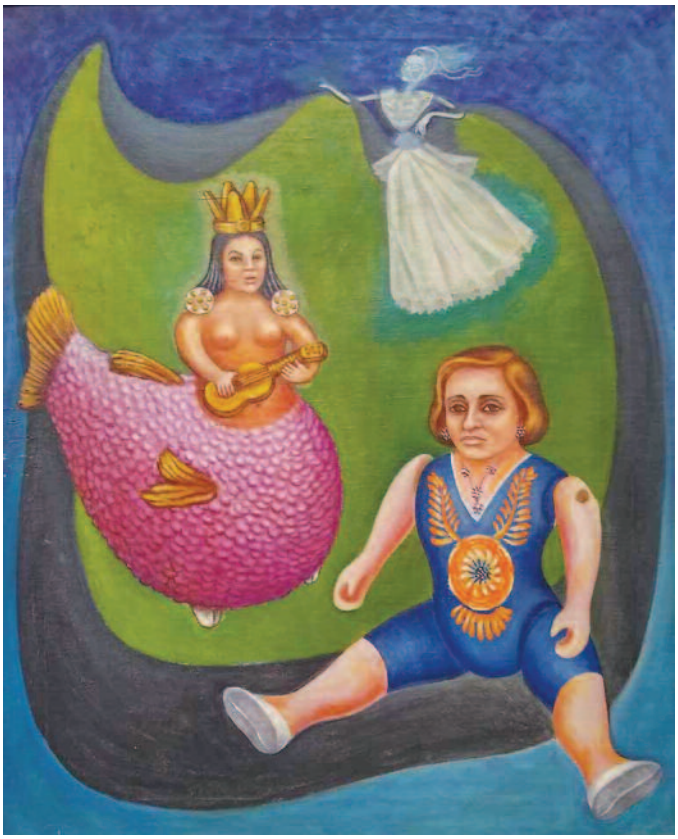
Deborah Frizzell is Adjunct Professor of Art History at William Paterson University in New Jersey, where she teaches modern and contemporary art history and theory. She is writing a manuscript about Nancy Spero's influence on younger generations of artists.

Notes

1. *We Wanted a Revolution: Black Radical Women, 1965–85*, Brooklyn Museum, April 21–Sept. 17, 2017; California African American Museum, Los Angeles, Oct. 13, 2017 – Jan. 14, 2018; Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, Feb. 17 – May 27, 2018; The Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, June 26 – Sept. 30, 2018.
2. See Lisa Farrington's review of *We Wanted a Revolution: Black Radical Women 1865-85, A Sourcebook*, eds. Catherine Morris and Rujeko Hockley, in *WAJ* 39, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2018): 54–57.
3. See "The Combahee River Collective Statement" in *History as a Weapon*: https://historyisaweapon.com/defcon1/combrivercoll.html (accessed date); also Kimberlé Crenshaw "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color," 1989: https://www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/mapping-margins.pdf (accessed July 14, 2018).
4. See A.I.R. Gallery: https://www.airgallery.org/exhibitions/dialecticsofentanglement (accessed July 14, 2018).
5. Lorna Simpson interviewed by Siddhartha Mitter in "Lorna Simpson Embraces the Blues," *The New York Times*, 6/13/2013: https://www.nytimes.com/2019/06/13/arts/design/lorna-simpson-paintings-hauser-wirth.html (accessed July 14, 2018).



Pl. 1. Aurora Reyes, *Frida in front of the mirror* (1946), oil on canvas. Courtesy of Héctor Godoy Lagunes. Photo: FONDO FOTOGRÁFICO CENIDIAP/INBAL. Biblioteca de las Artes.



