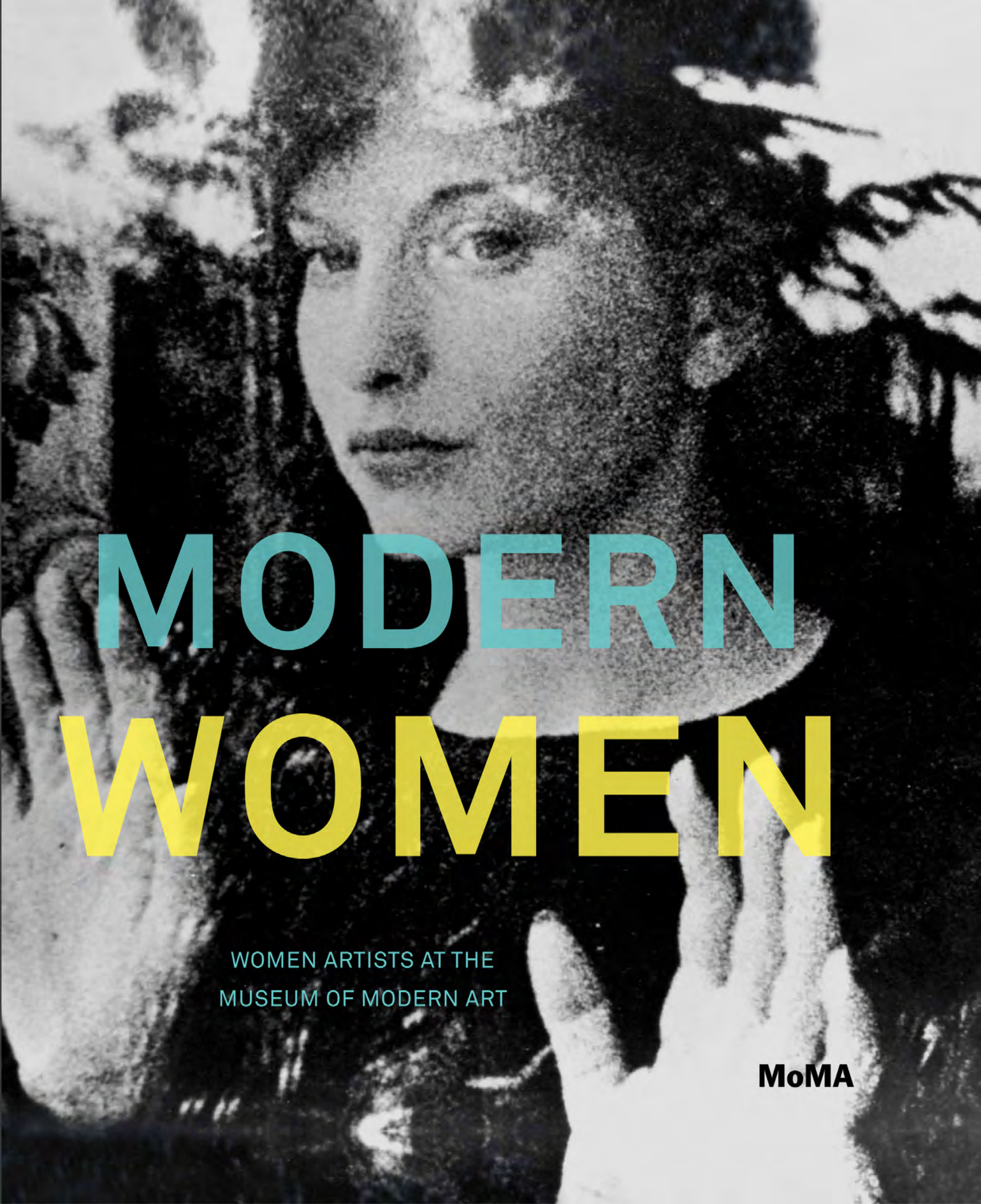

MODERN WOMEN

WOMEN ARTISTS AT THE
MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

MoMA

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Edited by CORNELIA BUTLER and ALEXANDRA SCHWARTZ
with essays by

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ANNE UMLAND / GRETCHEN L. WAGNER / DEBORAH WYE

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, NEW YORK

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FOREWORD

This publication celebrates a sustained research effort focused on women artists whose work is in the collection of The Museum of Modern Art. Their contributions have shaped not only the history of our institution but also the history of modernism for which it stands.

It also bears witness to the many other women—curators, founders, administrators, philanthropists—who have, with these artists, contributed to the formation and continuity of the Museum and to the quality of its collections and exhibitions.

Modern Women: Women Artists at The Museum of Modern Art represents the culmination of a five-year initiative known internally as the Modern Women's Project. It is our ambition that this unprecedented, institution-wide effort will ultimately influence the narratives of modernism the Museum represents by arguing for a more complex understanding of the art of our time. The title of this volume, *Modern Women*, immediately maps the territory of its contents. This is not a history of feminist art or of feminist artists, although a number of the artists featured here claim feminism's accomplishments or insist on a feminist discourse to contextualize their work. With some important exceptions, this is not a group of artists that coheres beyond the rubric of gender. And, certainly, it is only a sampling of the work by women artists in the Museum's collection. This publication is, in a sense, a work in progress, an artifact of a continuous effort to research our collection and rethink the consensus of art history.

This period of particular focus on women artists at the Museum was sparked by Sarah Peter, a philanthropist and artist. With true generosity of spirit, she approached the institution in 2004 with a broad proposal for the development of programs to benefit women at MoMA. After a wide range of possibilities were discussed in an exploratory process spearheaded by Mary Lea Bandy, Deputy Director for Curatorial Affairs and Chief Curator of Film and Media, a cross-departmental group of curators was formed to begin research on women artists in the Museum's collection and to develop and lead a series of public initiatives exploring the subject. In support of this ongoing project, the Modern Women's Fund was established in 2005. Bandy retired, and that year Deborah Wye, Chief Curator of Prints and Illustrated Books, took over as leader of the group, which evolved to include Sally Berger, Assistant Curator, Department of Film; Cornelia Butler, Chief Curator of Drawings; Tina di Carlo, Assistant Curator, and Alexandra Quantrill, Curatorial Assistant, Department of Architecture and Design; Susan Kismaric, Curator, Department of Photography; Barbara London, Associate Curator, Department of Media and Performance Art; Alexandra Schwartz, Curatorial Assistant, Department of Drawings; and Anne Umland, Curator, Department of Painting and Sculpture. In 2007 Butler took over for Wye, and the group gained new members: Leah Dickerman, Curator, Department of Painting and Sculpture; Juliet Kinchin, Curator, Department of Architecture and Design; and Eva Respini, Associate Curator, Department of Photography. I am grateful to these colleagues, particularly Cornelia Butler and Alexandra Schwartz, the editors of this volume, for their development of a series of initiatives at the Museum on the subject of women artists and modernism, including an international symposium, a major publication, educational programs, and exhibitions, and for catalyzing an ongoing and affirmative push for greater scholarship on the women artists in the collection, past, present, and future. Their rigorous and passionate commitment has foregrounded an ongoing discussion within the institution around issues of gender and art.

To celebrate the publication of this book, a series of new collection installations will unfold over a six-month period in 2010, in the Museum's medium-based collection galleries, its archives, and its theaters. Each curatorial department has devised a strategy for highlighting its holdings of work by women artists, with the goal of subtly yet assertively increasing the presence of women artists throughout the building. The Architecture and Design Galleries will feature kitchen design, highlighting the recent acquisition of Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky's Frankfurt Kitchen (1926–27); film exhibitions will focus on such figures as Maya Deren, Lillian Gish, and Sally Potter; a major, recently acquired sculpture by Lee Bontecou will anchor an in-depth presentation of her work in the Painting and Sculpture Galleries, and works by women artists (many recently acquired) will be on display in various public spaces throughout the Museum; a collaboration between curators of drawings and prints and illustrated books will highlight the work of Mona Hatoum, Yayoi Kusama, Anna Maria Maiolino, and Alina Szapocznikow, among others, in an installation exploring the intersection of abstraction, architecture, and the body; the Photography Galleries will feature a history of photography told through the work of women artists; and the Media and Performance Art Galleries will feature Joan Jonas's work *Mirage* (1976/2003). A retrospective exhibition of the performance and media art of Marina Abramović will occupy the large, sixth-floor galleries and atrium of the Museum.

Starting in 1929, with Lillie P. Bliss, Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, and Mary Quinn Sullivan, the Museum's three founders, MoMA has benefited from the intelligence, generosity, and adventurous spirit of the women who have been the backbone of this institution, and I am grateful to them. As always I thank the women and men on the Museum's board of trustees, who lead by example through their unflagging commitment and support. In particular I acknowledge the leadership and generosity of Jerry I. Speyer, Chairman, and Marie-Josée Kravis, President.

I am deeply grateful to Sarah Peter, whose continued commitment has ensured the completion of this milestone publication and the exhibitions that coincide with and celebrate it.

Glenn D. Lowry
Director, The Museum of Modern Art, New York

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Modern Women: Women Artists at The Museum of Modern Art is the product of five years of intensive research and preparation, and we are enormously grateful to the many people who have been part of that process.

Our most profound thanks go to Sarah Peter, who in 2005 established the Modern Women's Fund, dedicated to research on work by women in the Museum's collection. This book is the centerpiece of that initiative, and we are deeply grateful for her generous support and leadership and her great enthusiasm for this project. She has been—and will continue to be—an inspiration to everyone at the Museum.

This book would not exist without the contributions of its numerous authors. We are deeply grateful to the following scholars: from outside the Museum, Carol Armstrong, Johanna Burton, Yenna Chan, Beatriz Colomina, Huey Copeland, Aruna D'Souza, Yuko Hasegawa, Pat Kirkham, Mary McLeod, Helen Molesworth, Griselda Pollock, T'ai Smith, and Sally Stein; and, from inside the Museum, Esther Adler, Paola Antonelli, Sally Berger, Christophe Cherix, Michelle Elligott, Jennifer Field, Starr Figura, Samantha Friedman, Jodi Hauptman, Jenny He, Judith B. Hecker, Jytte Jensen, Laurence Kardish, Juliet Kinchin, Susan Kismaric, Nora Lawrence, Andres Lepik, Barbara London, Roxana Marcoci, Sarah Hermanson Meister, Anne Morra, Luis Pérez-Oramas, Paulina Pobocha, Christian Rattemeyer, Eva Respini, Romy Silver, Sarah Suzuki, Emily Talbot, Ann Temkin, Lilian Tone, Anne Umland, Gretchen L. Wagner, and Deborah Wye. Their essays speak for themselves, and their research has contributed immeasurably to our ongoing study of the Museum's collection.

A book of this size and scope is inevitably a complex endeavor, and we had the great fortune to work with an extraordinary team in the Museum's Department of Publications. Kara Kirk, Associate Publisher; Emily Hall, Associate Editor; Rebecca Roberts, Senior Assistant Editor; Christina Grillo, Production Manager; Hannah Kim, Marketing and Book Development Coordinator; and Sam Cate-Gumpert, Carole Kismaric Mikolaycak Intern in Publishing, were truly heroic, bringing this book to fruition with astonishing skill, care, and grace under enormous pressure. Christopher Hudson, Publisher; David Frankel, Editorial Director; and Marc Sapir, Production Director, devoted huge amounts of time and effort to this project. We are most grateful for their guidance, wisdom, and expertise. We are no less indebted to Bethany Johns, whose impeccable design, tireless work, and terrific patience quite literally made the book. We would like to thank the Museum's editorial board, which offered helpful advice in formulating the book, as well as Kyle Bentley, Kate Norment, and Susan Richmond, whose editorial contributions were invaluable. We also extend our thanks to Sharon Gallagher and Avery Lozada of Distributed Art Publishers/D.A.P. for their enthusiasm for this project.

The book was developed at the Museum by a working group of curators that was deeply involved at every stage of its progress. We would like to thank the members of this group: Mary Lea Bandy, former Deputy Director for Curatorial Affairs and Chief Curator of Film and Media; Sally Berger, Assistant Curator, Department of Film; Tina di Carlo, Assistant Curator, Juliet Kinchin, Curator, and Alexandra Quantrill, Curatorial Assistant, Department of Architecture and Design; Leah Dickerman, Curator, and Anne Umland, Curator, Department of Painting and Sculpture; Susan Kismaric, Curator, and Eva Respini, Associate Curator, Department of Photography; Barbara London, Associate Curator, Department of Media and Performance Art; and Deborah Wye, Chief Curator of Prints and Illustrated Books. Lisa Mantone, Director of Development, played an important role throughout. Former Museum staff members Fereshteh Daftari and David Little also contributed greatly to the project. Throughout, we were aided by numerous researchers and interns; in particular we extend our thanks to Romy Silver, Research Assistant; interns Jessica Fain, Frances Jacobus-Parker, Joyce Kuechler, and Julia Monk; and the students in the Columbia University art history graduate seminars "Women Artists at MoMA" (team taught; led by Deborah Wye, spring 2007) and "Feminist Practices and Art Institutions" (Cornelia Butler and Alexandra Schwartz, spring 2008), who provided research assistance and opportunities for exploration and discussion.

We are tremendously grateful to our many colleagues at MoMA. We would like particularly to thank Glenn D. Lowry, Director, for his vision and leadership, and Kathy Halbreich, Associate Director; Michael Margitich, Senior Deputy Director for External Affairs; Peter Reed, Senior Deputy Director for Curatorial Affairs; and Jennifer Russell, Senior Deputy Director for Exhibitions, Collections, and Programs, for their ongoing support. Chief Curators Barry Bergdoll, Klaus Biesenbach, Peter Galassi, Rajendra Roy, Ann Temkin, and Deborah Wye, with Wendy Woon, Director of Education, offered generous guidance and the full cooperation and assistance of their departments. As the book neared completion and an extensive roster of exhibitions and educational programs celebrating it were planned, numerous other colleagues became involved in the project, including Laura Beiles, Sara Bodinson, Allegra Burnette, Maggie Lederer D'Errico, Margaret Doyle, Beth Harris, Jenny He, Pablo Helguera, Jytte Jensen, Roxana Marcoci, Sarah Hermanson Meister, Kim Mitchell, Anne Morra, Aidan O'Connor, Veronica Roberts, Daniela Stigh, Sarah Suzuki, Jenny Tobias, and Leslie Ureña, and we extend sincere thanks to them.

We warmly thank the staff of the Museum Library and Archives, including MacKenzie Bennett, Sheelagh Bevan, Michelle Elligott, Michelle Harvey, Milan Hughston, David Senior, and Jenny Tobias, for their invaluable assistance with research; the staff of the Department of Imaging Services, including Thomas Griesel, Robert Kastler, Erik Landsberg, Jonathan Muzikar, Roberto Rivera, Jennifer Sellar, Rosa Smith, and John Wronn, for the huge amount of new photography undertaken for this book; and the office of the General Counsel, particularly Nancy Adelson and Dina Sorokina, for advice regarding image rights and permissions. Great thanks go also to the staff of the Department of Drawings, especially Esther Adler, Geaninne Gutiérrez-Guimarães, Ji Hae Kim, and John Prochilo, for their support and good cheer. Among other past and present MoMA staff, we would like to particularly thank Carla Bianchi, Caitlin Condell, Sarah Cooper, Kathy Curry, Carrie Elliott, Paul Galloway, Whitney Gaylord, Alexandra Lee, Erica Papernik, Jennifer Schauer, Emily Talbot, Lilian Tone, Steve West, and Gillian Young, who provided essential help with imaging, captioning, and other matters. Many thanks go as well to Carol Armstrong, Rosalyn Deutsche, Richard Meyer, and Elisabeth Sussman.

We are profoundly grateful to the rights holders of the many works pictured in this book for their generosity in allowing them to be reproduced.

Finally we must salute the hundreds of artists whose works are highlighted in this book and housed in the Museum's collection. Theirs is a history and production too profound to be contained within the pages of any volume. It is to them we give our deepest respect and thanks.

Cornelia Butler and Alexandra Schwartz

THE FEMINIST PRESENT: WOMEN ARTISTS AT MoMA / CORNELIA BUTLER

I would call "feminine" the moment of rupture and negativity which conditions the newness of any practice.
—Julia Kristeva[1]

I don't believe in "feminist art" since art is a mysterious filtering process which requires the labyrinths of a single mind, the privacy of alchemy, the possibility of exception and unorthodoxy rather than rule.
—Anne-Marie Sauzeau-Boetti[2]

When in 1976 Anne-Marie Sauzeau-Boetti wrote an important but little-known article titled "Negative Capability as Practice in Women's Art," she appropriated for women artists the notion of the productive space of the margin. What she called, in that article, "the double space of incongruence" is a reworking of an idea first penned by John Keats in 1817, in which he described the ideal state of mind of the poet or artist as "capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after facts and reason."[3] The idea of embracing uncertainty and doubt as a framework for making art (and life) seems extremely relevant for the current shifting economies and international discourse of change. Flexing the muscle of poetic license Sauzeau-Boetti takes Keats a step further. Claiming his position for the feminine, she knowingly declared in a sly aside that Keats and Marcel Duchamp "let their own feminine identity bloom quite freely," referring to Duchamp's reinvention of himself as his female alter ego in his infamous self-portrait in drag, *Rrose Sélavy* (1921).[4]

1. View of the exhibition *Projects 70: Janine Antoni, Shahzia Sikander, Kara Walker (Banners Project, Series 3)*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, November 22, 2000–March 13, 2001. Photographic Archive. The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York

What is remarkable about this text is how ahead of its time it was. "Many women artists still deny the idea of a female art," Sauzeau-Boetti wrote. "Art is good or bad, but has no sex." Speaking from a European point of view, midway through the decade in which second-wave feminism took hold in the West, she both identified feminism's deficiencies while deploying another, unexpected patrimony for women's work in her nod to Duchamp, claiming for feminism the radical proposal of a fluid, ready-made artistic identity. She suggested that feminist practice, or rather the practices of some women artists, launch "a process of differentiation. Not the project of fixing meanings but of breaking them up and multiplying them."[5] Sauzeau-Boetti's understanding of the possibilities of an artistic practice ignited by negative capability was provocative in its encouragement of an equal critical playing field for male and female artists. But what might her Keatsian or Duchampian model mean for curatorial and museological practice in the twenty-first century? Is there a way to internalize negative capability in an institution such as The Museum of Modern Art, whose role in the very construction of Western art history requires persistent reexamination? What might a feminist present—a history set in motion by such examination—look like at a place like MoMA?

To begin to answer these questions, let us consider three examples of disruption, three instances when the spirit of a negative capability might be said to have been provocatively and even humorously enacted. In each of these cases women artists actively blurred the boundaries of curatorial and artistic praxis, questioning the locus of power and authorship. Each a product of their respective historical moment, they include an exhibition as conceptual provocation in 1971; exhibition as historical recuperation in 1995; and exhibition as intervention in 2000.

On December 2, 1971, an advertisement ran in the *Village Voice* for a one-woman exhibition, showing an image manipulated and altered by the artist, Yoko Ono, of The Museum of Modern [F]art, with Ono carrying the missing *f* emblazoned on a shopping bag as she walked beneath the Museum's marquee. A one-hundred-page catalogue, sold for one dollar, would, according to the advertisement, document the event. For a period of two weeks visitors encountered, on the sidewalk outside MoMA's entrance, a man wearing a sandwich board bearing a message about flies that had been released into the Museum's sculpture garden carrying the artist's perfume. His presence was the only physical evidence of the purported exhibition; visitors were variously amused, mystified, or disgusted by the ruse, and the Museum's box office found it necessary to put a small, handmade sign showing the *Village Voice* ad in its window, stating, "THIS IS NOT HERE."[6] A self-proclaimed feminist with work now in MoMA's collection, Ono has recalled at the time feeling compelled to address the absence of her own representation as an artist; by occupying the sculpture garden, the sidewalk, and the liminal spaces of the viewer's attention and response, she infiltrated an institutional situation to which, as a woman artist, she had no other access.[7]

As part of MoMA's exhibition series Artist's Choice, Elizabeth Murray was invited in 1995 to organize an exhibition from the collection. Artist's Choice had been conceived in 1989 "to see the collection of The Museum of Modern Art in a new way" and functioned as a means of bringing artists directly into the institutional discourse.[8] Murray's exhibition (no. 3) featured paintings and sculptures solely by women artists, a selection criterion that was, as she states in her frank introduction in the exhibition's brochure, the first and only idea that occurred to her as a curatorial premise.[9] Kirk Varnedoe, then the chief

2. "But Is It Art? Security officer Roy Williams pleads with nude young men and women to leave Museum of Modern Art pool, where Maillol's sculpture, *Girl Washing Her Hair* [*sic*], reclines. Impromptu nude-in was conception of Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama (right). Crowd takes it in stride," *New York Daily News*, August 25, 1969, cover. Archives Pamphlet Files: Sculpture Garden. The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York

3. View of the exhibition *Artist's Choice: Elizabeth Murray*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, June 19–August 22, 1995. Photographic Archive. The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York

4. View of the exhibition *Sense and Sensibility: Women Artists and Minimalism in the Nineties*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, June 15–September 11, 1994. Photographic Archive. The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York

curator of the Department of Painting and Sculpture, described the exhibition as one that took the viewer "into a different territory, opening onto the sociological histories of modern art and of this Museum, and embracing unresolved debates about the interplay of biological and societal factors in an individual's creativity."[10] I was deeply affected by that exhibition, which, literally bringing to light many works that had rarely been on view, was a revelation and profoundly moving. That Murray would have one of the only retrospective exhibitions in the Museum's history devoted to a woman painter—her survey exhibition, organized by Robert Storr, opened in 2005, not long before her untimely death in 2007—makes her Artist's Choice selection that much more prescient. In what Varnedoe described as a "remaking of ancestry," Murray's inclusive curatorial strategy issued a challenge to subsequent generations of curators and proposed a kind of feminist potential for rethinking knowledge production.[11]

By 2000 MoMA, like most museums exposed to a decade of globalism, was more aggressively attempting to redress its history not only with women artists but also with artists from diverse cultural positions. As part of the Projects series, which highlights emerging artists, Fereshteh Daftari, an assistant curator of Painting and Sculpture, selected a trio of artists, Janine Antoni, Shahzia Sikander, and Kara Walker, to alter the banners that greet pedestrians on West Fifty-third Street on the approach to the Museum (the same block on which visitors would have encountered Ono's sandwich board) (no. 1). Antoni's textual manipulation was subtle, subversive, and openly hilarious: "MoM," rendered in the same classic Helvetica that declares MoMA's cultural authority as much as its graphic identity, thus performing a sly institutional drag. Simultaneously an announcement of institutional self-criticality, a matriarchy not yet realized, and a critical riff on the monolith of modernism, Antoni's banner had an uneasy succinctness that resonated with both uninitiated viewers and art-world insiders, making its own revisionist case.

And there have been other disruptive moments in the Museum's history.[12] In 1988 Barbara Kruger organized *Picturing Greatness*, essentially a proto–Artist's Choice exhibition (no. 5). At the invitation of Susan Kismaric and the Department of Photography, Kruger selected photographic portraits of famous artists in order to explore notions of "greatness." For the wall text introducing the exhibition she wrote, "Vibrating with inspiration yet implacably well behaved, visceral yet oozing with all manner of refinement, almost all are male and almost all are white."[13] And in the early years of political feminism there was Lucy R. Lippard's contribution to Kynaston McShine's legendary exhibition *Information* in 1970, the same year

5. View of the exhibition *Picturing Greatness*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, January 14–April 17, 1988. Photographic Archive. The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York

that she led Women Artists in Revolution (WAR), in protest against the paltry representation of women artists in the Whitney Annual. In the midst of a personal transformation from critic of Conceptual art to curator and champion of feminist art, Lippard upended her own contribution to the exhibition's catalogue, executing, instead of the conventional index she had been invited to author, an essentially conceptual document made up of randomly generated information for each of the artists. Anarchic in spirit and use value, this index interrogated the very nature of canon formation, asking how an artist's pedigree is formed, and by whom.[14]

These disruptions unfold as a narrative post-1965, but we should also give credit to the Museum's collecting patterns and curatorial proclivities under its first director, Alfred H. Barr, Jr., which were much more adventuresome and nuanced than conventional accounts would have us believe. In addition to his canny eye and nervy acquisition of masterpieces emerging from the studios of artists of his generation, Barr included the work of self-taught artists, championed Latin American modernism, and voraciously pursued the "new," bolstered by what now seems like a radical program of deaccessioning designed to keep the Museum's holdings current and responsive to history. His desire for MoMA to be a living archive representing all the visual arts was reflected in his efforts, as early as 1939, to start a film program and the Museum's short-lived Department of Dance and Theater Design, a distant precursor of the current Department of Media and Performance Art. In short, what he envisioned was the lively telling of modernism as an integrated, multivalent narrative reflecting all of art's practitioners.

The Museum's publications program has long been able to reflect a greater internationalism and pluralism of viewpoints than its curatorial program, including such in-depth inquiries as the Studies in Modern Art series, which contains adventurous thinking and expansive research, often introducing artists before their work appears in MoMA's collection. The appearance of *Modern Women: Women Artists at The Museum of Modern Art*, thanks to a confluence of curatorial interests and enlightened patronage, provides a similar occasion for deep research as well as for serious reflection on the history of women artists, designers, photographers, architects, curators, and patrons with the institution. It celebrates the great wealth and diversity of practices by artists whose contribution to the avant-garde movements of the twentieth century has been enormous, if frequently underrecognized.

Like most major modern and contemporary art institutions, MoMA has steadily and consciously increased its acquisition of work by women artists in the postwar period, but individual curators have also been committed to single figures along the way, collecting and supporting specific women artists as they were deemed integral to broader impulses and movements of the time—Diane Arbus and street photography; Eva Hesse and Minimalism, Lee Krasner and Abstract Expressionism; Marisol and Pop—and other artists who have reached canonical status: Lygia Clark (no. 6), Louise Bourgeois, Julia Margaret Cameron, Agnes Martin, Charlotte Perriand, Mira Schendel, Agnès Varda, Walker, and many others.

6. **Lygia Clark** (Brazilian, 1920–1988). *Poetic Shelter.* 1960. Painted metal, 5 1/2 x 24 x 20 1/8" (14 x 63 x 51 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Patricia Phelps de Cisneros in honor of Milan Hughston

(What is interesting is that none of these categories were constructed in a way that sufficiently accounts for the practices of these women. Accounting for women artists in history means thinking differently about how such categories are made.) And the lacunae that inevitably emerge when a project like this book is undertaken—the vast gaps that make up what Griselda Pollock calls "the missing future"—prompt questions, both internally and from our audience, about how the institution has defined what is or is not a canonical contribution: questions of education, economic necessity, modes of editing and critical apparatus, and the very configuration of an artist's studio and practice.[15]

So how might we effect what Pollock has called "differencing of the canon?"[16] The notion of a porous art history was championed in the 1970s by a range of feminist practitioners; in ways both actual and symbolic the Museum was perceived as the gatekeeper of a tradition in need of dismantling and was not infrequently the target of their wrath. The by-now timeworn discourse around the exclusion of women artists—and feminist practice—from institutions of art and art history, fueled by Linda Nochlin's 1972 article "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?" has, up to now, produced a legacy of a kind of feminist infiltration, of the disruptions I have described above. In 1972, the same year as Nochlin's call to arms, Mary Beth Edelson created a collage titled *Some Living American Women Artists* (no. 7), which was reproduced as the first of a series of five posters dedicated to presenting "women artists as the grand subject."[17] Edelson's crude cut-and-pasted version of Leonardo da Vinci's *The Last Supper* (1495–98) is both aggressive and humorous, as well as a simple template for the way women artists in the 1970s envisioned a virtual takeover of the systems of representation and patronage. This image of historical recovery and reverence remains one of the iconic images of the feminist art movement; Edelson's group of five collages now resides in MoMA's collection and might still be seen as emblematic of a desire for a different art-historical narrative.

Histories and collections exist as a sum of the exclusions, inclusions, particularities, and vagaries of production, acquisition, installation; contrary to Barr's notion of a museum devoted to works in all mediums, MoMA's insistence on medium specificity in the acquisition, care, and exhibition of its collections has led, particularly since the 1970s, to a spatialized and perhaps monomorphic version of art history.[18] Intended in part to correct this Balkanization of the collections by expanding the Museum's real estate, Yoshio Taniguchi's design for the Museum's sixth and most substantial renovation, completed in 2004, includes twenty thousand square feet of grand gallery space devoted to the contemporary collections. Although it is more difficult to represent women practitioners from earlier periods in MoMA's collection—they just aren't there in the same numbers—there has been a significant expansion in the contemporary period not only of the categories of art and artists but also of curatorial reach. Thinking through art as it has unfolded after 1970 has been at the heart of the Museum's mission to reshuffle the twentieth-century narrative it was so instrumental in establishing.

The subtext of many of the essays in *Modern Women* is the question of how movements, narratives, and finally museum galleries and exhibitions are transformed when gender is introduced as a category. Helen Molesworth's text at the end of this book, "How to Install Art as a Feminist," imagines a gallery configuration in which the linkages and allegiances between works and artists might be reconsidered in unexpected ways, activating new readings and unfixing categories. How does adding Bourgeois, Frida Kahlo, or Alina Szapocznikow to MoMA's galleries inflect the presentation of Surrealism and the erotic object? Does the personal imagery of Bourgeois's childhood night visions, Kahlo's working through her bodily trauma in exquisite portraits of pain and survival, or

7. Mary Beth Edelson (American, born 1935). *Some Living American Women Artists.* 1972. Cut-and-pasted gelatin silver prints with crayon and transfer type on printed paper with typewriting on cut-and-taped paper, 28 1/4 x 43" (71.8 x 109.2 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchased with funds provided by Agnes Gund and gift of John Berggruen (by exchange)

8. **Alina Szapocznikow** (Polish, 1926–1973). *Untitled.* 1970–71. Ink on paper, 28 1/4 x 22 1/4" (71.8 x 56.5 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchased with funds provided by the Rendl Endowment for Slavic Art

9. **Marina Abramović** (Yugoslav, born 1946). *Portrait with Flowers*. 2009. Gelatin silver print, dimensions unknown. Collection the artist

Szapocznikow's visceral expression of the unspeakable horrors of war (no. 8) in some way contaminate the version of the bodily as represented by their male peers? Might Hannah Wilke's transgressive video *Hannah Wilke Through the Large Glass* (1976, no. 10), a response to Duchamp's *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even (The Large Glass)* (1915–23), initiate new thinking about a trajectory of modernism that situates the legacy of Duchamp as powerfully as that of Pablo Picasso, whose patrimony looms so large at MoMA but whose relevance to a younger generation of artists is less definitive? How does the rendering of the female body by an artist like Marlene Dumas change our understanding of Willem de Kooning, an artist with whom she shares an intense vision of icons of the feminine? How does Atsuko Tanaka's, Schendel's, or Martin's deeply subjective Minimalism rupture the apparent geometries they each represent? Does the physical presence of Marina Abramović (no. 9), supplanting Barnett Newman's iconic obelisk in MoMA's cavernous atrium in her 2010 retrospective, radically alter the configuration of the female subject within the body of the Museum? Seen through the lens of women artists, the history of modern art begins to look very different.

The artist Ulrike Müller has spoken of a "feminist continuum" and "simultaneities and continuities," networks of discourse that extend into the past and the future of art and, I would argue, curatorial practice.[19] In addition to her individual studio practice, Müller works with the queer feminist collective LTTR, which engages a much broader audience in direct, often aggressive, address. In the spirit of propagating such networks within the frame of a historical exhibition, LTTR staged a series of events in conjunction with *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution*, when it was on view at P.S.1 in 2007, meant to respond to the exhibition's omissions and inclusions, creating a

10. **Hannah Wilke** (American, 1940–1993). *Hannah Wilke Through the Large Glass.* 1976. 16mm film transferred to video (color, silent), 10 min. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired through the generosity of Courtney Plummer

cross-generational dialogue and interrogating the curatorial framework in productive ways (no. 14).

Such a notion of community and cross-generational discourse is suggested in various configurations in texts throughout this book. Early in the twentieth century, Sally Stein writes, a constellation of women photographers came together and drifted apart in response to the economic realities of being female practitioners in a still-emerging medium. In "Women on Paper," Carol Armstrong imagines a network of women joined through their selection of a medium which itself bears the history of the peripheral or overlooked. Both Starr Figura's "Women Artists and the Russian Avant-garde Book, 1912–1934" and T'ai Smith's "A Collective and Its Individuals: The Bauhaus and Its Women" describe how the activities and configurations of women artists paralleled broader group tendencies within the avant-gardes with which they were aligned. Gretchen Wagner describes the flourishing of women artists in the pages of such alternative formats as zines and underground publishing networks in "Riot on the Page: Thirty Years of Zines by Women." And in her introduction to this volume, Aruna D'Souza looks at the oppositional or marginal practices that have long been the purview of women artists and the possibility of those practices finding a place in the institution.

Modern Women is the third part of a project that began in 2005, when the personal politics of philanthropist and artist Sarah Peter inspired her to approach MoMA with the idea of doing something for women. What was launched as a collection-based research initiative, which will continue into the future, also generated a series of symposia and panels over the past three years, as well as this book, around which a series of collection installations highlighting the work of women artists will take place.

As the first public part of this initiative, MoMA hosted "The Feminist Future" in 2007, a two-day symposium on women and gender attended by a record-breaking audience. In her keynote remarks Lippard wryly noted the sheer numbers of the mostly female attendees: "Well, this is quite a turnout for an 'ism,' especially in a museum not notorious for its historical support of women."[20] (In the art press and critical community the year 2007 was roundly declared the year of feminism; in "Feminist Art Finally Takes Center Stage," an article on the symposium and its reception, *New York Times* critic Holland Cotter wrote, "The event itself was an unofficial curtain-raiser for what is shaping up as a watershed year for the exhibition—and institutionalization, skeptics say—of feminist art.")[21] Although MoMA had not staked any claim on feminist discourse, there was clearly the desire in the room for the institution to come to the table, and no symposium or educational event in the Museum's history, before or since, has drawn as big a crowd of committed participants.[22] International in scope, the series of panels included art historians, writers, critics, and artists, to "[examine] ways in which gender is addressed by artists, museums, and the academy, and its future role in art practice and scholarship."[23]

The event and its organizers straddled the dual responsibility of accountability to the field and its particular historical relationship with MoMA—why, for example had such figures as Lippard or Pollock never before been invited to speak at MoMA on any subject?—and the clear mandate to move the discussion forward. The audience's reaction and response ranged from nostalgic to angry, from appreciative to critically engaged.[24] Along with the public airing of updated scholarship, a critical mass of frustration was directed at an institution seen to have largely omitted the history of half the population in its recounting of the twentieth century, an anger that D'Souza has argued, "is argument and an insistence on the conflicts embedded in the contemporary project of feminism."[25] The most dynamic contingent was a younger generation of art historians and students who were simultaneously awed—by the presence of the grandes dames in their midst and the fact of this discussion taking place in the hallowed halls of MoMA—and utterly aware of the urgent need to negotiate new models of art and activism.

What was also noteworthy was a palpable ambivalence about being invited into the belly of the beast and allowing

11. **Marlene Dumas** (South African, born 1953). *Jen.* 2005. Oil on canvas, 43 3/8 x 51 1/4" (110.2 x 130.2 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Fractional and promised gift of Marie-Josée and Henry R. Kravis

12. Louise Bourgeois inside *Articulated Lair* (1986) in her Dean Street studio, Brooklyn, 1986. Photograph by Peter Bellamy

13. View of the exhibition *Here Is Every. Four Decades of Contemporary Art*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, September 9, 2008–March 23, 2009. Photographic Archive. The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York

their narratives and their work to be historicized. The audience, rightly characterized by critic Geeta Kapur in her panel remarks as an exclusive reunion of mostly white second-generation feminists, was clearly glimpsing the kind of acceptance that many of them had spent careers and lifetimes constructing resistance against. Miwon Kwon has noted that "not all exclusions are bad. They're not only inevitable, but they're also necessary in order to define positions that can then legitimately engage in discourse," but a history of exclusions alone does not do the reconstructive work essential to recalibrating the history of modernism and twentieth-century art, the differencing and re-visioning, the "feminist effect" Pollock persuasively argues for in her introductory text to this volume.[26]

This volume coincides with a broader institutional conversation about representation and the social and political conditions of art-making at the end of the twentieth century. Key changes in how the Museum's collection is installed have begun to take place. In 2008 Anne Umland, a curator in the Department of Painting and Sculpture, organized *What Is Painting?* an exhibition of works from the collection in which works by women artists represented a full one-third of the works on view. But Umland's notion of interrogating the rubric of painting's structure and language, the very orthodoxy on which MoMA's history and acclaim are so heavily based, was itself provocative and deconstructive, exposing collecting histories and patterns of emphasis and depth (Jasper Johns, Roy Lichtenstein, Marcel Broodthaers , Dumas [no. 11]) or omission (Lee Bontecou, Tanaka, Lee Lozano, John Baldessari—all artists whose reception has been late in their careers or otherwise achieved outside the art economies of New York and the United States). The exhibition's title, taken from a Baldessari painting of the same name, reflected a new openness to a structural and deeply theoretical questioning of the practice of painting itself.

Since 2008 Ann Temkin, the first female chief curator of the Department of Painting and Sculpture, has been consistently rotating the paintings galleries on the Museum's fourth and fifth floors to include women and artists working from different cultural positions. In a truly feminist approach to this kind of reworking of the historical narrative(s) of modernism, these rotations frequently include not only Hesse, Bourgeois, Wilke (no. 11), and Kahlo but also lesser-known and non-Western artists. *Bauhaus 1919–1933: Workshops for Modernity*, a 2009–10 exhibition organized by Barry Bergdoll and Leah Dickerman, foregrounded the role of women in conceptualizing and putting into practice the collective workshop structure.

Here Is Every. Four Decades of Contemporary Art, an installation of the contemporary galleries that I organized in 2008, enabled me to present a version of post-1968 history in the contemporary galleries in which all kinds of questions were raised, including what the gaps were in MoMA's collection from these four decades and how possible it would be to represent the contribution of women artists during this period. The Museum's dearth of painting and sculpture by women from the 1960s and '70s, when women artists began to increase in number and visibility, reflects the ignorance of the time, but video, performance, and photography are important exceptions to that rule, each of them mediums whose histories occupied the margins of the art world and where women therefore found easy access. One of the most important works from that era, Yvonne Rainer's *Trio A* (1966, page 419, no. 5), is a danced proposal for a reorganization of the hierarchies of the body, gesture, and the space of the gallery. Seen in this context, it informed every other object in the room, giving a kinesthetic inflection to Bruce Nauman's *Cones Cojones* (1973–75), foregrounding in a new way the bodily engagement with form and space of Hélio Oiticica's *Box Bolide 12 'archeologic'* (1964–65), a hieroglyphic grouping of wall sculptures by Richard Tuttle, and a monumental wooden sculpture by Alice Aycock (no. 13). Setting history in motion through the lens of the contemporary—this is the feminist present.

When the idea for this publication was first conceived in 2004, its top priority was to highlight MoMA's deep holdings of work by women. It became clear, however, that

it would not be possible to make the book a comprehensive reference for the canonical artists—there are simply too many of them—nor was it desirable to simply reproduce what we already knew. We began to ask ourselves how we would make a book that celebrated the Museum's incomparable collection and its commitment to certain key figures while at the same time highlighting lesser-known figures and investigating the gaps and lacunae, and, in formulating what such a book might look like, we discovered a range of intellectual responses to feminist criticism within the institution's curatorial ranks, a tension between the considerable contributions of feminist thought and criticism and a curatorial approach that foregrounds a work's formal qualities or a maker's biographical profile apart from the cultural context in which it was made or received.

Thus this anthology is an amalgam of critical approaches—new information and research applied to canonical and lesser-known artists; arguments contributing to the lively discourse around gender and the production of meaning in contemporary art—in addition to a transparent, if imperfect, history of key female figures at MoMA.[27] We formulated it along the lines of an archival model of history, envisioning an expository publication that would put a lot of new information into the field, articulating strands of practice by women working alongside male colleagues and including varied, although largely Euro-American, cultural perspectives. The historical or cultural exclusions that are evident here parallel those that exist throughout the collection. The texts represent a range of training, writing styles, and approaches to gender-based or feminist strategies. This contestation reflects a larger moment of change in art history, part of the rubric and logic and argument of the book. Making explicit the institution's own often messy relationship with modern art by modern women, it is a core sample of current institutional thinking about how to account for and construct a richer history of a past viewed through the lens of a contemporary feminist moment.

The publication of this book feels like both a luxury and a subversive act. How at this postfeminist, post–identity politics moment can we justify a publication that separates out a group of artists based solely on gender? Or, for that matter, any category? What this book argues for is not a disinterested narrative or objective history but, rather, through a focus on deep scholarship and an archival impulse to bring material to light, a more complicated reading of the twentieth century and understanding of MoMA's collection. Art historian Marsha Meskimmon has said that "for subjects and materials which have been marginalized by mainstream, historical meta-narrative, reconceiving histories is a political as well as scholarly act," and in its sheer mass and ambition this publication is such an act.[28]

As a curator who has by accident and by design staked a claim in the histories of women artists, I am often asked why we need such a project anymore. Perhaps we don't. As of this writing, MoMA is soon to open a retrospective of Abramović's career, and her own intervention in and reconstruction of the history of performance

14. LTTR performance at *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution*, P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, Long Island City, New York, February 23, 2008

art, a medium to which she has contributed so richly, has overhauled current thinking about the discipline of performance itself. Her *Seven Easy Pieces*, the restaging of landmark performance works at the Guggenheim Museum in 2005, stands not only as one of the most important works of the last thirty years but also as an example of historical community. Far from being finished with these issues (of women, of gender, of feminism), whatever that might mean, the making of such a publication and series of projects is part of the "feminist continuum" and about not "protesting what we don't want but performing what we do want."[29] At some level the feminist present is about more and different information and about creating a space and time for looking and for changing the way we see.

1. Julia Kristeva, epigraph for Anne-Marie Sauzeau-Boetti's influential text "Negative Capability as Practice in Women's Art," *Studio International* 191, no. 979 (January–February 1976): 24–29.
2. Sauzeau-Boetti, "Negative Capability as Practice in Women's Art," p. 25.
3. "I had not a dispute but a disquisition with [Charles Wentworth] Dilke, on various subjects; several things dovetailed in my mind, & at once it struck me, what quality went to form a Man of Achievement especially in literature & which Shakespeare possessed so enormously—I mean Negative Capability, that is when man is capable of being in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts without any irritable reaching after fact & reason." John Keats, letter to his brother, December 22, 1817; reprinted in *Complete Poems and Selected Letters of John Keats*, ed. Edward Hirsch (New York: Modern Library Classics, 2001), p. 30. This idea of negative capability or the iterative space of ambivalence is linked to other important twentieth-century thinkers, including Fredric Jameson, W. E. B. Du Bois (on negative performativity), Homi Bhabha (on negative politics), Richard Shiff (on doubt), and bell hooks, whose notion of the productive space of the margin influenced a generation of artists in the 1990s.
4. Sauzeau-Boetti, "Negative Capability as Practice in Women's Art," p. 25.
5. Ibid. I thank Susan Hiller for bringing this article to my attention in 2005.
6. See Kristine Stiles, "Museum of Modern [F]art," in Alexandra Munroe, *Yes, Yoko Ono* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2000), p. 195.
7. Yoko Ono, conversation with the author, January 21, 2010.
8. Kirk Varnedoe, foreword to *Artist's Choice: Elizabeth Murray: Modern Women*, exhibition brochure (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1995), n.p.
9. Elizabeth Murray, introduction to ibid.
10. Varnedoe, in ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. Other important moments in MoMA's history include the indelible image of Yayoi Kusama's spontaneous performance *But Is It Art?* (1969, no. 2), which disrupted the Museum's sculpture garden with nude performers cavorting with Aristide Maillol's *The River* (not, as the *Daily News* named it, *Girl Washing Her Hair)* in one of the pools, and, on the curatorial side, Lynn Zelevansky's prescient 1994 exhibition *Sense and Sensibility: Women Artists and Minimalism in the Nineties* (no. 4), which summarized an important feminist trajectory of Post-Minimalist sculpture. This exhibition of work by young women artists was both timely and noteworthy for its placement in the Museum's basement galleries.
13. Barbara Kruger, wall text for *Picturing Greatness*. Curatorial Exhibition Files, Exh. #1472. The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York.
14. Lucy R. Lippard, "Absentee Information And Or Criticism," in Kynaston L. McShine, *Information* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1970), pp. 74–81.
15. See Griselda Pollock's essay in this volume, "The Missing Future: MoMA and Modern Women."
16. In her groundbreaking book of the same name, Pollock argued for dismantling the canon to include nonmasculinist subjectivities. Pollock, *Differencing the Canon: Feminist Desire and the Writing of Art's Histories* (London: Routledge, 1999).
17. Mary Beth Edelson, quoted in Linda Theung, "Mary Beth Edelson," in Cornelia Butler and Lisa Gabrielle Mark, eds., *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution* (Los Angeles: The Museum of Contemporary Art; Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2007), p. 232.
18. On MoMA's installation history, see Carol Duncan and Alan Wallach, "The Museum of Modern Art as Late Capitalist Ritual: An Iconographic Analysis," *Marxist Perspectives* 1, no. 4 (Winter 1978): 28–51; and Mary Anne Staniszewski, *The Power of Display: A History of Exhibition Installations at The Museum of Modern Art* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1998).
19. Ulrike Müller, in Rosalyn Deutsche, Aruna D'Souza, Miwon Kwon, Müller, Mignon Nixon, and Senam Okudzeto, "Feminist Time: A Conversation," *Grey Room* 31 (Spring 2008): 36.
20. Lippard, quoted in Holland Cotter, "Feminist Art Finally Takes Center Stage," *New York Times*, January 29, 2007.
21. Ibid.
22. Video of the "The Feminist Future" on MoMA's Web site, www.moma.org.
23. Press release for "The Feminist Future," The Museum of Modern Art, New York, January 18, 2007.
24. See D'Souza's essay in this volume, "'Float the Boat!': Finding a Place for Feminism in the Museum."
25. D'Souza, in "Feminist Time," p. 47. Kwon's response is important to note: "Expressions at anger aren't necessarily productive. Anger can be a great motivator, of course, but it's an emotion, not an argument."
26. Kwon, in ibid., p. 35.
27. Among the few similar publications connected to institutional collections are *The Louise Noun Collection: Art by Women* (Iowa City: The University of Iowa Museum of Art, 1990); *elles@centrepompidou: Artistes femmes dans la collection du Musée national d'Art moderne, Centre de création industrielle* (Paris: Éditions du Centre Pompidou, 2009); and Rhea Anastas and Micheal Brenson, eds., *Witness to Her Art* (Annandale-on-Hudson, N.Y.: Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College, 2006). In the cases of the collections of Marieluise Hessel (at Bard) and Louise Noun, the works became part of larger museum collections.
28. Marsha Meskimmon, "Introduction," in *Women Making Art: History, Subjectivity, Aesthetics* (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 63.
29. Emily Roysdon, quoted in Eva Egermann and Katharina Morawek, "Be a Bossy Bottom!" *Malmoe*, July 9, 2007, www.malmoe.org/artikel/tanzen/1445; quoted by Müller in "Feminist Time," p. 63.

THE MISSING FUTURE: MoMA AND MODERN WOMEN / GRISELDA POLLOCK

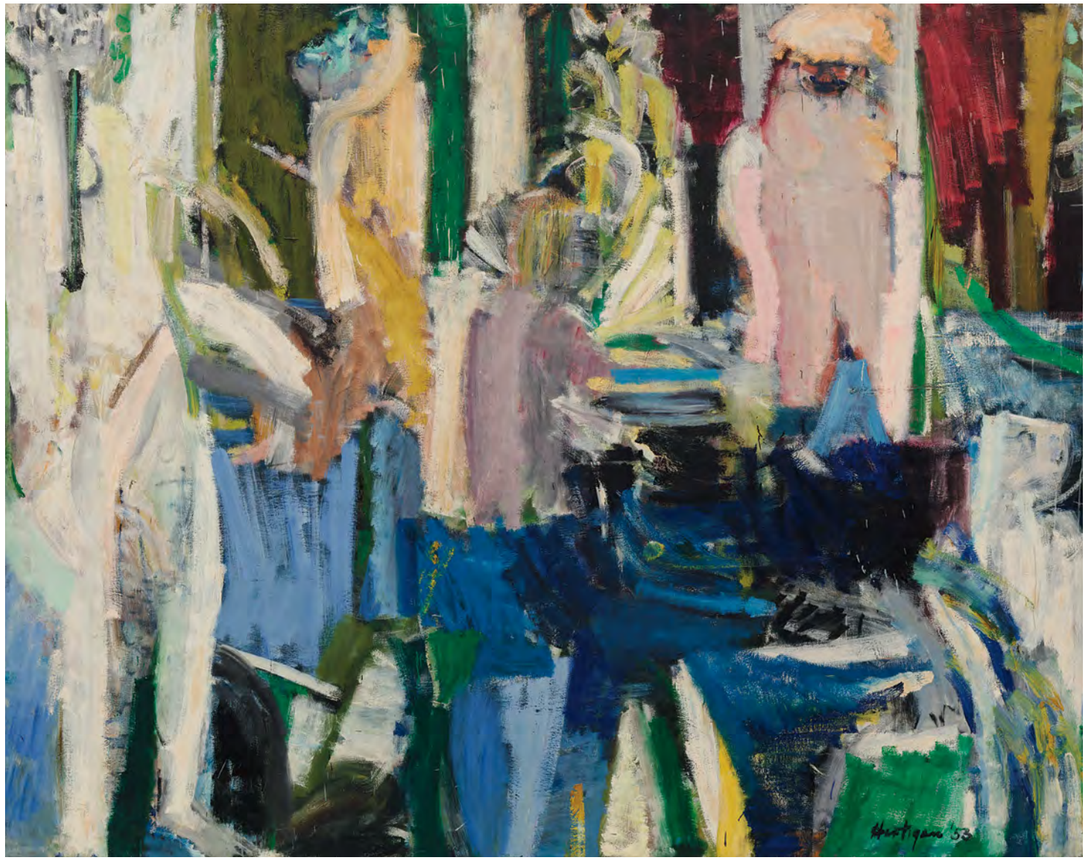
Among the many reasons women took to the streets in 1970 was, perhaps surprisingly, art. Angry artists, critics, curators, and art historians stomped militantly around The Museum of Modern Art, protesting the unrepresentative picture of the modern century perpetuated by institutions that appeared to exhibit only the work of men, and thus to educate their ever-expanding publics in a half-truth about the nature of art and modernity, one that would continue to "disappear" contemporary women artists. That same year, at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, curator Henry Geldzahler showed forty-three artists in the exhibition *New York Painting and Sculpture, 1940–1970*. Only one was a woman. Helen Frankenthaler (no. 2) was rightly included, but Nell Blaine, Elaine de Kooning, Grace Hartigan (no. 3), Lee Krasner, Joan Mitchell (no. 1), and Louise Nevelson (no. 4)—to name just a few—were not. If artists who were women were still being kept from public knowledge, what would happen if the institutions and their selective stories were not challenged in the name of both the erased past and the missing future?

WOMEN FOUND THE MUSEUMS

The history of museums, taste, and the collecting of modern art in the United States owes much to influential women amateurs. The Metropolitan Museum of Art's marvelous collections of later-nineteenth-century French art are based in Louisine Havemeyer's remarkable holdings, astutely assembled under the thoughtful guidance of American painter Mary Cassatt.[1] The involvement

1. **Joan Mitchell** (American, 1925–1992). *Ladybug*. 1957. Oil on canvas, 6' 5 7/8" x 9' (197.9 x 274 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchase

2. **Helen Frankenthaler** (American, born 1928). *Jacob's Ladder*. 1957. Oil on unprimed canvas, 9' 5 3/8" x 69 3/8" (287.9 x 177.5 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Hyman N. Glickstein



3. **Grace Hartigan** (American, 1922–2008). *River Bathers*. 1953. Oil on canvas, 69 3/8" x 7' 4 3/4" (176.2 x 225.5 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Given anonymously

of wealthy women in culturally enriching activities was an extension of their widespread nineteenth-century role in philanthropy and social service.[2] Collecting and museum building were, furthermore, social strategies and cultural mechanisms for legitimating the very visible forms of social difference and privilege created by both old and new wealth in the modern industrial era.[3] As modernist critic Clement Greenberg, in his most left-wing moment, astutely pointed out in 1939, the artistic avant-garde, while attempting to escape ideological subservience to the new bourgeoisie by its self-imposed social exile, was nonetheless inevitably, and inescapably, tied to the representatives of social and economic power by "an umbilical cord of gold."[4] Without the financial resources of those adventurous and progressive sections of the new moneyed class, the independent enterprise of individualist, avant-gardist art-making could not have been sustained. Modernism and modern social processes were thus inextricably, if sometimes contradictorily, aligned. They crossed most visibly in the formation of The Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1929.

Legend has it that on a journey to Egypt in the winter of 1928–29, Abby Aldrich Rockefeller met modernist art collector Lillie P. Bliss. They discussed the project for a museum of modern art. On her return crossing Rockefeller traveled with Mary Quinn Sullivan, who became the third key woman player in the founding of The Museum of Modern Art, which opened in November 1929.[5] In her detailed historical account of the varied intellectual origins of the Museum, Sybil Kantor revises the narrative by reminding us that the creation of a museum dedicated to modern art was already being discussed in New York during the 1920s.[6] Conditions for such an initiative had been set by the first major exhibition of modern art in New York: the Armory Show in 1913, organized in part by Arthur B. Davies, who also advised Bliss on her pioneering collection of modern art (later donated to MoMA). Kantor also points to the impact of the patronage of modern art by the collector John Quinn, another organizer of the Armory Show, whose substantial collection was put up for auction in New York in 1926 and was thus made visible, for a brief moment, to the small but influential groups of collectors, artists, and emerging curators interested in modern art, for whom the idea of a more permanent display was thus stimulated. (Quinn was an indefatigable collector and patron of Gwen John. In 1971 his sister gave John's *Girl Reading at a Window* [1911, no. 5] to the Museum.)

In addition, Kantor identifies the important work of Katherine Dreier (no. 6), who with Marcel Duchamp and Man Ray founded the Société Anonyme in 1920, an experimental project they called a Museum of Modern Art. The group fostered the exhibiting, collecting, and teaching of European and American modernist art, and produced a major show at the Brooklyn Museum in 1926 (no. 7).[7] As yet another factor behind the founding of MoMA, Kantor notes Museum Work and Museum Problems, an innovative curatorial program at Harvard University directed by Paul Sachs. MoMA's first director, Alfred H. Barr, Jr., participated in the course in 1924–25, encountering, as would other influential museum curators after him, Sachs's method of connoisseurship, which itself was based in that of Bernard Berenson.

Historical events are always the effect of many determinations and relations rather than the product of individual initiatives. It is, however, the very contradiction between the undoubtedly influential role of certain women in founding and shaping MoMA and the vision of modern art that the Museum disseminated—which radically *disappeared* the equally vital and visible role of women in *making* that modernist art, as artists—that we have to explore and reframe.

4. Louise Nevelson (American, 1899–1988). *Sky Cathedral*. 1958. Painted wood, 11' 3 1/2" x 10' 1/4" x 18" (343.9 x 305.4 x 45.7 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Ben Mildwoff

Opposite:
5. Gwen John (British, 1876–1939). *Girl Reading at a Window*. 1911. Oil on canvas, 16 1/8 x 10" (40.9 x 25.3 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Mary Anderson Conroy Bequest in memory of her mother, Julia Quinn Anderson

6. Katherine S. Dreier (American, 1877–1952). *Abstract Portrait of Marcel Duchamp*. 1918. Oil on canvas, 18 x 32" (45.7 x 81.3 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund

At the heart of MoMA's history lies a profound paradox. The 1920s were a self-consciously *modern* moment, in which women from all walks of life and social classes and many countries were, for the first time in history, actively shaping societies and making democratizing changes. Yet MoMA created a vision of modern art that effectively excluded the new and, importantly, *modern* participation of women.

In the film and book *Paris Was a Woman* (1995), Greta Schiller and Andrea Weiss recovered a rich archive of photographic and filmed footage that once again revealed the vitality of Paris from 1900 to 1940 as the center of a cultural revolution *for* and *by* women.[8] By now, a mass of scholarship firmly disproves the idea that there were no women modernists. There were—in numbers. It is not that their work lacked quality, relevance, originality, or importance. Modernist women were creating and innovating alongside, and often in partnership with, their male colleagues, husbands, lovers, rivals. It is not that their work was unexhibited, unreviewed, unavailable to be collected through dealers. In the United States, advanced women artists were active in forming avant-garde artistic organizations such as the American Abstract Artists. They participated in groups, journals, and events, and were present in every aesthetic move and major "movement," including Dada and Surrealism, that MoMA would chart as modernism.

Modernist consciousness was fundamentally engaged with the changing social roles, economic activity, public visibility, and cultural articulation of women in urban society at the levels of both lived processes and cultural representation. So how can we account for the counterintuitive fact that despite every form of evidence to the contrary, and despite everything that made the *modernization of gender roles* fundamental to modernity itself, the dominant vision of modern art created by the most influential American museum systematically failed to register the intensely visible artistic participation of women in making modernism modern? And why has it taken so long for this problem to be addressed and redressed?

This irony needs to be further underlined. It is not an incidental or trivial fact. We cannot dismiss it as the mere residue of older attitudes, or of embedded sexist prejudices that would eventually be swept away with natural liberalization. In fact, research since 1970 into the history of women in the arts has yielded incontrovertible evidence of a continuous history of women participating in, and being acknowledged for, art-making throughout the centuries and cultures, culminating in their massive presence both in the professional art world by the end of the nineteenth century and in avant-garde groupings from the beginning of the twentieth century. Women studied and exhibited at salons and academies. They founded independent organizations, won prizes, challenged limitations, took the lead in projects. "The Independents," as Cassatt insisted on calling the artists we know better as Impressionists, not only included four women in their core group of ten or so but were financially and aesthetically supported by them. One of these highly intelligent and creative women, Berthe Morisot, was hailed by French critic Claude Roger-Marx as perhaps "the only true Impressionist."[9] By the dawning of the twentieth century, and notably after the long-fought campaigns for political emancipation had borne fruit and a world war had proved women's resilience and adaptability to hard industrial labor, women clearly felt rising confidence in their ability to assume an equal role in making modern society and its cultures, a potential that was also increasingly registered by the cinema industry in its representations of women at work and enjoying social and personal agency.

If the exemplary museum dedicated to curating, preserving, and disseminating distinctively modernist cultural forms in all their manifestations, from painting to cinema, architecture to design, photography to graphics, systematically produced and maintains an incomplete (universalizing, masculinist, Eurocentric) picture of its subject, we have to ask: How could this have happened? What made that extraordinary selectivity possible at the very moment when living reality delivered evidence of new diversity? What aspects of modernist culture itself have been suppressed in the manner in which the history of modernism has been curated in museums such as MoMA? Of what is it symptomatic that we can now work positively to transform for the future?

Two answers to my first question about selectivity spring to mind and must be disposed of swiftly. The first is good old-fashioned sexist prejudice against women per se. But that is hardly interesting. Selectivity is often presented as a matter of self-evident quality. It is possible that those seeking generously to create a museum of modern culture simply chose the best, *as they saw it*. It seems, problematically however, that the best happened to be more or less created by men, and white men at that, with little consideration of sexualities. Without denying

7. International Exhibition of Modern Art: Arranged by the Société Anonyme for the Brooklyn Museum, November–December 1926, exhibition catalogue with cover illustration composed by Katherine S. Dreier and Constantin Aladjalov. Katherine S. Dreier Papers/Société Anonyme Archive, Yale Collection of American Literature, The Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library

the immense creativity of those distinguished men selected by MoMA as the representatives of major modernist art and culture, we cannot accept that women somehow are just less creative than men, less intelligent, less innovative, less thoughtful, less important articulators of modern human experience. It is unhistorical. It would, moreover, be completely unmodernist to do so.

MODERNIZATION, MODERNITY, AND MODERNISM

A museum of modern art negotiates three interconnecting terms. "Modernization" refers to the radical transformation of economic, social, and political processes through industrialization and urbanization; "modernity" refers to the cultural consciousness emerging in this epochal change that reshaped the world; and "modernism" is the cultural negotiation and critical representation of this new consciousness. The rights of "man" [*sic*] were boldly declared but just as quickly restricted and betrayed. The inclusion of women and of working-class and nonwhite men had to be struggled for again and again. Traditional forms of social authority were contested by revolution, and new, dynamic urban-industrial economies were formed, generating cities with their urban subjectivities and all the attendant issues of labor, consumption, and sexuality. Campaigns against enslavement, for workers' rights, and for the emancipation of black men and all women typify modernizing society. From the moment British writer Mary Wollstonecraft wrote "A Vindication of the Rights of Women" in 1792 to the meetings of the first American feminists at Seneca Falls in 1848 and on to the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment, which gave all American women the vote on equal terms with men, in 1919 (in Britain this occurred in 1928), gender was an important feature of and issue for modernity. Gender, in fact, became a central symbolic axis of power and meaning as caste and estate waned and the possibility of change became fundamental to modernizing societies.

The nineteenth-century women's movements were testament to a newly created consciousness of the collective experience of women *as women* in a world that was restricting what they could and could not do or be in clear, gendered, and gendering terms. Alfred Tennyson's poem "The Princess" (1847) declared starkly:

> Man for the field and woman for the hearth:
> Man for the sword and for the needle she:
> Man with the head and woman with the heart:
> Man to command and woman to obey:
> All else confusion.[10]

Public and private spheres were gendered masculine and feminine, respectively. Changes in and challenges to these concepts and the relations of gender generated conservative ideologies that moralized motherhood and privatized domesticity as much as incited feminist demands for women's equal rights to education, economic independence, sexual freedom, and self-determination. In various forms—political, social, and cultural—the questions of sex, sexuality, and, above all, the meanings of gender as a power relation run like brightly colored thread through modern societies and agitate all forms of their culture; they are still unfinished business to this day.

The anxieties created by destabilizing traditional relations between the sexes and exploring new terms for the experience of gender across the new cities—public and private spaces, workplaces and entertainment sites—constituted a vital theme in modernist culture that was manifested in visual art, literature, opera, dance, poetry, theater, and film.

Yet literary theorist Rita Felski has posed the question: "What is the gender of Modernity?"[11] Can a historical period have a gender? No. Felski argues that the selective and self-interested representations that scholars have made of modernity have created a gendered orientation. Thus the exemplary figures of modernity—Faust, Karl Marx, Gustave Flaubert, Charles Baudelaire, and Pablo Picasso, for instance—render masculine experience typical, reducing the complexity and ambivalence of cultural history as it struggled with change and the diversity of resulting possibilities. We are taught to understand modernity's gender politics through the crass opposition between the *flâneur* (a figure of masculine sexual freedom and intellectual mobility, identified since Baudelaire with the image of the modern artist) and the double imaging of woman as prostitute (a sexual object) or hysteric (muted and/or mad, hence like the childish masses).[12] Cultural historian Andreas Huyssen has argued that authentic, serious high-modernist culture has generally been identified with masculinity and self-restraint and structurally opposed to a mass culture that is itself represented as intrinsically "feminine." This use of gender to create not only an opposition but also a hierarchy creates a problem of "the persistent gendering as feminine as that which is devalued," and vice-versa.[13] Hence, in modernist discourse the feminine becomes not one face of a multifaceted modernity but modernism's defining other: the matter, materiality, and nature that culture masters and refigures as art. To be properly modern, all traces of feminine gendering must be effaced, allowing the masculine to present itself as universal and exclusively modern. According to Huyssen: "The universalizing ascription of femininity to mass culture always depended on the very real exclusion of women from high culture and its institutions."[14] He notes:

> The deeper problem at stake here pertains to the relationship of modernism to the matrix of modernization which gave birth to it and nurtured it through its various stages. In less suggestive terms, the question is why, despite *the obvious heterogeneity of the modernist project* [emphasis mine], a certain universalizing account of the modern has been able to hold sway for so long in literary and art criticism, and why it is even today so far from being decisively displaced from its position of hegemony in cultural institutions.[15]

What has kept in place such an obviously selective, canonical, masculine version of the history of art, despite the evidence for a more complex history of modernism produced by the last forty years of critical scholarship?

To answer this question we might turn to psychoanalysis, which can shed light on why we invest in certain ways of seeing the world. Looking at art historians of his moment, Sigmund Freud asked: what do we desire from the stories of art, from the writing that so often celebrates art through the mythic figure of the artist? Freud suggests that art history combined *theological* and *narcissistic* tendencies. The story of art as a story of great men, and only men, registers a specifically masculine narcissism; primary, infantile idealization of the father gives way to, and is compensated for by, the creation of a hero, who must be like the heroizing self but also an idealization, a figure elevated above that self. As French philosopher Sarah Kofman, analyzing Freud's aesthetic theory, writes:

> The cult of the artist is ambiguous in that it consists in the worship of father and hero alike; the cult of the hero is a form of self-worship, since the hero is the first ego ideal. This attitude is religious but also narcissistic in character. . . . This religious and narcissistic attitude toward artists can be observed at all levels of cultural production. It explains for instance people's interest in biographies. . . . Yet it is essential that distance be preserved: the artist and his work must remain "taboo" in a sense. . . . Freud's unmasking of this dynamic, however, consists in showing that the theological attitude of worship toward the artist is simply the other side of narcissistic identification.[16]

Thus we can recognize the psychological investment in an art history that is shaped as a history of great men. Those who determine the history of art seek in their narratives of exceptional individuals a gratifying but heroic reflection of themselves, an ideal other, embodied in the mythicized figure of the creative artist. For a masculine establishment in control of the discourse and evaluation of art, which then shapes the whole discipline and practice in its own image, the artist cannot be a woman and perform this function. Even women entering the discipline professionally learn to become intellectual "transvestites" by identifying with masculinity, the only ideal, precisely because the devaluation of the feminine offers no compensatory gratification for those who would study artists who are women.

Not a mere reflex, *modernism* emerged as the critical site of refractions of, and reflections upon, both the articulated issues and the unspoken, even unconscious, dimensions of radically changing, heterogeneous experiences, social relations, and subjectivities in industrial, urban, colonizing, and later imperial lifeworlds. The structural transformations typical of urban-industrial-imperial *modernization* undid the former fixity of ideas about masculinity and femininity and opened up the destinies of men and women, promising and betraying the possibility of determining what those destinies could be. During modernization, some women became the pillars of powerful and conservative groupings in modern society, while others embraced the radical potential for change. As writers, poets, dancers, thinkers, designers, filmmakers, and artists, avant-gardist women embraced the opportunities offered by modernity, translating them into the newly open and experimental forms of modernist culture. Flocking to the mostly European centers of modern cultural practice, such as Paris, from Shanghai, Tokyo, Seoul, Berlin, Prague, Moscow, Bern, Worpswede, Tallin, Warsaw, Budapest, London, and New York, modernist women entered the cultural field in substantial numbers between 1900 and 1940.

What is needed is not a belated recognition of hitherto-neglected women modernists as a second tier in the great modernist pantheon. We shall need different systems or modes of seeing, assessing, and understanding art in order not to perpetuate fundamentally flawed, psychically invested, and selective versions of modernism. Modernism was never a one-sided project that (white) men simply did better. Nonetheless, whatever it was that modernist women were introducing into culture through their newly emancipated and active embrace of the modernist revolutions in aesthetics was both recognizably new and sufficiently different to have seemed "other" to the early masculinist curators. Was that because of the latter's deployment of specific, already-gender-impregnated art-historical models for categorizing modern art? Or was it because of the concomitant mythologies of the artist that already prejudged art and artist as fundamental, symbolic enunciations of idealized masculinities? Gender ideology was always-already at work in art history and its sustaining mythologies. Far from being gender-neutral and indifferent, museological art history has been a powerful inscription of a self-reflecting, narcissistic, masculinist vision in which men act and create and "woman" is positioned as other, a resource for art, a part of the world of nature, reproduction, and matter which masculine creativity strives to master and reform in an activity—artistic creation—that makes (the) man. Such processes occur at levels beyond individual consciousness, intent, or even purposeful understanding.

MODELING ART HISTORY FOR MODERN ART

So how did the manner in which people were trained to do art history and develop it into curatorial strategies produce this contradiction whose effects we are now seeking to undo? During the 1920s, when men like Barr and his highly educated Harvard colleagues, who would direct so many key American museums, were traveling to discover firsthand what was happening at the Bauhaus and in Berlin, Moscow, Paris, Prague, and Warsaw, they would have seen for themselves the widespread participation of men and women in modernism—in Constructivism, Surrealism, Dada, design, cinema, dance, art dealing, and art writing. In cases of specifically revolutionary culture, such as the first decade of the Soviet experiment, the equality of the sexes was axiomatically fostered. Spending time in Paris would have meant experiencing that, again, *Paris was a woman*.

Biographical studies of Barr's formative travels indicate that he was not unaware of women as artists; he met Lyubov Popova with Aleksandr Rodchenko in Moscow (no. 8), saw Gunta Stölzl and Anni Albers at the Bauhaus, and invited Meret Oppenheim to exhibit at MoMA in 1936 (no. 9). We also know that when solicited by Peggy Guggenheim in 1942 for names of women artists he respected, he was forthcoming, naming five "female abstract painters who on the whole seem to me as good as the best of the men in the American Abstract Artists group."[17]

Yet no department of MoMA had a one-woman exhibition until 1940, when the photographer Thérèse Bonney was thus honored.[18] The first woman painter to be featured was Josephine Joy in 1942, followed over the course of the next seven years by photographers Genevieve Naylor and Helen Levitt; industrial designer Eva Zeisel; painters Georgia O'Keeffe, Florine Stettheimer, and Loren MacIver; and textile designer and printmaker Anni Albers. Joy (no. 10) was a self-taught painter who worked for the WPA California Project, showed in Los Angeles, and was brought to the attention of New York dealer Sidney Janis, who included her in his book *They Taught Themselves* (1942). A few of her paintings were purchased and shown at MoMA, and the artist was recognized posthumously in 1981 at the Smithsonian American Art Museum, in Washington, D.C., in the exhibition *In Their Own Way*, and in 2009 in a show at the Galerie St. Etienne in New York, under Janis's title. Stettheimer, for all her interesting work, might also appear eccentric to the mainstream modernist story.

In 1936 Barr organized two definitive companion exhibitions: *Cubism and Abstract Art* and *Fantastic Art and Dada*. Barr bifurcated modern art into a rational strand, which included both geometric and organic abstraction,

8. **Lyubov Popova** (Russian, 1889–1924). *Untitled*. 1917. Cut-and-pasted colored papers on paper mounted on board, 9 3/8 x 6 1/8" (23.9 x 15.6 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Deutsch

9. **Meret Oppenheim** (Swiss, 1913–1985). *Object*. Paris, 1936. Fur-covered cup, saucer, and spoon, cup 4 3/8" (10.9 cm) diam., saucer 9 3/8" (23.7 cm) diam., spoon 8" (20.2 cm) long, overall height 2 7/8" (7.3 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchase

10. Josephine Joy (American, 1869–1948). *Prisoner's Plea*. c. 1935–37. Oil on fiberboard, 23 7/8 x 28" (60.8 x 71.0 cm). Smithsonian American Art Museum. Transfer from The Museum of Modern Art

and its antithesis: the irrational, the fantastic, the uncanny. What does it tell us that the first women to have a special exhibition of a few works were artists so completely contradicting the deeply logical, formally interrelated system created to tell the story of modern art? MoMA had acquired *The Sleeping Gypsy* (1897) by autodidact Henri Rousseau in 1939, donated by Olga Hirsch (Mrs. Simon) Guggenheim. Vincent van Gogh, before Rousseau, represents the powerful effect of an untutored but imaginative painter in the newly opened field of modernist experimentation. But both of these men now take their place in the grand narrative and are not sequestered to a special category of outsider artists, of whom—along with children, the mentally distressed, and the non-European—European modernists have been so freely appropriative.

The women who were exhibited during the 1940s were all American artists and designers, and promoting American modernism was an important part of the Museum's mission. But without a more complete international representation of women from the earlier moments of modernism on both sides of the Atlantic, such women could only appear as exceptions, tokens, outsiders by virtue of their gender. Furthermore, most of the more recent one-woman exhibitions at MoMA have originated at other institutions, including the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (Clementina, Lady Hawarden, 1990); the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (Hannah Höch, 1997); The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (Yayoi Kusama, 1998); The Art Institute of Chicago (Julia Margaret Cameron, 1999); and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago (Lee Bontecou, 2004). To gain a sense of proportion, we can note that of the 2,052 exhibitions at MoMA since 1929, ninety-five have focused on a woman (five percent) and seven have been group shows with all women exhibitors (three percent).[19]

THE WOMEN: PEGGY GUGGENHEIM AND THE ART OF THE CENTURY

Peggy Guggenheim arrived in New York in 1942, in flight from Nazi-occupied France, having had to give up her idea of creating a museum/gallery of modern art in Paris and, before that, in the later 1930s, in London. She opened the gallery Art of This Century in October 1942 at 30 West Fifty-seventh Street (no. 11) with a women-only exhibition she had organized, only her second exhibition of any kind. By 1942 it was already necessary to produce a specific exhibition to show the work of artists being ignored or marginalized by MoMA and the other institutions determining the public knowledge of modernism. Alternating between abstraction and Surrealism in the two special galleries designed by Frederick Kiesler, Guggenheim organized a range of shows that would include several exhibitions devoted to individual women (Irene Rice Pereira, Janet Sobel, Pamela Bodin, Virginia Admiral, Marjorie McKee, Sonja Sekula).[19] On January 5, 1943, Guggenheim opened *Exhibition by 31 Women*. Two years later a second show, titled simply *The Women*, was held. Poorly archived and difficult to research, these two exhibitions tell us something extremely important about the situation of modern art in New York as perceived by another woman who, enabled by family wealth, played a leading role in sustaining modern creativity. Guggenheim clearly felt that there was a need to focus attention on many women, to provide space for numbers of women artists that was otherwise unavailable in New York.

Only O'Keeffe was in a position strong enough to decline to participate. I do not imagine that feminist O'Keeffe's refusal to show as a "woman artist," as cited in the letter she wrote in response to Guggenheim's offer, was a rejection of solidarity with women.[20] It was more a recognition of the dangers of a move that, however necessary, only consolidated the sex segregation against which the modernist woman was fundamentally struggling. To be an artist and a woman is to integrate the whole of one's humanity into an open contribution to the world; to be labeled a "woman artist" is to be disqualified by sex from membership to the group known as "artists." We radically misunderstand those earlier-twentieth-century women who wanted to be considered artists if we fail to grasp Huyssen's point that femininity in any form had become antithetical to, and could entirely disqualify, authentic modernism or that, when discerned, it would become the only quality for which the work was recognized and by which it was then diminished and set apart.

Guggenheim's initiative reveals the parlous situation in which artists who were women were already placed: to be seen through the hospitality of Guggenheim's pointed initiative highlighting the necessity of bringing women into view was also to risk being labeled, like Édouard Manet at the Salon des Refusés, one hundred years before, with outsiders, to be put in a category whose gendered framing immediately undid the term "artist." Without any qualifying adjective, the term disguises its normal colonization by the masculine sex.

The idea behind *Exhibition by 31 Women* was proposed to Guggenheim by Duchamp (long associated with Dreier's more open modernism) to counter the dominant Surrealist myth of woman as only mistress, muse, or *femme-enfant*. With the exception of Guggenheim herself, the jury

11. Peggy Guggenheim seated on Frederick Kiesler's Correalist Rocker (1942) in Art of This Century gallery, New York, c. 1942. Visible are René Magritte, *The Voice of the Air* (1931); Leonor Fini, *The Shepherdesses of the Sphinx* (1941); Leonora Carrington, *The Horses of Lord Candlestick* (1938); and Joan Miró, *Dutch Interior II* (1928).

12. **Maria Helena Vieira da Silva** (French, born Portugal. 1908–1992). *Dance*. 1938. Oil and wax on canvas, 19 1/2 x 59 1/4" (49.5 x 150.5 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Alfred Flechtheim Fund

13. **Esphyr Slobodkina** (American, born Russia. 1908–2002). *Tamara Abstraction*. 1945. Oil with mixed-medium attachments on wood board, 19 1/2 x 41 1/2" (49.5 x 105.4 cm). Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Frank B. Bemis Fund and A. Shuman Collection

selecting the show was, however, composed exclusively of men, including critic James Johnson Sweeney and MoMA curator James Thrall Soby. As I mentioned before, Barr was consulted, and he offered the names of Suzy Frelinghuysen, Pereira, Esphyr Slobodkina, Gertrude Greene, and Eleanor de Laittre. Guggenheim's show included the first three of these artists as well as Djuna Barnes, Xenia Cage, Leonora Carrington, Maria Helena Vieira da Silva (no. 12), Eyre de Lanux, Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven, Leonor Fini, Valentine Hugo, Nevelson, Frida Kahlo, Buffie Johnson, Oppenheim, Hedda Sterne, Dorothea Tanning, Sophie Taeuber-Arp, Sekula, and Jacqueline Lamba.

Let me expand on just one of the artists included. Slobodkina (no. 13) was born in Siberia and during the Russian Revolution moved to China, where she studied art before emigrating to the United States in 1929. With her Russian husband, Ilya Bolotowsky, as well as Josef Albers, Hananiah Harari, and Rosalind Bengelsdorf, she founded the American Abstract Artists in 1936, an artist-run organization that still operates today. In 2008 the AAA curated a memorial exhibition for her at the Painting Center in New York. In her work she expanded a flattened abstract style by collaging various materials, including wood, plastic, metal, and disassembled typewriters. She also became renowned as an illustrator. She is represented in the collections of most major American museums, except MoMA. I have to say that until doing this research, this feminist art historian was unaware of Slobodkina, her work, or her foundation. None of the women identified by Barr in his letter to Guggenheim were collected by MoMA. Most of the artists had to wait until art historians inspired by second-wave feminism began recovering their work and restoring it to its place in the history of art.

In the summer of 1945, Guggenheim showed another thirty-three artists, including Krasner, Blaine, Louise Bourgeois, MacIver, Pereira, Charmion von Wiegand, and Sobel. MoMA would acknowledge two of these artists, but belatedly: Bourgeois in 1982, by then seventy-one years old, and Krasner in 1984, after her death. The 1982 retrospective for Bourgeois occurred thanks to the arrival of Deborah Wye, who was already engaged in a curatorial project on Bourgeois before her appointment as a curator in the Department of Prints and Illustrated Books. The posthumous exhibition devoted to the relentlessly innovative and self-renewing Krasner (no. 14) came much too late for her to figure in the archive of exhibitions contemporary with her Abstract Expressionist moment, from which future scholars will derive their sense of what was considered important and influential during the 1940s, 1950s, and on to the 1980s. Nothing can now undo the effects of such failures to create the shows *in time* that would have educated the public, generated the scholarly studies, and constituted the material records for future histories of an inclusive twentieth century.

FORMALISM, ABSTRACTION, AND THE ARTIST IN MoMA'S MODERNISM

MoMA's masculinism can be understood as a symptom of the story of modern art created by Barr. We can acknowledge Barr's brilliance in being the first to chart the apparently chaotic profusion of radical stylistic communities and intellectual coteries that composed the distinctive modernist moment of art-making between 1880 and 1935. In place of confusion, however, he reduced diversity to a coherent and logical progression toward a single telos in art: abstraction.

Some background is needed to understand Barr's project. Modernist art-making shifted from the nineteenth-century practices of official, often centralized, state-organized or -sponsored salons or academies to being created and sustained by independent, private enterprise—what has been named "the dealer-critic system."[21] Non-centralized innovation offered many new spaces and generated diversity rather than conformity in art practice. During the same period (1870–1920), the academic

14. Lee Krasner (American, 1908–1984). *Gaea*. 1966. Oil on canvas, 69" x 10' 5 1/2" (175.3 x 318.8 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Kay Sage Tanguy Fund

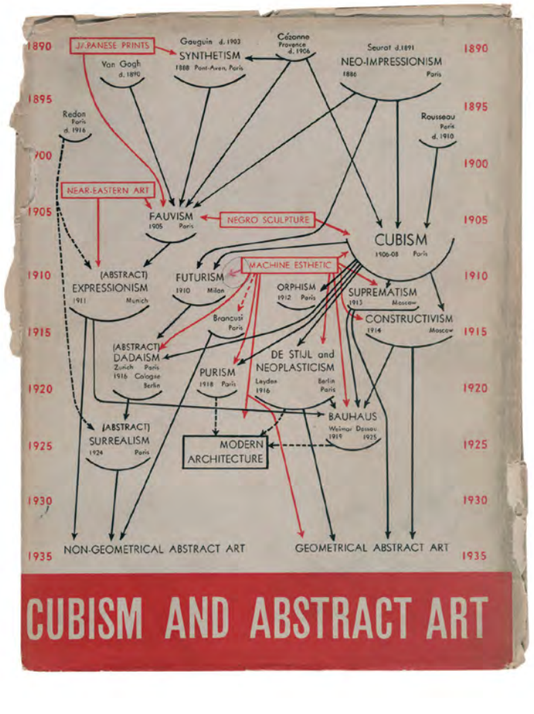
discipline of art history developed rapidly from its initial nineteenth-century foundations in the German university, swiftly taking root in the United States in the midcentury when the first university chairs in art history were granted. The major schools of art history sought to establish methods for studying visual culture. These were dominated by concepts of art as an intelligible succession of styles placed within national cultures subject to chronological periodization. Thus around 1929, when MoMA was founded, modernist art's *diversification* encountered art-historical *systematization*; the latter tamed the former into the story MoMA and all other modern museums and art-history textbooks have subsequently told.

We now know that the many trajectories within modern, and certainly postmodern, art have made Barr's assumption that art inevitably progresses toward abstraction untenable. If art was moving inexorably toward abstraction and losing figuration as a mirror of the human, the cult of the artist emerged as compensation. The artist, even while making abstract art according to geometric or organic principles, provided modern art with human interest. The heroic modern artist was presented as an active agent in the changing of styles, as well as an entrepreneur of an independent, free-enterprise system, after art-making had been unmoored from larger structures such as ecclesiastical, state, or aristocratic patronage and government-regulated art training, rewards, and censorship. Individuation created a new concept of the artist for modern capitalist times.[22] In Barr's art-historical narrative, the concept of the artist was reshaped in mythic terms: adventurer, explorer, individualist, entrepreneur. All these terms were coded in modern culture as masculine, as were the qualities of leadership and creative authority, even while women as much as men embraced the view of the artist as a singular and free adventurer.

Barr linked his studies of systematic stylistic evolution, undertaken with Charles Morey at Princeton, with a third element to constitute his new discipline of art history: connoisseurship, which he had experienced in the museum course with Sachs at Harvard. Typically connoisseurship performs a curious combination of two apparently antagonistic elements. The first involves discerning the imprint of distinguishing artistic and figurative habits by which artworks can be attributed to a specific artist. Once a body of work has been created as an oeuvre with a single creator, a persona can be produced for that creator, which then allows for the emergence of the deeper, humanistic significance of the work, symptomatized by these formal habits. Thus the seemingly impersonal formal elements of an art object become attached to an explanatory biography of the subject of art: the artist. Hence Barr is also remembered for monographic projects, for establishing the oeuvres and artistic evolution of modernist masters Picasso and Henri Matisse.[23]

This conjunction of formalism and persona remodels both the artist and art in relation to deeper concepts of modernity itself, as it suggests that art is always going somewhere, moving on, developing from and reacting against what has been. It means that we think of modern art as driven by an inner logic. Modern art becomes an unfolding story that can be mapped as a flow chart, as Barr famously did for his important *Cubism and Abstract Art* exhibition in 1936, then translating the image—an indeed brilliant model of the relations between artists' coteries and events between 1890 and 1935 (no. 15)—into the architecture of the Museum itself: a chain of rooms experienced by the visitor as both a pedagogical passage and a spiritual adventure. Here artworks become elements of a story, like sentences in a book or shots in a film.

Such combinations may in fact suggest important, formal relations that matter art historically. Stylistic innovation is a feature of, and undoubtedly a driving force behind, modernist art consciousness. The point, however, is that it is not the only one. Emphasizing formal relations to the exclusion of all other factors and possibilities has distorting effects. Doing so makes many evidently important aspects of the modernist enterprise in which women participated, alongside men, apart from men, and in their own voices, unthinkable, invisible, unassimilable to modern art as it was charted by Barr.



15. *Cubism and Abstract Art* exhibition catalogue, by Alfred H. Barr, Jr., with cover chart prepared by Barr (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1936). Offset, 10 1/8 x 7 3/4" (25.7 x 19.7 cm). Alfred H. Barr, Jr., Papers, 3.C.4, The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York

Look again at Barr's infamous image for *Cubism and Abstract Art*. It did confer intelligibility and dignity on what might have seemed to those not yet converted to modernism an anarchic mess, a cacophonous clamor of juvenile noise and fury signifying nothing so much as the breakdown of culture itself. Instead, Barr provided a coherence of mutual influence and expanding relations by means of which visitors could move from work to work, from room to room, and *see* all of it as exemplifying the inevitability of abstraction as it occurs over a unidirectional sequence of time.

What disappears from such diagrammatic representations of influence, however, is history, which shaped modern art and artists with all the immense traumas and significance attached to World War I and its terrifying industrialization of conflict, its vast numbers of dead or mutilated bodies, its radical rewriting of the European map, its linking of the United States and Europe through conflict, its transforming of the experience and roles of women while men were at the front, which served to hasten the victory for the vote.[24] To have chronology without history means ignoring the Russian Revolution and Joseph Stalin's rise to power, the rise of Italian and German Fascism, the economic catastrophe of the Depression, the rise of the Left, the New Deal, the development of the motorcar, the airplane, telephones, communication systems, new kinds of consumption and urban service employment. It misses the invention of cinema, discoveries in philosophy and science, and the emergence of psychoanalysis, all of which provided new ways of understanding ourselves. Artists were deeply impacted by these epoch-making changes, which occurred on all fronts: travel, technology, revolution, civil rights, sexuality, race relations, immigration, politics. Modern art negotiated its historical conditions in many ways, and in that negotiation differences were generated according to a multitude of factors shaping the subject positions from which that modern history was being experienced and represented by men and women of different classes, ethnicities, cultures, locations, sexualities, and histories. Without abandoning the insights of formalism, inclusive histories of modern art must be complex, expanded, and multifocused.

AN ICONOLOGICAL READING

In nineteenth-century art history, formalizing and connoisseurial trends that classified art only through period and style were countered by other intellectual trends. Aby Warburg argued that art is not merely a formal process; it is also a *symbolic* activity that produces images and meanings by which cultures address topics of great importance to human thought and feeling. Art both registers new situations and revives, where necessary, long-lived and persistent traditions in imagery, visually remembering and encoding human experience and emotions. These mnemonic figurations Warburg named *pathos-formel*: the image as a formalization of remembered and intense feeling.[25] For Warburg, art was not merely a formal, problem-solving exercise. The image as formalization negotiates, visually and aesthetically, fundamental aspects of human experience: pain, death, suffering, love, jealousy, power, anxiety, hatred, violence. If we approach art in Warburg's *iconological* manner (which does not and cannot ignore the precise *forms* by which such visual engagements with meaning and experience are performed and renovated), we may be able to understand more of what was produced in the modern period by more artists, while also understanding the specific symbolic narrative enacted in The Museum of Modern Art as an institutionalization of a modernism that negotiated an anxious and heroic masculinity.[26]

As early as 1979 art historians Carol Duncan and Alan Wallach offered such an iconological analysis of the hanging of, and the visitor's subjective experience passing through, MoMA's formalist display.[27] These authors were the first to analyze a museum display in this way and to make such a reading of the classic arrangement of MoMA's galleries at the time. In 1989 Duncan would provide a comparable reading of the 1984 reinstallation of the main galleries.[28] (Recent rehangings have become more experimental and inclusive while still rehearsing the fundamental narrative for the earlier twentieth century.) It was not, however, for its absenting of women that Duncan and Wallach critiqued MoMA's hangs. Paradoxically, they were pointing to the massive presence of the feminine, but not as artists. The feminine was everywhere as image, in what, drawing indirectly on Warburg's antiformalist model, Duncan and Wallach identified as the Museum's iconological program. Reading the Museum as the producer of a narrative *experience* through the carefully plotted display of major works, Duncan and Wallach argued that MoMA can be read as a form akin to ancient, ceremonial architecture in which the viewer undergoes not merely instruction in the history of art but a transformation of his or her consciousness and self-perception through orchestrated encounters with symbolically and affectively charged images. Entry into a specially designed building, with its flights of stairs or vast halls and atria, separates the viewers from the everyday world outside in order to prepare them for another level of nonprofane experience. The interior spaces are laid out in a series of interlocking rooms, passage through which becomes an ordeal similar to classical adventures in the labyrinth, where the hero was challenged to survive an encounter with a monstrous other. In the case of MoMA, the monstrous other the viewer encounters through art is almost always represented by a female figure, prime among which are the staring prostitutes of Picasso's *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* (1907), which is always placed prominently in the Museum's art-historical narrative. If the hero of the adventure is confronting the monstrous feminine as its other, irrespective of his or her actual gender or orientation, the experience of this adventure masculinizes the spectator.[29]

In this artistic labyrinth, the visitor is inducted, through a series of symbolic encounters mediated by the paintings and sculptures, into a mythic ordeal of menaced but ultimately triumphant masculinity while also being ideologically restructured as the individual subjectivity typical of the capitalist system:

> But inside the labyrinth, the principle of creativity is defined and celebrated as a male spiritual endeavour in which consciousness finds its identity by transcending the material, biological world and its Mother Goddess. . . . The labyrinth ordeal is articulated by the iconographic programme. Since the architectural script has cast you as pure subjectivity [suspending everyday life and time], at any point within the labyrinth, the iconography tells you what your consciousness should be. In other words, once you are inside the labyrinth, the labyrinth is inside you.[30]

The proposed path through the story told by The Museum of Modern Art works through the selection of objects that deal with dramatic struggles with material, bodies, and desires. As we progress, this journey reveals an attenuation of subject matter in favor of resolved formal solutions: abstraction. (Here the two systems of formalist logic and iconography converge.) The passage plotted out by a selective version of the history of modern art can be read as performing the celebration of thought over matter, light over darkness, masculine logic over feminine materiality. It leads toward the mystical triumph of the spirit. Punctuated by major paintings such as *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* or Willem de Kooning's *Woman, I* (1950–52) or majestic sculptural female bodies by Aristide Maillol or Pierre-Auguste Renoir, one's journey is menaced by the dangerous encounter with, and inspired by the ultimate transcendence over, the multifaced Gorgon-Whore whose many manifestations constitute the feminine otherness that is represented in art as being in contrast to the energetic signature of the masculine creator: the artist. This inflects our very understanding of gendered values in the modern:

> But the passage through the labyrinth is not simply a mythical struggle between male and female consciousness. This iconographic programme encodes a structure of ideas and cultural values. In the labyrinth, the female spectator—the Mother Goddess—stands for lived, sensuous experience, human needs and human love . . . which must be renounced . . . [in favor of purely] aesthetic detachment. . . . The ritual clarifies social experience by recreating it imaginatively in symbolic form. In this way the labyrinth nightmare exalts as positive values the competitive individualism and alienated human relations that characterize contemporary social experience.[31]

Two vital points emerge here. First, the Museum layout helps to determine the detached nature of the subjectivities that come to be experienced within it. Second, the collection and display of the representative works of the major movements of twentieth-century art can be read to disclose a deeper, unconscious script that would not be visible in, and will not be noticed through, the dominant forms of published art history, which focuses on individual artists or on groups, styles, and movements. Duncan and Wallach argue, therefore, that there is a mythic dimension of sexual difference in the canonized selection and display of modern art in the Museum. They indicate the ways in which the orchestration of "an ordeal and a triumph" of a historically specific form of masculine subjectivity (modern, adventurous, individualistic, competitive) over the materialized and often monstrous representation of the maternal/prostitutional feminine can be revealed as the underlying story of the modern, capitalist subject that we encounter when we visit the Museum, thinking we are there merely to learn a sequence of styles and marvel at individual genius displayed with objective scholarship on the neutral walls of a museum space.

In her 1989 review of the 1984 reinstallation of MoMA's core historical collection, Duncan drew once again upon the iconological tradition in art history to explicate more fully how the DNA-like double helix of the narrative plotted in the Museum's galleries works, furthermore, to make the very idea of *woman as artist* impossible to accommodate. One strand is a formalist story of the progressive struggle for artistic and spiritual transcendence over matter, darkness, and nature, represented by the victory of abstraction in the battle against a feminized materialism, sometimes figured, sometimes signified by medium itself. The other strand provides for the viewer/visitor a performative encounter with a symbolic drama of masculine anxiety in the face of, and the conquering of the image of, "Woman," whose evacuation from representation is tracked in many artists' development and presented as artistic innovation, leading us to value above all else dissociation from ordinary, daily, lived human relations.