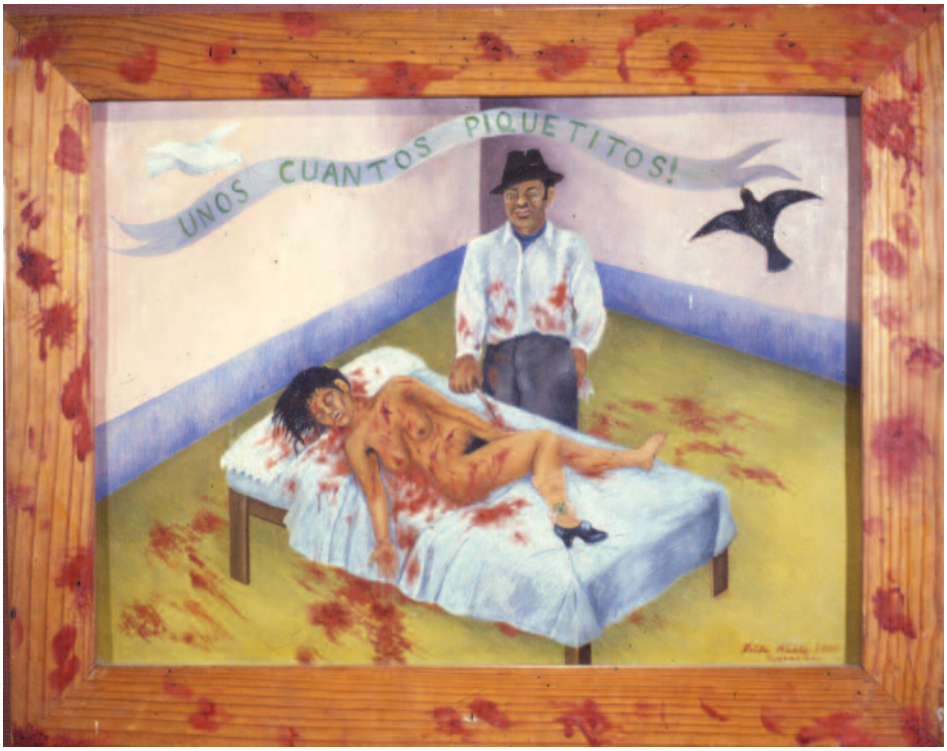
Pl. 2. Aurora Reyes, *Concha, Aurora and Frida* (1949), oil on canvas. Héctor Godoy Lagunes Collection, Courtesy of Héctor Godoy Lagunes. Photo: the author.



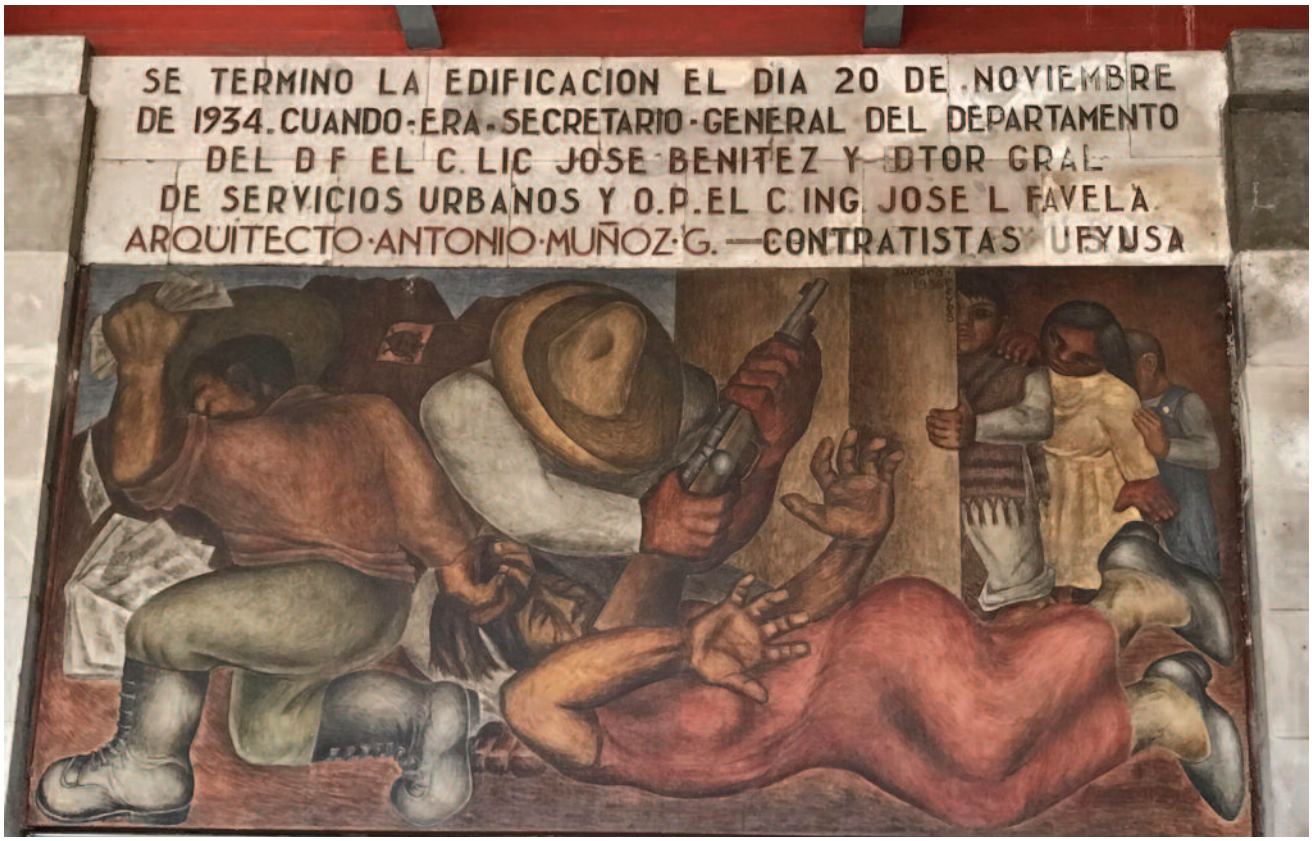
Pl. 3. Frida Kahlo, *Moses or the Core of the Sun* (1945), oil on masonite, 30" x 24". Private Collection, on loan to the Fine Arts Museum, Houston, TX, D.R. © Banco de México, Fiduciario en el Fideicomiso relativo a los Museos Diego Rivera y Frida Kahlo. Av. 5 de Mayo No. 2, col. Centro, alc. Cuauhtémoc, c.p. 06000, Ciudad de México. Photo: FONDO FOTOGRÁFICO CENIDIAP/ INBAL. Biblioteca de las Artes.