Thus stylistic succession laid out through the historical galleries celebrates enlightenment through the progressive mastery over and abstraction from the world of the everyday, from matter and materiality, which has been identified as feminine. Yet at the same time the Museum is crowded with images of women, as lovers, prostitutes, tarts, and entertainers who are socially debased and often formally disfigured. The female nude from Paul Cézanne and Paul Gauguin to Picasso and Matisse and on to de Kooning and Tom Wesselmann is often the recurring site of major stylistic and individual statements. Duncan suggests that we must acknowledge that these paintings, which plot out such individual stylistic innovation and implant the signature of that creative individual mastery of the challenge posed by the world to the artist, also enact a deeper psychic drama about *sexual* identity. Thus the search for spiritual transcendence through aesthetic victory over materiality does not seem contradictory "if we understand the modern-art museum as a ritual of male transcendence, if we see it organized around male fears, fantasies and desires, then the quest for spiritual transcendence on the one hand and the obsession with a sexualized female body on the other, rather than appearing unrelated or contradictory, can be seen as parts of a larger psychologically integrated whole."[32]

Clearly never consciously planned, the Museum's cultural scripting of experience through the works it has selected and this double narrative it tells have real effects on its ability to see the work of women artists and integrate what they created from their sexually different experiences and psychic economies. Thus Duncan tellingly concludes, "Since the heroes of this ordeal are generically men, the presence of women artists, in this mythology, can only be an anomaly."[33] Their numbers or coexistence with the male artists could never be allowed to dilute the unconscious masculinity of this fundamentally mythopoetic space or to degender the masculinizing ritual of the passage through it.

WHERE TO NOW?

The Museum, therefore, must be confronted as an author of a specific narrative and the architect of a cultural experience whose structural elements actively render the acknowledgment of women's place as creators in the modernist enterprise difficult to imagine or integrate, even as some initiatives are being made to place more works by more women on view. Anyone who visits recent installations of contemporary art at MoMA that are genuinely inclusive will already experience a different ethos in the spaces, perhaps a sense of more possibilities, shifting perspectives, varied moods, each indicating the sensibility/intellectuality of the artist, man or woman, and offering something expanded and polyphonic. How people interpret this variableness is open. For the Museum to change and enable visitors to experience modernism as diverse, created from heterogeneous, even conflicting positions, articulating through formal experimentation and iconographical invention varied ethnic, sexual, gendered cultural experiences of a multifocalized world, we shall need to open ourselves to radically different models of understanding the whole of modernist culture.

Critical feminist, postcolonial, and queer museological and art-historical theory has experimented with ways of creating new and inclusive, rather than merely corrective or supplementary, ways of representing the histories of art. "Inclusive" means understanding that modern art was created by diverse men and women, side by side, in various forms of conversation, rivalry, and difference.

I vividly recall a visit to the modernist galleries of the National Gallery of Australia in Canberra in 1986, where in the darkened and cavernous spaces paintings were suspended on wires so that they floated in space, allowing the visitor to pass among them. It was there that I first saw a Krasner painting (*Cool White* [1959]) that was hung in the same space as a Jackson Pollock (*Blue Poles* [1952]), not side by side, for this hanging system allowed each painting to be met in its own discrete space. The impact

was immediate and extraordinary, as I sensed the deep, long, and often difficult conversation between two equally brilliant, ambitious, and extraordinary painters. No doubt they talked about killing shallow space, felt Greenberg and Barr as éminences grises looming over them as they wondered every day if the work they had each done was indeed a painting. They also shared an interest in Surrealism, in indigenous cosmologies, in ancient art, myth, and ritual. Using anthropologist Clifford Geertz's study of culture as a form of deep play typically associated with gambling in sport, I suggest that the most powerful and affecting works of art are those that work with the deepest of plays.[34]
I am also suggesting this: that for an artist like Krasner to choose to live and work in the most intimate proximity with an artist like Pollock, whom she considered to be one of the most significant forces emerging in the New York art world, in whose creation she ambitiously desired to share while daring also to create beside it her own vision, was one such deep play. Art history remains impoverished for not yet fully being able to recognize Krasner's paintings, one of which, for instance, used to be shown only intermittently at Tate Britain (before the creation of Tate Modern and its innovative thematic hangs). Typically, the Krasner was exhibited strictly when the Pollock was not. Thus the very nature of the deep play that occurred during and after their time together was never visible for us to experience in the art ring.

Another inclusive and non-Eurocentrically international model is organized around the terms "generations" and "geographies."[35] This involves exploring the specific and singular axes and moments from which each artist produces his or her work. Art is made in relation to time, family, and larger collective social and cultural histories: generations. It is also made in space, in relation to geopolitical configurations that may include home or migration, exile or displacement, national identity or cosmopolitanism: geographies.[36] Each artwork or practice is produced across these axes but does not represent or exemplify them. From specific locations and singular histories, artists speak to the world in particular modes whose specificities the art historian aims to plot out and indicate as the ground from which a particular aesthetic gesture is being made. Thus the aim is not to categorize, confine, classify, or render exemplary, but to ask: What am I seeing? Who is speaking? From where?

A vital curatorial project was curated by Catherine de Zegher at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston in 1996, titled *Inside the Visible: An Elliptical Traverse of 20th Century Art, in, of and from the Feminine*. Rather than offering an alternative canon of missing women, the exhibition framed a series of complex encounters and groupings of artists, each working from generational and geographical specificity. More significant is what was implied by the subtitle and its phrase "in, of, and from the feminine." De Zegher made three important interventions in the curation, exhibition, and interpretation of twentieth-century art created by women.

The exhibition was focused around a temporal concept—*the twentieth century*—rather than an art historical category: *modern art* or any of its stylistic subcategories that form part of the model created by Barr's Museum of Modern Art for us to understand as a flow of mutually influencing stylistic movements: isms. By this means she refused the directional telos of a developmental, formalist schema for the unidirectional advance of modern art that makes it structurally impossible for art history to recognize the contributions and interventions made by creative women in the twentieth century that do not conform to this ahistorical chronological evolution of styles and movements.

De Zegher, therefore, proposed that that there are several ways to plot the histories of art made during the long twentieth century. Hers was an *elliptical traverse*, a crisscrossing backward and forward as well as a circling movement across the terrain of aesthetic practices that involved placing in new and revealing relations artworks made from three moments of historical and cultural significance. Determined not by the formalist schema but by intersections of cultural history and sexual difference, the moments she brought together were the 1920s—'30s (when modernist experimentation was contested by the rise of fascism), the 1960s—'70s (when new social movements put forth ideas of second-wave feminism, antiracism, and decolonization), and the 1990s (after the fall of the Berlin Wall and when globalization was under way). De Zegher, however, introduced into the manifold ways we could identify key cultural moments and politico-historical conjunctions a specific focus on the history and negotiations of sexual difference. Thus her elliptical traverse not only discerned new continuities across three generations of artists, from different countries, cultures, and practices, clustering around various modalities and problematics rather than styles; it also showed how a retrospective review allows the present moment, the "now-time" (*Jetztzeit*) in Walter Benjamin's terms, to bring a formerly indecipherable past into view and recognition.[37]

De Zegher deployed both psychoanalytical notions of the reversal of time (anamnesis and the return of the repressed) and the idea of the now-time. "Anamnesis" refers to the undoing of forgetfulness or repression of the past, while the "return of the repressed" suggests that what was traumatic and could not be fully assimilated at the time may have been repressed or become latent and can return either to haunt and torment us or to be integrated retrospectively into an expanded and de-repressed present. Christine Buci-Glucksmann explains:

> To the empty linear time of a cumulative succession of events, Benjamin opposes the necessity of a temporal break, an interruption in time disclosed by the imaginaries of history. *Jetztzeit* is an intensive, qualitative time which becomes visible in "states of emergency," the moments when "culture engenders barbarism" and the infinitely repressed memory of "those without a name" (*Namenlosen*) finally reappropriates a history dominated by the historicism of the rulers.[38]

Neither seeking to add the hitherto "unnamed"—that is, artists who have not registered as the authors of significant artistic events in the grand narrative of modernism—nor proposing an alternative version of the same type of period-style-master-oeuvre-work history of art, a feminist curatorial *écriture* in this field explores a radically different sense of how to *encounter* an expanded, heterogeneous, inexhaustible series of artistic *events* that collectively reveal to us deeply significant dimensions of culture and subjectivity, history and struggle, by means of aesthetic formalizations and practices.

An elliptical traverse that linked and repositioned the overlooked or marginalized past through what it had, often without contemporary recognition, seeded into culture, to flower decades later, was most significantly defined as "in, of, and from the feminine." Although the exhibition brought to light thirty-three artists who were women (including Anna Maria Maiolino [no. 16]), it could have shown work by men. It was not a women's show whereby the mere fact of gender formed the absolute bond between the exhibiting artists, who would thus be made only to exhibit this generalizing and unenlightening difference. Instead, the singularity of each artistic inscription could emerge precisely because the artists who were exhibited were so significantly diverse in terms of age, culture, sexuality, ethnicity, historical experience, and aesthetic choices and strategies, even while the discerning critic-curator could suggest, on this reading, deeper, symptomatic genealogies in the groupings she made around four themes: fragmentation and the body; inscription, silence, and textuality; weaving as practice and metaphor; and enjambment (the breaking of a syntactic unit so that meaning flows across the rupture). Indeed the artists demonstrated what Julia Kristeva has defined as the potential of aesthetic practices to bring forth "the singularity of each person . . . and . . . the multiplicity of every person's possible identifications . . . the relativity of his/her symbolic as well as biological existence, according to the variations in his/her specific symbolic capacities."[39]

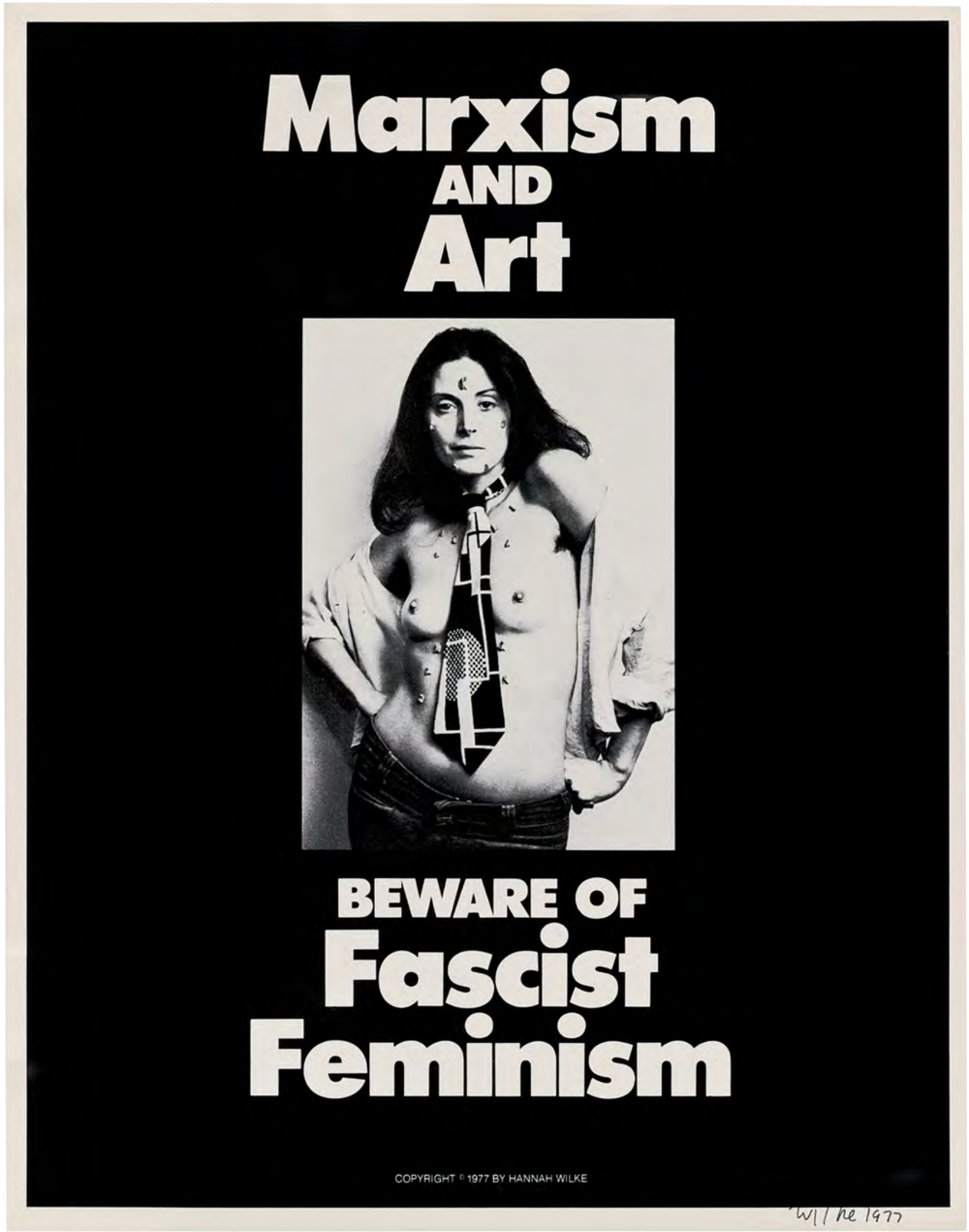
I cannot underline sufficiently the difficulty we face in overcoming the gross exclusion of women from the canon of modernism and even from contemporary art through

16. Anna Maria Maiolino (Brazilian, born Italy 1942). *Buraco preto* (Black hole) from the series *Os buracos/ desenhos objetos* (Holes/ drawing objects). 1974. Torn paper, 27 x 27" (68.6 x 68.6 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchase

to today. That in itself requires bold gestures of scholarly recovery, while at the same time we have to deconstruct the resulting tendency to generalize these artists as merely exemplars of a gendered collective: women, a sexualizing nomination by which they are, as a category, lumped together, their singularity annulled. As "women artists," not artists who are women, they are excluded a priori from the category "artist," which has been symbolically reserved for men. We must bring women together as diverse artists who share, in unpredictable ways, their experience of sexual and other significant differences, in order to see their work (because of continuing marginalization and oblivion) and in order to find out, for the first time, what in fact each woman in her artistically signified yet gendered/sexual singularity is offering to the world, to us all, to attain more complete knowledge of that world as it is lived and thought from multiple positions over time and space.

Thus the work being done in this first-ever review of the women artists, designers, filmmakers, sculptors, and architects in the collection of MoMA cannot be viewed under the terms that dominated the formation of the Museum and its continued habits of exhibition. Four decades of research and analysis have identified major issues in museum and academic art-writing and offered new models for creating an inclusive, expanded, and self-critical presentation of the art of the modern and the contemporary. This clearly involves the active, creative, and mutually respectful encounter between museum, curator, and scholar so that expanded methods of cultural inquiry can radically open us up to the heterogeneity and creativity of the past, the present, and the future we may otherwise miss.

1. Frances Weitzenhoffer, *The Havemeyers: Impressionism Comes to America* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1986).
2. Kathleen D. McCarthy, *Women's Culture: American Philanthropy and Art, 1830–1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).
3. Calvin Tomkins, *Merchants and Masterpieces: The Story of the Metropolitan Museum* (New York: Henry Holt, 1989).
4. Clement Greenberg, "Avant-Garde and Kitsch," 1939; reprinted in Greenberg, *Art and Culture: Critical Essays* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1961), pp. 3–21. "No culture can develop without a social basis, without a source of stable income. And in the case of the avant-garde, this was provided by an elite among the ruling class of that society from which it assumed itself to be cut off, but to which it has always remained attached by an umbilical cord of gold." Ibid., p. 8.
5. Russell Lynes, *Good Old Modern: An Intimate Portrait of the Museum of Modern Art* (New York: Atheneum, 1973), pp. 4–8.
6. Sybil Gordon Kantor, *Alfred H. Barr, Jr. and the Intellectual Origins of the Museum of Modern Art* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2002).
7. See Jennifer R. Gross, *Société Anonyme: Modernism for America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006).
8. Andrea Weiss, *Paris Was a Woman: Portraits from the Left Bank* (London: Rivers Oram Press/Pandora Press, 1995).
9. Claude Roger-Marx, "Les Femmes peintres et l'impressionisme: Berthe Morisot," *Gazette des beaux-arts*, December 1, 1907, p. 50.
10. Alfred, Lord Tennyson, *The Princess: A Medley*, 1847, section 5, lines 437–41.
11. Rita Felski, *The Gender of Modernity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995), p. 1.
12. Ibid.
13. Andreas Huyssen, "Mass Culture as Woman: Modernism's Other," in *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism (Theories of Representation and Difference)* (Basingstoke, England: MacMillan Press, 1986), p. 53.
14. Ibid., p. 62.
15. Ibid., pp. 55–56.
16. Sarah Kofman, *The Childhood of Art: An Interpretation of Freud's Aesthetics*, trans. Winifred Woodhull (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), pp. 19–20.
17. Alfred H. Barr, Jr., letter to Peggy Guggenheim, September 24, 1942; quoted in Susan Davidson and Philip Rylands, *Peggy Guggenheim & Frederick Kiesler: The Story of Art of This Century* (New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 2005), p. 292.
18. This and other historical facts about The Museum of Modern Art were gathered from the Museum Archives, with the assistance of Romy Silver, Research Assistant, Modern Women's Initiative, Department of Drawings, and Michelle Elligot, Museum Archivist.
19. On Sonja Sekula, see Nancy Foote, "Who was Sonja Sekula?" *Art in America*, September–October 1971, pp. 73–80; and Ann Gibson, "Universality and Difference in Women's Abstract Painting: Krasner, Ryan, Sekula, Piper and Streat," *Yale Journal of Criticism* 8, no. 1 (Spring 1995): 103–32. There is also an informative Web site dedicated to the painter: www.sonja-sekula.org/.
20. Jimmy Ernst, *A Not-So-Still Life: A Memoir* (New York: St. Martin's Press/Marek, 1984), p. 236; cited in Davidson and Rylands, "Exhibition by 31 Women," in *Peggy Guggenheim & Frederick Kiesler*, p. 291.
21. Harrison C. White and Cynthia A. White, *Canvases and Careers: Institutional Change in the French Painting World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965).
22. Those artists who opposed capitalism during the Soviet experiment specifically modeled their practice on socialized, collective, nonindividuating production.
23. Barr, *Picasso: Fifty Years of His Art* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1946), and *Matisse: His Art and His Public* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1951).
24. The critique was first mounted by Meyer Schapiro in "The Nature of Abstract Art," *Marxist Quarterly* 1 (January–March 1937): 77–98; reprinted in Schapiro, *Modern Art, 19th and 20th Centuries (Selected Papers)* (New York: George Braziller, 1979), pp. 185–212.
25. Aby Warburg's neologism first appears in "Dürer and Italian Antiquity," 1905; reprinted in Warburg, *The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity*, trans. David Britt (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 1999), pp. 729–31. For the evolution of this term, see Gertrude Bing, "A. M. Warburg," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 28 (1965): 299–313. A useful introduction to Warburg's iconological project is Giorgio Agamben, "Aby Warburg and the Nameless Science," in *Potentialities*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1999), pp. 89–103.
26. Warburg's follower Erwin Panofsky brought this approach to the United States, where iconography has dominated the studies in medieval and Renaissance art history. There is a distinction to be made between iconography—the study of symbols used in the visual arts, e.g., keys in the hand of a man suggest Saint Peter—and iconology, which attempts to explain the overall symbolic activity of art in relation to larger cultural processes and meanings and to the meaning of symbolic activity in human life.
27. Carol Duncan and Alan Wallach, "MoMA: Ordeal and Triumph on 53rd Street," *Studio International* 194, no. 1 (1978): 48–57.
28. Duncan, "The MoMA's Hot Mamas," *Art Journal* 48, no. 2 (Summer 1989): 171–78; reprinted in Duncan, *The Aesthetics of Power: Essays in Critical Art History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 189–207.
29. This point draws on Laura Mulvey's feminist theory of cinematic spectatorship, which shows how irrespective of one's social gender the spectating position for a classic Hollywood film identifies the spectator with a masculine psychic position of desire, mastery, and sadism. Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," *Screen* 16, no. 3 (Autumn 1975): 6–30.
30. Duncan and Wallach, "Ordeal and Triumph on 53rd Street," p. 52.
31. Ibid., pp. 55, 57.
32. Duncan, "The MoMA's Hot Mamas," p. 192.
33. Ibid., p. 193.
34. Griselda Pollock, "Cockfights and Other Parades: Gesture, Difference, and the Staging of Meaning in Three Paintings by Zoffany, Krasner, and Pollock," *Oxford Art Journal* 26, no. 2 (September 2003): 141–65. Clifford Geertz, "Deep Play: Notes on A Balinese Cockfight," in *The Interpretation of Culture* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), pp. 412–53.
35. This art historical model for inclusive, international postcolonial feminist studies is introduced by a team of scholars in Pollock, ed., *Generations and Geographies in the Visual Arts: Feminist Readings* (London: Routledge, 1996). The project was inspired by the work of *Third Text*, an international journal dedicated to providing critical perspectives on art and visual culture.
36. For more on geographies of art, see Irit Rogoff, *Terra Infirma: Geography's Visual Culture* (London: Routledge, 2000).
37. Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History XIV," 1940, in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (London: Fontana, 1973), p. 263.
38. Christine Buci-Glucksmann, *Baroque Reason: The Aesthetics of Modernity*, trans. Patrick Camiller (London: Sage Publications, 1994), p. 44. Citations from Benjamin, "Central Park," *New German Critique*, no. 34 (Winter 1985): 36.
39. Julia Kristeva, "Le Temps des femmes," *33/44: Cahiers de recherche de sciences des textes et documents*, no. 5 (Winter 1979): 19; translated by Alice Jardine and Harry Blake in Toril Moi, ed., *The Kristeva Reader* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), p. 210.



"FLOAT THE BOAT!": FINDING A PLACE FOR FEMINISM IN THE MUSEUM

/ ARUNA D'SOUZA

At a panel held in the fall of 2007 at The Museum of Modern Art to discuss the institutionalization of feminism in a number of exhibitions and conferences that had taken place earlier in the year—including *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution, Global Feminisms*, and MoMA's conference "The Feminist Future: Theory and Practice in the Visual Arts," among others—discussion turned to Women on Waves, a Dutch activist group.[1] Founded by the physician Rebecca Gomperts in 1999, the organization commissioned the architect and designer Joop van Lieshout to transform a boat into a floating medical clinic (no. 2), which sailed to countries in Europe that ban women's access to reproductive procedures, including abortion and birth control: Ireland, which it visited in 2001; Poland, in 2003; and Portugal, in 2004. Located in a boat anchored twelve miles offshore—in international waters and thus subject only to the legal codes of the Netherlands, the country in which the boat was registered—and claiming the protective mantle of artistic free speech when challenged by local governments for breaking national laws, the project fits uncomfortably in the category "feminist art."[2] Cornelia Butler, the panel's moderator, revealed that Gomperts had approached her to ask whether The Museum of Modern Art would be interested in absorbing the boat into its permanent collection, a request that made a certain amount of sense, Butler noted, because of its pedigree (designed by van Lieshout, thus conferring a certain artistic legitimacy to a project that might otherwise be considered merely political); its resonance with a range of artistic practices that had emerged in the 1990s and early 2000s and dwelled on the creation of hybrid forms; its previous inclusion in a number of exhibitions, including the 2001 Venice Biennale; and its potential relationship to the Museum's design collection, which would provide for it a context of other industrial and utopian creations. But still, Butler said (with some regret), the Museum was unable to take it.

The problem was not, as might be surmised, that the boat's aesthetic value was too tangential or too much of a technicality to consider it a work of legitimate artistic intervention. Rather, the issue was a double-barreled concern over logistics and politics: how could the Woman on Waves ship possibly be absorbed into the space—both physical and conceptual—of the Museum, especially considering its status as a usable, and, yes, unwieldy object with meaning derived specifically from its deployment in acts of political activism? In the conversation that followed, panelists and audience members discussed what the Museum would have to do to accommodate the Women on Waves boat; a host of suggestions emerged that seemed to hinge on the idea of finding ways to preserve the activist politics that motivated the piece, even as it was turned into a historical remainder, a remnant of those interventions. It would not be enough simply to put the boat on display; it would be necessary to *activate* it, perhaps by continuing to use it as a medical clinic. "Float the boat!" became the jocular cry of audience members, as we urged MoMA to find a creative solution to what Butler presented as an intriguing museological problem.[3]

This exchange distills many of the problems faced by curators and historians seeking a solution for incorporating this loosely and problematically defined category of "feminist art" into the museum: how to make space, physically and conceptually, for such work. Many of the scholars, critics, and artists who had taken part in "The Feminist Future," both as speakers and audience members, seemed critically aware that in order to accommodate the

1. **Hannah Wilke** (American, 1940–1993). *Marxism and Art: Beware of Fascist Feminism.* 1977. Offset, sheet 11 5/8 x 9 1/16" (29.6 x 23 cm). Publisher: the artist, New York. Printer: unknown. Edition: approx. 25. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Marsie, Emanuelle, Damon, and Andrew Scharlatt, Hannah Wilke Collection and Archive, Los Angeles

2. **Women on Waves** ship docked in Harlingen, the Netherlands, June 16, 2003, en route to international waters off the coast of Poland. **Atelier Van Lieshout** (Netherlands, est. 1995) designed the A-Portable mobile clinic on deck. Photograph by Willem Velthoven

contributions of women and feminist artists the Museum needed not to simply make *space* for that work—to include women artists as a matter of course in its exhibitions and gallery rotations—but rather to reimagine itself as an institution in a very fundamental way, to reorient the institution according to the political imperatives of feminist art itself. Helen Molesworth, in her comments at the symposium, succinctly outlined these two separate but equally crucial issues. Posing the hypothetical problem of how she would rehang a museum's galleries to include works by women painters, she noted the difficulty—the impossibility, even—of this task, given the years of institutional and conceptual assumptions that structured the exclusion of women from the narrative of modernism in the first place: "Is it a revolution of the deepest order to insert women artists back into rooms that have in fact been structured by their very absence? What would it mean instead perhaps to take this absence as a particular historical condition, under which the work of women artists is both produced and understood?"[4]

Molesworth's comments (a version of which appear in her essay in this volume) raise the problem of the relationship between the work of women artists and feminism. Not all women artists were feminists—many of the most famous, such as Frida Kahlo, Georgia O'Keeffe, Lee Krasner, and Eva Hesse, predated the advent of second-wave feminism, and many post-1968 female artists focus primarily on issues other than gender and difference—nor are all feminist artists women.[5] The mere inclusion of women artists is not a sufficient feminist gesture: if feminism requires a focus on work that lies outside the modernist canon, the bringing into view of that which has been repressed, it also necessitates reconceiving the institution and its various hierarchies of medium, genre, and other restrictive classifications, all of which generate the exclusive ideologies of gender, race, and class that marginalized or outright rejected the work of women artists (among others) in the first place.

Alongside this question about the distinction between *women's* art and *feminist* art—the former a term that implicitly acknowledges the historical occlusion of certain artists from the modernist canon, the latter one that identifies art taking part in a political project that aims to interrogate and dismantle such partialities—runs the question of what constitutes a proper museological response. For some, including Molesworth, the mere addition of women artists into institutions that have "been structured by their very absence" is deeply problematic, because their work is often at odds with the main narrative unfolding in institutions' galleries and exhibitions, so that women's art is thus framed as a thing apart, something separate and distinct, and, inevitably, something *less*. The ideal would be a restructuring of the narratives constructed by the Museum so that work by women would be included as a matter of course, as a part of a process of already-begun but still much-needed historical revision, according to new, historically informed standards of quality and significance. We are closer to this ideal, certainly, than we were a generation ago. Under a changing roster of curators with a sense of the multiplicity of modernisms to have emerged in the twentieth century and of the need for periodic rehanging of the galleries to highlight these competing versions (rather than relying on a relatively fixed, univocal presentation of the permanent collection, as has been the tradition at MoMA), women are gaining greater visibility in the Museum. In *What Is Painting?*, a 2007 show of work from MoMA's collection, for example, an unprecedented number of women (thirty percent) were included, a number of them from outside the United States, without the curator, Anne Umland, feeling any particular need to comment on their gender. It was taken as a given that in order to answer the question posed by the title of the show a number of women (including Vija Celmins, Lynda Benglis, Beatriz Milhazes, Lee Lozano, and Atsuko Tanaka) must figure in the answer. *Multiplex*, which opened in 2009 under the guidance of Deborah Wye, included twenty-six women out of seventy-two artists—a little over twenty-five percent—but these

accounted for a great deal of the show's real estate, with large-scale installations by Louise Bourgeois, Hanne Darboven, and Nancy Spero.

For those who fear that at this point in history such moments of progress are too few and far between, holding out for a truly feminist reconception of the institution may seem unreasonable; after all, ghettoization in the galleries is a far better fate for these hidden works by women artists than ghettoization in the storage room. Unwilling to wait for a moment in which the artist's gender does not figure—positively or negatively—in curatorial decisions, those who embrace this point of view maintain that the work of women artists should at least see the light of day, even under imperfect conditions. For curators at the Centre Pompidou in Paris, a third option emerged: in the summer of 2009 the museum unveiled a rehanging of the permanent collection, *elles@centrepompidou*, exclusively featuring women artists. This new presentation showed the richness of the collection as well as the gaps; most important, according to the lead curator, Camille Morineau, was that such an intervention, by excluding men, would likely change the way that curatorial decisions were henceforth made.[6] If an all-male exhibition were to be mounted at the Pompidou in the future, Morineau hoped that it could not take place without comment: it would have to be considered an *ils@centrepompidou* exhibition. Gender, in other words, would not be erased but ascribed to masculinity in the way that it is always ascribed to femininity: as a term that *means* something. Eventually, Morineau predicted, gender would cease to be a meaningful term because it would no longer encode a set of disadvantages, of negative meanings that posed the other (femininity) as lesser than the norm (masculinity). But that cannot happen, the new Pompidou hanging implied, without a moment of complete inversion of operative terms.[7]

As the Pompidou exhibition made plain, these revisionist projects are beholden to the collections that curators have at their disposal. And so if an institution such as The Museum of Modern Art wishes to integrate the work of women and feminist artists into its collection—and consequently into its influential narrative of modernism—it must confront the obstacle posed by the objects it owns, which were largely amassed under a set of assumptions that were implicated in (and in fact constitutive of) patriarchal and elitist culture, as Griselda Pollock trenchantly observes in her essay in this volume. There are treasures in the Museum's storerooms and in its galleries: the presence of certain women artists in thrilling depth (the sculpture, drawings, and print work of Bourgeois, or the photographs of Cindy Sherman), as well as the presence of some unexpected figures (the work of Latin American women artists such as Gego and Amelia Peláez Del Casal from the 1940s, or of Russian Suprematist, Constructivist, and productivist women such as Natalia Goncharova or Varvara Stepanova). Some of these works were targeted purchases by the Museum, motivated by a sense of historical responsibility, by the research interests or exhibition program of a single curator, or by the collecting interests of a particular donor. In other cases the acquisitions were the result of factors even more contingent: the establishment of the Inter-American Fund in 1942, linked to the Museum's collaboration with the United States State Department's efforts in Latin America, which facilitated the acquisition of works by Latin American artists, some by women, and Alfred H. Barr, Jr.'s trip to the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in 1927–28, which allowed the Museum to acquire works by artists from those regions that would have been unattainable in subsequent years, thanks to Cold War politics and Soviet isolationism.

For all these moments of remarkable prescience on the part of the Museum's curators and acquisitions committee, there have been some deeply distressing missteps. Judy Chicago, who created the iconic sculpture *The Dinner Party* (1974–79) and whose work epitomizes a certain type of feminist art to emerge in the 1970s, albeit one whose essentialist position is held in deep suspicion by many feminist thinkers of her own and later generations, has only a single lithographic print in MoMA's collection, one not terribly representative of her most important work. The artist often posed as Chicago's opposite, the Conceptual artist Mary Kelly, whose *Post-Partum Document* (1973–79) is another iconic work of feminist art, this time rooted in gender's construction within language and visual sign systems and thus in a complex network of desire, is entirely absent.

The exclusion of a stream of artistic practice (one hesitates to call it a "movement") that was, as critic Holland Cotter has correctly pointed out, the most significant to emerge in the post-1968 era, is not just an injustice from the point of view of equality but a travesty of the historical project that MoMA has set for itself since its founding: the articulation of the major artistic movements and interventions of the modern period.[8] But beyond this absence of feminist art within the collection, the lack of works by women artists means that the histories of modern art generally are left partial and incomplete: as Ann Temkin, Chief Curator of the Department of Painting and Sculpture, demonstrated in her rehanging in 2009 of the Museum's postwar American galleries, the biomorphic abstraction of Mark Rothko, Arshile Gorky, and Robert Motherwell cannot be understood without the inclusion of Bourgeois; the same could be said of Isa Genzken's relationship to German art of the 1970s and 1980s, or Silvia Kolbowski's role in video art of the 1980s, although the Museum is rather less equipped to tell those historical tales.[9] The curators who wish to redress the historical marginalization of work by women artists must then contend with doing so in a collection that has serious gaps; whatever the Museum's current commitment to filling such absences, it is made all the more difficult by the passage of time, the more prescient collecting strategy of other institutions, and the exigencies of the art market, whose prices now reflect a renewed interest in works by post-1970s feminist and women artists.

The essays in this book give some sense of such presences and absences in MoMA's collection, but there are also countless unacknowledged contributions by women in its galleries and storerooms—unacknowledged because the conventions of museology and art history favor organization around single, generative masters and have thus been less than effective in dealing with collective practices. The most serious consequences of this oversight are in the realms of architecture, design, and film, where a single work is the result of collaboration among many members of a studio or team. In MoMA's Department of Architecture and Design, for example, the identification of architectural projects by the name of the lead architect obscures the activity of many women in the production of the masterwork, present in the studios as designers, engineers, and draftspersons; in the case of Le Corbusier, one might cite the particularly important presences of Jane Drew (a major contributor to the designs of Chandigarh, the planned capital city of Punjab, India, who was responsible for that project's housing designs) and Charlotte Perriand (who was employed in his Paris office and was primarily responsible for his furniture designs). This blind spot can be rectified only by continued research into the collection by museum professionals and academics; this volume is an acknowledgment of that need, and an important step toward fleshing out the historical record of women's participation in modernism.

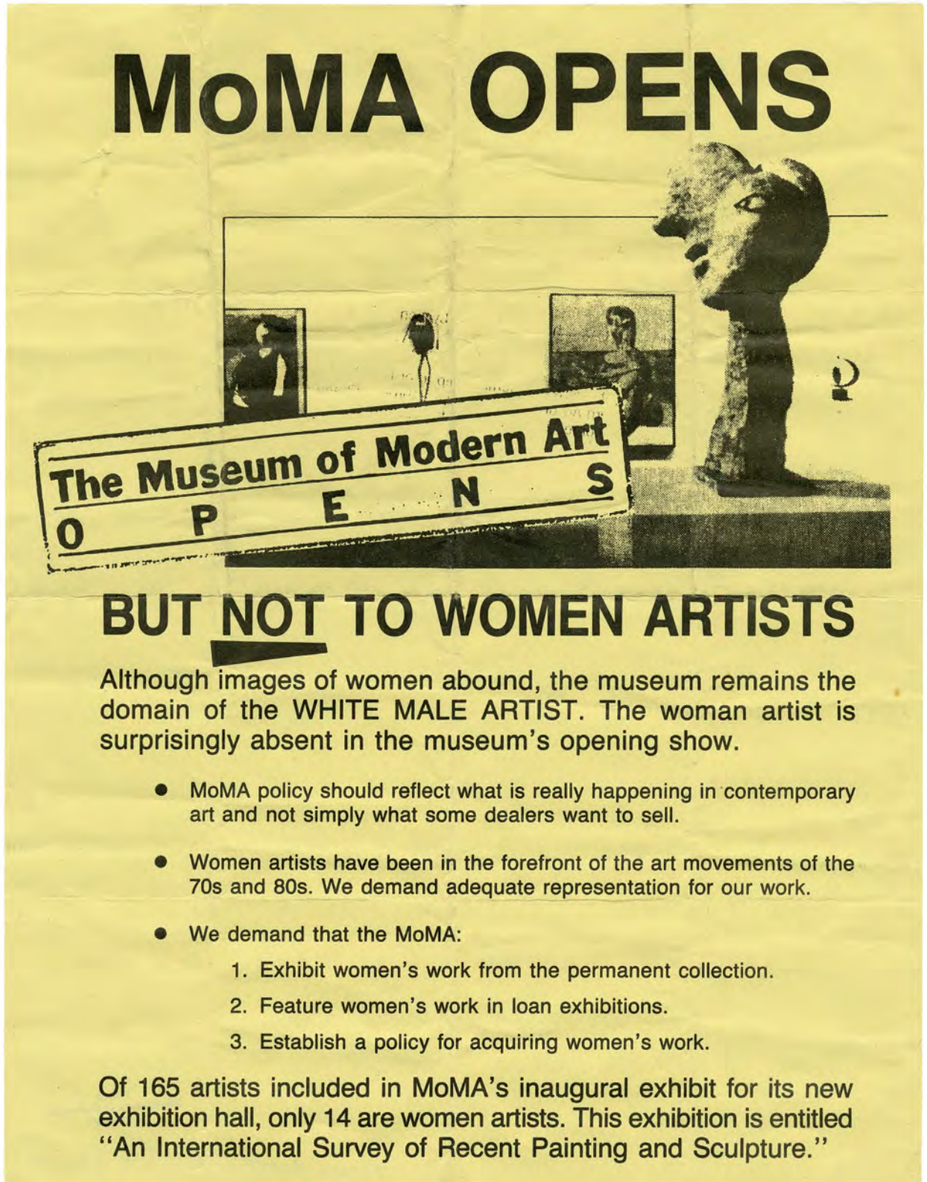
The richness of MoMA's holdings by women artists is most evident, not surprisingly, in the realm of works on paper—photographs, drawings, prints, illustrated books, and ephemera from the Museum's archives, and thus the archives are a particularly important source of work by women. This breadth and history was touched on in *Documenting a Feminist Past: Art World Critique*, an exhibition drawn from those archives, organized by Associate Librarian Jennifer Tobias to coincide with "The Feminist Future."[10] The greater presence of work by women artists in works on paper and in the archives is a consequence, in part, of the ease of purchasing and storing them, making the departments housing those mediums more likely to acquire works by a more diverse range of artists compared with those housing, for example,

painting and sculpture; they have the luxury, that is, of being speculative in their purchases. For the Department of Painting and Sculpture, acquisitions are generally more costly in terms of space, money, and conservation commitments. Within the museum world such decisions about how to spend scarce resources have been historically justified by arguments over quality, as if issues of connoisseurship or intrinsic aesthetic value were self-evident and unmotivated by other, more exclusionary criteria. In fact, as Pollock has argued, these assessments of quality are themselves part of an ideological structure that means to exclude; to imagine that women or people of color do *not* produce quality work means simply that one's assessment or definition of quality is deeply suspect.

But the wealth of the Museum's holdings of feminist art in its archive is also historically determined by feminist practice itself: among the most important approaches taken by artists from the earliest moments of feminist organizing has been the creation of ephemera—pamphlets, posters, zines, advertisements, and other printed matter—that often blurs the lines between artwork and public declaration, a phenomenon explored in Gretchen Wagner's essay in this volume. It is probably not surprising that so many feminist artists and collectives resorted to low-budget, mass-distributed formats as their chosen medium in the early 1970s: galvanized by the early organizing of second-wave feminists, who attempted to rouse a community to social action, artists participated in such organizing precisely through the creation of the advertising and printed communication deployed by the feminist movement. Moreover, for feminist artists coming of age when the dematerialization of the art object was a strategy used in an increasingly urgent manner to resist the commodification and fetishization of traditional artistic forms, ephemeral formats must have seemed a logical and timely choice. The practitioners often had radically different notions of what constituted a properly feminist visual politics—demonstrated through the sheer variety of aesthetic solutions, mediums, and forms—but what these ephemeral practices had and continue to have in common is an interest in exceeding the strictly bounded, elitist, and often exclusionary space of the museum or gallery in delivering their aesthetic and political interventions to a wider audience.

Such work often quite directly narrated the conditions of its exclusion from the museum, in the sense that it was often generated through protest of such exclusion, by institutions in the United States such as the Whitney Museum of American Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, and even The Museum of Modern Art itself. *An International Survey of Painting and Sculpture*, MoMA's inaugural exhibition after its 1984 expansion, included only 13 works by women of the 169 on display, inspiring both a poster for a Women Artists Visibility Event (WAVE), declaiming "The Museum of Modern Art Opens but Not to Women Artists" (c. 1984, no. 3), as well as the organization of the activist group the Guerrilla Girls. The latter's posters replicated the consciousness-raising gestures of early feminist activists; the addition of sharp wit and a penchant for needling and shaming the art world's old-boy networks never undermined the work's entertaining tone (no. 4). Joanne Stamerra conceived *Erasing Sexism from MoMA* (1976) (nos. 5 and 6) in response to two major bicentennial exhibitions, *Drawing Now* at MoMA and *Twentieth-century American Drawing* at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, which Stamerra described as not simply excluding, for the most part, women artists but also possessing a generational bias and a bias toward big commercial galleries. The work, which involved surreptitiously placing pencil erasers printed with the slogan "Erase Sexism at MoMA" throughout the Museum's galleries, was done in conjunction with demonstrations held outside the museum in February 1976 by Nancy Spero's Ad Hoc Protest Committee.

3. **Women Artists Visibility Event.** "The Museum of Modern Art Opens but Not to Women Artists." c. 1984. Leaflet, 8 $^{7}/_{16}$ x 10 $^{15}/_{16}$" (21.4 x 27.8 cm). The Museum of Modern Art Library, New York



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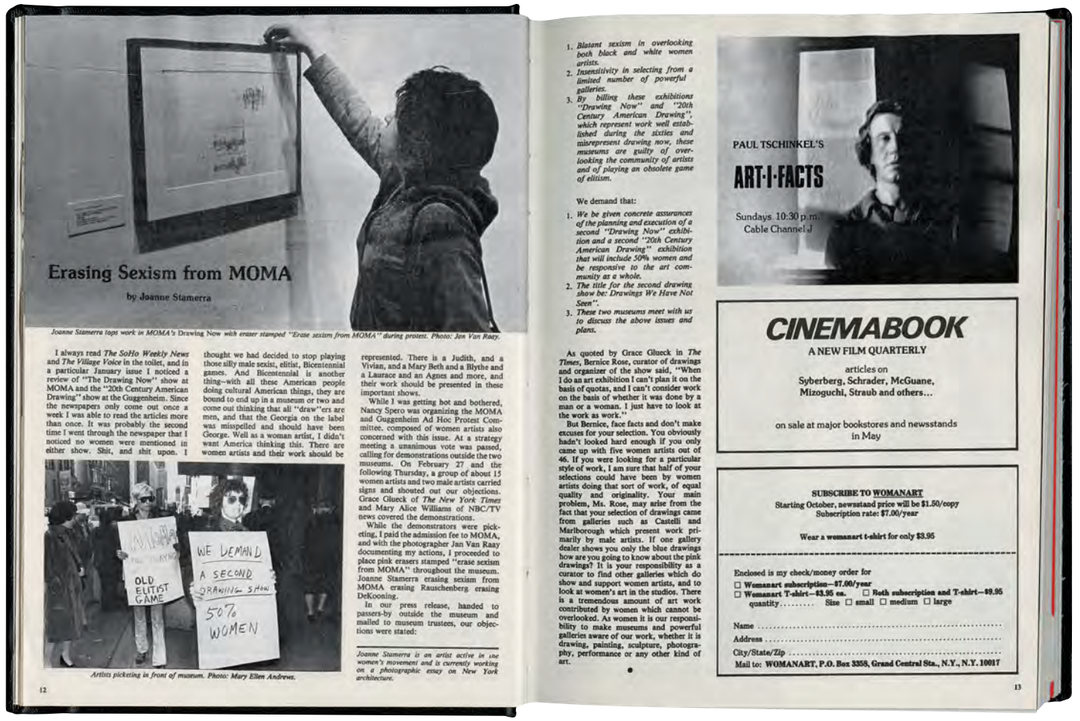
4. **Guerrilla Girls** (USA, est. 1985). *The Advantages of Being a Woman Artist*. 1988. Poster, 17 x 21 7/8" (43.2 x 55.6 cm). The Museum of Modern Art Library, New York



Erasing Sexism from MOMA

by Joanne Stamerra

Joanne Stamerra tags work in MOMA's Drawing Now *with eraser stamped "Erase sexism from MOMA" during protest. Photo: Jon Van Raay.*

I always read *The SoHo Weekly News* and *The Village Voice* in the toilet, and in a particular January issue I noticed a review of "The Drawing Now" show at MOMA and the "20th Century American Drawing" show at the Guggenheim. Since the newspapers only come out once a week I was able to read the articles more than once. It was probably the second time I went through the newspaper that I noticed no women were mentioned in either show. Shit, and shit upon. I thought we had decided to stop playing those silly male sexist, elitist, Bicentennial games. And Bicentennial is another thing--with all these American people doing cultural American things, they are bound to end up in a museum or two and come out thinking that all "draw"ers are men, and that the Georgia on the label was misspelled and should have been George. Well as a woman artist, I didn't want America thinking this. There are women artists and their work should be represented. There is a Judith, and a Vivian, and a Mary Beth and a Blythe and a Laurace and an Agnes and more, and their work should be presented in these important shows.

Artists picketing in front of museum. Photo: Mary Ellen Andrews.

While I was getting hot and bothered, Nancy Spero was organizing the MOMA and Guggenheim Ad Hoc Protest Committee, composed of women artists also concerned with this issue. At a strategy meeting a unanimous vote was passed, calling for demonstrations outside the two museums. On February 27 and the following Thursday, a group of about 15 women artists and two male artists carried signs and shouted out our objections. Grace Glueck of *The New York Times* and Mary Alice Williams of NBC/TV news covered the demonstrations.

While the demonstrators were picketing, I paid the admission fee to MOMA, and with the photographer Jan Van Raay documenting my actions, I proceeded to place pink erasers stamped "erase sexism from MOMA" throughout the museum. Joanne Stamerra erasing sexism from MOMA erasing Rauschenberg erasing DeKooning.

In our press release, handed to passers-by outside the museum and mailed to museum trustees, our objections were stated:

1. *Blatant sexism in overlooking both black and white women artists.*
2. *Insensitivity in selecting from a limited number of powerful galleries.*
3. *By billing these exhibitions "Drawing Now" and "20th Century American Drawing", which represent work well established during the sixties and misrepresent drawing now, these museums are guilty of overlooking the community of artists and of playing an obsolete game of elitism.*

We demand that:

1. *We be given concrete assurances of the planning and execution of a second "Drawing Now" exhibition and a second "20th Century American Drawing" exhibition that will include 50% women and be responsive to the art community as a whole.*
2. *The title for the second drawing show be: Drawings We Have Not Seen".*
3. *These two museums meet with us to discuss the above issues and plans.*

As quoted by Grace Glueck in *The Times*, Bernice Rose, curator of drawings and organizer of the show said, "When I do an art exhibition I can't plan it on the basis of quotas, and I can't consider work on the basis of whether it was done by a man or a woman. I just have to look at the work as work."

But Bernice, face facts and don't make excuses for your selection. You obviously hadn't looked hard enough if you only came up with five women artists out of 46. If you were looking for a particular style of work, I am sure that half of your selections could have been by women artists doing that sort of work, of equal quality and originality. Your main problem, Ms. Rose, may arise from the fact that your selection of drawings came from galleries such as Castelli and Marlborough which present work primarily by male artists. If one gallery dealer shows you only the blue drawings how are you going to know about the pink drawings? It is your responsibility as a curator to find other galleries which do show and support women artists, and to look at women's art in the studios. There is a tremendous amount of art work contributed by women which cannot be overlooked. As women it is our responsibility to make museums and powerful galleries aware of our work, whether it is drawing, painting, sculpture, photography, performance or any other kind of art.

Joanne Stamerra is an artist active in the women's movement and is currently working on a photographic essay on New York architecture.

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5. **Joanne Stamerra** (American, born 1951). "Erasing Sexism from MoMA," *Womanart* (Summer 1976). The Museum of Modern Art Library, New York

6. **Joanne Stamerra** (American, born 1951). *Erase Sexism at MoMA*. 1976. Rubber eraser, 3/4 x 2 1/4 x 3/8" (2 x 5.7 x 1 cm). Collection the artist

The allusion to erasing—in the literal, rubbing-out-of-pencil-marks sense—evoked Robert Rauschenberg's act of destruction, *Erased de Kooning Drawing* (1953), a gesture that inscribed the young male artist into modernism's patriarchal lineage with the commission of aesthetic patricide. In a statement published in the summer 1976 issue of *Womanart* magazine, accompanied by photographs taken by Jan van Raay of the performance itself, Stamerra suggested that she would erase sexism at MoMA by erasing the gesture of Rauschenberg erasing de Kooning—that is, by displacing the self-perpetuating Oedipal narrative that continued to structure art-historical and curatorial accounts of modernism. Stamerra's act of opposition, effected by a performative act and commemorated in documentary and ephemeral forms, is not object-based and is thus relegated to the Museum's archive. The importance of a trove such as the archive as a source for artwork, not simply as a source for information on artwork, is important for the recuperation of the practices of women artists throughout the twentieth century, not to mention the most important feminist practice of the 1970s. Recent exhibitions at MoMA, such as *Bauhaus 1919–1933: Workshops for Modernity* in 2009–10 and P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center's *1969* in 2009–10 have begun to incorporate this rich material into displays of the permanent collection as one way of representing the history of feminist art and activism as well as the very presence of women artists in the institutional discourse.

Additional resistance to this revisionist historical project is created by feminism itself, which has never decided, exactly, the limits of its terms. (In this sense feminism is no different from modernism; both are terms constantly, and often contradictorily, defined by their adherents. MoMA's traditional narrative of modernism is but an intervention, albeit an extremely influential one, in what is in fact a much-contested terrain.) The question of what constitutes feminism as a political or activist endeavor—and thus what defines feminist art and what characterizes a legitimately feminist curatorial strategy—is not at all inconsequential to the work that takes place in the museum. In some cases these conflicts are played out in the work of feminist artists, as in Hannah Wilke's poster *Marxism and Art: Beware of Fascist Feminism* (1977, no. 1), a response to Lucy R. Lippard's criticism in 1976 of Wilke's art practice in general and the performance *S.O.S. Starification Object Series* (1974) in particular as a "confusion of the roles as beautiful woman and artist, as flirt and feminist."[11] *Marxism and Art*, which features a black-and-white still from *S.O.S. Starification Object Series*, asserts that such criticism is guilty of applying unproductive labels to artists' practice and thus hinders any kind of feminist expression other than a censoring one. If Wilke's was not an unusual response to the emergence of postmodern feminism, then the means by which she chose to articulate her objection perhaps was: a poster pasted on the walls outside the Ronald Feldman Gallery, where a one-woman show of her work was taking place. Thus was the protest poster, a rhetorical form, deployed to supplement her work in the gallery, but the activist impulse was directed at feminism itself, as an ideological debate taken to the streets and made public.

The diverse answers to the question of what feminist art is are reflected not only in the different ways feminist artists approach images of woman and questions of representation, as the debate between Wilke and Lippard demonstrates, but in their relationships to their chosen mediums. As might be expected of what is less an artistic movement than an aesthetico-political one—one in which politics, rather than form, is largely the defining term and in which aesthetic strategies are tools to articulate both a political field in its historical moment and the cultural field's relation to that politics—the sheer variety of mediums a single artist may employ in her engagement with this project can be breathtaking. Thus a museum that wants to capture the breadth and depth of the political project of an artist like Wilke must be willing to collect across a broad range of mediums, as MoMA has demonstrated in its recent acquisition of her sculpture *Ponder-r-rosa, White Plains, Yellow Rocks* (1975) (which at this writing has been installed in the permanent-collection galleries), adding to its holdings of her drawings, video, and photographs, and it must also be willing to see that such ephemeral works are critically important to the artist's oeuvre, rather than conforming to an outmoded hierarchy of genres.

The definition of feminist art hinges in part on the definition of feminist politics, as Wilke's intervention makes clear. So how does one characterize that politics, given the fraught nature of the definition (and not simply art's relation to it)? Critic and curator Geeta Kapur, in her talk at "The Feminist Future," discussed the difficulties of being asked to represent diversity at an event that otherwise failed to interrogate ethnicity and race from a feminist point of view; she cast the relative Eurocentrism of feminist art as conceived by the art world not simply as a problem of exclusiveness but as a failure to be sufficiently expansive in imagining what the term "feminism" could mean in our postcolonial moment, when issues of class, race, and unequal development constantly challenge the conception of a unifying, utopian feminist politics. She suggested that the rather predictable title of the session in which she spoke—"Body/Sexuality/Identity"—contained a conjunction of terms that had been worked through a decade earlier in Euro-American feminist discourse and had predetermined the political and historical positions of the speakers by encouraging a focus on politics of the body and politics of representation—on deconstructing the image of woman—as opposed to other defining terms that might question what, exactly, a politics of feminism might mean. By introducing a new set of terms, she felt, such as "citizenship, language, and gender," terms that suggest notions of collectivity, translation, communication, and social spheres, we might open a space for race, ethnicity, and postcolonialism to speak to the project of feminism.[12] An artist such as Nalini Malani, who works primarily in video installation, deploys gender in a mythic sense to address issues of nationalism and citizenship in a postnational moment, interrogating issues of religious violence by refiguring the stereotype of woman as victim. Emily Jacir likewise examines issues of ethnic conflict, the violence of borders, and notions of homeland and belonging in works such as *Crossing Surda (A Record of Going to and from Work)* (2002), which explores the reality of the Israeli-Palestinian border and the way in which gender and nationality inflect the meaning of this almost totally abstract (but deeply consequential) limit by making it concrete: the artist recorded the video work with a camera placed in her handbag as she crossed from the Palestinian territory into Israel, a daily practice for most Palestinians.[13] Neither of these works, the first by an Indian artist and the second by a Palestinian—addresses subjects normally categorized as "feminist," but in most of the world, including the United States, poverty, immigration, refugee status, and armed conflict are pressing feminist issues, if for no other reason than that their effects are felt most gravely by women. Yet they are not generally seen as feminist by American feminists in the same way as, say, reproductive rights, equality, rape, and domestic violence. If we are to take seriously the challenges posed by racial, materialist, and postcolonial critiques of feminist art and feminist criticism, a more mobile or flexible definition of feminist politics is necessary. Just as feminist art may not look like art in the terms with which we have become familiar, it might likewise not look like feminism.

This need for flexibility becomes clear, too, with a group like LTTR, whose artistic practice is in crucial ways starkly different from that of its forbears, even as it is deeply aware of its relation to a historical lineage. The artists' collective, whose name was originally an acronym for "Lesbians to the Rescue," insists first on defining itself as a "feminist genderqueer artist collective with a flexible project oriented practice," indicating a rejection of both a single, formal project and feminism's exclusive identification with femininity: it insists, that is, that feminist politics must go hand in hand with refusing binary categories of gender in favor of a plural one, accommodating transgender and other challenges to that binary, as well as

the possibility of more politically radical definitions of masculinity (that is to say, nonphallic ones).[14] The group publishes an open-call journal and holds launch parties and other events in order to build community, which its members see as carrying on the legacy of early feminist organizing. In the words of member Ulrike Müller:

> LTTR is invested in building a sustainable activist model. We are, however, not engaged in a politics of protest. . . . We're invested in a different, more performative model of politics, the motivating question being what we can do for each other now, in the space and time we share. This kind of politics can be traced back to earlier feminist groups but also was essential for the work of ACT UP. . . . We're actively building feminist (nonpatriarchal) relationships, having fun, negotiating conflicts, sharing pleasure, and shaping queer spaces. My *LTTR* co-editor Emily Roysdon has put this beautifully: "We are not protesting what we don't want, we are performing what we want."[15]

This is quite a different notion of political activism from that which motivated much of the feminist art that came before, and yet, for all the strategic difference, it still draws on the formal or operational solutions that those earlier feminists mined. The publication of the zine, with its D.I.Y. (do it yourself) aesthetic and democratic call for submissions, harks back to the pamphleteering of an earlier generation. Even some of its published submissions—such as Ridykeulous's *Defaced Guerrilla Girls Poster* (2006), which transforms "The Advantages of Being a Woman Artist" into "The Advantages of Being a Lesbian Woman Artist" with vandalism, dirty jokes, and cruel derision—demonstrate an ambivalent but still engaged relationship to past forms of activist art.[16] The pressing question for MoMA, then, is how an object-based institution can accommodate such practices, how it can become a site for community-building and for the utopian re-creation of art worlds. And even more important: when such accommodations do take place, how are their effects to be felt and dispersed by the institution, transforming the institution in the aftermath? LTTR was invited to organize an event, in February 2008, in conjunction with *WACK!* at P.S.1, and the result was an artistic intervention amorphous enough that it hardly registered by conventional museological standards, even in an institution that has historically celebrated such nonstandard mediums as performance and installation works in a curatorial context: hoping to "[create] a space for public dialog, intergenerational exchange, live feminist energy, and evidence of our continued presence," the group transformed P.S.1's event hall into a gathering of artists and nonartists, of people attending the event and unsuspecting museum-goers who were drawn into the room.[17] The event, in the end, was simply a conversation about feminism, art, and community (page 26, no. 14). That a museum was willing to make physical space for such activities—which hark back to the consciousness-raising activities of early feminist organizers—is notable in itself, but the question is not just of real estate: it is important to ask whether such collaborations between artists and institutions might encourage a different approach to issues of gender, equity, and curatorial convention.

These issues will be addressed, are already being addressed, by interventions such as this book, which is not meant simply as a celebration of what The Museum of Modern Art has achieved or a palliative offering in response to the art public's increasing demand for equity within this institution. It is the beginning, it seems—or perhaps the middle, something further along—of MoMA's movement to make its history of modernism more inclusive and therefore more historically accurate. But in the Museum's attempt to "Float the Boat"—to make space for feminism and women artists in a way that takes seriously the challenges that such art poses to the idea of the Museum itself—in the museum's feminist future, there are obstacles posed by the now, the resistances and the realities of the histories and objects that curators have to work with. In 1971 Spero wrote a letter (now in the archives of the Smithsonian Institution) to Lippard: "Dear Lucy," it read, "The enemies of women's liberation in the arts will be crushed. Love, Nancy."[18] Spero may have imagined those enemies to be a set of individuals resistant to the inevitable justice that feminist artists, in that heady first onrush of the early 1970s, imagined or hoped for, but it is clear that now, almost forty years later, the resistances are more likely to be those of institutional protocols and realities. That is not to say that they cannot and should not change; it is rather to acknowledge that change will be difficult, despite the most fervent desires of the people who make up the institution. The revolution has been a long time coming and will probably be achieved with much less violence than Spero was prepared to endure—although she, too, ends her call for revolution with love—but it is happening, we hope, as we speak.

1. Two brief thanks: first, to the participants in a roundtable published in spring 2008—Rosalyn Deutsche, Miwon Kwon, Ulrike Müller, Mignon Nixon, and Senam Okudzeto—whose ideas have shaped my thinking about issues of feminism and curatorial practice; and second, to Alexandra Schwartz and Connie Butler for their warm invitation and endless patience. Thanks, too, to Deborah Kass for bringing Nancy Spero's letter to my attention, and to Silvia Kolbowski for her advice and encouragement. *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution* took place at The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (March 4–July 16, 2007), and at P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, Long Island City, New York (February 12–May 12, 2008); *Global Feminisms* at the Brooklyn Museum of Art (March 23–July 1, 2007); "The Feminist Future: Theory and Practice in the Visual Arts" at The Museum of Modern Art, New York (January 26 and 27, 2007).
2. For a thorough and thoroughly enlightening discussion of the way Women on Waves "tacks between art and politics in much the same way as it moves between actual human rights mission and media-political campaign, legality and piracy, fact and myth," see Carrie Lambert-Beatty, "Twelve Miles: Boundaries of the New Art/Activism," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 33, no. 2 (2008): 309–27. The quotation appears on p. 316.
3. The full transcript of "Reconsidering Feminism: A Year in Review," which took place November 20, 2007, at The Museum of Modern Art, New York, is available at www.moma.org/explore/multimedia/audios/17/247.
4. Helen Molesworth, panel discussion, "Institutionalization of Feminism," at "The Feminist Future," The Museum of Modern Art, New York, January 20, 2007, media.moma.org/audio/2007/pub_prog/feminist_future/8a_1.m4v. Molesworth's comments echo those of Griselda Pollock, "What the Graces Made Me Do. . . . Time, Space and the Archive: Questions of Feminist Method," in *Encounters in the Virtual Feminist Museum: Time, Space and the Archive* (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 9–10.
5. The exclusion of men from both *Global Feminisms* and *WACK!* which seemed to construct feminism as a "women's problem" rather than a set of political positions and tactics that could be engaged by artists of whatever gender, was noted by critics, including Holland Cotter and Carol Armstrong, in their respective reviews of the exhibitions. Cotter, "Feminist Art Finally Takes Center Stage," *New York Times*, January 29, 2007; and Armstrong, "On WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution and Global Feminisms," *Artforum* 45, no. 9: 360–62. This is an especially acute problem for transgender artists, whose work takes up a feminist politics precisely by rejecting the category "woman," alongside the category "man," as a patriarchal and heterosexist category of classification and control.
6. Camille Morineau, introduction to *elles@centrepompidou: Artistes femmes dans le collection du Musée national d'Art moderne, Centre de création industrielle* (Paris: Éditions Centre Pompidou, 2009), p. 16.
7. Ibid., pp. 16–17.
8. Cotter wrote, "Feminist art, which emerged in the 1960s with the women's movement, is the formative art of the last four decades. Scan the most innovative work, by both men and women, done during that time, and you'll find feminism's activist, expansionist, pluralistic trace. Without it identity-based art, crafts-derived art, performance art and much political art would not exist in the form it does, if it existed at all. Much of what we call postmodern art has feminist art at its source." Cotter, "The Art of Feminism as It First Took Shape," *New York Times*, March 9, 2007.
9. On Ann Temkin's rehanging of MoMA's galleries, see Ted Loos, "At MoMA, 'Permanent' Learns to be Flexible," *New York Times*, October 25, 2009.
10. A brochure for *Documenting a Feminist Past: Art World Critique*, including a checklist, is available at moma.org/interactives/exhibitions/2007/feminist_past/index.html.
11. Lucy R. Lippard, *From the Center: Feminist Essays on Women's Art* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1976), p. 126.
12. Geeta Kapur, panel discussion, "Body/Sexuality/Identity," at "The Feminist Future," conference at The Museum of Modern Art, January 27, 2007, www.moma.org/explore/multimedia/videos/16/180.
13. On the work of Nalini Malani and other South Asian women artists reconceiving the terms of feminism, see Kapur, "Gender Mobility: Through the Lens of Five Women Artists in India," in Maura Reilly and Linda Nochlin, eds., *Global Feminisms: New Directions in Contemporary Art* (London: Merrell Publishers, 2007), pp. 79–95.
14. "About LTTR," www.lttr.org/about-lttr.
15. Müller, in Deutsche, D'Souza, Kwon, Müller, Nixon, and Okudzeto, "Feminist Time: A Conversation," *Grey Room* 31 (Spring 2008): 63. Emily Roysdon, quoted in Eva Egermann and Katharina Morawek, "Be a Bossy Bottom!" *Malmoe*, July 9, 2007, www.malmoe.org/artikel/tanzen/1445.
16. Ridykeulous is an artists' collective made up of Nicole Eisenman and A. L. Steiner. *The Advantages of Being a Lesbian Woman Artist* appeared in *LTTR: Positively Nasty*, no. 5 (2006): 32.
17. "LTTR at WACK! A One Day Event at P.S.1," www.lttr.org/eventslttr-at-wack-a-one-day-event-at-ps1.
18. Nancy Spero, letter to Lippard, October 29, 1971. Lucy R. Lippard papers, 1940s–2006. Archives of American Art, The Smithsonian Institution.

EARLY MODERN

Cameron carried out her intention of "recording faithfully the greatness of the inner as well as the features of the outer man" with drive and a sense of purpose.

Julia Margaret Cameron established herself as a leading figure in photography early in the medium's history. Despite the recalcitrant nature of photographic technology at the time—photographers had to coat their glass plates with light-sensitive emulsion moments before they were exposed, then immediately develop and wash them—Cameron achieved a consistent level of beauty in her work, securing her place as one of the great photographers of the nineteenth century.

The daughter of an official of the East India Company (a monopoly that had virtually ruled India since the 1750s) and the granddaughter of French royalists, Cameron was born in Calcutta, was educated primarily in France (where she lived with her grandmother, at Versailles), was married at the age of twenty-three, and gave birth to six children. In 1843 she and her husband, Charles Hay Cameron, settled in Calcutta, where he became president of the Indian Law Commission and a member of the Supreme Council. Upon his retirement five years later, the Cameron family returned to England, living in London, Kent, and Surrey and eventually settling on the Isle of Wight, where their friend Alfred, Lord Tennyson, Queen Victoria's poet laureate, also lived.

Through her family, marriage, and intellectual curiosity, Cameron was well placed within a leading group of English intellectuals, scientists, painters, and writers of the period. Tennyson, the well-known astronomer Sir John Herschel (who also experimented in photographic processes), and the painter George Frederick Watts (who was a kind of mentor to Cameron in the visual arts) all became her subjects. At a time when it was difficult and not altogether respectable for middle-class women to earn a living (or to gain access to higher education), Cameron's privileged position gave her the time and resources to photograph. Most significant, it provided the cultural ambience in which her life as an artist would evolve. But the family was not without financial worry; it has been suggested that Cameron pursued her photographic career to supplement her family's income after losses on her husband's coffee plantations in Ceylon.[1]

Cameron was forty-eight years old when, in 1863, she began making portraits of her family and friends with a camera given to her by her daughter Julia and son-in-law Charles Norman. With a Victorian penchant for collecting, Cameron compiled these in albums, which she presented as gifts to friends and benefactors. There are twelve known albums. Cameron exhibited her photographs in 1864 in the Photographic Society's Exhibition of the Year in London, in which she showed five portraits, and the Ninth Annual Exhibition of the Photographic Society of Scotland in Edinburgh, in which she showed twenty-five pictures. In the summer of 1865 she had her first one-person exhibition, at P. & D. Colnaghi, a print seller that later sold carbon prints of her work. In a career of only fifteen years, she made more than 1,200 photographs, an extraordinary achievement.

Cameron made 275 portraits of men, about a quarter of her known work, the rest being biblical and mythical subjects (no. 2) and portraits of women. The majority of her male subjects were among the most influential and important men of science, the church, and the arts and letters in Victorian England, including the writer Thomas Carlyle, the poets Robert Browning and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and the novelist Anthony Trollope. Cameron carried out her intention of "recording faithfully the greatness of the inner as well as the features of the outer man" with drive and a sense of purpose.[2] She confronted these ostensibly daunting figures in order to make a visual record of them and, more important, an interpretation that would impart some sense of their significance and authority. Cameron photographed her subjects from the shoulders up, and her large-format prints provide almost life-size heads, making them the first close-ups in photographic history. Her subjects' commanding presence is emphasized by her use of raking light, which reveals a face's every detail. The "science" of phrenology—the belief that mental faculties and character traits are indicated by the configurations of the skull—generated great interest in Cameron's lifetime, and she was undoubtedly aware of it. Photographic portraits that unsparingly revealed the contours of a subject's head and face—a high forehead indicated a surplus of reverence, a domed skull meant a large brain, and bags under the eyes demonstrated a mastery of language—might further impart the brilliance of her subjects.

1. *Horace Darwin*. 1868. Albumen silver print, 13 $^{11}/_{16}$ x 10 $^{11}/_{16}$" (34.8 x 27.2 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Shirley C. Burden, by exchange

This portrait of seventeen-year-old Horace Darwin (1868, no. 1), the son of the naturalist Charles, is the only known print from the negative. Charles Darwin and his family visited the Camerons on the Isle of Wight for a six-week vacation in 1868 and rented a cottage from them. Cameron photographed most of the family, including Charles; Horace's older brother, Erasmus; and Horace, whom she particularly liked. She did not, however, photograph Darwin's wife, Emma. As one biographer has written, "She refused to photograph Emma, asserting that women between the ages of eighteen and seventy should never be photographed."[3] Indeed, a review of Cameron's photographs of women reveals that she rarely broke this rule.

Cameron's subject was the ninth of Darwin's ten children and would later work as a civil engineer, establish the successful Cambridge Scientific Society, and become mayor of Cambridge. Here Horace faces the camera but does not look at it. His averted eyes suggest spontaneity and immediacy, qualities such a long sitting would not have provided. His head rests on his hand as if he were lost in thought, but this pose was likely taken because it was easier to keep steady. Centered in the frame, he is silhouetted in the darkness from which he emerges as though crossing the threshold into adulthood, underscoring the sense of his disdainful or shy vulnerability. The effect is at least partially due to the selective focus of the early lens.

The directness of this portrait is modern in its simplicity and bluntness. The photograph relies on Cameron's faith in the medium's capacity to transform what is before the camera into a picture. As with all of her photographs, Cameron indicated her pleasure in photography's complicated relationship to reality when she signed this portrait with the note "Taken from Life."

1. Julian Cox, "To . . . Startle the Eye with Wonder and Delight: The Photographs of Julia Margaret Cameron," in Cox and Colin Ford, *Julia Margaret Cameron: The Complete Photographs* (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2003), p. 41.
2. Julia Margaret Cameron, "Annals of My Glass House," 1874, in *Annals of My Glass House: Photographs by Julia Margaret Cameron*, ed. Violet Hamilton (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1996), p. 15.
3. Ford, "Geniuses, Poets, and Painters: The World of Julia Margaret Cameron," in *Julia Margaret Cameron*, p. 26.

2. *Venus Chiding Cupid and Removing His Wings*. 1872. Albumen silver print, 11 $^{13}/_{16}$ x 11 $^{7}/_{16}$" (30 x 29 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Paul F. Walter

1. *Weberzug* (March of the weavers) from *Ein Weberaufstand* (A weavers' revolt). 1893–97, published 1931. Etching from a portfolio of three lithographs and three etchings, sheet 12 5/16 x 17 5/8" (31.2 x 44.7 cm). Publisher: Alexander von der Becke, Berlin. Printer: Otto Felsing, Berlin. Edition: unknown. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. The Ralph E. Shikes Fund

The life and work of Käthe Kollwitz evolved as inseparable arcs during a period that saw two world wars and Germany in tumultuous transition. Born to a middle-class family in the Prussian city of Königsberg (now Kaliningrad, Russia), Kollwitz studied and later settled in Germany, following the traditional path of marriage and motherhood but also forging a formidable career as an artist, professor, and academy member. Like many women artists before and after her, from Mary Cassatt to Louise Bourgeois and Marlene Dumas, she pursued themes of domesticity while also using her work as a vehicle for social criticism.

While Kollwitz practiced painting and sculpture, she is perhaps best known for her printmaking. As prints are issued in editions, they can be distributed more widely than single artworks, and this possibility of broad dissemination befitted her artistic concerns—workers' rights, war, death, and poverty, particularly as they affected women and children. In the mid-1880s she became deeply influenced by the work and writings of the German artist Max Klinger. While she admired the unique combination of allegory and realism in his highly acclaimed print cycles, she was even more taken with his 1891 treatise, *Malerei und Zeichnung* (Painting and drawing), in which he asserted the primacy of graphic mediums, and black-and-white print cycles in particular, for expressing life's darker subjects and emotional turmoil.

As early as 1888, Kollwitz began making studies for her own print cycle. Her preliminary work on this series was inspired by the struggles of French coal miners, as portrayed in Émile Zola's novel *Germinal* (1885). In 1893, however, Kollwitz saw one of the first productions of Gerhart Hauptmann's controversial play *Die Weber* (The weavers), a dramatic recounting of the1844 armed uprising of weavers in Silesia (today mostly Poland) against poor wages and abominable working conditions, which ended in tragedy (and which would later be cited by Karl Marx as the birth of a German workers' movement). She was so impressed by this story of proletarian revolt that she adopted it as her new subject, producing a series of etchings and lithographs titled *Ein Weberaufstand* (A weavers' revolt) (1893–97).

In *Weberzug* (March of the weavers) (no. 1), a band of workers moves determinedly, if dejectedly, toward the town in which they will attack their employers' homes and warehouses. There seems to be a sense of bleak resignation rather than excitement or true revolutionary fervor, for while some shout with fists in the air, others look grimly resigned as they march along, axes in hand. Among the group are several women, one of whom labors to carry a sleeping child; here the artist compassionately portrays the myriad duties of women, as she would throughout her career. Typical of her work at the time, the print has a very detailed, academic quality, with networks of etched lines that give the workers density, conveying the concreteness of the events we see transpiring. Even so, the images carry the seeds of universality, which would grow as her work progressed. In the title, for instance, she has used the article "a," rather than Hauptmann's "the," suggesting an expansion in subject from a specific historical moment to the general poverty of the working class.

During the initial years of World War I, Kollwitz met with tragedy: her younger son was killed in combat in Flanders, only months after volunteering for military service. This wrenching loss deeply affected her life from that point forward, and she struggled to find professional satisfaction. She had been grappling for years with a series of war prints, trying them first as etchings and then as transfer lithographs. Her breakthrough came when she saw the woodcuts of Ernst Barlach. The resulting portfolio of seven woodcuts, *Krieg* (War) (1921–22), marks a dramatic shift in Kollwitz's work—an abandonment of literary and historical themes in favor of more personal and universal ones. Kollwitz conceived the work not as a narrative cycle, like *Ein Weberaufstand*, but as a series of thematically linked images communicating widely comprehensible ideas about war. Apocalyptic and war-themed print cycles have a history in Europe dating back to the sixteenth century, and Kollwitz's contemporaries, such as Max Beckmann and Otto Dix, made series referring specifically to World War I. She, however, focused not on the harsh realities of battlefield and military life but on their collateral damage: poverty-stricken families, widowed wives, fatherless children, and grieving parents, a role she understood all too well.

Shifting her visual language to match these concerns, Kollwitz began producing large, iconic images. By removing any chronological or geographical details in *Die Mütter* (The mothers) (1921–22, no. 3), for instance, she made an image that can be understood by people in any time or place. Here women band together to form a single, seemingly immovable object against the blank ground of paper. With terror or sorrow in their eyes, they embrace one another and form a protective circle: one clutches an infant to her chest and another pushes her hands out as if to keep away any further bad news, while several children's faces peer out uncomprehendingly. *Die Mütter* shows how far she had traveled philosophically since advocating armed revolution in *Weberzug*. As she wrote in June of 1921:

I have been through a revolution, and I am convinced that I am no revolutionist. My childhood dream of dying on the barricades will hardly be fulfilled, because I should hardly mount a barricade now that I know what they are like in reality. And so I know now what an illusion I lived for so many years. I thought I was a revolutionary and I was an evolutionary.[1]

The rise of the National Socialists in the early 1930s drove Kollwitz's personal and professional decline further. Due to her political opposition, she was forced to resign from the Prussian Academy of Arts and from her teaching position, and exhibitions of her work were met with increasing hostility. Having lost her studio, and now installed in a communal workshop, she began her last print cycle, a series of eight lithographs, *Tod* (Death) (1937). Each of the scenarios features a personification of death, usually a skeletonlike figure, interacting with mothers, children, or the elderly. There is a marked brutality to some of the images, an "[objection] to . . . losing the flower of Germany's youth, those who had not already 'lived the best part' of their lives."[2] Having met much grief in her life, Kollwitz had developed a stance toward death that was more nuanced and perhaps more deeply and mournfully felt. In *Ruf des Todes* (Call of death) (no. 2) an old woman turns, seemingly without fear or distress, toward the hand of the unseen figure touching her gently on the shoulder. The old woman is Kollwitz herself, witness to a lifetime of economic, social, political, and personal turmoil, and ready to answer the call.

1. Käthe Kollwitz, *The Diary and Letters of Kaethe Kollwitz*, ed. Hans Kollwitz, trans. Richard and Clara Winston (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1988), pp. 99–100.
2. Dora Apel, "'Heroes' and 'Whores': The Politics of Gender in Weimar Antiwar Imagery," *Art Bulletin* 79, no. 3 (September 1997): 380.

2. *Ruf des Todes* (Call of death) from *Tod* (Death). c. 1937. One from a portfolio of eight lithographs, sheet 25 1/8 x 21 1/8" (63.8 x 53.6 cm). Publisher: Alexander von der Becke, Berlin. Printer: unknown. Edition: 100. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchase Fund

3. *Die Mütter* (The mothers) from *Krieg* (War). 1921–22, published 1923. One from a portfolio of seven woodcuts, sheet 18 9/16 x 26 1/8" (47.2 x 66.4 cm). Publisher: Emil Richter, Dresden. Printer: probably Fritz Voigt, Berlin. Edition: 100. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of the Arnhold Family in memory of Sigrid Edwards

1. **D. W. Griffith** (American, 1875–1948). *An Unseen Enemy*. 1912. 35mm film (black and white, silent), 14 min. (incomplete). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. The Biograph Collection; preserved by The Museum of Modern Art with support from The Lillian Gish Trust for Film Preservation

Dorothy Gish and **Lillian Gish**

LILLIAN GISH (American, 1893–1993) / JENNY HE

"A movie star since movies began," actress Lillian Diana de Guiche was born the same year that Thomas Edison introduced the motion picture to the American public.[1] This coincidence, however random, proved fateful for Gish, a defining artist of early film history. Known as the First Lady of the Silent Screen, Gish made her most significant cinematic contributions during the silent film era, but the prolific actress enjoyed a career that went five decades beyond her last silent film. Over a seventy-five-year career, Gish made more than one hundred films, almost half of which reside in the collection of The Museum of Modern Art, including landmark works such as her first film, *An Unseen Enemy* (1912, no. 1), and her last silent picture, *The Wind* (1928, no. 2).

Gish spent her entire life acting—on screen, stage, and television. Her persona is one of Victorian womanhood—genteel, vulnerable, and innocent—often reflected in Madonna-like characters (*The Mothering Heart*, *The Battle at Elderbush Gulch*, *Intolerance*, *Way Down East*, *The Scarlet Letter*). Her heroines are unadulterated in both innocence and madness, adversity and triumph, as they deflect wanton men hell-bent on defiling their virgin characters (*The Birth of a Nation*, *Way Down East*, *Orphans of the Storm*, *The Wind*). Cast often in melodramas, Gish played characters who tenaciously fought to gain redemption after the violation of their virtue.

Gish's doe eyes, button nose, and pixie smile belied a charisma and passion that materialized in front of the camera in her performances. Adept at both comedy and tragedy (often in the same film), Gish possessed an emotional range that could alternate between restrained (*Broken Blossoms*) and grand (*Orphans*), with everything from subtle facial nuances to frenzied body movements in full hysteria in her acting repertoire. In all her facets she personified endurance. Her characters—put-upon women facing tribulations from the injustices of the French Revolution (*Orphans*), the persecution of Puritanical society (*The Scarlet Letter*), and the ravages of nature in the American West (*The Wind*)—endured in the face of betrayal, rape, death, and abandonment. Often characterized as a waif, Gish was a dichotomy of fragility and resilience. This was true of her life offscreen as well as onscreen. Fellow female film pioneer Frances Marion knew her to be as "fragile as a steel rod."[2]

Gish was a woman holding her own in the early days of Hollywood, and she amassed enough clout and influence to call her own shots. As a vocal proponent of film preservation, she made it her lifelong mission to ensure that her work and the work of all film artists would survive. "Art is the most lasting product of a civilization," Gish said, and "the only lasting aristocracy."[3] Gish contributed greatly to the aristocracy of her art, and her legacy as an iconic figure in film history will also endure.

After debuting in a production of *In Convict's Stripes* in 1902, Gish began acting in touring troupes in New York City. Her tenure in New York and on Broadway led to a friendship with fellow actress Gladys Smith, who years later would change Gish's life through a chance meeting with film director D. W. Griffith. Attending a nickelodeon showing of *Lena and the Geese* (1912), Gish immediately recognized the actress in the film as her old friend Gladys. Spurred by the star sighting, Gish, along with her sister, Dorothy, and their mother, Mary, decided to look up her friend by visiting the studio that filmed *Lena,* American Mutoscope and Biograph Company, located in Union Square. The visit not only reconnected the Gishes with Smith (now Mary Pickford) but also introduced them to Griffith, who was immediately struck by Lillian's "exquisite ethereal beauty."[4] He ushered the sisters into a casting session for *An Unseen Enemy*, a one-reeler about two sisters fending off a larcenous maid and her safe-robbing accomplice. Impressed with their ability to respond to direction, Griffith recast the film with the Gishes, even though he had already begun rehearsals with other actresses, and began shooting Lillian's first screen appearance the next day.

Gish became one of Biograph's stock players and appeared in more than thirty Biograph films over the next two years, including significant shorts such as *The Mothering Heart* (1913) and *The Battle at Elderbush Gulch* (1913). Griffith left Biograph in 1914, joined several other film companies—Reliance-Majestic, Triangle Film Corporation, Famous Players-Lasky (Paramount), and United Artists—then eventually built his own studio in Mamaroneck, New York. Gish followed him, and under his tutelage she developed her acting talents and honed her screen persona. G. W. Bitzer, the director's longtime cameraman, recalled that "Griffith conditioned [Gish] to the part she was to play, and once she had the action in mind, she wouldn't forget or deviate by so much as a flicker of the eye. Her interpretation would be as directed, without waste of precious film."[5] Gish practiced something akin to Method acting (long before the phrase was coined) and studied dance choreography, but her ability to invent on the spot, born out of in-the-moment emotion, meshed perfectly with Griffith's directorial style. The chemistry between director and actress resulted in some of Gish's greatest performances, in silent cinema classics such as *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), *Intolerance* (1916), *Broken Blossoms* (1919), and *Way Down East* (1920). Gish also matured professionally behind the camera. When Griffith was filming *The Love Flower* (1920) in Florida, he entrusted the care of his studio to Gish.[6] He also encouraged her to

2. **Victor Sjöström** (Swedish, 1879–1960). *The Wind*. 1928. 35mm film (black and white, silent), 72 min. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired from MGM
Lillian Gish

make her own feature film, stating that Gish knew as much about making pictures as he did, and more about acting.[7]

Orphans of the Storm (1922, no. 3), the last of Gish's collaborations with Griffith, marked a turning point in her career. She convinced Griffith to make the film, based on Adolphe d'Ennery's play *The Two Orphans* (1874)—although he had intended his next project to be Goethe's *Faust*—and to cast her sister as Louise (his first choice was Mae Marsh).[8] During rehearsal for the climactic scene at the guillotine, in which Gish's Henriette seems to be moments from certain death, Gish disagreed with Griffith's direction and felt that the scene required a "greater depth of emotion." After rehearsing the scene her way, Gish recalled, "Without a word, he walked up to me, sank to one knee and kissed my hand before the company. 'Thank you,' he said."[9] In nine short years, she had evolved from ingenue to Hollywood powerhouse.[10]

Gish pressured MGM to make *The Scarlet Letter* (1926), based on Nathaniel Hawthorne's book, which had been blacklisted by the censorship office of the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America due to outcry from church and women's groups. Undaunted, she took it upon herself to secure clearance for the film. No roadblock was insurmountable for Gish if she believed in a project. For her swan song to the silent era she chose *The Wind*, based on a novel by Dorothy Scarborough. The actress hand-picked her director (Victor Sjöström) and leading man (Lars Hanson) and was asked by MGM's Irving Thalberg to produce. Gish's career continued over the next sixty years—her sound work is represented in the Museum's collection by films such as Charles Laughton's *The Night of the Hunter* (1955) and her last film, Lindsay Anderson's *The Whales of August* (1987)—but her legacy was long secured by her first sixteen years in film.

On June 25, 1935, The Museum of Modern Art presented to the public its Film Library (now the Department of Film), whose mission was "to preserve [and] exhibit . . . all types of films, so that the film may be studied and enjoyed as any other one of the arts is studied and enjoyed," with Iris Barry as its inaugural curator.[11] Gish's relationship with MoMA's Department of Film, like her relationship with film itself, began at its inception. It was through Barry, in the mid-1930s, that Gish first heard of the nascent concept of film preservation.[12] Inspired by Barry and her own belief in the value of film as an art form, Gish maintained frequent correspondence with the department throughout her life in their joint efforts toward film preservation. As Eileen Bowser, a former curator in the Department of Film, noted, "Convinced of the power of film to change the world," Gish was a "dedicated fighter for every cause associated with the art of the film."[13] Not only was the actress instrumental in the donation of scripts, films, and funds to the Museum, but she also valued the input of its film curators, with whom she discussed her projects and from whom she sought advice regarding film preservation.[14]

The acquisition of the D. W. Griffith Collection—one of the first major film collections to enter the Film Library—might not have occurred had it not been for Gish's intervention. In the summer of 1935 Barry and her husband, John Abbott (then the Film Library's director), visited Hollywood in an attempt to convince directors, actors, and studios to deposit films with the Museum. When they approached Griffith, he declined. In 1938, when D. W. Griffith, Inc., was in receivership and the director's films were on the verge of being lost, Gish interceded and convinced Griffith to entrust his films and legacy to the Museum.

3. **D. W. Griffith** (American, 1875–1948). *Orphans of the Storm*. 1922. 35mm film (black and white, silent), 142 min. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired from the artist; preserved by The Museum of Modern Art with support from The Lillian Gish Trust for Film Preservation
Lillian Gish (on scaffold)

In 1954, when actor Charles Laughton set out to make his directorial debut, he prepared for *The Night of the Hunter* by screening Griffith films at MoMA. An admirer of Gish since Griffith's *Broken Blossoms*, Laughton sought her out for the pivotal role of Rachel Cooper—an evolution of her silent film heroines—who protects two vulnerable yet resilient orphans from a soulless preacher intent on their destruction. Richard Griffith, then curator of the Film Library, acted as an intermediary between Gish and Laughton during their discussions surrounding the film.[15]

From 1963 to 1980 Gish undertook an ambitious endeavor to tour universities, libraries, and museums throughout the world, lecturing on the art of film, concentrating on the period from 1900 to 1928. In preparation for these lectures, the actress engaged in constant dialogue with the Museum regarding film material and preservation methods. In exchange, Gish took her knowledge to the public and provided the Museum's Film Preservation Program with resounding advocacy.[16]

It was fitting that when Gish became the fourteenth life member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences on November 25, 1982, the ceremony was held at MoMA. The celebration of her devotion and contribution to the art of the motion picture took place at the institution that continues to collect, preserve, study, and exhibit her work.

1. "Lillian Gish, 99, a Movie Star Since Movies Began, Is Dead," *New York Times*, March 1, 1993, p. A1.
2. Frances Marion, quoted in Cari Beauchamp, *Without Lying Down: Frances Marion and the Powerful Women of Early Hollywood* (New York: Scribner, A Lisa Drew Book, 1997), p. 119.
3. Lillian Gish, address to "Government and the Arts" session, Centennial Celebration of the American Institute of Architects, Washington, D.C., May 15, 1957.
4. D. W. Griffith, quoted in Gish, with Ann Pinchot, *Lillian Gish: The Movies, Mr. Griffith, and Me* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1969), p. 35.
5. G. W. Bitzer, quoted in Charles Silver, *Lillian Gish* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1980), p. 5.
6. Beauchamp, *Without Lying Down*, p. 119.
7. Gish's only directorial effort was *Remodeling Her Husband* (1920), a film that has been lost. Silver, *Lillian Gish*, p. 10.
8. Charles Affron relates these events in *Lillian Gish: Her Legend, Her Life* (New York: Scribner, A Lisa Drew Book, 2001), p. 153.
9. Gish, with Pinchot, *Lillian Gish*, p. 244.
10. In 1925, after a fierce bidding war to sign the actress, MGM placed Gish under a studio contract that gave her script approval.
11. Mary Lea Bandy, "Nothing Sacred," in John Elderfield, ed., *Studies in Modern Art 5: The Museum of Modern Art at Mid-Century: Continuity and Change* (New York, The Museum of Modern Art, 1995), p. 82.
12. Gish, testimony to Committee on Government Relations, transcribed in *Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Government Information and Individual Rights*, June 19, 1979, p. 61.
13. Eileen Bowser, quoted in Silver, *Lillian Gish*, p. 3.
14. Iris Barry, letter to Gish, New York, May 18, 1950. Lillian Gish Letters, Film Study Center Collection, The Museum of Modern Art, New York.
15. Richard Griffith, wire to Charles Laughton, New York, July 30, 1954. Lillian Gish Letters, Film Study Center Collection, The Museum of Modern Art, New York.
16. Bowser, letter to Gish, New York, May 11, 1972. Lillian Gish Letters, Film Study Center Collection, The Museum of Modern Art, New York. In this letter Bowser provides information about films in the Museum's collection to assist Gish in her lectures and thanks the actor for her support of MoMA's Film Preservation Program.

1. *La Prose du Transsibérien et de la petite Jehanne de France*, by Blaise Cendrars. 1913. Illustrated book with pochoir, sheet 6' 9 5/8" x 14 1/4" (207.4 x 36.2 cm). Publisher: Éditions des Hommes Nouveaux, Paris. Printer: unknown. Edition: 150 announced; 60–100 printed. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchase

SONIA DELAUNAY-TERK (French, born Russia. 1885–1979) / JODI HAUPTMAN

Looking back at age ninety-three to her early career, Sonia Delaunay-Terk described how her artistic practice worked differently yet in tandem with that of her husband, Robert Delaunay. "Robert," she wrote, "had been shooting off rockets in all directions—Back on earth I had gathered the falling sparks of the fireworks. I tended the more intimate and transient fires of everyday life, while silently continuing important work."[1] This important work—explorations in an abstract language of color and contrast—was rooted in the domestic but evoked life in the city; was constructed from mere scraps but contemplated fragmentation itself as a strategy; was anti-monumental but functioned as monuments to her time; was quiet but gave voice to contemporary ideas. Indeed, Delaunay-Terk's efforts to combine different worlds—familial and metropolitan, theoretical and functional, maternal and professional—may have readied her to speak to the defining characteristic of her day: the simultaneous experience of disparate events, images, and sounds.

Early on, Delaunay-Terk fused radical pictorial thinking and function in a host of interventions into the household, from curtains and quilts (no. 3) to lamp shades and boxes. These experiments in fabric-and-paper collage eventually offered a means of forging relationships beyond her home, the most important of which was with the writer Blaise Cendrars. The Delaunays met Cendrars in early 1913, through their friend and compatriot Guillaume Apollinaire. For his first visit to the Delaunays' home, Cendrars brought his recently completed poem *Les Pâques à New York*. Sonia was so taken with the work that she set out to create a cover and binding for it. Rhythmic and cacophonous, balanced and askew, Delaunay-Terk's suede-and-paper housing captured the poem's sensations.[2]

Soon after, Cendrars brought Delaunay-Terk a new work, *La Prose du Transsibérien et de la petite Jehanne de France*, an epic text that describes a journey across time and space. Cendrars's narrator (and alter ego) sets out on the train from Moscow to the Pacific coast accompanied by a young prostitute. Along the way he encounters heartrending visions, from the "one thousand and three bell towers" of Moscow to the "gaping wounds" and "amputated limbs" of the "pesthouses."[3] He is buffeted in body by the violent thrusts of the train, optically by a world perceived only as shards, and psychically by the repetition, expansion, and contraction of time itself. "Overwhelmed by the beauty of the poem," Delaunay-Terk explained, "I undertook to illustrate it."[4]

Combining words with images, the authors completely rethought the appearance, function, and use of the traditional bound volume or the luxurious *livre d'artiste*. The book comprises a two-meter-long sheet (joined together from four smaller ones) that folds in half lengthwise and then top to bottom, like an accordion, into twenty-two panels (no. 1).[5] Images, rendered by pochoir, a stencil technique, run down the left side, and text down the right. The poem is printed in various fonts, type sizes, and colors, with a mix of uppercase and lowercase letters, and blocks of text shift in spacing and in justification from left to right to center—all of which creates a reading experience defined by disruption, acclimation, and reinterruption, far from the intimacy of a handheld text and the linearity of turning one page after another.