Pl. 4. Aurora Reyes, *Embryo*, detail from *Trajectory of Culture in Mexico*, mural cycle of the Auditorio 15 de mayo, Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación, 1962, temple, 326 m^2. Courtesy of Héctor Godoy Lagunes. Photo: the author.



Pl. 5. Frida Kahlo, *A Few Small Nips* (1935), oil on metal, 11 3/8" x 15 1/2". Dolores Olmedo Museum, D.R. © Banco de México, Fiduciario en el Fideicomiso relativo a los Museos Diego Rivera y Frida Kahlo. Av. 5 de Mayo No. 2, col. Centro, alc. Cuauhtémoc, c.p. 06000, Ciudad de México. Photo: FONDO FOTOGRÁFICO CENIDIAP/INBAL. Biblioteca de las Artes.



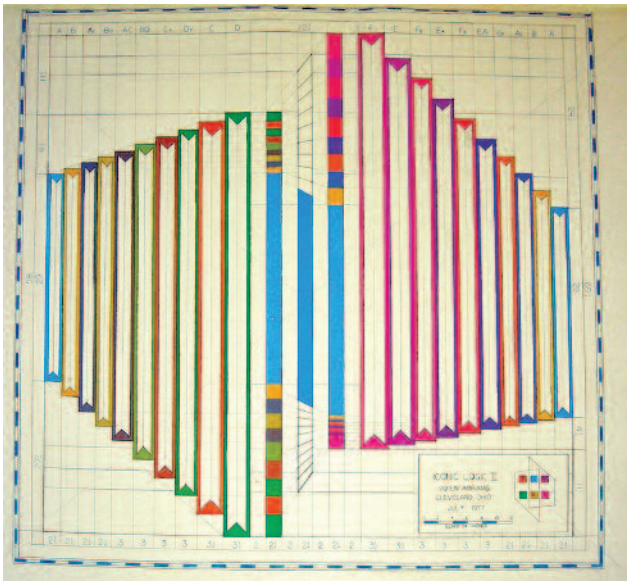
Pl. 6. Aurora Reyes, *Attack on a Rural Teacher* (1936), fresco. Centro Escolar Revolución. Courtesy of Héctor Godoy Lagunes. Photo: the author.