Announcing the publication in a promotional card (no. 2) as the "premier livre simultané," Delaunay-Terk and Cendrars launched themselves into the contemporary debates on the ownership and meaning of the term "simultaneity" that pervaded the avant-garde movements of the time. From Post-Impressionism's exploration of the optical effects produced by adjacent hues, Futurist artists, for example, exploited small brushstrokes and contrasting colors to reveal simultaneity as the fusion of past and present and the passage of time, while for artists associated with Cubism simultaneity meant the juxtaposition of different views of a subject within a single composition. Similar differences in conception and approach provoked heated disputes among writers like Apollinaire, Jacques Barzun, and Cendrars himself.[6]

In its form and content, *Transsibérien* offers its own take—a manifesto even—on simultaneity as a concept, theory, and strategy. In Cendrars's words, "Simultaneous contrast is depth perceived. . . . Depth is the new inspiration."[7] Along these lines, the book's opening panel offers up flatness and surface as a foil for depth and immersion. The Michelin map printed before the work's title and text accurately demarcates the train's path from west to east but is a mere graph of the journey. The poem and pictures that follow provide an immersive experience: sights, colors, sounds, smells, textures, tastes. While the map's route is linear and progressive, the text is circular and messy; time and space are impossible to demarcate or define. Delaunay-Terk's images provide a similar effect. In certain passages, soft- and hard-edged abstract forms respond and connect to the protagonist's tale, but in others, shapes and colors float freely, unmoored and overlapping like colored

2. *Premier Livre simultané*. 1913. Pochoir announcement for *La Prose du Transsibérien et de la petite Jehanne de France*, by Blaise Cendrars, sheet 3 13/16 x 13 7/16" (9.7 x 34.2 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York

fabric. The reader is thus drawn in narratively, optically, and even physically (the act of unfolding and folding the book results in colored hills and valleys that project out into the reader's space and give the pictures body and dimension).

This notion of immersion is embodied in the work's final and most important image, the Eiffel Tower, a symbol of modernity for the authors' generation and a representation of their profound ambitions for the book (it was to be printed "in an edition attaining the height of the Eiffel Tower").[8] Although reduced in size and shape to a few strokes of red pigment, the tower is nonetheless instantly recognizable. In the neighboring text, Cendrars describes Paris: "City of the incomparable Tower of the Rack and the Wheel." Instead of setting the tower next to the Ferris wheel, a view familiar from the 1900 Exposition, Delaunay-Terk depicts the tower piercing the wheel. In this small gesture of depth—one thing inside another—the authors' notion of simultaneity is once again conveyed.

Cendrars and Delaunay-Terk's simultaneity is, most of all, an *immersion* of one thing into another: a melding of words and pictures, color and form, reading and seeing, bodies and cities. This degree of penetration and exchange would have had special appeal to Delaunay-Terk. With a child in tow and a household to run, her art-making was necessarily integrated into her daily tasks, from decorating her apartment to hosting art gatherings to collaborating with poets, printmakers, and industrial designers to establishing her own textile business, the Atelier Simultané. Delaunay-Terk engaged with simultaneity not only as a technique or a method but as an attitude, a life practice.

This practice can best be seen in what she called "simultaneous dresses." Pieced together from bits of fabric of varying shapes, sizes, and colors, these ambulatory collages were propositions for new, modern clothing. Sporting the frocks herself, Delaunay-Terk emblematized the simultaneity of her work and her life as she collapsed color and form, surface and depth, movement and stasis, artist and object in her own body.

3. *Untitled (Couverture).* 1911. Remnants of used fabric, 43.7 x 32.3" (111 x 82 cm). Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne. Gift of Sonia Delaunay and Charles Delaunay

1. Sonia Delaunay, *Nous irons jusqu'au soleil* (Paris: Éditions Robert Laffont, 1978), p. 16; translated in Sherry A. Buckberrough, "An Art of Unexpected Contrasts," in *Sonia Delaunay: A Retrospective* (Buffalo, N.Y.: The Buffalo Fine Arts Academy, 1980), pp. 102–3.
2. Delaunay-Terk made covers for other poetic works in 1913–14, including Jules Romains's *Puissances de Paris* (1911), Ricciotto Canudo's *Les Transplantés* (1913), and Guillaume Apollinaire's *L'Hérésiarque et Cie* (1911).
3. Translated in Walter Albert, *Selected Writings of Blaise Cendrars* (New York: New Directions, 1966), pp. 67, 93, 95, and 93.
4. Dealunay-Terk, quoted in Sherry A. Buckberrough, "A Biographical Sketch: Eighty Years of Creativity," in *Sonia Delaunay: A Retrospective*, p. 31.
5. Marjorie Perloff has written the most complete account of *Transsibérien* in *The Futurist Moment: Avant-Garde, Avant Guerre, and the Language of Rupture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), pp. 2–43. This text is indebted to her brilliant analysis.
6. For accounts of simultaneity and the debates around it, see Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space: 1880–1918* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983); S. P. Horrex, "Blaise Cendrars and the Aesthetic of Simultaneity," *Dada/Surrealism* 6 (1976): 46–58; Monique Chefdor, "*Blaise Cendrars et le simultanéisme*," *Europe* 566 (June 1976): 24–29; and Apollinaire, "*Simultanéisme-librettisme*," *Les Soirées de Paris*, June 15, 1914, pp. 322–25.
7. Blaise Cendrars, "Modernities: Delaunay," 1919, in Chefdor, ed., *Modernities and Other Writings by Blaise Cendrars* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), p. 102.
8. Perloff, *The Futurist Moment*, p. 2. It is interesting that the year of the *Transsibérien*'s publication, the Eiffel Tower transmitted "the first time signal around the world," thus bringing together disparate temporalities. Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space*, pp. 13–14.

1. Illustration of Asta Nielsen for an unknown magazine, n.d. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Department of Film Study Center Files

ASTA NIELSEN (Danish, 1881–1972) / JYTTE JENSEN

Propelled by the enormous popularity of her first film, *Afgrunden* (*The Abyss*), made in her native Denmark, Asta Nielsen came to Germany in 1911. She was met at the train station by thirty thousand adoring Berliners. A quarter of a century later, when she left Germany—the country she had called her second home and where most of her film career had taken place—it was also due to widespread popularity, but this time her worldwide fame brought her trouble. It was 1937, and she had been invited to tea with Adolf Hitler, who attempted to coax her back into film acting, which she had left in 1932 to continue acting on the German stage. As she tells it, Hitler argued that he could utter two thousand words that no one in the international arena would understand, whereas she could make one gesture and conquer the world. Her response was: "This gesture?" as she mocked the "Heil Hitler" salute.[1] After that she had no future in Germany, and she left Berlin to retire in Denmark.

Between these two significant points lie seventy films and the creative, exciting, and exhausting life of the first female international star, who was not only integral to shaping the language of the new cinematic art form but also influenced the image of womanhood in the twentieth century.

Well into the late 1920s, when movies were still silent, it was possible for a small country whose language was not widely recognized beyond its borders, but which had a pioneering spirit, to produce moving pictures that would appeal to audiences around the world. Denmark had already established an internationally successful, well-respected film industry when Asta Nielsen's first film appeared in 1910.[2] *Afgrunden* was intended by its first-time writer-director, Urban Gad, to attract attention to his female lead, so that she could get better parts as a stage actress. But when the film premiered, the day after her twenty-ninth birthday, she suddenly had an entirely different career before her, one she would explore to its fullest extent with prodigious talent and an iron will.

Afgrunden already exhibits several of the characteristics that would soon make Asta Nielsen recognizable, inimitable, and adored: her ability to communicate inner, often tortured emotions through perfectly controlled facial expressions, particularly the uncanny expressiveness of her enormous eyes (so well captured in semi–close-ups, new to film); to articulate different emotions within a scene as well as develop an evolving characterization in scenes following one another, thus taking advantage of the artistic potential of multireel films; and to utilize her entire body as an instrument to seduce and control, as evidenced in the famously sensual "gaucho dance" scene. International fame followed *Afgrunden*, which was lauded for its artfully displayed eroticism in the midst of early cinema's comedic and dramatic-literary productions. Thanks to Asta Nielsen's performance, the film was as much a passion play as an erotic drama, perfectly calibrated to balance the inner and outer turmoil of her character in a poetic language that suited the medium (as well as, miraculously, allowing the film to slip past the censors in most countries).

A film diva was born. She made four more films with Gad within the year, partly in Denmark and partly in Germany. The popularity of these films convinced her to pursue her career in Germany, where she was offered an entire studio exclusively for the making of her films.[3] Here the possibilities were altogether greater, the stakes higher, than they had been in Denmark.

In Germany the actress quickly became known as *Die Asta* (The Asta), a category in and of herself. She made her first thirty-two films with Gad, whom she took with her to produce the ideas and framework for the films, raise money for the Asta brand, and otherwise leave her to develop her on-screen characters in seemingly intuitive symbiosis with the camera lens. Asta Nielsen never gave much credit to any of the directors with whom she worked, not even the more famous ones such as Carl Froelich, Robert Wiene, and Ernst Lubitsch, who followed on the heels of Gad. She felt they didn't understand her uniqueness, the "special something" she brought to the screen. Consequently, from 1916 on she established her own production companies to exercise artistic control and choose projects that would give life to a distinctive gallery of women—young and old, poor and rich, but always strong and possessed of tremendous conviction and passion. *Die Asta* never played the victim, even when her character was one. She developed a "natural" acting style appropriate to the naturalistic quality of the film medium and honed it in countless roles, comedic as well as dramatic; she was as committed to finding the right expression for the scheming teenager (a role she would play successfully well into her thirties) as she was for the femme fatale or the dying mother. She exerted her influence on decor, costumes, and even film promotion to assure the greatest exposure of her efforts to create film art and to connect with all kinds of moviegoers.

Her popularity easily crossed barriers of class as well as gender: men adored her (she was the preferred pinup during World War I by soldiers on *both* sides), and women of all ages idolized her as an example of the *neue Frau* (modern woman).[4] The movies helped

2. **Svend Gade** (Danish, 1877–1952). **Heinz Schall** (German, 1872–?). *Hamlet*. 1920. Film (black and white, silent), 115 min. The Museum of Modern Art, New York
Asta Nielsen

bring vividly to life the evolving definition of women's roles throughout the Western world: a new feminine ideal that was perhaps especially needed in Germany, a country depressed and demoralized after World War I and eager to establish a new identity. *Die Asta*'s astonishing range of individualized portraits of rebellious, passionate, unconventional women perfectly matched the spirit of the moment.

One of the first films acquired in 1935 by Iris Barry, the first director of what was then called The Museum of Modern Art's Film Library, was *Hamlet* (1920, no. 2), starring Asta Nielsen as the Danish prince.[5] She had established a production company (Art-Film, with offices at 27 William Street in New York, as well as Germany) to fulfill her ambition to play Hamlet, though not as Shakespeare wrote the part. In this early, radical interpretation of the play, Hamlet is a woman who has been raised as a man in order to inherit the throne. The actress brings Hamlet to life by externalizing his masculinity in a swagger; a stiff, upright body posture; and sharp, decisive arm and hand movements—a person playing at being male. It is an astonishing performance that presents the prince in an invigorated, gender-bending modern light, and it proved to be Asta Nielsen's biggest success in the United States; in Europe it was, uncharacteristically, panned by the critics.

The actress-producer's timing was right for the US, where the suffragette movement had finally triumphed, and the reshaping of this classic text into a protofeminist story beautifully fit a certain American ideal of the modern heroic character. The restless energy and edginess with which Asta Nielsen envisioned the prince were projected in a complex symbiosis of maleness and femaleness that was absorbed into her dynamic screen presence. Compared to American stars of the period, the actress in many of her other roles was too odd-looking, too old, too successful, and not a little frightening, as she gave life to sexual, passionate, intelligent women with minds of their own. But because as Hamlet she was playing at embodying a mercurial, intelligent *male* character, the performance allowed the American public and critical establishment to fall comfortably under *Die Asta*'s spell.

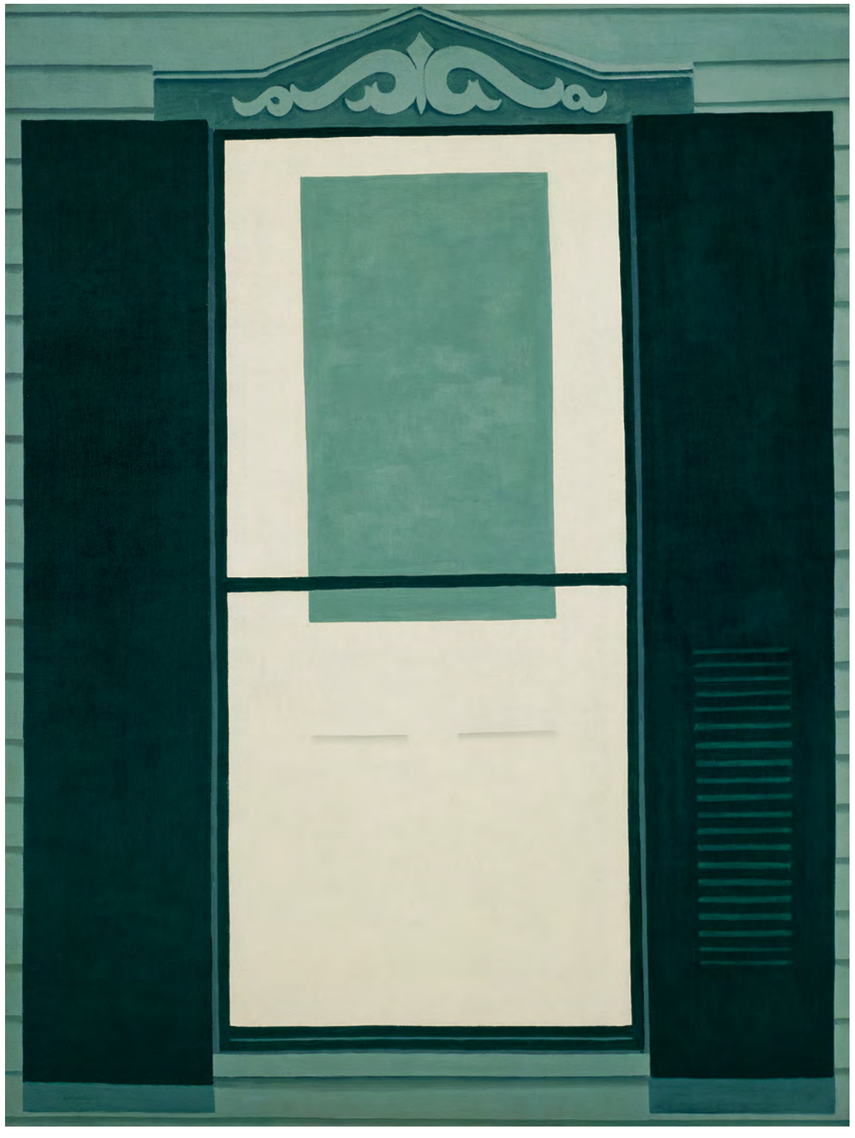
One of the high points of later silent cinema and perhaps the only genuine filmic masterpiece of Asta Neisen's career, *Die freudlose Gasse* (*The Joyless Street*) (no. 3) was directed by G. W. Pabst in 1925. It is the only one of her films in which she did not appear as the female lead. In the American version, which was heavily edited, that honor went to newcomer Greta Garbo, a fellow Scandinavian who would quickly become a star in the US.[6] Asta Nielsen's performance as an aging streetwalker losing her man to a younger woman is characterized by minimal external gestures. When we first encounter her, her whole body projects dejection and hurt. As she prepares for confrontation, she appears still and stiff from the effort of concealing her thwarted passions. Entering the room with her former lover, she holds her head high, but her wide-open eyes darting frantically around reveal her inner turmoil, soon to boil over and lead to devastating tragedy. The image of the stone-faced prostitute being led away, her body drained of life, adds great depth to the vignette (no matter how the scene was butchered by the censors). The character's passion and the actress's consummate skill at eliciting our compassion linger long after the scene has ended.

Although Asta Nielsen's first sound film, *Unmögliche Liebe* (*Crown of Thorns*), garnered a respectable amount of attention in 1932, she chose to pursue her stage career in the years before she retired to Denmark in 1937. The art of cinema had changed, and many of the medium's technical developments did not suit her acting style. Even as early as *Rausch* (*Intoxication*), in 1919, she complained that her scenes were not long enough: Lubitsch, being a modern director, used montage and cut more often than she liked.[7] The audience had changed as well, as movies increasingly became the domain of younger people, especially in the by-now-dominant American cinema, in which many of the female stars were teenagers.

3. **G. W. Pabst** (Austrian, 1885–1967). 1925. *Die freudlose Gasse* (*The Joyless Street*). 35mm film (black and white, silent), 125 min. The Museum of Modern Art, New York
Asta Nielsen

No one who has experienced Asta Nielsen on a screen will forget her magic. Her role in securing a place for cinema as an art form is substantial, and her proper place as "The Silent Muse" was expressed with appropriately definitive eloquence by the French poet Guillaume Apollinaire: "She is Everything! She is the Drunkard's vision and the lonely Man's Dream."[8]

1. *Den talende Muse: Samtaler med Asta Nielsen* (*Asta Nielsen: The Talking Muse*), directed by Torben Skjødt Jensen (Point of No Return Productions in collaboration with The Danish Film Museum and DR-Documentar, 1996).
2. Asta Nielsen, *Den tiende Muse*, 2 vols. (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1945–46).
3. Marguerite Engberg, *Filmstjernen Asta Nielsen* (Århus, Denmark: Klim, 1999).
4. Antonia Lant and Ingrid Periz, eds., *Red Velvet Seat: Women's Writing on the First Fifty Years of Cinema* (London: Verso, 2006), p. 40.
5. STAR database of archival holdings, Department of Film, The Museum of Modern Art, New York.
6. This discussion relates to the contemporary release version (and the print in MoMA's collection), which was heavily censored by the Weimar-era government and in which Asta Nielsen's role was drastically cut. An extensive 1999 restoration by the Filmmuseum in Munich re-created the film's complex narrative and restored Asta Nielsen's role as an equal costar with Garbo.
7. Nielsen, *Den tiende Muse*, vol. 2, *Filmen*, p. 127.
8. Guillaume Apollinaire, quoted in Pablo Diaz, *Asta Nielsen: Eine Biographie unserer populären Künstlerin* (Berlin: Verlag der Lichtbild-Bühne, 1920), p. 7.



1. *Farmhouse Window and Door*. October 1929. Oil on canvas, 40 x 30" (101.6 x 76.2 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired through the Richard D. Brixey Bequest

O'Keeffe's composite image complicates relationships between inside and outside, interior and exterior, and public and private, while deliberately playing with the similarities and differences between a door and a window, a door within a window, a window within a door, and the relation of both to the flat, rectangular shape of her canvas.

Georgia O'Keeffe's painting *Farmhouse Window and Door* (1929, no. 1) arrived at The Museum of Modern Art on April 20, 1945. It was offered for purchase by O'Keeffe's husband, the legendary photographer and promoter of modern art Alfred Stieglitz.[1] Six days later, on April 26, the painting was presented to the Committee on the Museum Collections by James Johnson Sweeney, then director of the Museum's Department of Painting and Sculpture and the work's chief champion and advocate. The Museum needed an important work by O'Keeffe, argued Sweeney, who considered her one of America's most significant modern artists, and this was the best available.[2] The Committee voted to acquire the painting, and O'Keeffe's austere architectural portrait of the Stieglitz family's Lake George farmhouse in upstate New York became part of the collection.

In the minutes from the meeting, O'Keeffe's painting is referred to as *Lake George Window*, although the handwritten label Stieglitz had affixed to its backing and the receipt issued upon its arrival at the Museum indicated its title as *Farm House* [*sic*] *Window and Door*.[3] There is no explanation to be found in the Museum's archives of why this slight yet arguably significant modification was made, leaving us to speculate whether it was Sweeney who coined the simpler, shorter title for the work, or Stieglitz, or another party. What is certain, however, is that from the April 26 meeting on, *Lake George Window* and not *Farmhouse Window and Door* was the title used at MoMA for the work. O'Keeffe herself, when asked in October 1947 about which of the two titles she preferred, replied that she didn't care, a response countered by her own meticulously maintained records, in which the work is consistently referred to as *Farmhouse Window and Door*.[4]

What are the substantive differences, if any, between "Lake George Window" and "Farmhouse Window and Door"? And why does it seem important at this historical juncture, more than sixty years later and despite the artist's expressed indifference, to revert to the title that came with the work? First and most crucially, the subject denoted by "Lake George Window" is singular, while "Farmhouse Window and Door" refers not to just one thing but to two. The latter helps us see the subject of O'Keeffe's painting as two superimposed architectural motifs—not just a window, but a door and a window—one laid over the other to create a compound image that is deliberately ambiguous despite its straightforward frontal presentation. Comparison of O'Keeffe's painting with two photographs by Stieglitz that include partial views of the Victorian farmhouse at Lake George makes her compositional strategies clear. Despite the painting's abstract simplifications, specific details of the farmhouse's windows and clapboard siding as seen in Stieglitz's 1934 *House and Grape Leaves* (no. 2) are instantly recognizable. Similarly, the general characteristics of the farmhouse's door, which provides the backdrop in Stieglitz's 1920 portrait of his niece Georgia Engelhard (no. 3), are also present in O'Keeffe's painting but brought into physically impossible proximity with the window.[5]

The spatial collapse and confusion between O'Keeffe's two chosen protagonists is an effect often seen in avant-garde photographs of the 1920s.[6] Here one thing—an exterior, closely-cropped view of a window flanked by green-black shutters and topped by a precisely rendered, curlicue pediment—is laid over another, a ghostly white painted door that itself contains a window, indicated by the gray, relatively atmospherically painted rectangle that occupies its upper half. O'Keeffe's composite image complicates relationships between inside and outside, interior and exterior, and public and private, while deliberately playing with the similarities and differences between a door and a window, a door within a window, a window within a door, and the relation of both to the flat, rectangular shape of her canvas. The cumulative effect encompasses absence

and presence, transparency and opacity, and a desire to see beyond the frame as well as an aggressive denial of the possibility of doing so.[7]

O'Keeffe inscribed the date October 1929 on the verso of her canvas, permitting it to be precisely located in terms of the time and place where it was made. From May to August 1929 she spent her first extended period in Taos, New Mexico, away from Stieglitz and from Lake George.[8] She returned to Lake George on August 25, *only*, as she wrote to her friend Ettie Stettheimer, because of Stieglitz. "If it were not for the Stieglitz call I would probably never go—but that is strong—so I am on the way. He has had a bad summer but the summers at Lake George are always bad—that is why I had to spend one away."[9]

It seems highly likely that *Farmhouse Window and Door* was among the first paintings she completed upon her return.[10]

O'Keeffe's and Stieglitz's various biographers concur that the autumn months the couple spent together in 1929 were unusually productive and peaceful for both of them, making the many analogies to camera work found in O'Keeffe's painting particularly poignant.[11] The cool tonalities of her palette evoke those of the gelatin silver prints that were Stieglitz's medium of choice during the 1920s.[12] The gray, scumbled painting within a painting that takes the place of the window within the farmhouse's front door brings Stieglitz's Equivalents, his atmospherically abstract photographs of clouds, to mind.[13] The close-up view of the farmhouse and the pronounced cropping are strategies, like

2. **Alfred Stieglitz** (American, 1864–1946). *House and Grape Leaves*. 1934. Gelatin silver print, 9 5/8 x 7 9/16" (24.4 x 19.2 cm). The Cleveland Museum of Art. Gift of Cary Ross, Knoxville, Tennessee

3. **Alfred Stieglitz** (American, 1864–1946). *Georgia Engelhard*. 1920. Gelatin silver print, 9 5/8 x 7 5/8" (24.4 x 19.4 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. The Alfred Stieglitz Collection. Gift of Miss Georgia O'Keeffe

superimposition, that declare O'Keeffe's intimate familiarity with and embrace of the conventions of modern photography, enlarged, simplified, and abstracted as only she, a painter, could do.[14]

In the end, neither *Lake George Window* nor *Farmhouse Window and Door* is entirely satisfying as a title. Opting for the latter eliminates an immediate reference to Lake George, but in the end that seems a positive gain. It makes a viewer look more closely at the painting's individual components and their interesting peculiarities rather than reduce it to a single, simple, nameable subject. It pries it loose from a specific association with a place that O'Keeffe had, by the end of the 1920s, come to feel increasingly ambivalent about. And, most important, it announces the painting's composite character, encouraging us to see it for what it is: a work filled with complicated relationships, similarities, and differences, ranging from those between the material and metaphorical qualities of doors and windows to those between modern photography and modern American painting, mirroring the complex reciprocity between Stieglitz's achievement and O'Keeffe's own.[15]

1. See Temporary Receipt from The Museum of Modern Art to Alfred Stieglitz, April 20, 1945. Collection files, Department of Painting and Sculpture, The Museum of Modern Art, New York.
2. See Minutes from the Meeting of the Committee on the Museum Collections, April 26, 1945. Collection binders, Department of Painting and Sculpture, The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Sweeney organized a retrospective of Georgia O'Keeffe's work for the Museum in 1946.
3. For a transcription of this label, see Barbara Buhler Lynes, *Georgia O'Keeffe: Catalogue Raisonné*, vol. 1 (New Haven: Yale University Press; Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art; Abiquiu, N.Mex.: The Georgia O'Keeffe Foundation, 1999), cat. 653. Also see Temporary Receipt, 1945.
4. Dorothy H. Dudley, letter to O'Keeffe, October 29, 1947, and O'Keeffe's undated, handwritten reply. Collection files, Department of Painting and Sculpture, The Museum of Modern Art, New York. For a useful discussion of the complexities involved in assigning titles to O'Keeffe's works, see Lynes, *Catalogue Raisonné*, pp. 14–19. *Farmhouse Window and Door* is the title adopted there. The painting was first exhibited in 1930, at Stieglitz's New York gallery, An American Place, as *Portrait of the Farm House, Lake George*.
5. For multiple views of the Lake George farmhouse, see Sarah Greenough, *Alfred Stieglitz: The Key Set*, vols. 1 and 2, *The Alfred Stieglitz Collection of Photographs* (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art; New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2002), cats. 777, 815–17, 819–20, 1,465–66, 1,474, 1,540–49. For verbal descriptions, see Sue Davidson Lowe, *Stieglitz: A Memoir/Biography* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1983), pp. 95–98. Stieglitz's photographs in Greenough, *The Key Set*, along with the passages in Lowe, *Stieglitz*, make clear that it would have been impossible, in real space, to ever catch a straight-on view of the door through one of the windows.
6. For two examples of superimposed photographs by Stieglitz, see Greenough, *The Key Set*, cat. 604 (Dorothy True [1919]) and cat. 1,464 (Dorothy Norman [1932]). I am tremendously grateful to Sarah Meister, Curator, Department of Photography, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, for looking at O'Keeffe's painting with me and discussing it in relation to conventions of modern photography. I am also indebted to Sarah Whitaker Peters's discussion of *Farmhouse Window and Door*, which she describes as "the most creatively photographic of all her major works." Peters, *Becoming O'Keeffe: The Early Years* (New York, Abbeville, 1991), p. 302.
7. This observation is indebted to Anne Middleton Wagner's discussion of the "window motif" in Eva Hesse's pictures, which she describes as encompassing "both the desire to see beyond the frame, and the fear of so doing. They alternately indulge that desire and prohibit it." Wagner, *Three Artists (Three Women): Modernism and the Art of Hesse, Krasner, and O'Keeffe* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996), pp. 264–66.
8. For the context of O'Keeffe's departure and return to Lake George, see Laurie Lisle, *Portrait of an Artist: A Biography of Georgia O'Keeffe* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1986), p. 161 and 187, respectively.
9. O'Keeffe, letter to Ettie Stettheimer, August 24, 1929. *Georgia O'Keeffe: Art and Letters*, eds. Jack Cowart and Juan Hamilton, letters selected and annotated by Greenough (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1987), p. 195.
10. This conjecture is based on the sequence of the checklist that Stieglitz prepared for an exhibition of O'Keeffe's work at An American Place in 1930, where *Farmhouse Window and Door* was first shown. For an image of this checklist and for installation views of the show, see Lynes, *Catalogue Raisonné*, figs. 31–33.
11. For insight into the state of O'Keeffe's relationship with Stieglitz during the late summer and fall of 1929, see Lisle, *Portrait of an Artist*, p. 188; also see letters from O'Keeffe to Mabel Dodge Luhan, Lake George, New York, September 1929. *Art and Letters*, pp. 196–99.
12. On Stieglitz's use of gelatin silver prints in the 1920s, see Greenough, *The Key Set*, vol. 1, p. xiii. It is also interesting to consider the painting's palette in relation to O'Keeffe's comment that subdued color was, for her, gendered. In response to her feeling that her work was considered inferior to that of contemporary male painters, she remarked, "I can paint one of those dismal-colored paintings like the men." O'Keeffe, *Georgia O'Keeffe* (New York: Viking Press, 1976), n.p.
13. For a brief but insightful history of Stieglitz's Equivalent series, see Greenough, *The Key Set*, vol. 1, pp. xlii–xliv. For examples of Equivalents from 1929, see ibid., vol. 2, cats. 1,253–305.
14. Greenough provides an enlightening discussion of O'Keeffe's keen understanding of Stieglitz's photographic techniques and process in *Key Set*, vol. 1, pp. xi–xiii. For the most extensive discussion to date of O'Keeffe in relation to modern American photography, see Peters, *Becoming O'Keeffe*.
15. On the complex dynamics of O'Keeffe and Stieglitz's relationship, see Wagner's chapter "O'Keeffe's Femininity," in *Three Artists*, pp. 29–103. It is interesting to consider, following Wagner's arguments, the ways O'Keeffe's *Farmhouse Window and Door* works to counter the persistent equation of O'Keeffe's work with "the feminine, and with its inevitable synonyms, the bodily and the sexual." Ibid., p. 32.

1. *Giant Cable.* 1931. Linoleum cut, comp. 14 3/8 x 18 7/16" (36.5 x 46.9 cm). Publisher and printer: the artist, London. Edition: 50. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Riva Castleman Endowment Fund and Donald B. Marron Fund

The period in Britain between the two world wars was marked by political and economic strife—wartime scars, escalating unemployment, the monarch's abdication. But there was also progress. New means of mechanization led to a renewal of the London Underground, which in turn improved access to leisure activities. The role of women began to shift away from the sole demands of marriage and family life. Artistic tradition began to give way to modernism, as the short-lived but influential Vorticism movement captured the machine age through dynamic representations of movement and geometry. The formal and ideological elements of modernism, in turn, had a profound effect on British printmaking, as artists sought new, simplified, and popular means of conveying modern life.

The medium of linoleum cut, championed by Sybil Andrews under the tutelage of Claude Flight at the Grosvenor School of Modern Art in London, obtained newfound relevancy in this climate. The linoleum cut's ease of execution, directness of image-making, and relative newness as an artistic medium resonated with a small group of artists at the school.[1] Along with Flight and his other gifted student, Cyril Power, Andrews believed that the technique suited the new age of modernity.

For their linoleum cuts they used ordinary household linoleum flooring, which was resistant but soft enough to be easily cut with gouges made from umbrella ribs. Images were printed—without a press or chemicals—by rubbing a simple wooden spoon against paper that had been placed over the inked linoleum block.[2]

"I was interested in the shapes and rhythms and patterns of things," Andrews said.[3] With linoleum cut, bold areas of color, simplified shapes, sweeping curves, and sharp angles were easily and inexpensively achieved. This medium was priced democratically, to appeal to and educate a broad, uninitiated audience.

Andrews had first joined the Grosvenor School as its secretary in 1925, at age twenty-seven. Prior to her move to London, and just after finishing secondary school, she was involved in the war effort as a welder of aircraft parts in Bristol. It was a time of immense activity for workers, reflections of which would later surface in Andrews's prints. While in Bristol, Andrews began a correspondence course on art and initiated her own artistic practice. After Bristol she moved to Bury St. Edmunds to work as a teacher, and there she met and studied art with Power—a man twenty-six years her senior. In 1922 the couple moved to London.

Andrews and Power had a close relationship, each influencing the other as they lived and worked together in a small London studio from 1930 to 1938. The two artists even collaborated, under the signature "Andrew Power," on a series of sports posters designed for the London Passenger Transport Board from 1929 to 1937, intended to show passengers how accessible Britain's sporting venues were by public transport. But Andrews's work can be singled out for its gift of capturing movement—human, animal, and mechanical—and the emotion and dignity associated with those movements. She devoted her entire artistic career to linoleum-cut printing, completing seventy-six prints in all, more than half from 1929 to 1939.[4] Among her most exceptional prints, *Giant Cable*, of 1931, and *Racing* and *Speedway*, of 1934—depicting laborers and racers—exemplify the theme, and drama, of movement.

Giant Cable (no. 1) shows people engaged in heavy physical labor and exertion. Here, municipal workers hoist a massive cable using a manual winch. Emphasizing the strength and dignity of the workers, Andrews exaggerated the power of their outstretched bodies and limbs as they move in unison to raise and unroll the cable. The diagonal thrust of the composition, enhanced by the stepped platform, transforms the otherwise banal industrial equipment into a monument to modern urban life.

Sporting events, particularly horse racing and jumping, provided the subject for a number of Andrews's prints. Among her most sweeping compositions, *Racing* (no. 2) depicts the Epsom Derby in Surrey, one of the country's celebrated thoroughbred horse races. Run on a flat, horseshoe-shaped track made of grass and without jumps, the Epsom Derby is about sheer speed. Here, the pace and exhilaration of the race is captured through the exaggerated curve of the track and the aerodynamic, harmonious motion of horse and jockey. With this scene, Andrews may be illustrating the famous last segment of the race known as Tattenham Corner, as four racers close in on the lead.

Speedway (no. 3), originally conceived as a poster commission for the London Passenger Transport Board (although never produced), evokes power and speed through the abstract simplification of identical motorcyclists curving along a dramatic diagonal. The bikes appear to burst forth from the picture plane, their force emphasized by the winged airwaves that radiate from the tires, while the blur of spectators in the upper left corner underscores the momentum and thrill of the race.

Andrews's life and work are an example of the contribution of women artists to the development of British modernism and, more specifically, to British modern printmaking. Andrews may have subordinated

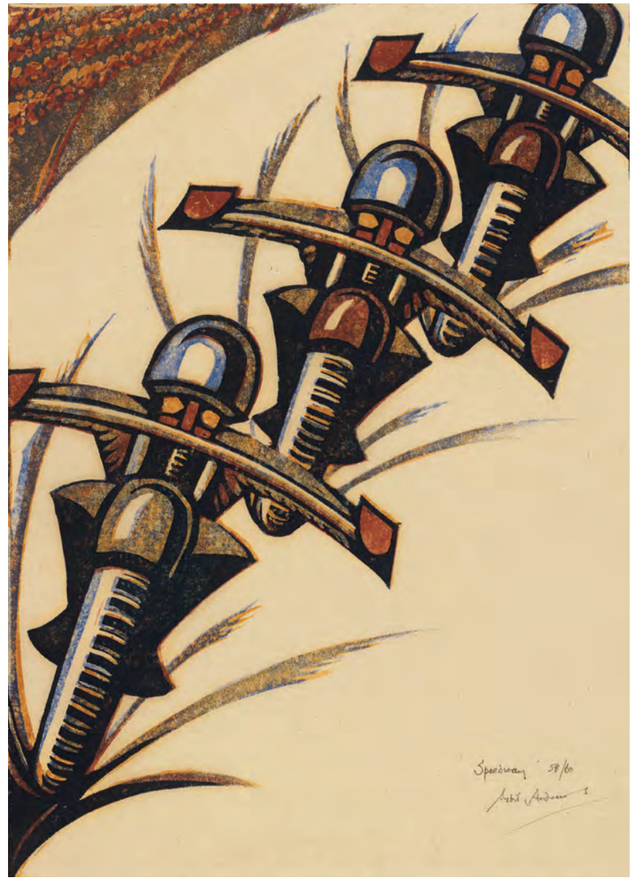
her last name in "Andrew Power," but she came into her own as conventions of femininity were being challenged. Urban mobility gave women independence, which was a key factor in their participation in avant-garde activities.[5] The position of women in society was also influenced by women's suffrage, along with legislation that increased equality in education and employment.[6] Women, after all, had filled thousands of jobs in wartime—many demanding heavy physical labor. Art schools also started to open up to women, although women artists were often left out of exhibitions.

The circle of printmakers at the Grosvenor School was, in some ways, exceptional. Flight's classes were open to students on a rolling basis and without entrance requirements, perhaps making them particularly inviting to women artists.[7] Printmaking's association with the decorative arts also made it a natural draw for women during this time.

Andrews was a woman of modest means, with a simple mission: to create prints that captured the spirit of the modern age. But in doing so, she set an example. In her book *Artists Kitchen*—a kind of recipe book for the making of art—Andrews wrote, "Before you can *be*, you must *do*."[8]

Opposite:
2. *Racing.* 1934. Linoleum cut, comp. 10 $^{5}/_{16}$ x 13 $^{1}/_{2}$" (26.2 x 34.3 cm). Publisher and printer: the artist, London. Edition: 60. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Sharon P. Rockefeller Fund and General Print Fund

3. *Speedway.* 1934. Linoleum cut, comp. 12 $^{13}/_{16}$ x 9 $^{1}/_{8}$" (32.5 x 23.2 cm). Publisher and printer: the artist, London. Edition: 60. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. General Print Fund and The Shapiro-Silverberg Foundation Fund



1. For the definitive discussion of this group of artists and their works, see Stephen Coppel, *Linocuts of the Machine Age: Claude Flight and the Grosvenor School* (Hants, England: Scolar Press, 1995).
2. Coppel, *Claude Flight and His Followers: The Colour Linocut Movement between the Wars* (Canberra: National Gallery of Australia, 1992), p. 2.
3. Sybil Andrews, interview, October 28, 1985; quoted in Kathleen Niwa, *The Shapes and Rhythms and Patterns of Things: The Linocuts of Sybil Andrews* (PhD diss., University of Victoria, Canada, 1984), p. 2.
4. For a comprehensive discussion of Andrews's work, see Peter White, *Sybil Andrews: Color Linocuts* (Calgary: Glenbow Museum, 1982).
5. For a discussion of the female Vorticists, see Jane Beckett and Deborah Cherry, "Reconceptualizing Vorticism: Women, Modernity, Modernism," in Paul Edwards, ed., *Blast: Vorticism, 1914–1918* (Farnham, England: Ashgate, 2001).
6. The Representation of the People Act of 1918 gave women over the age of thirty the right to vote; ten years later women over twenty-one were given the right. The Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act of 1919 removed gender and marital status as qualifications for civil and judicial professions, among others.
7. Five of the seven principal linoleum-cut artists at the Grosvenor School were women (and four of those five were international students).
8. Andrews, *Artists Kitchen* (London: R. K. Hudson, 1985).

Like the traditional Mexican dresses she usually wore and posed in, her distinctive attire can be considered in symbolic terms as a form of self-defining costume.

"The picture is certainly one of Frida's best, as well as an exceptional document," wrote Lieutenant Edgar Kaufmann, Jr., to Alfred H. Barr, Jr., director of The Museum of Modern Art, referring to Frida Kahlo's *Autorretrato con pelo cortado* (*Self-Portrait with Cropped Hair*) (1940, no. 1).[1] Kaufmann and Barr had spent part of the summer of 1942 traveling together in Mexico, looking for works of art to acquire for the Museum's collection.[2] By early February 1943 Barr was able to report to Kaufmann—who was away, serving a tour of duty in the United States Air Force Intelligence Office—that "now we have practically every Mexican artist whom we would like to have well represented, with the exception of Frida Kahlo. I have my eye on the small self-portrait of Frida sitting in a chair with close cropped hair, the floor strewn with the hair she has just cut off, with some touching inscription up above, such as 'will you love me in December even with my hair cut off.' Do you think this is a good picture? Would it be something you would like to have your money spent on? I like it very much."[3]

1. *Autorretrato con pelo cortado* (*Self-Portrait with Cropped Hair*). 1940. Oil on canvas, 15 3/4 x 11" (40 x 27.9 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Edgar Kaufmann, Jr.

Aside from Barr's overly saccharine translation of the Spanish lyrics Kahlo had carefully painted across the top of her canvas, his exchange with Kaufmann is revealing.[4] It testifies to the early priority he placed on acquiring a work by Kahlo as an important representative of contemporary Mexican art and to the strong impression Kahlo's *Autorretrato con pelo cortado* had made on both men. Although it is unclear exactly when and where Barr first saw the painting, Kaufmann had visited Kahlo at her home in Mexico in February 1940, at a moment very likely coincident with that of the work's origins.[5] "I have to give you a [*sic*] bad news," Kahlo wrote to her friend and erstwhile lover the photographer Nickolas Muray, on February 6, 1940: "I cut my hair, and looks just like a ferry [*sic*]. Well, it will grow again, I hope!"[6] Her misspelled choice of the word "fairy," which Kahlo used to refer to an overtly effeminate male homosexual in a way typical of 1940s-era homophobia, is telling: it conjures a subject with masculine and feminine qualities. It is this newly androgynous self that Kahlo meticulously documented in *Autorretrato con pelo cortado*.

Although Kahlo previously had painted one other portrait of herself with short hair, *Autorretrato con pelo cortado* is the only work she ever made in which she chose to portray herself in men's clothing.[7] Like the traditional Mexican dresses she usually wore and posed in, her distinctive attire can be considered in symbolic terms as a form of self-defining costume. Yet her dangling earring, delicately boned hands and face, and diminutive high-heeled shoes—along with the numerous tendrils of cutoff hair that carpet the floor—send signals that conflict with those of the close-cropped haircut and man's suit. Like Man Ray's photographs of Kahlo's friend and loyal supporter Marcel Duchamp in the guise of his female alter ego Rrose Sélavy, the painting presents us with an image of someone posing, not attempting to pass, as the opposite sex.[8] The deliberate ambivalence and resultant gender confusion contribute to the work's uncanny allure.

All who knew Kahlo well surely would have recognized the charcoal-gray, oversized suit and crimson shirt as attributes of her husband, the famed Mexican mural painter Diego Rivera, whose divorce from Kahlo became final in November 1939.[9] Identifying the garments as Rivera's complicates the work's psychological subtext: to put on the clothes of a former lover is a physically intimate act, simultaneously tender and aggressive. It involves, on the one hand, the potentially poignant touch of fabric against skin and, on the other, the assertive appropriation of another's (sartorial) identity as one's own. *Autorretrato con pelo cortado* was conceived and painted at a moment when Kahlo was particularly keen to establish her financial independence from Rivera and to make a living from her art.[10] It is, therefore, certainly plausible to view the work, as one early critic did and others subsequently have done, as a sign of Kahlo's "determination to compete with men on the same artistic level"—to assume the role of master, as opposed to wife, mistress, or muse, at the same time as she mourned Rivera's absence.[11]

In January 1940, probably just prior to cutting her hair, Kahlo reported to Muray, "I have to finish a big painting . . . [for *The International Exhibition of Surrealism* that opened in Mexico City on January 17, 1940] and start small things to send to Julien [Levy]."[12] It is highly likely that one of the "small things" she subsequently started was *Autorretrato con pelo cortado*. Kahlo always insisted on her work's documentary character and its intimate relation to real, lived events in her life.[13] Among these events, in addition to those directly linked to her biographical circumstances, the brouhaha over Mexico City's Surrealism exhibition—which prompted Kahlo's sarcastic remark that "everybody in Mexico has become a surrealist because all are going to take part on [*sic*] it"—should also be considered, given the painting's numerous, slyly ironic references to Sigmund Freud's theories of fetishism, which were widely embraced by the Surrealists yet problematically defined women in terms of lack.[14]

The lyrics Kahlo painstakingly inscribed in flowing, cursive script across the top of *Autorretrato con pelo cortado* sing of someone once loved for her hair, which is a classic Freudian fetish object or stand-in. The suggestively positioned pair of (castrating) scissors introduces a performative dimension, identifying Kahlo with the act that gave rise to the eerily animate locks of hair themselves. These liberated tendrils—black and fluid, like the writing—float up against the surface of the painting, refusing to conform to the dictates of recessional space. It is, perhaps, in her treatment of the hair that Kahlo most clearly signals both her engagement with and distance from Surrealism, by transforming the disengaged, spontaneous lines of the movement's celebrated automatic drawings into an obsessively detailed, exquisitely painted, deliberately referential network. The fine lines traced by her brush recall what art historian Rosalind Krauss has described as "the kind of drawing that the French call *écriture*—a descriptive line pushed toward the abstract disembodiment of the written sign."[15] But at the same time they reject it; Kahlo also forced those lines into mimetic service, into the jobs of description and self-representation.

It is perhaps in this hairy, calligraphic, floor-bound realm—at a distance from the face that has, by now, become so famous that its celebrity makes it difficult to see her art—that Kahlo the master artist most powerfully emerges, as a figure not only capable of wearing her then-more-famous husband's suit with authority but of creating an intimate, corporeal, counterlanguage that placed her private, personal experiences at the center of her public practice, redefining, in terms of a very particular feminine subjectivity, what can be considered subject matter for the making of serious, universal art.

2. **Diego Rivera** (Mexican, 1886–1957). *Autorretrato* (*The Firestone Self-Portrait*). 1941. Oil on canvas, 24 x 17" (61 x 43.2 cm). Collection Michael Audain and Yoshiko Karasawa, Vancouver, B.C.

1. Edgar Kaufmann, Jr., letter to Alfred H. Barr, Jr., February 25, 1943. Alfred H. Barr, Jr. Papers, I.97, The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York.
2. Barr, draft report on his summer 1942 trip to Mexico and Cuba, undated. Alfred H. Barr, Jr. Papers, 10.A.47, The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York.
3. Barr, letter to Kaufmann, February 4, 1943. Alfred H. Barr, Jr. Papers, I.97. The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York.
4. For a closer translation see *MoMA Highlights: 350 Works from The Museum of Modern Art, New York* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1999), p. 181: "Look, if I loved you it was because of your hair. Now that you are without hair, I don't love you anymore."
5. Frida Kahlo, letter to Julien Levy, February 28, 1940. Philadelphia Museum of Art Archives. In this letter Kahlo reports that Kaufmann had recently visited her and had purchased the painting *"Child birth"* (1932) (now more commonly known as *Mi nacimiento* [*My Birth*]).
6. Kahlo, letter to Nickolas Muray, February 6, 1940; reprinted in Kahlo, *Escrituras*, ed. Raquel Tibol (Mexico City: Plaza y Janés, 2004), p. 241.
7. For the most extensive discussion of *Autorretrato con pelo cortado* to date, including mention of the earlier *Autorretrato con cabello corto y rizado* (*Self-Portrait with Curly Hair*) (1935) and a useful overview of critical responses to the work, see Gannit Ankori, *Imaging Her Selves: Frida Kahlo's Poetics of Identity and Fragmentation* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2002), pp. 175–87. I am indebted to her observations throughout, although because she interprets *Autorretrato con pelo cortado* as evidence of what she seeks to establish as a long-standing interest on Kahlo's part in assuming a "masculinized" identity, the work's anomalous status within Kahlo's oeuvre goes unmentioned. Kahlo did pose in a man's suit in 1926, fourteen years earlier, for photographs taken by her father, Guillermo Kahlo, but *Autorretrato con pelo cortado* is the only known instance where she depicted herself as a dandy in masculine attire and short hair.
8. On Kahlo's close relationship with Marcel Duchamp and her likely familiarity with Man Ray's photographs of Duchamp as Rrose Sélavy, see ibid., p. 184. For a useful discussion of the distinction between posing and attempting to "pass," see Jennifer Blessing, "Rrose is a Rrose is a Rrose: Gender Performance in Photography," in *Rrose is a Rrose is a Rrose: Gender Performance in Photography* (New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1997), p. 23.
9. Ankori argues against identifying the suit with Diego Rivera and suggests that Kahlo may have loosely based the painting on a photograph of herself, seated in a similar chair, wearing pants and a woman's embroidered Mexican shirt. Ankori, *Imaging Her Selves*, p. 177. It can be noted, however, that when Rivera painted *Autorretrato* (no. 2), commissioned as a pendant to Kahlo's *Autorretrato dedicado a Sigmund Firestone* (*Self-Portrait Dedicated to Sigmund Firestone*) (completed by February 15, 1940), he portrayed himself dressed in a gray suit with a crimson shirt just as Kahlo does in *Autorretrato con pelo cortado*. See Emma Dexter and Tanya Barson, eds., *Frida Kahlo* (London: Tate, 2005), plate 35 and fig. 102. And when Kahlo painted Rivera's portrait set within her own face in *Autorretrato como tehuana* (*Self-Portrait as a Tehuana*) (1943), she rendered him in the same crimson shirt and charcoal-gray wide-lapelled suit, further supporting an association between these garments and Rivera. Ibid., plate 42.
10. See Kahlo's letters to Muray, December 18, 1939, January 1940, and February 6, 1940, in *Escrituras*, pp. 238–41, on her determination to rely only on her own art for money and for references to how hard she was working in anticipation of a second one-person show at the Julien Levy Gallery, New York. See also Kahlo's letters to Levy, February 7 and February 28, 1940. Philadelphia Museum of Art Archives. The show kept being postponed, and Kahlo eventually suggested to Levy that he offer her February 1941 slot on the exhibition schedule to the photographer Manuel Alvarez Bravo. Kahlo, letter to Levy, August 30, 1940. Philadelphia Museum of Art Archives.
11. Ben Bindol, "Exhibition by 31 Women," *Aufbau* 9, no. 3 (January 15, 1943): 14; archived in Press Clipping Volumes, Peggy Guggenheim Museum, Venice. Kahlo's *Autorretrato con pelo cortado* was included in a show titled *Exhibition by 31 Women* at Peggy Guggenheim's recently opened gallery Art of This Century, New York, January 5–31, 1943. I am indebted to Robert Storr's suggestion that in Kahlo's *Autorretrato con pelo cortado* she kills the muse to become the master. Storr, "Frida Kahlo autoportrait aux cheveux coupés," *Art Press*, no. 113 (April 1987): 84.
12. Kahlo, letter to Muray, January 1940. The big painting Kahlo referred to is most likely *La mesa herida* (*The Wounded Table*) (1940), now lost.
13. See Kahlo, letter to Carlos Chávez, October 1939, in *Escrituras*, p. 231, for an early, manifestolike description of the intimate relation between her art and her life.
14. Kahlo, letter to Muray, January 1940.
15. Rosalind Krauss, "Magnetic Fields: The Structure," in Krauss and Margit Rowell, *Joan Miró: Magnetic Fields* (New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, 1972), p. 11.

1. **Kiki Smith** (American, born Germany 1954). *Sampler*. 2007. Illustrated book with 206 letterpress illustrations and one supplementary letterpress print with ink and foil additions, sheet 24 x 15 3/4" (61 x 40 cm). Publisher and printer: The Arion Press, San Francisco. Edition: 40. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired through the generosity of Susan Jacoby in honor of her mother, Marjorie L. Goldberger and General Print Fund

I'm Nobody! Who are you?
Are you—Nobody—Too?
Then there's a pair of us!
Don't tell! they'd advertise—you know!

How dreary—to be—Somebody!
How public—like a Frog—
To tell one's name—the livelong June—
To an admiring Bog![1]

So wrote Emily Dickinson, on a tiny sheet of paper sewn into one of about forty little fascicles and stowed away in a drawer. It emerged after her death, in 1886, and then again and again until, in 2007, it was included in *Sampler* (no. 1), a collection of her poems illustrated by Kiki Smith, with small stitched images made by piercing sheets of photographic emulsion with an etching needle.[2] Thus were sewn together the nineteenth and the twenty-first centuries; photography, writing, and etching; and two women on paper, in a book that (unfortunately) cleans up Dickinson's odd punctuation and presents her poetry, her name, and her image in the form of a nineteenth-century photograph transformed, by Smith's cross-stitching, for the "admiring bog."

Being a nobody, like being a somebody, is a relative state of being: relative to others of her time, some gifted and others less so, Dickinson was indeed more or less a nobody; relative to most writers now, male and female, past and present, she is definitely a somebody, whose gifts and gentle radicality have long been recognized and canonized.[3] Likewise Smith, a daughter of Minimalist sculptor Tony Smith, was a definite somebody, although she might not have been so without the art-world efforts of the American feminist movement of the 1970s, in whose discursive fields she has roamed ever since, with her own love of paper writ much larger than Dickinson's tiny, creased, folded-up, sewn-together, stowed-away bits of eccentric inscription.[4]

What Dickinson knew, however, was that there were certain imaginative freedoms that being a nobody granted. There were kinds of largeness that being small made possible. There were kinds of flight that being encaged enabled, kinds of enablement that limits could produce, in the right mind of a somewhat wrong-minded person, in this case a classic nineteenth-century woman-in-a-white-dress who lived in private and wrote down her passions, her yearnings, her mordant understandings, and her worm's-eye noticings, with the vertiginous breathlessness of her ejaculatory gasps and dashes and exclamations piercing the written-on whiteness of the page with the voiced ellipses of an invisible embodiment, often erotic in tone. Obviously I don't want to argue for encagement but only to suggest that being a relative nobody, as Dickinson knew, was a condition of possibility and liberty as much as of marginalization and belittlement, and that becoming a somebody, like that frog in the bog, could bring with it a diminishment of radicality: now that we know Dickinson's name so well, her strange verses have become normalized. Good thing for her, in a way, that her name did not become widely known sooner than it did.[5]

So I want to take this opportunity to look in reverse order through a works-on-paper canon that I have constructed of relative nobodies and somebodies whose names have become known (some better than others) and whose works on paper—inscribed, drawn, printed, photographed, and variously pierced and punctured—have been acquired by The Museum of Modern Art, that great mausoleum of somebodies. I want to consider the ways in which those nobodies and somebodies used their

nobodiness and somebodiness to produce paper eccentricities of interest, if not radicality, to us now, and to somewhat shift off its normal course the direction of the canon that they now inhabit with different degrees of renown. The fact of the femaleness of these nobodies and somebodies will enter into the equation, but with some circumspection. For they all are or were women, although what matters about them is not their gender but what they did on, to, and with the sensuous material of paper. Which, since paper is a relatively private medium, they did in relative privacy, with less concern than otherwise for the public, the bog that the frog addressed.

PIERCED AND PUNCTURED

> *A Spider sewed at Night*
> *Without a Light*
> *Upon an Arc of White. . . .*
>
> *Of Immortality*
> *His Strategy*
> *Was Physiognomy.*[6]

Sewn next to the "nobody" poem in Smith's *Sampler* are two small buttonholes, each the inverse of the other, thus introducing the logic of the print and the photograph into her system of sewing and drawing. That pair is a perfect little image of nobodiness doubled, as it is in the poem. At the same time it is not fortuitous that they also look like twinned vaginal openings. Appearing elsewhere in the *Sampler*, their vulval character is always noticeable and in keeping with Smith's habitual introduction of the body—the visceral, internal, animal body rather than the body seen from the outside as an ideal, a whole, or an organized gestalt—into the grain, weave, pulp, and layered folios of her paper works.[7] Here the buttonholes produce a slighter yet more pointed effect: in addition to making the equations mark=stitch=genital hair and drawing=sewing="this-sex-which-is-not-one" (as Luce Irigaray punningly terms the female sex)—associating the mark of drawing with the mark of feminine craft and then the mark of the female, bringing the gentility of the distaff side gently down to genitality, earthily down to earth—these paired buttonholes also sharpen Dickinson's poetry into the *punctum* that is always latent within it, piercing the paper that it is written on and with it the heart of the reader.[8]

The piercing and puncturing of paper unites the work of several other artists in MoMA's collection, from Ellen Gallagher's *Watery Ecstatic* (2003) to Mira Schendel's *Perfurados III* (c. 1970s, no. 2) and an untitled work by Howardena Pindell (1973, no. 3) and back to Hannah Höch's cut-and-pasted *Watched* (1925, no. 4) and an untitled work by Lyubov Popova from 1917.[9] Gallagher's cut-paper works literally transform drawing-by-line into drawing-by-cutting, evoking less Henri Matisse's grand cutouts than a little girl's doily-making, as well as the paper scraps left over from such efforts; the artist combines clean, intentional cuts with scored and scarified paper, bringing the materiality of the surface to the fore and making its back side count in the marking of its front side. Not only does this roughen the domestic, child's-play associations of paper-cutting, and sully and desublimate the clean whiteness of the paper ground, it also makes its mark in rather than on that ground, transforming the abstract, form-making gesture of line into an act of cleavage, a splitting of matter. It makes the paper itself matter and refuses the pure white abstraction of its planarity and all the figure-ground distinctions that go with it. For all of its figures are of its ground, and that ground is sliced, bent, and frayed into double-sidedness.

Schendel's *Perfurados*, made some thirty years earlier, are more pristine in their pinpricked surfaces: some black and some white; some creating constellations, clusters, and spiderwebs of delicate perforations in which light, white wall, or undersurface shine through to make spirals or bands; others simply partitioning the space with a perforated dividing line. Modest in size, these works

2. Mira Schendel (Brazilian, born Switzerland. 1919–1988). *Perfurados III*. c. 1970s. Perforated paper, 12 5/8 x 12 5/8" (32 x 32 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchase

nevertheless evoke cosmic dimensions, stellar skies, and ethereal distances; they are in some sense exercises in the dematerialization of drawing. At the same time they make the paper of which they are made more materially present than the pricked lines that divide their surfaces, and urge an awareness of the two-sidedness and paper-thickness of the paper. Not to mention the constitutive act of pricking, of piercing the paper with a sharp instrument.

For their part, Pindell's paper-punch works, such as *Untitled (#7)*, are made of paper holes: the confetti resulting from the punching of holes in other paper works fabricates the texture of a new one, a pastrylike matter thickened by the intimate flourlike substance of talcum powder and raised off the surface by a grid of sewing-thread lines. The pen and ink of such works belongs to the previous surfaces from which the holes were punched. As light as the powdered sugar on the top of a mille-feuille confection (and, in so being, unlike the artist's heavier, more glutinous paintings made in similar ways), the holes have a doubled materiality and a delicate earthiness, weaving together presence and absence, matter and unmatter. These, too, make the paper matter and refuse the making-out-of-thin-air status usually granted to line and its formative gestures. They refuse the Athena-from-the-head-of-Zeus Idea of drawing—its Logos—and replace it with a material matrix of something- and nothingness, of matter and the

3. Howardena Pindell (American, born 1943). *Untitled (#7).* 1973. Pen and ink on punched papers, talcum powder, and thread on oak tag paper, 10 1/8 x 8 3/8" (25.9 x 21.3 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Lily Auchincloss

4. Hannah Höch (German, 1889–1978). *Watched.* 1925. Cut-and-pasted printed paper on printed paper, 10 1/8 x 6 3/4" (25.7 x 17.1 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Joseph G. Mayer Foundation Fund in honor of René d'Harnoncourt

other side of it, paper and paper holes. And they accept none of the self-importance and heavy solemnities that sometimes go with the genius of art; instead, they are lightly ludic in nature, like playing in your mother's pantry or her cosmetics cabinet or with the leftovers of her workroom wastebasket.

Höch's and Popova's collages from a half a century earlier are not far from the Dada and Suprematist/Constructivist mainstreams. Yet the modesty of their cutting-and-pasting efforts is endearing and, unlike the contemporaneous work of, say, John Heartfield or Kazimir Malevich, their air of distaff-side nobodiness is unashamedly inflected by the child's playroom. Höch's little spoon-man was cut out and assembled, scrapbook style, from bits of printed books and magazines, and his empty little head, made of preprinted paper glued on a paper ground, has the convex/concave quality of a hole—or an egg—or a blank—in the flowering, undersea dream-field of the collage, where every little nothing is made of something. Popova's collage brings the mighty Suprematism of Malevich's paintings down to earth, lowering its sights to the world of colored paper scraps, where once again form is made by a cut, and paper is not thin air but itself—doubled by layers of other paper and thickened by library paste. And in both cases—in all the above cases—the materiality of paper is pierced—punctured—by the sharp poignance, the *punctum* of the view from nowhere, nowhere better captured than in the delicate, polite, low-to-the-ground violence of Dickinson:

A Bird came down the Walk—
He did not know I saw—
He bit an Angleworm in halves
And ate the fellow, raw,

And then he drank a Dew
From a convenient Grass—
And then hopped sidewise to the Wall
To let a Beetle pass— . . . [10]

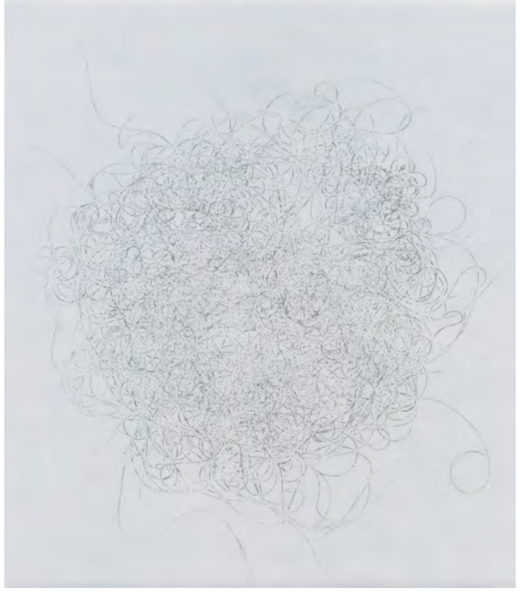
HAIR, MATRIX, MOLLUSK

Come slowly—Eden!
Lips unused to Thee—
Bashful—sip thy Jessamines—
As the fainting Bee—

Reaching late his flower,
Round her chamber hums—
Counts his nectars—
Enters—and is lost in Balms.[11]

Other such verses by Dickinson make clear that the nobody's vantage point is an embodied and often piercingly erotic one as well. Informed by the close observations of the amateur naturalist that Dickinson, like others of her time and "gentle sex," apparently was, they make the world near to the ground yield moments of sharp sensation, captured and carried in abrupt sequences of words with meanings both literal and metaphoric, direct and indirect.[12] The works by women that I address here are all in one way or another concerned with the body and its secrets: their enfolding into each other of matter and nothingness, surface and its reverse, have a bodiliness both literal and metaphoric.

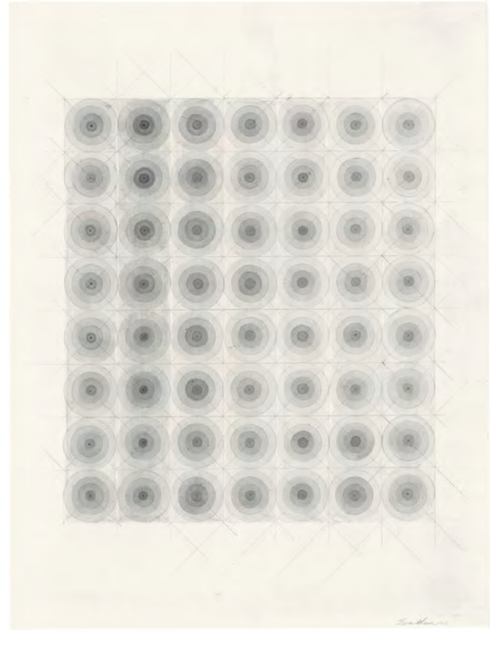
This is nowhere more true than in the series of tangled, superfine mazes, made by embedding and tracing matted filaments of hair in an etching plate and then printing on delicate sheets of chine collé, that Mona Hatoum dubbed *hair there and every where* (2004, no. 5). Also known for making holes in things, for drawing by piercing, and for assembling grids from hair, Hatoum here departs from the grid in labyrinthine snarls that equate drawing and printing with cellular growth and cast-off strands of protein, with the mark of the organic and the corporeal. It does not matter whether the hair is male or female (it was in fact the artist's own), the bringing-back of drawing to the body is poignant in its bio-logic, its matching of the human to the animal, of the cultural mark to the natural.

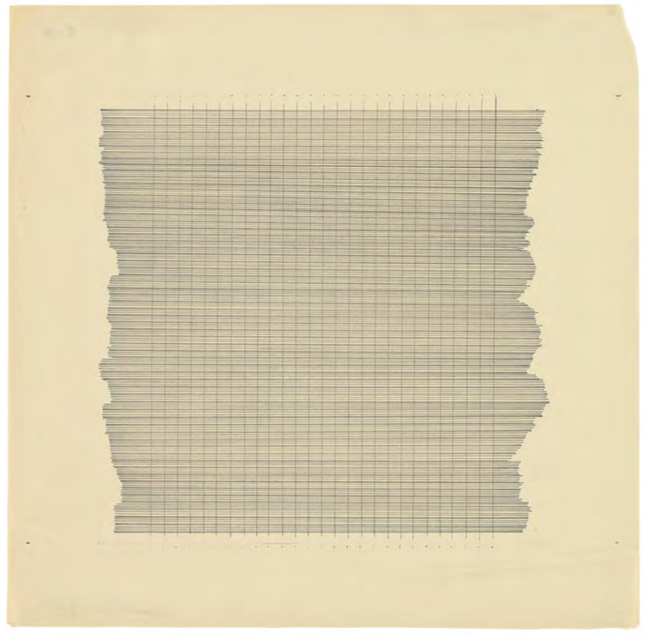


The etchings' white-on-white delicacy sharpens the poignancy, elaborating the combination of the fine and the coarse, the refined and the guttural, that we have seen elsewhere in this canon of women's works on paper. At the other end of the black-and-white spectrum lies Lee Krasner's *Obsidian* (1962), a tangled web of darkly lithographed lines with fine scratches looping through it, which takes over the whole surface, and in its darkness, coarseness, and allover-ness functions as a kind of negative to Hatoum's cream-on-cream hair tangles; it, too, underlines the materiality not only of the mark but of the paper support, caught up in a web of black ink, which in turn is a kind of enlarged, self-reflexive image of the web of paper matter, white turned into black, mark turned into ground.

One of the things that *hair there and every where* does is to make an irrational mess of that sign of rationality, the grid.[13] Two other artists in this canon are concerned with the grid and with departures from it: Eva Hesse and Agnes Martin. Hesse's *no title* (1966, no. 6) makes the grid hold circular stains of watercolor that approximate nipples and orifices, gently mocking the body that fits into the ideal Vitruvian geometry of the circle and the square. The grid remains, but it shares company with the stain in such a way that it wavers and fades and partially liquefies into the image and matter of water on paper. Martin's habitual minimalist grids—*Tremolo* (1962) and the more delicate *Untitled* (1960, no. 7)—work differently, growing ragged at their edges, unraveling into the warp and woof of woven threads that evoke textile and paper and the looms, screens, and scrims on which they are made, thereby making the pen marks on paper redouble the materiality of and in the paper.

5. **Mona Hatoum** (British of Palestinian origin, born Lebanon 1952). *hair there and every where.* 2004. Two from a portfolio of ten etchings, plate 7 7/8 x 6 15/16" (20 x 17.6 cm). Publisher and printer: Edition Samuel Jacob, Santa Monica. Edition: 20. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Carol and Morton H. Rapp Fund





6. **Eva Hesse** (American, born Germany. 1936–1970). *no title.* 1966. Watercolor and pencil on paper, 11 3/4 x 9 1/8" (30 x 23.1 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Fischbach

7. **Agnes Martin** (American, born Canada. 1912–2004). *Untitled.* 1960. Ink on paper, 11 7/8 x 12 1/8" (30.2 x 30.6 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired with matching funds from The Lauder Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts

8. **Louise Bourgeois** (American, born France 1911). *Les Mollusques* (Mollusks), state I. c. 1948. Etching with ink and pencil additions, sheet 9 7/8 x 6 5/8" (25 x 16.8 cm). Publisher: unpublished. Printer: the artist, New York. Edition: 1 known impression. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of the artist

9. **Louise Bourgeois** (American, born France 1911). *Les Mollusques* (Mollusks), state III. c. 1948. Etching and engraving, sheet 9 15/16 x 6 1/2" (25 x 16.6 cm). Publisher: unpublished. Printer: the artist, New York. Edition: 1 known impression. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of the artist

What of Louise Bourgeois's etched and penciled *Les Mollusques* (Mollusks) (1948, nos. 8 and 9), which has nothing of the grid about it? I choose this pair of etchings, each of which inverts the other, for its inside-out organicism and naturalist's orientation toward the ground, both the paper ground and the marine sediment in which the creatures embed themselves. Here printing's logic of reversal attaches itself to a sexual logic: from etching to etching, as mark and ground trade places, the phallic and the vulval become the inverse of each other. Do these organic shapes grow vertically out of the top and bottom edges of the print, or are we looking down at a bed in which parts of animal bodies lie enmeshed? Both at once. And it turns out that the remains of the grid are still there after all, in the up-and-down, back-and-forth of the marks and the shapes they create, and in the organic image of a zoological matrix. But that fragmented grid has turned into its opposite: the birthplace of form in formative matter, rather than creative mind; a Surrealist-style inversion of ratio into eros; and the paper intrication of biologic figure and material ground. Once more the hole replaces the whole: there are no closed-off, complete figures here.[14]

WRINKLE, FOLD, FABRIC, FIELD

I felt a Cleaving in my Mind—
As if my Brain had split—
I tried to match it—Seam by Seam—
But could not make them fit.

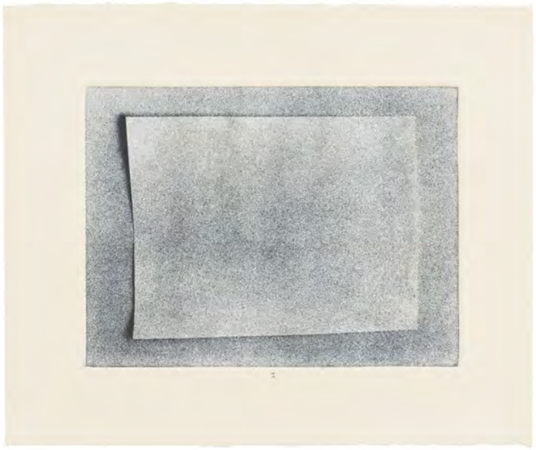
The thought behind, I strove to join
Unto the thought before—
But Sequence raveled out of Sound
Like Balls—upon a Floor.[15]

One of my aims with this canon is to cross over and fudge some well-guarded borders: not only between prints, drawings, and photographs—and the departments that house them—but also between image and abstraction. This is an opportunity to think them together rather than apart, and to move beyond the period divisions, movement categories, and chronological orderings that often accompany such separations. So I have elected to move backward through time, more or less, but at the same time to stop and begin again when other conceptions arise out of the works themselves and out of their reconfigurations of the way these ideas have been thought.

10. **Helen Frankenthaler** (American, born 1928). *Savage Breeze.* 1974. Woodcut, sheet 31 1/2 x 27 1/4" (80 x 69.2 cm). Publisher and printer: Universal Limited Art Editions, West Islip, New York. Edition: 31. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Celeste Bartos

So now I move backward from the 1970s to the late nineteenth century. And this time I am concerned with questions of wrinkle, fold, fabric, and field. I start with a woodcut by Helen Frankenthaler, *Savage Breeze* (1974, no. 10). From there I go back to Liliana Porter's set of ten photogravures, *Wrinkle* (1968, no. 11), and thence to Suzanne Valadon's etched *Marie au tub s'espongant* (Marie bathing with a sponge) (1908, no. 12) and Mary Cassatt's aquatint *Under the Horse-Chestnut Tree* (1896–97, no. 13). These are very different kinds of works on paper, made at very different times and places by very different sorts of women: a blue-blooded American abstract painter, an Argentinian printmaker, a French working-class model-turned-artist of the turn of the last century, and an upper-class American Impressionist. Let us see what happens when we try to think them together.

It is not surprising that Frankenthaler's *Savage Breeze* adds color into the equation, as do all of her other works on canvas and paper, whether painted or printed. In one way or another they all follow the drift of the color stain, which provides its own aleatory edges without much recourse to line. The stain lodges itself in rather than on the paper (or canvas), emphasizing again the material ground of mark-making—in this case stain-making, since the stain transforms the intentional mark into a flow of liquid substance. But as a woodcut, *Savage Breeze* is a slightly different matter, not only implying a self-reflexive relation between grain of wood and grain of paper, joined by the impress of color, but also sporting very evident marks and lines. Its fields of color are marked by borders and crisscrossed by incised trails of white line as well as a little channel of white space, a kind of wormhole opening briefly off the dip in the upper border between one color and another. What transpires is interesting: lines visibly made by cutting—by the indexical trace of the cut—are transformed into divisions of a field, partings of color, fissures running through the grain of a surface, tiny dry rivulets in the flooded terrain. An unmeasurable landscape



11. **Liliana Porter** (Argentine, born 1941). Plates I and V from *Wrinkle.* 1968. Two from an illustrated book with ten photogravures, sheet 13 $^{5}/_{16}$ x 16" (33.8 x 40.6 cm). Publisher: New York Graphic Workshop, New York. Printer: the artist, New York. Edition: 75. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Latin American Fund

mapped from above, a nameless body part cross-sectioned from the side, *Savage Breeze* turns line as positive contour into cut, cleft, crevice, channel, caesura. (It is worth remarking here that every abstraction is also an image of something—of itself, and/or whatever it evokes in the mind's eye of the viewer.)[16]

Surely nothing could be more different from these abstractions than Porter's black-and-white photogravures in *Wrinkle*, made as a book and then separated into ten separate images. As a set of photogravures it combines photography and etching and thus crosses the boundaries between the two mediums. But its black-and-whiteness and its photographic imaging are strikingly different from what I have already considered; nonetheless this is the work on paper that lies at the very center of my argument, for it makes clear that a photograph is as much a work on and of paper as any other print. More important, *Wrinkle* is an image of that fact: it is a depiction of the very ground that unites works on paper. From the first image to the last, a progressive, flip book–like movement takes us from a slightly curved piece of paper to a crumpled wad, all of them placed against the same flat paper ground, and there is a simultaneous movement, emphasized by the differential shifting of black, gray, and white tones, toward greater amounts of photographic detail caused by the wrinkling that gives the work its name. By doubling, tracing, and then etching the indexical ground and process that constitute the photographic image, *Wrinkle* represents the trajectory of a blank white piece of paper being transformed into a black, gray, and white photograph on yet another piece of paper.

And the wrinkle of *Wrinkle* thereby becomes the photographic equivalent of the fissures and folds of the other printed works, both abstract and representational, that make up my little canon. Take the case of Valadon's *Marie au tub s'espongant*. In this work Valadon looks back to the bathers of Hilaire-Germain-Edgar Degas. Degas's take, simultaneously empathic and voyeuristic, on the animal awkwardness of the female body as it washes itself, which was characteristically joined to an understanding of the relationship between imaged gesture and artist's gesture, is in Valadon's work at once exaggerated, subjected

12. **Suzanne Valadon** (French, 1865–1938). *Marie au tub s'espongant* (Marie bathing with a sponge). 1908. Drypoint, plate 6 $^{9}/_{16}$ x 8 $^{5}/_{8}$" (16.7 x 21.8 cm). Publisher and printer: unknown. Edition: proof. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund

13. **Mary Cassatt** (American, 1844–1926). *Under the Horse-Chestnut Tree.* 1896–97. Drypoint and aquatint, sheet 19 $^{11}/_{16}$ x 15 $^{3}/_{8}$" (50 x 39 cm). Publisher: L'Estampe Nouvelle, Paris. Printer: unknown. Edition: 45. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller

to further devenustation, and reduced to the operation of a thick, crude line outlining the figure heavily and heavy-handedly.[17] That line provides the outer contours of a body folded over on itself—into a fetal position that is at the same time a birthing pose—and of flesh and cloth.

By contrast, Cassatt's *Under the Horse-Chestnut Tree* shows a baby issuing from her mother's lap, in a field that, though representational, functions in a manner not unlike Frankenthaler's abstract fields of color interrupted by line. This, as we all know, is the mother-and-child subject matter most closely associated with Cassatt.[18] As we all also know, Cassatt was a friend and colleague of Degas and was often thought of as a kind of student or follower of his, although she was no more so than Georges Seurat or Paul Gauguin, and if we managed to shake free of the habits of thought provided for by our gender ideologies, we might be able to see that the dialogue between them was a two-way street. Her efforts in printmaking in particular, which she began under Degas's tutelage and/or in close collaboration with him (take your pick), yielded her best and most dramatic work in the 1890s, which looks nothing like Degas's prints. Following her brilliant 1891 set of aquatint-and-

drypoints depicting activities and moments in a modern middle-class woman's day—including but not limited to mother-and-child encounters—*Under the Horse-Chestnut Tree* continues the *japoniste* strategies of that earlier set, and is markedly unlike Degas's contemporaneous work in monotype, with the abstract, colored liquidity that seems to have so interested Frankenthaler. But although flattening is one of the tendencies that goes with those strategies, it is neither the whole story nor adequate to describe what is so remarkable and inventive about Cassatt's aquatints, whatever their subject. This example depicts a grass field as a broad area of green that adheres closely to the paper ground and cleaves the work in two at its horizon. Beneath the horizon three flatly incised areas open up within the green field: the patterned fabric of the mother's skirt with its tucks, gathers, and creases; the child's body, with its folds and crevices; and the mother's face, with the fold of her eyelid and her coiled and creviced ear. The strands of her hair are incised delicately and precisely next to her ear, within the dark patch that constitutes her head and sets off her scalp against the white of her profile. Thus Cassatt's *japonisme* allows for the same logic that would be adopted by Frankenthaler later on: the fold, the crevice, and the crease in a field of color that is at the same time the material ground of the image. Except that in the representational world of Cassatt's printmaking, the literal materiality of paper is matched and doubled by the depicted materialities of fabric, flesh, and hair.

We like a Hairbreadth 'scape
It tingles in the Mind
Far after Act or Accident
Like paragraphs of Wind

If we had ventured less
The Breeze were not so fine
That reaches to our utmost Hair
Its tentacles divine.[19]

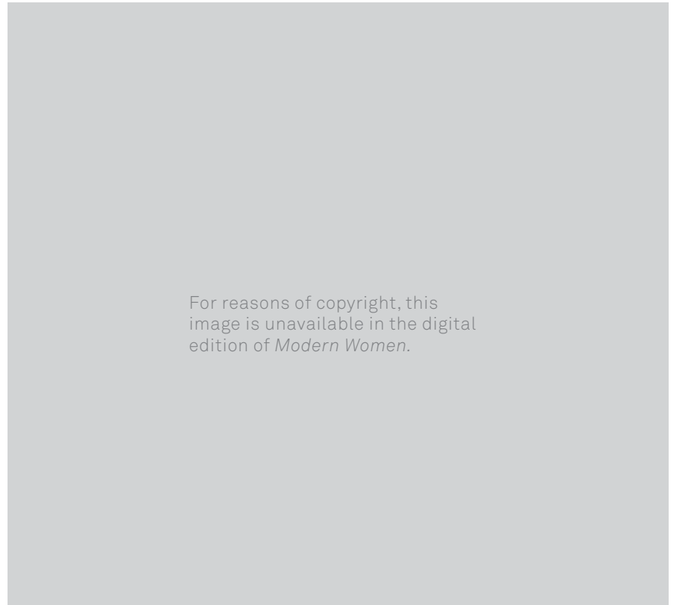
PUNCTUM, PHOTOGRAPH

She sped as Petals of a Rose
Offended by the Wind—
A frail Aristocrat of Time
Indemnity to find—
Leaving on nature—a Default
As Cricket or as Bee—
But Andes in the Bosoms where
She had begun to lie—[20]

I have wanted to include photographs in the category of works on paper, but at the same time I have kept them largely separate from other works on paper and saved them for last. For although a photograph is a work on paper (unless it is a work on some other kind of surface), it remains very difficult to see that surface in a photograph—to see through what we tend to understand as its transparency to its opacity, substance, and materiality, to its body. This is precisely the difficulty that I would like to address.

There are plenty of photographs of bodies and of materiality by women: out of them, I begin my retrospective discussion with Lorna Simpson's *Wigs* (1994, pages 492–93, no. 14), a portfolio of twenty-one lithographs printed on felt. Like Porter's photogravured *Wrinkle*, these began as photographic representations, in this case of hairpieces. The equation made between hair and felt in this work dramatizes the materiality of the photo-based image and questions the relationship between the optical trace and its literal tactility. For these are photo-based images that can be felt and that feel something like the hair that they represent. At the same time they stress the divide between the light-made image and the surface made of felt: the relay between seeing and feeling that refuses the utter joining into oneness of the two. The tonal language of the print tells the eye that it was not the hand that made the image but rather the light-receiving and light-tracing eye of the camera.

It is for this reason that I have kept my photographic women separate but connected. Looking back from Diane Arbus to Clementina, Lady Hawarden we can examine interests similar to those from Gallagher back to Cassatt: the fissures, folds, and wrinkles in the material fields of an embodied world. These interests are neither exclusive to women nor shared by all women, but they are a marked feature of the works on paper that I have considered. They mark my two favorite works by Arbus in MoMA's collection, two Maryland carnival pictures: *Girl in Her Circus Costume* (1967, no. 14) and *Albino Sword Swallower at a Carnival* (1970, page 264, no. 2). Both concerned with the bodily oddities of human presence, as Arbus's works always are, they set their two circus performers against the rippling billows and undulations of tent fabric, with skewed edges pulling slightly away from the spatial field of the photograph—just enough to make one diverge from the other while at the same time suggesting a relation of kinship and physical causality between the cloth and the surface of the square photograph. That relation reminds me of the lone color photograph in Roland Barthes's *La Chambre claire* (*Camera Lucida*, 1980): Daniel Boudinet's untitled 1979 photograph of a field of blue cloth parting slightly, letting in enough light to show a bit of a dark room, which wordlessly opens the book by illustrating the way the rents and tears, the wrinkles and creases in a material field are caught willy-nilly by the camera in its umbilical cord relation to the physical world it portrays. It is precisely from that field that the famous *punctum* issues.[21]



14. Diane Arbus (American, 1923–1971). *Girl in Her Circus Costume, Maryland*. 1967. Gelatin silver print, printed by Neil Selkirk, 14 7/16 x 14 7/16" (36.6 x 36.7 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchase

Certain photographic women seem to have been particularly interested in that field, and primary among them was Dorothea Lange, whose *Indonesia*; *Winters, California* (no. 15); and *Lap*, all from the 1950s, share that interest in a very marked fashion. Whether with feet, legs, and cloth making contact with the ground and taking up a good half of the photograph; or with feet, legs, dress cloth, and pregnant belly lying on the fabric of a bedspread constituting the whole of the photograph; or with the wrinkled fabric of a lap, with creased, clasped, and aged hands sunk into its folds, taking up all but two corners of the photograph—all three images take that *punctal* field as their subject, tying it to the human bodies that they contain. It is also true of *Coney Island* (1941, no. 16), a delightful photograph by Arbus's teacher, Lisette Model. This iconic fat woman

©The Dorothea Lange Collection, Oakland Museum of California, City of Oakland. Gift of Paul S. Taylor

15. Dorothea Lange (American, 1895–1965). *Winters, California.* 1955. Gelatin silver print, 10 x 13 5/16" (25.5 x 33.9 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchase

16. Lisette Model (American, born Austria. 1901–1983). *Coney Island.* 1941. Gelatin silver print, 10 7/8 x 13 5/8" (27.7 x 34.6 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchase

17. Ilse Bing (American, born Germany. 1899–1988). *Greta Garbo Poster in Paris Ghetto.* 1932. Gelatin silver print, 8 3/4 x 11" (22.2 x 28.1 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. David H. McAlpin Fund

18. Tina Modotti (Italian, 1896–1942). *Roses, Mexico.* 1924. Palladium print, 7 3/8 x 8 1/2" (18.8 x 21.6 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Edward Weston

joyfully occupies her wet field with her physicality, making robust contact with the ripples of sand and water beneath her and urging upon us, through her forward lean and her patent happiness, an empathic, border-crossing, bodily phenomenology. We connect to her through the vast *punctal* field of her dimpled flesh, its thereness-at-that-time at once viscerally demonstrated and crossing over into our here-and-now.

Ilse Bing was less interested in bodies, but her *Greta Garbo Poster in Paris Ghetto* (1932, no. 17) does as much as the photographs mentioned so far to announce the relation between its own indexical field of detail and the time-eroded material surfaces that it records: the fragment of Garbo's face not only declares the interconnectedness of photography and film but also peels back to show the blank surface on which it was posted and the layers of material surface beneath it, yielding this particular photograph's time-and-space-bound details.[22] Tina Modotti, who knew well the role of nude model, chose to depict that same material field, as in her *Cloth Folds*, often implying the body even when it was not present, as in her *Roses, Mexico* (1924, no. 18), of the same year. Modotti's interest in photographic embodiment was always tinged by an awareness of the time-bound fragility of photographed matter, nowhere more beautifully rendered than in the densely lapped field of fading rose petals. Therein lies the poignance of her work on paper.[23]

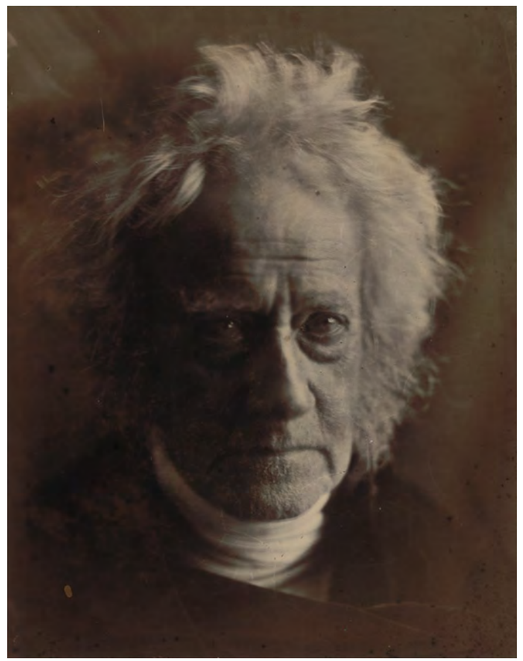
This focus on fragility was not usually shared by her compatriot Imogen Cunningham, who was more interested in photographing human flesh and form, but Cunningham's *Two Callas* (1929) certainly opens onto such an awareness, which it adds to Georgia O'Keeffe–like graphics of botanical sex. Her image of doubled lilies interjects a fragile fleshiness into their spiral form as they swirl back twice from surface into dark depth, twice enfolding matter into nothingness and surface into the work's photographic reverse. But the best realization from this period of the relation between a body and the embodiment of paper matter is to be found in a nude by Germaine Krull from the 1920s, perhaps because the matte texture of the paper she chose is successful in making the photograph look as tactile as it feels, thereby modifying its pure opticality and vivifying the photographic relay between skin, cloth, and paper, between eye and vicarious hand. Gertrude Käsebier belonged to the Pictorialist moment, when the tactility of

19. Gertrude Käsebier (American, 1852–1934). *Lolly Pops.* 1910. Platinum print, 11 1/4 x 8 7/16" (28.5 x 21.5 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Mrs. Hermine M. Turner

the photograph's surface was directly at issue in technical forms such as the gum bichromate print, in which the paper's tactile quality and the etching of photographic detail into it are particularly evident in the dark areas of the image. But in later photographs, which eschew the overt painterly quality of gum bichromate, it is in the light areas where one is most aware of the haptics of the material world; in *Lolly Pops* (1910, no. 19), a spooky picture in spite of its kids-and-kitten cuteness, light falls on a striped dress in the background, highlighting its folds and wrinkles, and on the wood of a banister and the weave of a carpet in the foreground. The light becomes almost palpable as it steps down the stairs in spots of sunlight. Here a certain delicate contest emerges between the dark tactility of the print surface and the lit surfaces of the recorded world.

Käsebier devoted her photographic practice to a similar set of subjects and issues as Cassatt's and, earlier, those of the British amateurs Julia Margaret Cameron and Hawarden. But let us turn our attention instead to Cameron's beautiful, if haggard, portraits of Sir John Herschel, one of the two most important figures in early photographic experimentation and invention in Britain. Three of these are in MoMA's collection: two albumen prints and one carbon print. Even more than in Cameron's famous Rembrandtesque portraits, in which Herschel, decked out in the dark folds of a velvet cloak and cap, faces slightly away in a three-quarter turn, these two closer views, from 1867 (no. 20), in which he directs his gaze right at the lens, dramatize the camera's confrontation with the fleshly stuff of aging skin and hair. Drifts of snowy hair standing on end and falling in wisps surround his craggy visage: wrinkled forehead; bushy eyebrows over glinting, baggy eyes; drooping cheeks; and sternly folded lips above a creased white neckerchief. It is not a flattering portrait, but the carbon print in particular yields a compelling encounter with the face of early photography, in all its *punctal* force. The that-has-been of Herschel is given, here and now, with all the material specificity of his aging skin and the immaterial energy of his anima, caught in the dark by light, piercing the mortal skin of the photograph.

Hawarden returns us, finally, to Dickinson. By now there is perhaps no need to rehearse Hawarden's devotion to yards of fabric and their interaction with light, in the context of the Victorian woman-in-white cloistered in her camera obscura, except to say that in MoMA's albumen print of Grace Maude and Clementina Maude (no. 21), made in 1863 or so (a year or two before Hawarden died), that devotion is doubled, as it so often was, in the figures of her two eldest daughters, and except to note that Hawarden's photography is marked by what emerges as a peculiarly feminine interest in the interaction of matter and its spectral opposite. I might go so far as to say that her photography functions as an allegory not only of the self-reflexive making of the photograph by light but,



Diana- and Danae-like, of the erotics of that making as well, as light caressingly enfolds itself in white skirts and curtains and skin and hair. And thus into the canon is also enfolded the very specifically human vantage point of the chambered woman, dreaming beyond her chamber "of the first league out from land."

Exultation is the going
Of an inland land to sea,
Past the houses—past the headlands—
Into deep Eternity—

Bred as we, among the mountains,
Can the sailor understand
The divine intoxication
Of the first league out from land?[24]

20. Julia Margaret Cameron (British, 1815–1879). *Sir John F. W. Herschel.* 1867. Albumen silver print, 14 x 10 3/4" (35.6 x 27.3 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Edward Steichen

21. Clementina, Lady Hawarden (British, 1822–1865). *Grace Maude and Clementina Maude.* c. 1863–64. Albumen silver print, 9 1/8 x 8 15/16" (23.2 x 22.8 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Paul F. Walter

1. Emily Dickinson, no. 288, c. 1861, *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson*, ed. Thomas H. Johnson (Boston: Little, Brown, 1960). All citations of Dickinson's poems are taken from this 1960 edition of her unrevised poems. (The first edition was published in 1890.) The numbers refer to those given to the poems, which are presented more or less in chronological order, rather than to page numbers.
2. Kiki Smith, *Sampler* (San Francisco: Arion Press, 2007). Some of the poems cited in this essay appear in *Sampler*, and others do not; in all cases I have chosen the unrevised punctuation and wording given in *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson*.
3. See, for example, Harold Bloom, ed., *Emily Dickinson* (New York: Chelsea House, 1985); Dorothy Huff Oberhaus, *Emily Dickinson's Fascicles: Method and Meaning* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995); and Wendy Martin, *The Cambridge Companion to Emily Dickinson* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
4. See Wendy Weitman, *Kiki Smith: Prints, Books, and Things* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2003).
5. Dickinson's poem "I died for Beauty" (no. 449, c. 1862, *The Complete Poems*) meditates on the futility of fame in yet another way, ending, "Until the moss had reached our lips/ And covered up our names."
6. Dickinson, no. 1138, c. 1869, *The Complete Poems*.
7. Works such as *Possession is 9/10 of the Law* (1985) exemplify Smith's engagement with the interior of the body and its identification with the materiality of paper; indeed, with all of its internal organs roughly and blackly scribbled over—thus literally invisible—*Possession* makes the paper on which that silkscreened, monotype blacking-out occurs both the most visible and the most beautiful of materialities, with the support replacing the mark as the aspect of the work on paper that matters.
8. On the *punctum*, see Roland Barthes, *La Chambre claire: Note sur la photographie* (Paris: Gallimard/Cahiers du cinéma, 1980); published in English, in a translation by Richard Howard, as *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981). I have played fast and loose with the concept here, extending it to cover other kinds of poignancies motivated by the indexical trace and its ties to the "that-has-been" of time past and piercing effects found in other kinds of works on paper.
9. For good work on these various artists, see Cornelia Butler and Lisa Gabrielle Mark, eds., *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution* (Los Angeles: The Museum of Contemporary Art; Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2007); Briony Fer, *On Abstract Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997); and Maud Lavin, *Cut with the Kitchen Knife: The Weimar Photomontages of Hannah Höch* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997). See also my and Catherine de Zegher's *Women Artists at the Millenium* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, October Books, 2006).
10. Dickinson, no. 328, c. 1862, *The Complete Poems*.
11. Ibid., no. 211, c. 1860.
12. For Dickinson's observations of the natural world, see *Emily Dickinson's Herbarium: A Facsimile Edition* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006).
13. Rosalind Krauss, "Grids," in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1985), pp. 8–22. See also her *Line as Language: Six Artists Draw* (Princeton: Princeton University Art Museum, 1974); and de Zegher's various interrogations of the definition of drawing, particularly de Zegher, with Avis Newman, *The Stage of Drawing: Gesture and Act, Selected from the Tate Collection* (London: Tate Publishing; New York: The Drawing Center, Harry N. Abrams, 2003). See also de Zegher, ed., *Eva Hesse Drawing* (New York: The Drawing Center; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006); de Zegher and Hendel Teicher, eds., *3x Abstraction: New Methods of Drawing: Hilma af Klint, Emma Kunz, and Agnes Martin* (New York: The Drawing Center; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005); and Rosalind Krauss, *Bachelors* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1999).
14. Many of my ideas about what I would call the "feminine" of form—ideas about doubling, about the matrix of matter, about the fold and inside-out-ness—are ultimately derived from Luce Irigaray's *Ce Sexe qui n'en est pas un* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1977); published in English, in a translation by Catherine Porter, as *This Sex Which Is Not One* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1985). This book and Irigaray's work in general are most often understood as essentialist and thus relegated to an earlier moment in feminist thought that now, post deconstruction, can no longer be useful to us. I disagree, finding in her writing some very useful conceptions of the form and structure of the feminine that both correct and contradict Freudian and Lacanian views of the matter, and that may be extended to revise our understanding of work—by women but not only by women—that swims against the mainstream of the patrilineage of modernist art. See also de Zegher, ed., *Inside the Visible: An Elliptical Traverse of 20th Century Art in, of, and from the Feminine* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1996).
15. Dickinson, no. 937, c. 1864, *The Complete Poems*.
16. For a good argument against the binary opposition between abstraction and representation, see Meyer Schapiro, *Nature of Abstract Art* (New York: American Marxist Association, 1937); reprinted in *Modern Art: 19th and 20th Centuries* (New York: G. Braziller, 1978).
17. The term "devenustation" comes from Leo Steinberg, "The Algerian Women and Picasso at Large," in *Other Criteria: Confrontations with Twentieth-Century Art* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), pp. 125–234.
18. On Mary Cassatt, see Pamela A. Ivinski, *Mary Cassatt, The Maternal Body, and Modern Connoisseurship* (Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 2003); Marc Rosen and Susan Pinsky, *Mary Cassatt: Prints and Drawings from the Artist's Studio* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); and Ingrid Pfeiffer and Max Hollern, eds., *Women Impressionists* (San Francisco: Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, 2008).
19. Dickinson, no. 1175, c. 1870, *The Complete Poems*.
20. Ibid., no. 991, c. 1865.
21. Barthes's conception of the *punctum*, as distinct from the *studium*, locates photography's innate spatiotemporal poignancy in its umbilical ties to the real: all the details that he mentions as having a *punctal* effect on him, and potentially on any of us, stem from that relation and thus are born of the detail that is traced in any photograph. (And, although Barthes never uses the term "indexical," there could be no more indexical theory of photography than his. On the theory of the indexical sign, see Charles S. Peirce, "Logic as Semiotic: The Theory of Signs," in *The Philosophy of Peirce: Selected Writings*, ed. Justus Buchler [New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1950], pp. 98–119; and Krauss, "Notes on the Index 1 and 2," in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde*, pp. 196–219.) All of my work on photography thus far is deeply informed by *La Chambre claire* and its indexical theory of the *punctum*. See my "Biology, Destiny, Photography: Difference According to Diane Arbus," *October* 66 (Fall 1993): 29–52; "Cupid's Pencil of Light: Julia Margaret Cameron and the Maternalization of Photography," *October* 76 (Spring 1996): 115–41, reprinted in Krauss et al., eds., *October: The Second Decade, 1986–1996* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1997); "From Clementina to Käsebier: The Photographic Attainment of the 'Lady Amateur,'" *October* 91 (Winter 2000): 101–39; and "This Photography Which Is Not One: In the Gray Zone with Tina Modotti," *October* 101 (Fall 2002): 19–52. In the last decade or so there has been a spate of books on women photographers, the most important of which is Naomi Rosenblum, *A History of Women Photographers* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1994), which went into its second edition in 2000.
22. Also of interest is Ilse Bing's doubled self-portrait (1931), in which she portrays herself in a folding bathroom mirror that shows her and her camera twice, from different angles. It is a phenomenon worth remarking on, even briefly, that it was women photographers, not men, who tended to gravitate to the mirrored self-portrait and its doubling and splitting of the subject's likeness.
23. Were there space and time, I would include Tina Modotti's ethereal photographic version of the grid, her palladium *Telephone Wires, Mexico* (c. 1925, page 197, no. 2), in this account, for it is among her most delicately beautiful images. It does not so much contemplate the time-bound fragility of its own material field as mark the connection between the photographic and the draughtsmanlike in its transformation of telephone wires into a set of finely criss-crossing linear marks.
24. Dickinson, no. 76, c. 1859, *The Complete Poems*.