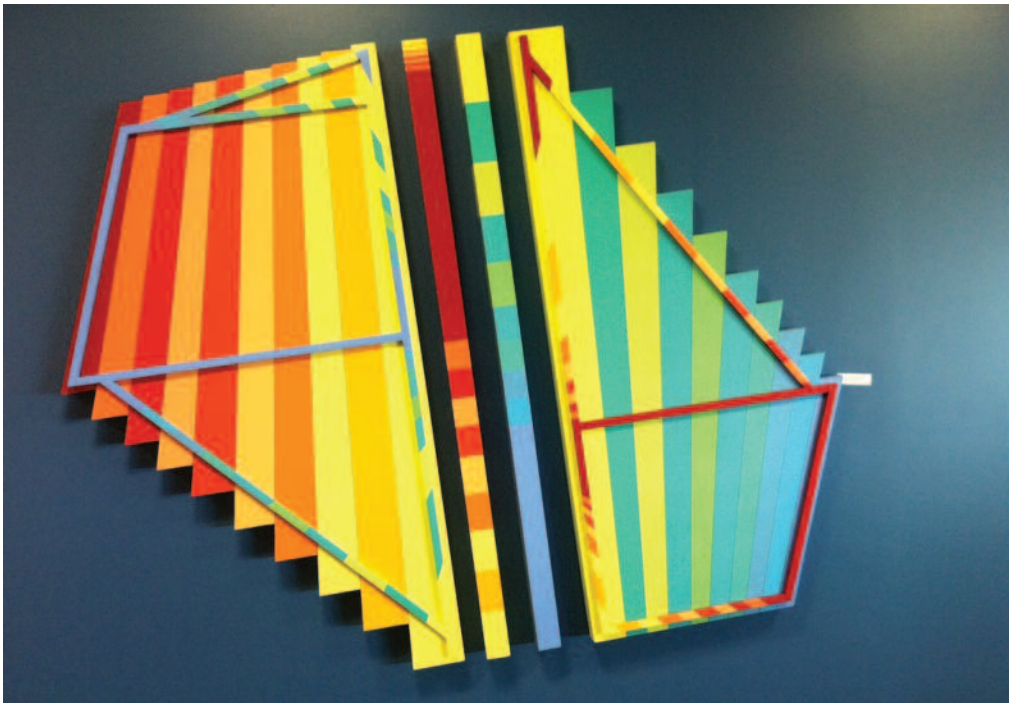
Pl. 7. Aurora Reyes, *Dramatic Argument* (1946), oil on canvas, Héctor Godoy Lagunes Collection. Courtesy of Héctor Godoy Lagunes. Photo: the author.



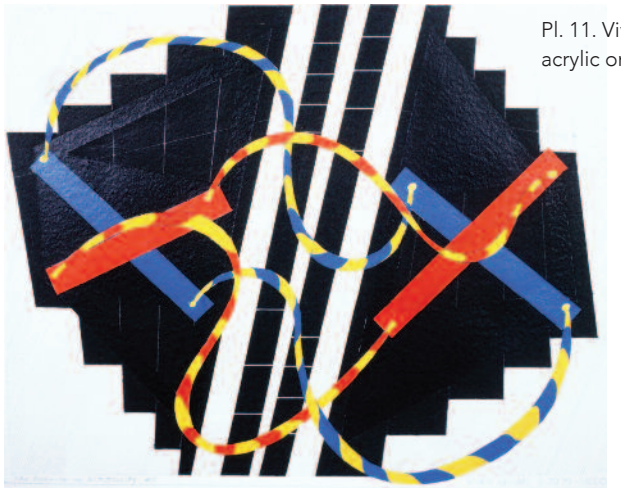
Pl. 8. Vivien Collens, *Froebel's Gifts*: *Energized Cube* (2017), powder coated aluminum, 16' 4' x 4'. Commissioned for permanent collection of Kenner Sculpture Garden, New Orleans. LA.



Pl. 9. Vivien Collens, *Iconic Logic* (1977), acrylic and pencil on paper, 25" x 30". Courtesy of the artist.



Pl. 10. Vivien Collens, *Janus Projection* (1979), acrylic on wood, 68" x 32" x 3". On long term loan to SUNY Orange. Courtesy of the artist.



Pl. 11. Vivien Collens, *New Dimensions* (1979), acrylic on paper, 14" x 18". Courtesy of the artist.



Pl. 12. Vivien *Collens, Heavenly Bodies* (1993), acrylic and collage on paper. 24" x 36". Courtesy of the artist.



Pl.13. Vivien Collens, *Personal Affects* (1995), mixed media, 66" x 73" x 12". Courtesy of the artist.



Pl. 14. Vivien Collens, *Circadian* (1995), acrylic on canvas, 60" x 60". Courtesy of the artist.



Pl. 15. Vivien Collens, *House with Heavenly Views* (2014), acrylic on canvas, 48" x 30". Courtesy of the artist.



Pl. 16. *Beacon Squirt*, 2019. Powder coated aluminum, 14'x 12'x 10'. Installed at Beacon, NY.



Pl. 17. Vivien Collens, *Doll with White Skirt* (2019), painted wood, 62" x 20" x 20". Collection of Cathy and Peter Halstead.

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