1. Gertrude Käsebier (American, 1852–1934). *Blessed Art Thou Among Women*. 1899. Platinum print, 9 3/8 x 5 5/8" (23.8 x 14.3 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Mrs. Hermine M. Turner

CROSSING THE LINE: FRANCES BENJAMIN JOHNSTON AND GERTRUDE KÄSEBIER AS PROFESSIONALS AND ARTISTS

/ SARAH HERMANSON MEISTER

At the end of the nineteenth century there were three types of photographers: the professional, the artist, and the amateur.[1] The borders between them were distinct, if permeable. Professionals relied on photography to make a living, either by operating commercial studios or accepting assignments from illustrated magazines, and produced unmistakably photographic work—rich in detail and intimately connected to the real world. Artists, for the most part, sought recognition for photography as a means of personal expression, imitating avant-garde efforts from other mediums with such techniques as soft focus, extensive darkroom manipulation, and compositional arrangements derived from Japanese woodcuts, anything to distinguish their work from that of their professional peers. The amateur photographer emerged with the technical developments of the 1880s: hoards of self-taught snapshooters enticed by George Eastman's advertising campaign ("You Press the Button, We Do the Rest") to take tens of thousands of pictures of their children, friends, and vacations. To photographers who considered themselves artists the sheer number of pictures produced by amateurs and professionals was a threat to the consideration of photography as a fine art.[2] It was during this increasingly divided era in photographic history that Frances Benjamin Johnston and Gertrude Käsebier first picked up their cameras.

There is ample evidence that women were participating in the business and art of photography from its earliest days, but it was the availability of commercially prepared dry-plate glass negatives in the late 1870s, followed by the development of rolled negatives on flexible film (which Eastman placed inside his Kodak No. 1 Camera in 1888) that precipitated a veritable flood of female photographers.[3] The profusion of advertisements featuring the Kodak Girl reflected Eastman's appreciation of the enormous potential of the female market and his determination to secure it.[4] And despite the prevalent gender biases at the time, artist-photographers were significantly less threatened by the presence of women in their midst than they were by the amateurs and professional studios churning out photographs for an eager and ever-expanding audience.

Alfred Stieglitz was unquestionably the central figure in photography at the turn of the twentieth century—a talented photographer in his own right, but also a tireless advocate for photography as a means of artistic expression.[5] Artist-photographers became known as Pictorialists, and Stieglitz championed their work on the pages of *Camera Notes* (from 1897 until 1902) and *Camera Work* (beginning in 1903).[6] In 1902, characteristically dissatisfied with the status quo, he invited twelve photographers who shared his absolute dedication to the advancement of photographic art to join him in a new alliance he christened the Photo-Secession.[7] Given the zeal with which he sought to protect photography from complacency or the taint of commercialism, it is no wonder that he eventually clashed with many of his admirers, particularly those who sought to earn a living making photographs. His approval and support were critically important for artistically ambitious photographers of this era, and Johnston and Käsebier were no exception. It is remarkable, however, that he gave his support to these two photographers who publicly staked their claim neither as artists nor as commercial professionals, but as professional artists.

The categories of artist and professional, which Stieglitz and many of his male contemporaries held to be mutually exclusive, were not perceived as binary for their female contemporaries, many of whom were accustomed

to transcending societal expectations (for example, defining both home and studio as women's spheres). The way in which Johnston and Käsebier bridged the divide between art and commerce can help us understand this singularly polarizing issue in the history of photography.

> *The woman who makes photography profitable must have, as to personal qualities, good common sense, unlimited patience to carry her through endless failures, equally unlimited tact, good taste, a quick eye, a talent for detail, and a genius for hard work. In addition, she needs training, experience, some capital, and a field to exploit. . . .*
>
> *Any person of average intelligence can produce photographs by the thousand, but to give art value to the fixed image of the camera-obscura requires imagination, discriminating taste, and, in fact, all that is implied by a true appreciation of the beautiful.*
>
> —Frances Benjamin Johnston[8]

Frances Benjamin Johnston appeared undaunted by many of the gender stereotypes that prevailed at the end of the nineteenth century: she remained unmarried, established her own commercial portrait studio, and photographed herself with her skirt drawn up, a cigarette in one hand and a beer stein in the other—a defiantly improper representation. Born in 1864 and trained at the Académie Julian, in Paris, and the Art Students League, in Washington, D. C., Johnston began her career writing and illustrating magazine articles, often using photographs as the basis for her pen-and-ink drawings.[9] Around 1890 she turned exclusively to photography, which she learned from Thomas Smillie, the Smithsonian's first staff photographer, and a few years later she went to work for George Grantham Bain, founder of the first news-photography agency, making her the first female photojournalist.[10] It was not until 1895, with the opening of her own studio, that she expanded her practice to include portraiture. She must have been pleased with her thriving studio and steady stream of freelance assignments, but she also remained proud of her artistic training; in 1896, "with no little trepidation," she submitted three prints to the first (and only) Washington Salon.[11] All three were accepted, likely encouraging her to submit work to the first Philadelphia Photographic Salon, in 1898, where she would first cross paths with Käsebier.

The Philadelphia Photographic Salon marked the first time that a recognized American fine arts institution sponsored a photography exhibition.[12] The organizers' pride and idealism would soon be tested by the tensions between those who shared Stieglitz's singular vision and those with broader notions of photographic accomplishment. Stieglitz was one of the salon's five jurors, who together selected only 259 works for exhibition from more than 1,500 submitted.[13] Four of Johnston's photographs were chosen, along with ten by Käsebier; only Stieglitz, Mathilde Weil, and Clarence H. White were equally well represented.

Johnston had also received glowing praise in the pages of *Camera Notes*, a quarterly magazine Stieglitz had created the previous year from his new position as vice president of the Camera Club of New York (and, not incidentally, chair of its publication committee). Stieglitz used *Camera Notes* to champion photography as a fine art, to commend those practitioners he admired, and to condemn (or, worse, ignore) the rest. On its pages in October 1897 Johnston was hailed, despite her professional background, as one of "the best known American amateurs" and an "eminent" name in the field.[14] In October 1898 a halftone reproduction of one of Johnston's photographs accompanied an article by Sadakichi Hartmann, which distinguished the work of artistic photographers from the "amateur" work of "Kodak fiends," thus aligning Johnston with serious creative endeavors.[15] Shortly thereafter Stieglitz wrote to Johnston, "Your work is capital, & I shall be glad to see more of it when you get to New York."[16] These were not empty compliments: Johnston's photographs were exhibited at the Camera Club in November 1898, concurrent with the first Philadelphia Salon.

The reviews of Johnston's work in *Camera Notes* confirm her enviable position. In January 1899 her photographs and Stieglitz's were described as "remarkable in equal degree."[17] And in the following issue: "If Miss Johnston be not endowed with that erratic and uncertain gift called genius, her works . . . give evidence at least of the possession of a high order of talent."[18] This issue contained Johnston's first full-page gravure as well as the magazine's first halftone reproductions of Käsebier's photographs. For Käsebier this would be the first of many appearances, but despite the promise described in these reviews, it would be Johnston's last reproduction or substantive mention.

It was a fast fall from Stieglitz's grace. Within a month of this issue's publication, when Johnston and Käsebier were appointed jurors of the second Philadelphia Photographic Salon (along with F. Holland Day, White, and Henry Troth), Stieglitz wrote to Day, "I like you as a Juror—but Miss Johnston! And even Troth. Why not Day to represent the East, Käsebier the Middle States, and White the West?"[19] (The jurors sat together for a tintype portrait at a local commercial studio, providing a precious record of their demeanor [no. 2]. For jurors responsible for upholding artistic standards of excellence to document their role in such a pedestrian manner would have been ironic, even deplorable, to Stieglitz.) For the third Salon, in 1900, Stieglitz secured a seat for himself on the jury, pleased to have Käsebier by his side and perhaps equally pleased about (if not responsible for) Johnston's absence. By then the rift was growing between Stieglitz's allies, who felt that "the modern photographic Salon stands for art and art alone," and a number of members of the Philadelphia Photographic Society, who felt that the selection criteria were too narrow. Johnston was among the many whose work was excluded because it no longer fit Stieglitz's definition of art photography.[20]

There were most likely several reasons for Johnston's falling out of favor. The first and most significant is that by mid-1899 her photography had little in common with the previous work that Stieglitz had admired. Johnston returned to the more expository pictorial vocabulary she had developed during her years working for Bain and the illustrated press—although now inflected with the lessons of composition and print quality she had absorbed under Stieglitz's influence. The second reason almost certainly stemmed from her refusal to observe the boycotts of salons and exhibitions that Stieglitz led on a regular basis or, more fundamentally, from her evident rejection of his position that the practical and commercial

2. Jurors of the second annual Philadelphia Photographic Salon, 1899. Tintype by James R. Applegate. Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division. Gift of Frances Benjamin Johnston

3. Frances Benjamin Johnston (American, 1864–1952). *The Old Well*. 1899–1900. From *The Hampton Album* (1900). Platinum print, 7 1/2 x 9 9/16" (19 x 24.3 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Lincoln Kirstein

4. Frances Benjamin Johnston (American, 1864–1952). *The Improved Well (Three Hampton Grandchildren)*. 1899–1900. From *The Hampton Album* (1900). Platinum print, 7 1/2 x 9 1/2" (19.1 x 24.2 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Lincoln Kirstein

applications of photography were antithetical to the creation of art.[21] The third reason could have been Johnston's increasing prominence as an arbiter of taste: her defining of (generally female) photographic accomplishment was a clear challenge to Stieglitz's authority.

Johnston was an official delegate to the International Photographic Congress, held during the 1900 Exposition Universelle in Paris, which Stieglitz and his coterie had boycotted entirely, on the grounds that photography was classified as Group III ("Appliances and General Processes relating to Literature, Science and Art") rather than Group II ("Works of Art").[22] In her capacity as delegate, Johnston gathered nearly one hundred and fifty photographs to demonstrate the artistic accomplishments of thirty-one of her female American peers—amateurs and professionals alike—and this exhibition, along with two other exhibitions of Johnston's recent work, constituted the only American photographs on view in Paris.[23] Johnston had sought Stieglitz's input in her planning, and his reply was cordial, if conscious of posterity's judgment: "The list of women photographers you sent me is complete and I can think of no one that you may have overlooked—I'd certainly ask them all. . . . The women in this country are certainly doing great photographic work and deserve much commendation for their efforts."[24] The exhibition was extremely well received; it traveled to Moscow in the fall of 1900 and back to Paris in January 1901, and Johnston wrote a series of seven articles about women included in the exhibition for *Ladies' Home Journal*, beginning with Käsebier.[25] She was asserting her voice in the debate over what constituted photographic art.

The change in Johnston's photographic style may have incited Stieglitz's intolerance of her extracurricular activities, but it resulted in the work for which she remains best known, which was also displayed in Paris in 1900. More than 350 of her photographs of the Washington, D.C., public school system, made in 1899, were displayed in the United States Pavilion; about 150 more, made at the Hampton Institute in December 1899 and January 1900, were in the Palace of Social Economy as part of the American Negro Exhibit. Johnston's rate of production for these two bodies of work alone would have been antithetical to the Pictorialists' labored practices. There was a clarity and uniformity to the images from each series that was well suited to the subject and assignment but anathema to Stieglitz and his followers, despite Johnston's use of Pictorialist processes—large glass-plate negatives and platinum prints. Yet the most unforgivable aspect of this work must have been the fact of its commission and real-world function. The Hampton Institute, founded in 1868 to provide African Americans and, soon thereafter, Native Americans with academic instruction and vocational training, had commissioned Johnston to make photographs for publicity and fund-raising purposes when public support for their mission was waning.

The best of Johnston's Hampton Institute photographs, most likely the same ones displayed in Paris, were compiled into an album, now in the collection of The Museum of Modern Art.[26] The album introduces its subject slowly, beginning with views of the campus, photographs of the school's founders (not made by Johnston), a group portrait of four hundred students, and a didactic series of before-and-after views illustrating the improvements made possible by a Hampton education (nos. 3 and 4). But it is the more than one hundred tableaux vivants that follow—of students absorbed in formal instruction or engaged in practical training—on which Johnston's reputation rightly rests (nos. 5–8). In some, the viewer's eye, like those of the students, is drawn to the subject of the day's lesson by the careful placement of desks and teaching tools; in others, Johnston positioned the students like actors on a stage, in arrangements that emphasize traditional compositional elements, with the force of her will keeping even the youngest students in their poses until the long exposure was completed. These photographs share the qualities of fine craftsmanship and classical composition admired by Stieglitz and his peers, but the images' insistently photographic characteristics were antithetical to their sense of aesthetic refinement.

Currying favor with Stieglitz had been somewhat of a distraction in Johnston's career, but his influence was apparent when she returned to work made on assignment, creating photographs that are exquisitely composed and beautifully rendered.[27] Johnston also followed Stieglitz's lead in assuming a role as public advocate, but in service of celebrating the accomplishments and fostering the development of female American photographers regardless of their status as artist, amateur, or professional.

> *Why should it not be required of the photographer, desiring to be known as an artist, that he serve an apprenticeship in an art school? Masterpieces can never be understood, or appreciated, or produced by one whose sense of beauty has not been awakened and educated. . . . I earnestly advise women of artistic tastes to train for the unworked field of modern photography. It seems to be especially adapted to them, and the few who have entered it are meeting with gratifying and profitable success. If one already draws and paints, so much the better. . . . Besides, consider the advantage of a vocation which necessitates one's being a taking woman.*
>
> —Gertrude Käsebier[28]

Gertrude Stanton was born in 1852, in the territory that is now Iowa, and raised in Colorado. When she was twelve, her family moved to Brooklyn, where her mother took in boarders to supplement the family income, one of whom was Eduard Käsebier, a shellac importer from Wiesbaden, Germany, who married the young Miss Stanton in 1873. Käsebier often spoke disparagingly of their relationship, her disappointment with which may have contributed to her decision to leave the confines of the domestic sphere and seek formal artistic training. Her children were not yet teenagers when Käsebier enrolled in the Regular Art Course at Brooklyn's Pratt Institute.[29]

The curriculum at Pratt was a progressive one, and female students were treated seriously, with advice, information, and support available for working women. The child-development theories of Friedrich Froebel, encouraging independent free play as a means of learning, were taught in teacher training school, as well as discussed

5. Frances Benjamin Johnston (American, 1864–1952). *Thanksgiving Day Lesson at the Whittier*. 1899–1900. From *The Hampton Album* (1900). Platinum print, 7 1/2 x 9 9/16" (19 x 24.3 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Lincoln Kirstein

6. Frances Benjamin Johnston (American, 1864–1952). *History: Class in American History*. 1899–1900. From *The Hampton Album* (1900). Platinum print, 7 1/2 x 9 1/2" (19.1 x 24.2 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Lincoln Kirstein

7. Frances Benjamin Johnston (American, 1864–1952). *Physiology: Class in Emergency Work*. 1899–1900. From *The Hampton Album* (1900). Platinum print, 7 9/16 x 9 1/2" (19.2 x 24.2 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Lincoln Kirstein

8. Frances Benjamin Johnston (American, 1864–1952). *Stairway of the Treasurer's Residence: Students at Work*. 1899–1900. From *The Hampton Album* (1900). Platinum print, 7 1/2 x 9 1/2" (19.1 x 24.1 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Lincoln Kirstein

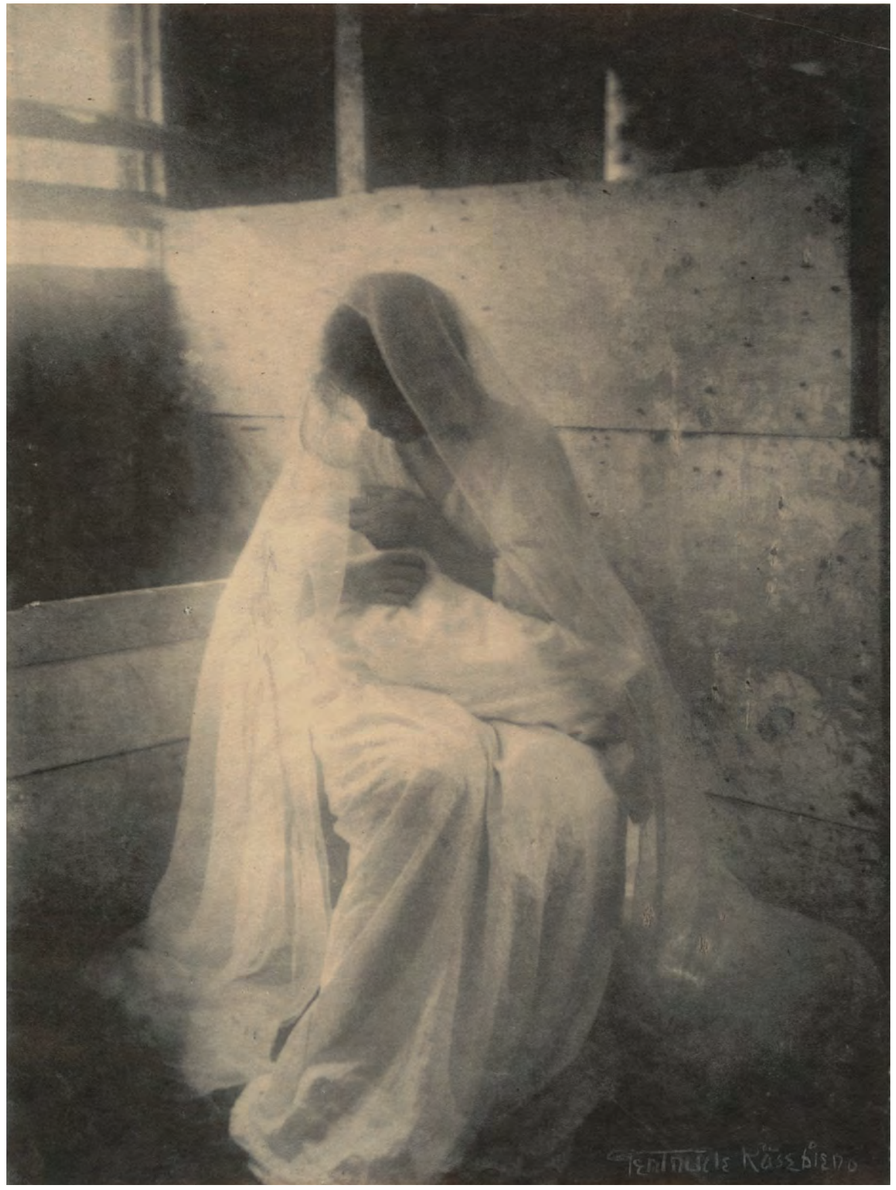
in public lectures and articles.[30] Such peaceful coexistence of practical advice with artistic education augured the combination of professional success and artistic recognition that would define Käsebier's photographic career. It was also at Pratt that Käsebier began to investigate the concept of motherhood, which would become central to her art in, for example, *The Manger* and *Blessed Art Thou Among Women* (both 1899, nos. 9 and 1), two of her earliest and best-known explorations of this theme (the gentle maternal encouragement toward independence in the latter work, symbolized by the threshold, can be interpreted as an illustration of Froebel's theories). The female figures in both works are garbed in timeless white gowns, functioning as symbols of purity and also as a nod to those viewers who would have been familiar with James McNeill Whistler's *Symphony in White, No. 1: The White Girl* (1862). The light tones evoke a dreamlike atmosphere that obfuscates the photographs' connections to the real world.

There was no formal instruction in photography at Pratt—Käsebier was in fact criticized by her teachers for submitting a photograph to a contest run by a local arts magazine—so she satisfied her photographic yearnings by taking pictures of her own children.[31] While packing for a trip to France after graduation in the summer of 1894, Käsebier had just enough room in her trunk for her camera; that summer she recognized photography as her true calling. She stayed in Europe for the remainder of the year, then returned to New York determined to become a photographer. She apprenticed at a commercial studio in Brooklyn, where, she said, "I served in the sky-light; I developed; I printed; I toned; I mounted; I retouched. I acquired the knack of handling materials in quantities, and caught the swing of business. I purposely forgot for the time, that I had any aim other than to be a commercial photographer."[32] Once armed with this training, however, she began submitting her photographs to art exhibitions, the first in November 1896 at the Boston Camera Club. Käsebier opened her first studio by early 1898, and soon wrote to introduce herself to Stieglitz.[33] Within a year, she not only knew Stieglitz well but had earned his respect, as evidenced by her solo exhibition at the Camera Club of New York in February 1899 and her increasing prominence on the pages of *Camera Notes*.

In July 1899 painter Arthur W. Dow (Käsebier's former instructor at Pratt) wrote of her, "Being a painter herself, with experience and training, and a knowledge of what constitutes fine art, she chooses to paint her portraits with the camera and chemicals."[34] Another reviewer remarked,

> Of the exhibitions of individual photographic work shown at the New York Camera Club, none excited more attention nor incited more earnest discussion than that of Mrs. Gertrude Käsebier . . . though professional work, it was marked by an entire absence of the confectioner-like and inartistic methods. . . . This is the more remarkable when it is remembered that these pictures were not the carefully studied compositions of leisure hours, but examples of work done professionally for the general public, without any chance to exercise a choice of models.[35]

Stieglitz may have given up on Johnston as an artist as a result of the commissions she accepted, but Käsebier's artistic success within a commercial operation forced him to soften his antiprofessional stance—at least on the pages of *Camera Notes*. In fact, most of the photographs that have come to define Käsebier as an artist were not made on commission, and any selection of her best work (by Stieglitz or this author) includes few examples in which she was not able to choose and pose her models.



9. **Gertrude Käsebier** (American, 1852–1934). *The Manger*. 1899. Platinum print, 12 $^{13}/_{16}$ x 9 $^{5}/_{8}$" (32.5 x 24.4 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Mrs. Hermine M. Turner

Käsebier was savvy enough to realize that remaining in Stieglitz's favor was in her best interest, and for many years she worked hard to stay that way. When Stieglitz founded the Photo-Secession (leaving the Camera Club of New York and *Camera Notes* behind him), Käsebier was one of twelve photographers he picked to join him as a founder and fellow. And when he created *Camera Work* to celebrate photography as a means of personal artistic expression, he chose Käsebier to be the featured photographer of the inaugural issue in January 1903—and asked Johnston to write a tribute:

> Mrs. Käsebier is great as an artist, and as such her unrivaled ability is everywhere conceded, but she is greater still as a professional photographer. . . . To portray with artistic insight "all sorts and conditions of men" . . . requires not only genius but a rare combination of other qualities—intuition, tact, sympathy and infinite patience. Gifted with such a temperament, this is what Mrs. Käsebier is doing.[36]

Another review noted that "a new magazine, devoted to the higher interests of photography . . . not inaptly opens with a survey of the work of Mrs. Gertrude Käsebier. For this lady has won a most enviable reputation both for the quality of the work and for the tact with which she has united artistic endeavor to business considerations."[37] And an unsigned editorial comment (by Stieglitz) reads, "In devoting our first number mainly to the work of Gertrude Käsebier, we feel that we are but doing justice to one whose art-example has been so potent in influencing the tendencies of modern portrait-photography. The selection made by us shows, though inadequately, the range and many-sided qualities of the work of this woman who prides herself upon being a mere 'commercial photographer.'"[38] Stieglitz justified his decision to Edward Steichen with the explanation that Käsebier was the "pioneer," but it was also true that, simply by selecting a woman as the focus of its first issue, Stieglitz was aligning his new magazine with a progressive agenda.[39] Despite the repeated mention of her professional activity, at most two of the six photographs reproduced in the inaugural issue were commissioned works, and two others—*Blessed Art Thou Among Women* and *The Manger*—had already appeared on the pages of *Camera Notes*. Stieglitz also reproduced *The Red Man* (1900), from Käsebier's extended series of Native Americans, a close-cropped man virtually unadorned and shrouded in a dark blanket, although the traditionally costumed figure in *American Indian Portrait* (c. 1899, no. 10) is more characteristic of the series. Käsebier photographed the subjects, who were traveling through New York with Buffalo Bill's Wild West troupe, in her Fifth Avenue studio. Their finery may have symbolized their Indian-ness, but it also echoed the props and costumes used in the commercial studios—from which Stieglitz and the Pictorialists worked so hard to distinguish themselves—which may have been why he chose the atypical image for publication. Portraits made outside her studio, such as her contemplative profile of Steichen smoking a pipe atop a balustrade (c. 1901, no. 11), were also not represented, although a view of a picnic, echoing Édouard Manet's 1863 painting *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe* and made on the same 1901 trip to Paris, was included as a halftone reproduction.

Käsebier's name appeared regularly on the pages of subsequent issues of *Camera Work*, but it was most often in the context of international exhibition reviews or Photo-Secession membership updates. It was not until April 1905 that her photographs were once again reproduced, and this time with only the brief mention that she was "one of our most prolific photographers as well as one of the foremost pictorialists."[40] *Happy Days* (1903, no. 12), one of six images reproduced as a full-page gravure, is a plein air scene whose bright sunshine and shadows, overlapping figures, and abrupt cropping all signaled new directions in Käsebier's work. The summer of 1903 was a productive one for Käsebier, and the photographs she made at or near her summer home in Newport, Rhode

10. Gertrude Käsebier (American, 1852–1934). *American Indian Portrait*. c. 1899. Platinum print, 8 x 6" (20.3 x 15.2 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Miss Mina Turner

11. Gertrude Käsebier (American, 1852–1934). *Edward Steichen*. c. 1901. Gum bichromate print, 8 1/16 x 6" (20.5 x 15.3 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Eugene M. Schwartz

Island (including *Happy Days* and a portrait of her friend Baron Adolf de Meyer [no. 13]), reveal her increased interest in asymmetrical composition and working outside the studio.

For the remainder of her career, however, Käsebier's work changed very little, which might have been as abhorrent to Stieglitz as her commercial practice. *Camera Work* did not review her exhibition at Stieglitz's Little Galleries of the Photo-Secession in early 1906, and the final substantive consideration of her work on its pages, in October 1907, was not illustrated, had already been published in a London journal three years earlier, and included such slights as "Her personality, almost as much as her artistic genius, has helped her vastly to win the position she now holds."[41] Käsebier, like Johnston, had lost Stieglitz's support.

While Johnston's snub in *Camera Notes* quickly ended her relationship with Stieglitz, and she was never invited to join the Photo-Secession, Käsebier's break with Stieglitz was more prolonged, in part because it was not precipitated by a radical stylistic change, and in part because she was one of the most talented Pictorialist photographers at the turn of the twentieth century. Thus Stieglitz was willing to forgive, for a while at least, her commercial ambition. In 1907, shortly after her harsh treatment in *Camera Work*, Käsebier joined the Professional Photographers of New York, so it would not have come as a surprise that she was bumped from the top tier of the Photo-Secession's organizational structure in 1909. Still, Stieglitz complained bitterly when Käsebier refused to

12. Gertrude Käsebier (American, 1852–1934). *Happy Days*. 1903. Gum print, 12 1/2 x 9 3/4" (31.8 x 24.8 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Mrs. Hermine M. Turner

submit work to the Artistic Photography Section of the Dresden International Photography Exhibition that year; she submitted it, perhaps out of spite, to the Professional Section instead.[42] He successfully solicited her work for what turned out to be the Photo-Secession's final exhibition, at the Albright Art Gallery in 1910—at which point several of the works he chose, including *Blessed Art Thou Among Women* and *The Manger*, were more than ten years old—only to hold it up as a negative example in *Camera Work*.[43] Käsebier finally submitted her resignation from the Photo-Secession in January 1912.

Given the contentious relationship between artistic and professional photographers at the turn of the twentieth century, Johnston's and Käsebier's insistence that they should be considered both has stirred great interest among scholars and critics, such as the prominent art critic who wrote of Käsebier, "[She] will tell you that she is a commercial photographer; unquestionably she is an artist. The union in her work of these two motives forms a study of more than usual interest."[44] Stieglitz's financial means enabled him to look down on art made for anything other than art's sake, yet for several years he tolerated the commercial aspirations of both Johnston and Käsebier. Neither Johnston nor Käsebier had the luxury of ignoring photography's potential for profit: Johnston was unmarried and supported herself through her photography, and Käsebier's husband's health and financial well-being were constant concerns from the mid-1890s until his death, in 1909.[45] Yet it is not simply necessity that explains the blurring of art and commerce in their work: having already transcended the prevailing female stereotypes of their day, Johnston and Käsebier found the artistic/professional divide to be similarly surmountable. Stieglitz was comfortable recognizing women's artistic achievements (and he likely enjoyed the progressive association that this open-mindedness afforded him), but the taint of commercialism proved to be much more difficult for him to overcome.

As ally or enemy, Stieglitz was the central figure in American photography at the turn of the twentieth century and beyond. As such, he is a critical point of reference for Johnston's and Käsebier's work, and for this reason the publications he edited and the exhibitions he controlled provide the framework for this essay. Johnston's work flourished once she moved beyond Stieglitz's unequivocal equation of personal artistic expression with photographic achievement, but her success as an artist and advocate owes much to his example. Käsebier, when her motifs and means of expressing them ceased to change, became an easy target for Stieglitz, who chafed against complacency, continually aligning himself with avant-garde creation. Yet the photographs she made between 1898 and 1905 are extraordinary examples of Pictorialism, and Stieglitz was among the first to recognize and celebrate her achievement. Stieglitz may have determined the present for both of these photographers, but he could not control their futures; even without his ultimate support, their place in the history of the art of photography remains secure.

13. Gertrude Käsebier (American, 1852–1934). *Baron Adolf de Meyer*. 1903. Platinum print, 13 3/8 x 10" (34 x 25.5 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Miss Mina Turner

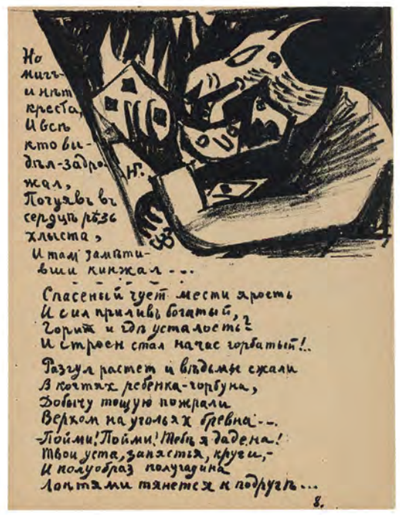
1. I would like to gratefully acknowledge the invaluable research assistance of Joyce Kuechler, Sarah O'Keefe, and Leslie Ureña, as well as the critical commentary provided by Leslie Hermanson, Harper Montgomery, and Connie Butler. Above all I would like to thank Emily Hall, who understands precisely why she deserves this acknowledgment.
2. The original use of the word "amateur" in regard to photography (in mid-nineteenth-century England) implied an esteemed nonprofessional status, but for the purposes of this essay I will use "amateur" to refer mostly to American, post-Kodak enthusiasts. On the technical developments of this era and the related tensions between artistic and professional ambitions, see John Szarkowski, *Photography Until Now* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1989), pp. 69–172. See also Peter Galassi, "Two Stories," in *American Photography 1890–1965 from The Museum of Modern Art, New York* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1995), pp. 11–25.
3. On the surge in female photographers, see Peter E. Palmquist, *Camera Fiends & Kodak Girls: 50 Selections by and about Women in Photography, 1840–1930* (New York: Midmarch Arts Press, 1989). For a broader history, see Naomi Rosenblum, *A History of Women Photographers* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1994). And for a more critical consideration, see C. Jane Gover, *The Positive Image: Women Photographers in Turn of the Century America* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988).
4. On Kodak's advertising campaigns, see Nancy Martha West, *Kodak and the Lens of Nostalgia* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000), pp. 19–35, 53–60, and 114–35.
5. On Alfred Stieglitz's advocacy see Sarah Greenough and Juan Hamilton, *Alfred Stieglitz: Photographs and Writings* (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1983); and Maria Morris Hambourg, "From 291 to The Museum of Modern Art: Photography in New York, 1910–37," in *The New Vision: Photography Between the World Wars* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1989), pp. 3–63.
6. Stieglitz published *Camera Work* until 1917, but by 1910 he had become disillusioned with what he perceived to be the complacency of Pictorialist photographers, and he ceased to feature their work.
7. The name alone declares Stieglitz's desire to align this new group with the painters, sculptors, and architects who had founded the Vienna Secession a few years before, in protest against the conservatism of the Viennese art establishment.
8. Frances Benjamin Johnston, "What a Woman Can Do with a Camera," *Ladies' Home Journal* 14, no. 10 (September 1897): 6–7.
9. For more biographical information, see Anne Tucker, *The Woman's Eye* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1973), pp. 29–43; Pete Daniel and Raymond Smock, *A Talent for Detail: The Photographs of Miss Frances Benjamin Johnston, 1889–1910* (New York: Harmony Books, 1974); and Bettina Berch, *The Woman behind the Lens: The Life and Work of Frances Benjamin Johnston, 1864–1952* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000).
10. It was in partnership with George Grantham Bain that Johnston made her best-known news pictures in 1899, of Admiral George Dewey and his sailors aboard the USS *Olympia*, fresh from their victory in the Philippines.
11. "An American Photographer," *The Photogram* 4, no. 46 (October 1897): 285.
12. On the Philadelphia Photographic Salons, see William Innes Homer, *Pictorial Photography in Philadelphia: The Pennsylvania Academy's Salons, 1898–1901* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 1984).
13. Ibid., p. 12.
14. These descriptions appear in a brief unsigned article listing future participants in the Camera Club of New York's group exhibitions. "Print Exhibitions," *Camera Notes* 1, no. 2 (October 1897): 51.
15. Sadakichi Hartmann, "A Few Reflections on Amateur and Artistic Photography," *Camera Notes* 2, no. 2 (October 1898): 41–45.
16. Stieglitz, letter to Johnston, 1898; quoted in Daniel and Smock, *A Talent for Detail*, p. 7.
17. Robert Demachy, "The Americans at the Paris Salon," *Camera Notes* 2, no. 3 (January 1899): 107.
18. Wm. H. Murray, "Miss Frances B. Johnston's Prints," *Camera Notes* 2, no. 4 (April 1899): 167–68.
19. Stieglitz, letter to F. Holland Day, March 31, 1899; quoted in Estelle Jussim, *Slave to Beauty: The Eccentric Life and Controversial Career of F. Holland Day, Photographer, Publisher, Aesthete* (Boston: David R. Godine, 1981), p. 137.
20. Joseph T. Keiley, "The Pictorial Movement in Photography and the Significance of the Modern Photographic Salon," *Camera Notes* 4, no. 1 (July 1900): 18–23.
21. In 1901 the Philadelphia Photographic Society announced that its fourth salon would include the work of artists, professionals, and amateurs. Many Pictorialist photographers, including Stieglitz, perceived this as an abandonment of their aesthetic ideals and refused to participate in any way. Johnston was one of three photographers who agreed to serve as a juror, evidently indifferent to such high-minded exclusivity (and the risk of further alienating Stieglitz), or else pragmatic enough to sense the opportunities this exposure might afford. Nevertheless, the absence of Stieglitz and his associates turned out to be fatal; the 1901 Philadelphia Salon was the last one.
22. J. H. Sears, *Harper's Guide to Paris and the Exposition of 1900* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1900), pp. 156–57. The classification of exhibits is described here in detail and makes clear the basis for Stieglitz's boycott: Group II (exhibited at the Grand Palais des Beaux-Arts) comprises "Paintings, Cartoons, Drawings; Engraving and Lithography; Sculpture, and Engraving of Medals and Precious Stones; Architecture," while Group III comprises "Typography, Various Printing Processes, Photography, Books, Musical Publications, Bookbinding, Newspapers, Posters, Maps and Apparatus for Geography and Cosmography, Topography, Mathematical and Scientific Instruments, Coins and Medals, Medicine and Surgery, Musical Instruments, Theatrical Appliances and Plants."
23. On the exhibition of photographs by American women organized by Johnston, see Bronwyn A. E. Griffith, ed., *Ambassadors of Progress: American Women Photographers in Paris, 1900–1901* (Giverny, France: Musée d'Art Américain Giverny; Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 2001); and Toby Quitslund, "Her Feminine Colleagues: Photographs and Letters Collected by Frances Benjamin Johnston in 1900," in Josephine Withers, *Women Artists in Washington Collections* (College Park: University of Maryland Art Gallery and Women's Caucus for Art, 1979), pp. 97–109.
24. Stieglitz, letter to Johnston, June 8, 1900. Johnston Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C. Gertrude Käsebier was initially reluctant to participate, possibly because of Stieglitz's boycott or because she was busy, but eventually she sent nine photographs.
25. Johnston, "The Foremost Women Photographers of America: The Work of Mrs. Gertrude Käsebier," *Ladies' Home Journal* 18, no. 6 (May 1901): 1. Subsequent articles featured Mathilde Weil, Frances and Mary Allen, Emma Farnsworth, Eva Watson-Schutze, Zaida Ben-Yûsuf, and Elizabeth Brownett.
26. For a thoughtful, if dated, introduction to this work, see Lincoln Kirstein, *The Hampton Album* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1966). For a more recent critical analysis, see Jeannene M. Przyblyski, "American Visions at the Paris Exposition, 1900: Another Look at Frances Benjamin Johnston's Hampton Photographs," *Art Journal* 57, no. 3 (Fall 1998): 61–68; and *Carrie Mae Weems: The Hampton Project* (New York: Aperture Foundation, 2000).
27. Johnston thought well enough of this commissioned work to submit it to the Camera Club's Members' Exhibition (May–June 1901), where three of her five photographs were titled *Study of School Children*, as reported in *Camera Notes* 5, no. 2 (October 1901): 144.
28. Käsebier, lecture delivered to the Photographic Society of Philadelphia, 1898; printed as "Studies in Photography," *Photographic Times* 30, no. 6 (June 1898): 269–72; reprinted in Peter Bunnell, ed., *A Photographic Vision: Pictorial Photography, 1889–1923* (Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith, 1980), pp. 84–86.
29. The definitive publication on Käsebier is Barbara L. Michaels, *Gertrude Käsebier: The Photographer and Her Photographs* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1992). For a more concise consideration, see Tucker, *The Woman's Eye*, pp. 13–27.
30. Michaels, *Gertrude Käsebier*, pp. 17–18, 26.
31. Käsebier's "first photograph," of her husband and a young boy (likely her son), was given to Stieglitz in 1900 and is now part of the Alfred Stieglitz Collection at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
Ibid., p. 19.
32. Bunnell, *A Photographic Vision*, p. 85.
33. "Dear Mr. Stieglitz, I feel it due to myself to explain why I ran you down. I am a photographer in distress . . . and I felt sure you could and would give me some valuable suggestions. Of course, I shall be delighted, if you will call upon me at my studio. . . . I have known you through your work for a long time. Very sincerely, Gertrude Käsebier," June 11, 1898. Alfred Stieglitz Collection, Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven; quoted in Michaels, *Gertrude Käsebier*, p. 45.
34. Arthur W. Dow, "Mrs. Gertrude Käsebier's Portrait Photographs: From a Painter's Point of View," *Camera Notes* 3, no. 1 (July 1899): 22–23.
35. J[oseph] T. K[eiley], "Mrs. Käsebier's Prints," *Camera Notes* 3, no. 1 (July 1899): 34.
36. Johnston, "Gertrude Käsebier, Professional Photographer," *Camera Work*, no. 1 (January 1903): 20.
37. Charles H. Caffin, "Mrs. Käsebier's Work—An Appreciation," ibid., p. 17.
38. "The Pictures in This Number," ibid., p. 63.
39. "Interview with Col. Edward J. Steichen." Folder F24, Gertrude Käsebier Papers, MS collection no. 149, University of Delaware Library; quoted in Kathleen Pyne, *Modernism and the Feminine Voice: O'Keeffe and the Women of the Stieglitz Circle* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2007), p. 16.
40. "Our Illustrations," *Camera Work*, no. 10 (April 1905): 50.
41. Keiley, "Gertrude Käsebier," *Camera Work*, no. 20 (October 1907): 27–31; originally published in *Photography: A Journal for Every Camera User* 17, no. 801 (March 19, 1904): 223–27. Keiley concludes with these observations: "Of medium size and rather inclined to fullness of figure . . . utterly careless of dress or appearances . . . for all that her hair is grey-streaked, and she is a grandmother; impulsive, quick-witted, original, devoted to her art, Gertrude Käsebier, painter by training, photographer by choice, member of the Linked Ring, and a founder and Fellow of the Photo-Secession . . . is one of the most striking figures and vital forces in the entire professional photographic world."
42. Michaels, *Gertrude Käsebier*, p. 128.
43. "How marked the contrast between this and the exhibition of Gertrude Käsebier, with its artistic irresponsibility and indifference to mere technique; its curious impulsiveness; its inner blind groping . . . that resents any seeming lack of appreciation on the part of others." Keiley, "The Buffalo Exhibition," *Camera Work*, no. 33 (January 1911): 23–29.
44. Caffin, "Mrs. Gertrude Käsebier and the Artistic-Commercial Portrait," in *Photography as a Fine Art: The Achievements and Possibilities of Photographic Art in America* (New York: Doubleday, Page, 1901), p. 55.
45. Michaels, *Gertrude Käsebier*, pp. 25 and 168 (ch. 2 n. 1). As Johnston confessed: "I have not been able to lose sight of the pecuniary side, though for the sake of money or anything else I would never publish a photograph which fell below the standard I have set for myself"; quoted in Daniel and Smock, *A Talent for Detail*, p. 27. Such a claim would have been anathema to Stieglitz, but certainly familiar to Käsebier.

1. Natalia Goncharova (Russian, 1881–1962). *Igra v adu* (A game in hell), by Velimir Khlebnikov and Aleksei Kruchenykh. 1912. Cover from an illustrated book with thirteen lithographs, page 7 3/16 x 5 1/2" (18.3 x 14 cm). Publisher: G. L. Kuz'min and S. D. Dolinskii, Moscow. Printer: unknown. Edition: 300. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of The Judith Rothschild Foundation

Within the complex history of Russian modernism as it unfolded from 1912 to 1934, two of the most distinguishing aspects were the prominence of so many women artists and the development and proliferation of a radically new type of art object, the Russian avant-garde book. Although these two phenomena are usually discussed separately, several of the era's leading women artists, including Natalia Goncharova, Olga Rozanova, Lyubov Popova, and Varvara Stepanova, were crucial in creating many of the most innovative and influential avant-garde books.[1] And although these women are remembered primarily as painters (or, to a lesser extent, as theater, textile, and clothing designers), many of the works they created in book or album format were at least as innovative and daring as their efforts in any other medium. Indeed, many of their books stand among the most important monuments in the graphic arts of this period. The fact that both women and illustrated books are usually accorded secondary status within art history in relation to men and paintings, respectively, makes this confluence of developments all the more exceptional.

The position of women at the forefront of the Russian avant-garde sets this movement apart from any other in art history to that point. Even the women artists' contemporaries were struck by their preeminence. Benedikt Livshits, a Russian poet and colleague of the artists, compared them to the legendary women warriors of ancient Scythia: "These were the real Amazons, these Scythian riders."[2] In addition to individual talent and ambition, their ability to achieve such success has been attributed in part to various social, economic, and cultural factors.[3] Goncharova, Rozanova, Popova, and Stepanova, like many other Russian women artists who came of age at the turn of the twentieth century, were from families of at least modest wealth, and all were well educated and had the opportunity for advanced study at art school. It was a charged and contradictory time in Russian history, as the conservative traditions of the old order represented by Czar Nicholas II came up against the progressive ideas and innovations of the modern world. The vast majority of Russians still lived in undeveloped rural areas within a patriarchal social structure, but within the tiny educated elite, an emergent intelligentsia supported equality of the sexes.[4] And although the literacy rate before 1917 was less than fifty percent, by the mid-nineteenth century education had become accessible to women, and by the 1880s the art schools in the cultural centers of St. Petersburg, Moscow, Odessa, and Kiev were attracting a majority of female students.[5]

Finishing their studies in the early 1900s, Goncharova, Rozanova, Popova, and Stepanova emerged in a cultural atmosphere in Moscow and St. Petersburg that was alive with expectations for major innovation in all of the arts, including painting, music, literature, theater, and even the new art of film. In the first decade of the twentieth century, for the first time in history, Russian artists had contact with the European avant-garde, whose example offered them an alternative to their own conservative academic traditions. Like their male counterparts, many women artists, including Goncharova and Popova, traveled to France, Italy, and other countries, or were able to learn about modernist developments in Western Europe, notably Cubism, Italian Futurism, and Expressionism, through



2 and 3. Natalia Goncharova (Russian, 1881–1962). *Igra v adu* (A game in hell), by Velimir Khlebnikov and Aleksei Kruchenykh. 1912. Two pages from an illustrated book with thirteen lithographs, page 7 3/16 x 5 1/2" (18.3 x 14 cm). Publisher: G. L. Kuz'min and S. D. Dolinskii, Moscow. Printer: unknown. Edition: 300. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of The Judith Rothschild Foundation

books and magazines, contact with Russian collectors of European modernism, and in other ways. Radical aesthetics and an urgent push for a new, Russian form of modernism exploded in the early 1900s and continued to spread even after the Revolution of 1917 and into the 1920s.

Goncharova, Rozanova, Popova, and Stepanova were all closely associated with important male artists, both personally and professionally. While these relationships clearly had an impact on their art, including their books, they were equal partnerships, and the influence was reciprocal. The men and women painted, socialized, and zealously debated issues together. The women participated in the same exhibitions, wrote or cosigned the same manifestos, and sought the same type of success and recognition. Neither subordinates nor disciples, they were as central to the development of Russian modernism as any of the men. It is possible that the absence in Russian art history of the tradition of the nude made the Russian art world a more comfortable place for women.[6] The relatively high social status of many of the women artists in relation to their male colleagues also may have helped level the playing field. In any event, their male compatriots accepted them as allies and equals. Together they shared a fervent commitment to aesthetic revolution and a passionate belief in the need to change the world.

As a site for creative experimentation and collaboration, the avant-garde book was a crucial part of this heady mix. It emerged and flowered as an important medium for the Russian avant-garde as it evolved from the Neo-Primitivism that characterized much of the work created between 1910 and 1914; to Russian Futurism, or Cubo-Futurism, which dominated Russian aesthetics from 1912 to 1916; to Suprematism, which emerged in 1916; to Constructivism, which prevailed in the wake of the Revolution in 1917.[7]

Within the prerevolutionary avant-garde, there was a close, cross-fertilizing relationship between artists and poets. Together they participated in the radical artistic groups and alliances that quickly formed, splintered, dissolved, and re-formed as different factions quarreled over which approach was more authentically modern or Futurist. They organized raucous public readings where they appeared in outrageous costumes with painted faces and engaged in riotous diatribes and high jinks that were meant to shock the middle class and bring attention to their modernist cause. They also collaborated on books that combined new forms of poetry based on everyday "low brow" subjects; common, sometimes coarse language; and an intentionally faulty and playful use of grammar, syntax, and punctuation, with similarly rough and deliberately unrefined illustrations. Many of the Futurist poets, including Aleksei Kruchenykh, Velimir Khlebnikov, and Vladimir Mayakovsky, began their careers as painters, so they brought a visual sense to their poetry and were keen to enlist the contributions of painters for their books. The books were often published by the poets themselves, or by well-to-do enthusiasts and patrons, usually in editions of several hundred. Those who purchased these books were also mostly friends, fellow artists, and other members of the intelligentsia who had a personal interest in art and poetry. Within this rarefied world, the books played an important part in publicizing the movement and disseminating its ideas.

The books that began appearing around 1912 were shockingly primitive handmade objects. They were printed using various unorthodox techniques on cheap paper with unevenly trimmed edges, stapled or minimally stitched bindings, and crude hand-lettering, all of which deliberately repudiated the elegant refinement of both Russian Symbolist journals and the deluxe *livres de peintre* that flourished in Europe, particularly France, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Russian Futurist books looked instead to more indigenous visual traditions, such as medieval Russian illuminated manuscripts as well as the familiar Russian *lubok*, a popular folk art form that combined simplified woodcut graphics with folkloric narratives. Typically consisting of only twenty or thirty small pages inside simple paper covers, when held and leafed through, these early avant-garde books impart a sense of something miraculously intimate, like a letter or manuscript written for a close friend or confidante. For Kruchenykh, who pioneered this new genre and wrote or coauthored more avant-garde books than probably any other writer, the intimate scale gave the books a certain integrity and allowed for a concise but intense kind of aesthetic experience: "I really don't like endless works and big books—they can't be read at a single sitting, and they do not give you any sense of wholeness. Books should be small, but contain no lies; everything is its own, belongs to that book, down to the last ink stain."[8]

The woman artist who made the earliest contributions to the avant-garde book was Natalia Goncharova. Born in 1881, she was the oldest of the "Amazons," and her life and work served as an inspiration to many of the women who came along slightly later. She was born on an estate in the province of Tula, in central Russia, where her family owned a linen mill and was part of the landed nobility. The daughter of a distinguished architect and a great-grandniece of the poet Aleksandr Pushkin, Goncharova spent her childhood in the country surrounded by the local peasant life that would eventually become an important subject in her paintings. In 1901 she enrolled in the Moscow School of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture. In the course of her studies she met the young painter Mikhail Larionov, who became her closest artistic ally and lifelong companion.

Goncharova was prominently included in many of the avant-garde exhibitions organized between 1910 and 1914 in Moscow and St. Petersburg. She quickly became the most famous woman artist in the Russian avant-garde, not only for her startlingly simplified, conspicuously naive Neo-Primitivist paintings, but also for her casual dress, her cohabitation with Larionov, her assertive presence at Futurist events, and her unabashed disregard for social proprieties. In 1913 she wrote, "If I clash with society this occurs only because the latter fails to understand the bases of art and not because of my individual peculiarities, which nobody is obliged to understand."[9]

From the fall of 1912 through early 1913 Goncharova and Larionov were involved in an intense collaboration with Kruchenykh and his frequent coauthor, Khlebnikov, creating the first Russian Futurist books. During this brief

a.

b.

c.

d.

e.

f.

4. **Natalia Goncharova** (Russian, 1881–1962). *Misticheskie obrazy voiny. 14 litografii* (Mystical images of war: 14 lithographs). 1914. Line block cover and five plates from a portfolio of fourteen lithographs, sheet 9 5/8 x 12 7/8" (24.5 x 32.7 cm). Publisher: V. N. Kashin, Moscow. Printer: unknown. Edition: unknown. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of The Judith Rothschild Foundation

a. Cover
b. "St. George the Victorious"
c. "Christian Host"
d. "Angels and Airplanes"
e. "The Doomed City"
f. "A Common Grave"

period, Goncharova and Larionov each illustrated several titles, some individually, some together with a larger group of artists. These books set a standard for innovation and the visual integration of text and images that subsequent Futurist publications sought to match or surpass.

Igra v adu (A game in hell) (1912, nos. 1–3) was the first of these groundbreaking books. A parody of a traditional *lubok* subject, it tells the story of a card game between sinners and devils in hell. Its thirteen leaves contain text by Kruchenykh, hand-lettered using a lithographic crayon in a style that loosely imitates Old Slavic religious manuscripts, and images by Goncharova, also drawn using a lithographic crayon. Goncharova's images of devils and sinners, which similarly refer to traditional depictions of hell in Russian icons, frescoes, and *lubok* prints, are rendered in a coarse Neo-Primitivist style that complements the crude simplicity of the handwritten text. The book's title can be seen as an early emblem of the contributors' attitude toward their collaborative endeavors, which was to approach them, as Nina Gurianova has suggested, like "an irrepressible game . . . unfettered by the boundaries of everyday 'hell.'"[10] This spirit of childlike camaraderie and improvisation would become one of the hallmarks of the Russian avant-garde book.

The use of lithography in this and many other Russian avant-garde books allowed the artists and poets to achieve several goals, both aesthetic and practical. Whereas in traditional illustrated books, images and text were usually printed using different techniques and would appear on separate pages, using lithography for both made printing simpler and less expensive. It also forged a stronger visual and conceptual connection between the two elements. Here, images and text share the same space on the page and the same autographic, crayon-based aesthetic. And whereas the text in traditional books was typically printed with letterpress, here the elemental, expressive gesture of handwriting and the character of the individual letters and words were themselves treated as visual elements. Each page in its totality was a work of art.

Goncharova's most monumental graphic project was *Misticheskie obrazy voiny. 14 litografii* (Mystical images of war: 14 lithographs) (no. 4), an album of fourteen lithographs created in response to the outbreak of World War I in 1914. In a more traditional portfolio format, the lithographs were issued loose inside a paper cover, without any related text, save for the individual titles provided on an insert sheet. Nevertheless, Goncharova organized the prints sequentially to create a loose, quasi-theatrical narrative. Her tightly framed images, packed with descriptive details, and her use of fluid, densely shaded lithography testify to the graphic skills she had acquired working on the earlier book projects. Drawing on her deep appreciation of Russian icon and folk traditions and taking a patently patriotic position toward Russia's wartime destiny, she incorporated various national, Christian, mythological, and apocalyptic elements into each print. Her perspective is evident from the very first print (b), in which St. George, the patron saint of Moscow, is shown slaying the dragon in a symbolic triumph of good over evil. Goncharova's composition is obviously modeled on well-known historical icons of the subject, including the central emblem on the Russian coat of arms. Subsequent plates include a double-headed eagle—another iconic motif from the Imperial Russian coat of arms—fighting the forces of East and West, and the Archangel Michael riding through infernal flames and blowing his trumpet to summon forces to battle. In the final plates a timeless, mystical narrative unfolds, as celestial legions protect the Christian army on Earth (c) and battle the forces of darkness (d and e). At the end, the victims of war are buried in a mass grave (f).[11]

Misticheskie obrazy voiny marks the end and culmination of Goncharova's involvement with the Russian avant-garde. In 1915 she and Larionov left Russia to design costumes and stage sets for Sergei Diaghilev's Ballets Russes as it toured through Europe. In 1919 they settled permanently in Paris, where Goncharova continued her work in painting and theater design. Although she would contribute illustrations to books published in Europe during these later years, the books were produced along mostly conventional lines. Goncharova died in Paris in 1962.

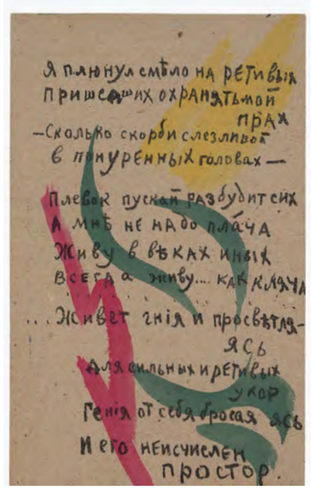
At the point at which Goncharova's involvement with avant-garde books left off, Olga Rozanova's began to flower. Five years younger than Goncharova, Rozanova was born in 1886 in Vladimir Province, east of Moscow, where her father was a district police officer. She moved to Moscow in 1904 and audited art classes there until 1911, when she moved to St. Petersburg and became an active member of its burgeoning avant-garde. Her early works leaned toward abstraction, and she explored the interaction of strong colors and angular, rhythmic forms. In 1912 she met Kruchenykh, and their lives became quickly intertwined, both creatively and personally. At the beginning of 1913 Kruchenykh moved from Moscow to St. Petersburg, and he began working closely with Rozanova and several other artists living there, including Kazimir Malevich and Nikolai Kul'bin, on the next wave of Futurist books. The collaborations between Kruchenykh and Rozanova, which consist of no fewer than thirteen books executed between 1913 and 1916 (some of them in concert with other artists or writers), include some of the most extraordinary

5. Olga Rozanova (Russian, 1886–1918). *Vzorval'* (Explodity), second ed., by Aleksei Kruchenykh. 1913. Cover from an illustrated book with seventeen lithographs by various artists, 6 7/8 x 4 5/8" (17.4 x 11.7 cm). Publisher: EUY, St. Petersburg. Printer: unknown. Edition: 450. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of The Judith Rothschild Foundation

high points in Russian avant-garde art. Rozanova's free, improvisational approach to art-making was an ideal match for Kruchenykh's explosive imagination. She also pioneered several audacious technical innovations that pushed the aesthetic of the avant-garde book in new directions.

Rozanova's first book projects include the covers and single lithographs she contributed to several collaborative, multiartist books in early 1913, such as *Vozropshchem* (Let's grumble), *Bukh lesinnyi* (Forestly rapid), and *Vzorval'* (Explodity) (no. 5), the titles of which reflect Kruchenykh's desire to fracture or explode the visual material on the pages of his books. As he later recalled, "There was a tremor, an explosion that was expressed not only in the structure of phrases and lines, but in the exploded script as well."[12] These books incorporate a new form of poetry that Kruchenykh and Khlebnikov coinvented during this period and called *zaum*, or transrational language. Literally "beyond sense," *zaum* poetry rejected the conventional notion that words must have a specific meaning. Instead, Kruchenykh and Khlebnikov focused on the sound and appearance of individual letters and words, and used invented or manipulated words. Kruchenykh explained, "The letter is not a means but a goal in itself. . . . To give verbal art complete freedom, we use arbitrary words to liberate ourselves from the subject and study the *color*, the *music* of the word, syllables, sounds."[13]

In subsequent projects Rozanova began to pursue possibilities for introducing color to Futurist books. Her first such efforts appeared in *Utinoe gnezdyshko . . . durnykh slov i* (A little duck's nest . . . of bad words) (no. 6), published in December 1913. The book contains one of Kruchenykh's most autobiographical texts, and Rozanova's lithographs, when not completely abstract, represent various details of their daily life, such as an interior that resembles the artists' favorite cabaret, The Stray Dog, and a cozy domestic scene at the kitchen table. While the book's lithographs essentially follow the example Goncharova had laid out slightly earlier, Rozanova took another step when she applied watercolor additions to one hundred copies from the total edition of five hundred. The watercolor transforms the black-and-white pages into an exquisitely lyrical series of multicolored abstractions. Rozanova's softly flickering and shifting panes of color seem somehow to both fracture and unify the visual logic and structure of each page, at one moment suggesting dissonance, at another harmony. The liberty that Rozanova took in actually coloring *over* Kruchenykh's words may be a testament to their close personal relationship. It may also have been influenced by her knowledge of *La Prose du Transsibérien et de la petite Jehanne de France* (page 84, no. 1), which was published in Paris in 1913 and exhibited



Opposite:
6. Olga Rozanova (Russian, 1886–1918). *Utinoe gnezdyshko . . . durnykh slov i* (A little duck's nest . . . of bad words), by Aleksei Kruchenykh. 1913. Cover and two pages from an illustrated book with fifteen lithographs with gouache and/or watercolor additions, page 7 3/8 x 4 13/16" (18.8 x 12.2 cm). Publisher: unknown, St. Petersburg. Printer: unknown. Edition: 500 (100 with hand additions). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of The Judith Rothschild Foundation

7. Olga Rozanova (Russian, 1886–1918). *Te li le*, by Velimir Khlebnikov and Aleksei Kruchenykh. 1914. Cover and page from an illustrated book with fourteen hectographed illustrations (eleven by Rozanova and three by Nikolai Kul'bin), page 9 1/4 x 6 1/2" (23.5 x 16.5 cm). Publisher: unknown, St. Petersburg. Printer: unknown. Edition: 50. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of The Judith Rothschild Foundation (Boris Kerdimun Archive)

at the end of that year in St. Petersburg.[14] This poem by Blaise Cendrars is enveloped by Sonia Delaunay-Terk's stenciled arcs and blocks of brilliant watercolor.

In *Te li le* (no. 7), which appeared a few months later in February 1914, Rozanova achieved an even more seamless integration of the painterly and the poetic. The *zaum* title is made up of alliterative nonsense words, and the book contains transrational poems by Kruchenykh and Khlebnikov extracted from some of their previous books. These poems were transcribed onto fourteen leaves, eleven by Rozanova and three by Kul'bin. The two artists also added abstract designs to their respective sheets. Rozanova's embellishments intermingle with the texts, echo the jaunty rhythm of the letters, and take on a hieroglyphic appearance. Her use of color, with individual words and letters appearing in different hues, suggests an intuitive reaction to the poems' sounds. To achieve this consonance, Rozanova turned to a new and rather obscure printing technique, hectography, a gelatin-based process that was a primitive precursor of the mimeograph.[15] In *Te li le*, the delicate, jewellike colors are absorbed into the paper, giving them a uniquely aqueous texture and luminescence.

Voina (War) (no. 8), executed over six months in 1915 and released in January 1916, was Rozanova's crowning achievement in the realm of printed art. With fifteen leaves inside a brown-paper cover, it includes ten full-page linoleum cuts on the theme of war, printed alternately in black, green, and red, and five pages with short verses by Kruchenykh printed in large block letters also with linoleum cut. One of the ten linoleum-cut images also incorporates collage elements, as does the cover. At approximately 16 by 12 inches, *Voina* is substantially larger than any of Rozanova's previous book projects. The artist felt that the complexity of the war subject and the broad graphic lines of the linoleum-cut medium warranted this more imposing scale.[16]

Rozanova's book was probably modeled loosely on Goncharova's war album, which had come out a year earlier. The format, in terms of both page size and sequential order, is strikingly similar. Some of Rozanova's images even seem to be inspired by specific sheets in Goncharova's album. For example, the tumbling buildings in Rozanova's "Destruction of the City" are reminiscent of those in Goncharova's "Doomed City." The soaring airplanes and falling figure with widespread arms in Rozanova's "Airplanes over the City" bear a loose, abstracted resemblance to elements in Goncharova's "Angels and Airplanes." But whereas Goncharova's images are dark and heavy and more obviously steeped in Russian visual and cultural traditions, Rozanova's are based on a lighter, more abstract and poetic approach. They were created a year into the war, when the alluring myth of a culturally and spiritually superior Russia emerging triumphant from mystical battle was replaced by the reality of the horror and brutality of war. Rozanova's fractured, shifting forms convey a sense of mass confusion and cataclysmic upheaval.

From a technical point of view, *Voina* benefited from all of Rozanova's previous experience designing and illustrating books. She had used linoleum cut in an earlier book,[17] and, as with hectography, she was eager to pioneer a less familiar technique.[18] She wrote, "Engraving on linoleum is extraordinarily interesting just now. . . . It's good to be spreading an unusual rather than ordinary method of printing."[19] The linoleum-cut aesthetic, like the woodcut, is based on broad, flat shapes and bold contrasts. In this series Rozanova merges the "primitive" aesthetic of traditional woodcuts and *lubok* prints with a modern, Cubistic approach to form and composition. Similarly, her use of text taken from a newspaper report from the front lines in the print titled "Excerpt from a Newspaper Bulletin" is based on her knowledge of both *lubok* woodcuts, which often incorporated short texts, and

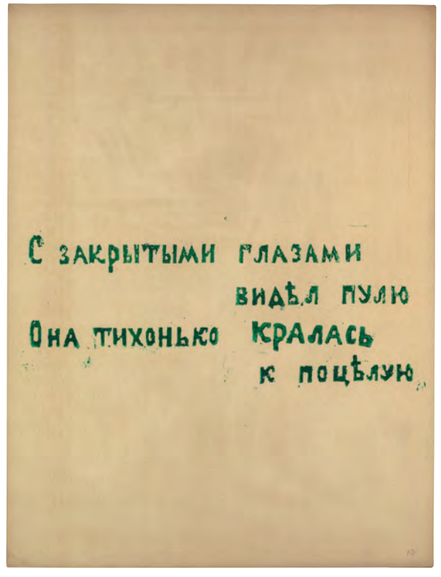
a.

b.

d

e.

c.



f.

the collages incorporating real newspaper clippings made by the French Cubists and the Italian Futurists. Strictly modern was Rozanova's use of collage in two other compositions. During the months that Rozanova was working on this album, she also began making geometric abstractions out of cut-and-pasted colored paper. She was also aware of Malevich's concurrent experiments with purely abstract geometric painting, which he would call Suprematism. At the end of 1915, when she was finishing work on *Voina,* she became an active member of Malevich's Supremus group and was creating her own abstract paintings, organized on the basis of color. The *Voina* cover, with a collage of geometric elements in black, blue, and white, is very much a Suprematist composition. And the page titled "Airplanes over the City," which combines linoleum cut and geometric collage, is a kind of synthesis of Russian Futurism and Suprematism.

Voina was the last book Rozanova illustrated.[20] After it was finished, she continued to make Suprematist paintings, and then, with the advent of the Russian Revolution in 1917, she threw herself into various tasks associated with the shift toward production art in the Communist era. But the hardships and tumult of the Revolution took their toll on Rozanova's health, and she died suddenly from diphtheria in 1918, at the age of thirty-two.

8. **Olga Rozanova** (Russian, 1886–1918). *Voina* (War), by Aleksei Kruchenykh. 1916. Cover and five pages from an illustrated book with ten linoleum-cut illustrations, two with collage, and five pages of linoleum-cut text, page 16 1/4 x 12 1/16" (41.2 x 30.6 cm). Publisher: Andrei Shemshurin, Petrograd. Printer: the artist, Vladimir, Russia. Edition: 100. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of The Judith Rothschild Foundation

a. Cover
b. "Destruction of the City"
c. "Airplanes over the City"
d. "Excerpt from a Newspaper Bulletin"
e. "Battle in Three Spheres (Land, Sea, and Air)"
f. Text

In the revolutionary and postrevolutionary period, two artists who came to books and graphics for the first time were Lyubov Popova and Varvara Stepanova. Popova was born in Ivanovskoe, near Moscow, in 1889. Her father was a wealthy textile merchant, who encouraged her interest in art and provided her with the means to travel widely in Russia and Europe. She studied painting with several private instructors in Moscow between 1907 and 1909, and in 1912 she went to Paris, where she was tutored in the principles of Cubism by Jean Metzinger and Henri Le Fauconnier. She returned to Moscow in 1913, where she became active in avant-garde circles and was included in several important Futurist exhibitions. In 1915 she began the series of abstract paintings she called "Painterly Architectonics," and in 1916 she joined the Supremus group, which included Malevich, Rozanova, and others. In 1918 she married Boris von Eding, an art historian who specialized in ancient Russian architecture; he died from typhus the following year.

Popova's first printed works were a few abstract linoleum cuts made between 1917 and 1921. While these were mostly small, single prints, she also created a larger album of six linoleum cuts with a linoleum-cut cover titled 6 *Gravyur* (6 prints) (c. 1917, no. 9). Like Goncharova's *Misticheskie obrazy voiny* and Rozanova's *Voina*, Popova's album is one of the most definitive statements by any artist in a print medium during the early modern period. Popova would certainly have known the two earlier projects. Her choice of medium and her cover, which integrates the title letters into a Suprematist composition of geometric shapes, seem especially to have been influenced by Rozanova's example. Like the previous two, this album is a group of graphically bold prints on large sheets of paper that sum up the ambitions and achievements of a particular period in the artist's work. Although Popova's series is not based on a narrative theme or text, her images gain power from the cumulative impact of viewing them in a sequence.

The prints are examples of the painterly architectonics that Popova was developing in her canvases at the same time. Her aim was to create spatial dynamism by layering her shapes so they would seem to be continually shifting and rotating. Unlike Malevich's Suprematism, her compositions are not meant as equivalents of spiritual states but rather as strictly formal constructions. Large geometric planes in bold colors—derived in part from the jewellike tones of Russian folk painting—overlap and interpenetrate. Popova's emphatic use of diagonals creates visual movement, causing the layers to look almost as if they are projecting into three dimensions. This floating and shifting is enhanced by the album format; when they are viewed all together or side by side, the energy of any one sheet catalyzes the push and pull in the others. Popova's carefully orchestrated palette of alternately warm and cool colors also contributes to the sense of pulsing motion.

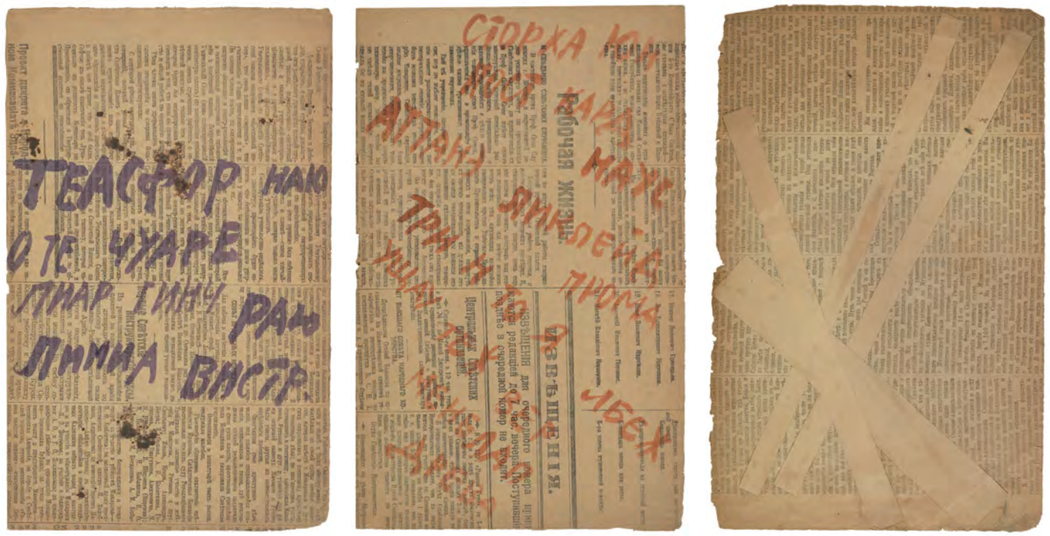
Slightly younger than Popova, Stepanova was born in 1894 in Kovno (now Kaunas, Lithuania). The daughter of a state official, she had a more humble background than those of Popova and Goncharova. From 1910 to 1913 she studied at the Kazan School of Art, where she met Aleksandr Rodchenko, who would become her lifelong partner and artistic collaborator. By 1915 she had moved

9. **Lyubov Popova** (Russian, 1889–1924). *6 Gravyur* (6 prints). c. 1917. Portfolio of six linoleum cuts with watercolor and gouache additions, one with oil additions, and one linoleum-cut title page with watercolor and gouache additions, sheet 13 9/16 x 10 1/8" (34.5 x 25.7 cm). Publisher: unpublished. Printer: the artist, Moscow. Edition: unknown (one of two known complete sets). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. General Print Fund, Edgar Wachenheim III Fund, and Harvey S. Shipley Miller Fund and by exchange: Nina and Gordon Bunshaft Bequest and Gift of Victor S. Riesenfeld

to Moscow without completing her studies. She and Rodchenko began living together, and they soon made contact with Futurist and Suprematist artists, including Popova and Rozanova, as well as others who would become prominent in the postrevolutionary years.

Between 1917 and 1919 Stepanova produced several experimental books of her own transrational poetry and abstract designs. These were some of her earliest and most provocative works in any medium. Inspired at least in part by the works of Kruchenykh and Rozanova (who had herself begun writing *zaum* toward the end of her life), they mark a moment of transition from the handmade aesthetic of Futurism to the more hard-edged, mechanical geometry of postrevolutionary Constructivism. Small, highly personal, and elliptical, *Gaust chaba* (1919, no. 10) is a fifteen-page book containing eight watercolored manuscript *zaum* poems and six collages, all on pages made from sheets of newspaper. The newspaper pages are positioned sideways in the book, so that it is not natural or comfortable to read their texts, and Stepanova's poems have been hastily brushed on top in large, commanding letters. On the collage pages, various plain and printed papers cut in geometric shapes are superimposed over the printed background. Whereas Kruchenykh's repudiation of standardized type had meant its complete absence, Stepanova's rejection was perhaps even more emphatic. She seems to have embraced the visual potential of the printed text while at the same time denying it its proper function. Her graffitilike scrawls mock the social order and literary authority represented by the newspaper. Explaining these experiments, she wrote, "In breaking up the moribund monotony of printed letters through

10. Varvara Stepanova (Russian, 1894–1958). *Gaust chaba*. 1919. Three pages from an illustrated book with fifteen pages of watercolor manuscript text on found newspaper leaves [this copy incomplete], page 10 13/16 x 6 3/4" (27.5 x 17.1 cm). Publisher: unknown, Moscow. Printer: unknown. Edition: 54. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of The Judith Rothschild Foundation



the use of painterly graphics, I am proceeding to a new form of creativity."[21]

Both Popova and Stepanova, along with other colleagues in the Russian avant-garde, welcomed the October Revolution of 1917, and in the years that followed they threw themselves into building the culture of a new Communist society. In 1921 they both stopped painting, aligning themselves with the Constructivists in their resolve to devote their creative energies to designing and producing useful objects that would serve the state. As part of this effort, both artists worked in theater, costume, and textile design. They also designed numerous covers for books and magazines. Unlike the early Futurist books, these volumes were intended for a mass audience. The artists adopted the Constructivist geometric style that was meant to project a new sense of order and rationality for art and life.

Val's. Pamiati Skriabina (Waltz: in memory of Scriabin) (1922, no. 11), a letterpress sheet music cover, is a typical example by Popova. Her lively design uses just two colors (the classically Constructivist black and red) on an off-white background. Combining different sizes, weights, and styles of type in an asymmetrical arrangement, she approached each word as if it were a geometric building block, balancing each one carefully against the others and binding them together with strategically placed linear elements. The rectilinear regularity of this construction is broken only slightly by a few diagonal elements, but with these small adjustments she infused the design with a restrained version of the spatial dynamism she pioneered in her painterly architectonics.

Only two years later, Popova's career was cut tragically short when, like Rozanova, she succumbed to disease. In May 1924 she contracted scarlet fever from her young son and died suddenly, at the age of thirty-five.

In the late 1920s and early 1930s Stepanova became one of the most committed champions of Soviet Constructivism. She applied its principles to the new look of Soviet books and journals, designing covers and layouts for numerous books herself, and also frequently collaborating with Rodchenko, who, more than any other artist, had taken the lead in defining the aesthetic of Russian Constructivist book design.

11. Lyubov Popova (Russian, 1889–1924). *Val's. Pamiati Skriabina* (Waltz: in memory of Scriabin), by E. Pavlov. 1922. Sheet music cover with letterpress typographic design on front, page 13 x 9 5/16" (33 x 23.7 cm). Publisher: Gosudarstvennoe muzykal'noe izdatel'stvo, Moscow. Printer: unknown. Edition: 200. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of The Judith Rothschild Foundation

Among her strongest designs were those for the cover and interior of *Groznyi smekh. Okna ROSTA* (A menacing laughter: the ROSTA windows) (1932, no. 12), with verses by Mayakovsky commemorating "three years of revolutionary battle" and reproductions of the placards he made for the Russian Telegraph Agency (ROSTA) in the early 1920s. Stepanova's dust jacket

features her own geometric letters, which, despite their mechanical appearance, bear some resemblance to her watercolor manuscript letters in *Gaust chaba*. Her design is highly reductive, yet she introduces a sense of motion simply by shifting the letters of the title's first word, *Groznyi*, to a slanted position. Her design for the endpapers features a dramatic photomontage using the repeated image of a Red Army soldier (cut from a photograph by B. Ignatovic) against a red background. She included a short line of text from Mayakovsky's poster verses that reads, "Everyone to arms, Comrades!" Photomontage had emerged as a powerful new medium in Russia in the mid-1920s, when it was decided that the Soviet cause would be better served by the more "factual" medium of photography than by abstract graphics. With photographic images, information could be more immediately conveyed to a public that was still largely illiterate. Stepanova's image reflects her familiarity with the montage technique utilized by the new film industry, which was nationalized in 1919 and whose techniques often involved eccentric cuts and rhythmic patterns.

In 1934 Stalin decreed that all art except Socialist Realism was prohibited in the Soviet Union. Over the ensuing decades until her death in 1958, Stepanova, alongside Rodchenko, continued to design books and journals exalting the Soviet state. But her freedom to experiment had ended, and a period of unfettered creativity and unprecedented prominence for women artists was officially over.

12. **Varvara Stepanova** (Russian, 1894–1958). *Groznyi smekh. Okna ROSTA* (A menacing laughter: the ROSTA windows), by Vladimir Mayakovsky. 1932. Letterpress dust jacket and endpapers, page 9 $^{7}/_{16}$ x 8 $^{1}/_{16}$" (24 x 20.5 cm). Publisher: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, Moscow-Leningrad. Printer: unknown. Edition: 3,000. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of The Judith Rothschild Foundation (Boris Kerdimun Archive)

1. Among the many Russian women artists working at this time, others who made books an important part of their oeuvre but who are not discussed here include Vera Ermolaeva, Valentina Kulagina-Klutsis, and Mariia Siniakova.
2. Benedikt Livshits, *The One and a Half-Eyed Archer*, trans. John E. Bowlt (Newtonville, Mass.: Oriental Research Partners, 1977), pp. 128–29.
3. For more on the social and cultural circumstances in which the Russian women artists emerged, see Bowlt and Matthew Drutt, eds., *Amazons of the Avant-Garde: Alexandra Exter, Natalia Goncharova, Liubov Popova, Olga Rozanova, Varvara Stepanova, and Nadezhda Udaltsova* (New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, 1999).
4. See Laura Engelstein, "Between Old and New: Russia's Modern Women," in ibid., pp. 59–73.
5. See Rebecca Cunningham, "The Russian Women Artist/Designers of the Avant-Garde," *Theatre Design & Technology* 34, no. 2 (Spring 1998): 39–51.
6. Jo Anna Isaak makes this point in *Feminism & Contemporary Art: The Revolutionary Power of Women's Laughter* (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 80–84. She also suggests that bourgeois notions about feminine domesticity may have been less constricting in Russia than in the West.
7. For a more thorough history and accounting of the many books created by the Russian avant-garde, see Margit Rowell and Deborah Wye, *The Russian Avant-Garde Book, 1910–1934* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2002).
8. Aleksei Kruchenykh, quoted in Kruchenykh, Velimir Khlebnikov, and Elena Guro, *Troe* (The three) (St. Petersburg, Russia: Zhuravl', 1913), p. 13; translated in Nina Gurianova, *Exploring Color: Olga Rozanova and the Early Russian Avant-Garde, 1910–1918* (Australia: G+B Arts International, 2000), p. 40.
9. Natalia Goncharova, preface to catalogue of solo exhibition, 1913; translated in *Russian Art of the Avant-Garde: Theory and Criticism, 1902–1934*, trans. and ed. Bowlt (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1988), p. 58.
10. Gurianova, "A New Aesthetic: Word and Image in Russian Futurist Books," in Alla Rosenfeld, ed., *Defining Russian Graphic Arts, From Diaghilev to Stalin, 1898–1934* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press; London: The Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum, 1999), p. 103.
11. For a more in-depth account of the entire series, see Natalia Shtrimer, "Mystical Images of the War," in Yevgenia Petrova et al., *Natalia Goncharova: The Russian Years* (St. Petersburg: State Russian Museum and Palace Editions, 2002), pp. 229–31.
12. Kruchenykh, letter to A. Ostrovskii, 1920s; quoted and translated in Gurianova, *Exploring Color*, p. 50.
13. Kruchenykh, "Gamma glasnykh," 1914; quoted and translated in ibid., p. 51.
14. Gurianova makes this connection in ibid., p. 54.
15. The hectography process does not allow for large print runs, so *Te li le* was printed in a relatively small edition of fifty.
16. Olga Rozanova wrote about this to Andrei Shemshurin, the publisher of the book, in June 1915: "Since the theme is more complex technically . . . and fine lines cannot be made on linoleum, I would like to enlarge their size to 6 x 7 *vershki* including the margins." Quoted and translated in Gurianova, *Exploring Color*, p. 155.
17. *Zaumnaia griga (Transrational boog)* was executed in 1914 and appeared in 1915. It featured texts by Kruchenykh and Roman Jakobson, writing under the pseudonym Aliagrov, and nine linoleum-cut illustrations based on playing-card designs by Rozanova.
18. The linoleum cut is a twentieth-century variant of the woodcut technique, in which a sheet of linoleum is carved to create a relief printing surface. Although linoleum was first developed as a floor covering in the 1860s, it was not used as an artistic medium until sometime shortly before World War I, when artists in Germany and England made the first such prints. Rozanova's linoleum-cut books, *Zaumnaia griga (Transrational boog)* and *Voina* (War), also rank among the earliest examples of the medium.
19. Rozanova, letter to Shemshurin, 1915; quoted and translated in Gurianova, *Exploring Color*, pp. 155–56.
20. She did, however, advise Kruchenykh on his own collage illustrations for his book *Vselenskaia voina* (Universal war), and in late 1915 or early 1916 she also began to write her own *zaum* poems, some of which were included in hectograph collections published by Kruchenykh in 1917. See ibid., pp. 100–103.
21. Varvara Stepanova, "About the Graphics Exhibited," in the catalogue of the 10th State Exhibition, *Nonobjective Art and Suprematism* (Moscow, 1919); translated in *Rodchenko/Stepanova: The Future Is Our Only Goal*, Peter Noever, ed. (Munich: Prestel, 1991), p. 161.

1. Group portrait of the Bauhaus weaving workshop students, 1927. Photograph by Lotte Beese. Included in the photograph are Gunta Stölzl (upper right) and Anni Abers (lower right). Bauhaus-Archiv Berlin

A COLLECTIVE AND ITS INDIVIDUALS: THE BAUHAUS AND ITS WOMEN

/ T'AI SMITH

PORTRAIT OF A COLLECTIVE

For The Museum of Modern Art's first Bauhaus exhibition, organized by Herbert Bayer and Walter and Ise Gropius in 1938, the accompanying catalogue presents the works of at least one hundred different *Bauhäusler*.[1] Through black-and-white reproductions of household items in metal or clay, textiles, architectural plans and models, form and color diagrams, and costume designs, the book serves as a window onto a landscape of collective projects. On page after page the reader is met with several big names from the canon of modern art (Vasily Kandinsky, Paul Klee, László Moholy-Nagy, and Josef Albers), but she also encounters humorous photomontages, tactile exercises made of bark and feathers, and photographs of curricular and extracurricular activities: unnamed women and men on a beach, on a balcony, on a stage. So while the catalogue's introductory essay by Alexander Dorner portrays the Bauhaus as the brainchild of director-architect Walter Gropius, the objects on display reflect myriad practices by a range of (at times anonymous) individuals.

Yet in spite of the German school's heterogeneity—as seen throughout Bayer's controlled-yet-diverse graphic layout, and in the most recent Bauhaus exhibition at MoMA—this essay will distill the collective into three "exemplary" female members: Anni Albers, Marianne Brandt, and Gunta Stölzl.[2] Perhaps it should be asked why these women, but not others, are being considered here. There will be no discussion of Alma Buscher, whose designs for children's furniture were highly influential during the Weimar years; or of Lore Leudesdorff, Benita Koch-Otte, and Otti Berger, all of whom have drawings and weavings that grace the 1938 Bauhaus catalogue.

The answer is on some level obvious: while MoMA holds several objects by a smattering of Bauhaus figures, its collection (as of 2009) does not exactly parallel the diverse terrain of the Bauhaus collective's practices. The Museum owns, for instance, a piece of drapery by Koch-Otte, yet no tapestries by her. Similarly, it does not possess a single clay vessel by Otto Lindig, the technical master of the Weimar pottery workshop; it has only one photograph by him. Indeed, the limits, and somewhat arbitrary nature, of the collection are not entirely a matter of gender—of male *Bauhäusler* being chosen over female ones. Rather, the Museum tends to reflect the modern hierarchy of mediums, or that it has been in the business of displaying so-called fine arts—paintings and drawings by, say, Lyonel Feininger, Kandinsky, or Klee—rather than applied arts.[3] But perhaps most definitive in terms of acquisition is that MoMA, like most museums, upholds the primacy of the proper name. Albers, Brandt, and Stölzl have strong representation because they are recognizable names, whereas Leudesdorff, Koch-Otte, and Berger are more obscure.

The objective of this essay is not, in fact, to bemoan the lack of representation of the school's women in the Museum or in historical texts. Instead, different questions need to be asked to help frame—and simultaneously dismantle—the monographic element that persists in the present work: How does one go about discussing the Bauhaus collective and its sundry scene (with its large numbers of unaccounted-for women) through objects made by only a few of its "individuals"? And how does one engage with the anonymous quality of many Bauhaus practices when a monographic approach frames discourse on the school?

To grasp the complexity of the school's objects, practices, and people, it is important to understand that, as with any group—say, "women"—the Bauhaus was at once bounded and unbounded by the *meeting* of its members.

It was not just an entity created by a single mastermind (Gropius), nor was it a simple function of an additive principle (the bringing together of those who populated it). The group was, rather, something of a (by)product of colliding forces. Although its history is often neatly divided into distinct phases—defined, respectively, by expressionism and craft, Constructivism and technology, functionalism and the design of prototypes for mass production—each moment was marked by tremendous conflict.[4]

Battles were especially contentious over the roles of craft and art at the school. In his 1919 manifesto and "program" for the Bauhaus, located first in Weimar, Germany, Gropius claimed that the school had leveled the traditional hierarchy between the two disciplines, but by giving famous international painters privileged positions at the school, and by denying the technical (craft) masters representation on the school's Masters' Council, he repeatedly demonstrated otherwise. By the time the Bauhaus moved to Dessau, Germany, and attempted to cohere as a corporate collective in 1925 (when it initially applied for GmbH [corporate] status), the school was seemingly unified under the banner of functionalist design. But conflict remained. As Gropius moved to brand the workshops' designs as products of this corporate machine, individual designers fought to retain credit.[5]

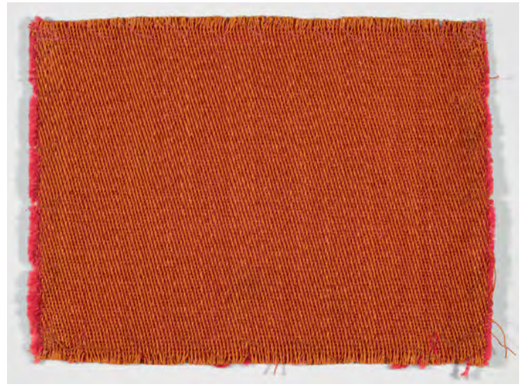
Definitions of art and craft and anonymity at the Bauhaus often intersected with those of gender. Upon distribution of the 1919 pamphlet, the school attracted so many women that Gropius, who had initially encouraged their application, found himself in the position of limiting their numbers and supporting the creation of a "women's class." Linked with the weaving workshop, this gendered collective directed women away from the more "masculine" workshops of cabinetry and metalwork, solving initial problems in programming the curriculum.

Thus the contradictory attitudes toward issues of gender, as well as the school's internal hierarchies, come to the fore in the example of the women's class—which itself was very much divided. The debates surrounding weaving and its apparent femininity were particularly fraught. In 1926 Helene Nonné-Schmidt defined weaving as the natural inclination of women to see "like children . . . the details instead of the over-all picture," a sign that "woman is counting on her limitations, considering them a great advantage."[6] Anni Albers found Nonné-Schmidt's argument so appalling that almost four decades later she would return to it, arguing that weaving was in fact an architectonic "process of structural organization" that was perhaps "closer to the inclination of men than women," at least by modern definitions.[7]

Such contentious interaction was common at the Bauhaus, which was, as historian Éva Forgács puts it, "the stage for a clash of personal and group ambitions, conflicting beliefs and convictions," political and theoretical justifications.[8] So instead of seeing Albers, Brandt, or Stölzl as distinct, biographical personae—or, worse, as tokens of the apparently progressive status of female students at the school—this essay calls for a method that accounts for *relationships* rather than individuals.[9] Each "name" will be treated as a case study in the different connections and issues between the individual and the collective. What the three Bauhaus women discussed here reveal is the degree to which the molecular identity of the school was only ever a function of relational forces of cohesion.

GUNTA STÖLZL: REPRESENTATIVE OF THE GENDERED COLLECTIVE

Gunta Stölzl arrived at the Bauhaus with its opening in 1919. While she recognized and was frustrated with gender inequalities at the school, she quickly advocated having a separate space for its women, and proposed the women's class the following year. Soon Stölzl became the de facto representative of the weaving workshop (no. 1), serving first as technical master and finally as the general workshop master from 1927 until 1931.[10] Throughout her tenure,



2. **Gunta Stölzl** (Swiss, born Germany. 1897–1983). Fabric for Tubular Steel Chairs. c. 1925. Mercerized cotton and Eisengarn, 6 1/8 x 4 5/8" (15.6 x 11.7 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Phyllis B. Lambert Fund

3. **Marcel Breuer** (American, born Hungary. 1902–1981). Club Chair (B3). 1927–28. Chrome-plated tubular steel and canvas, 28 1/4 x 30 3/4 x 28" (71.8 x 78.1 x 71.1 cm). Manufacturer: attributed to Standard Möbel, Germany. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Herbert Bayer

Stölzl's relationship to the school and her workshop balanced between metonymy (she stood in for the interests and practices of the weavers) and exception (she was the workshop's first female master).

The range of Stölzl's work has come to represent the workshop's various moments of production: from its initial pictorial weavings to its work developing industrial and mass-produced fabrics. In a sense, she represented the workshop to such a degree that most of the pieces acquired by MoMA from her Bauhaus years reflect her practice not as an individual "artist" but as a lead member of a corporate design team whose works are otherwise anonymous in their "look"—that is, lacking any stylistic signature. (The Museum owns only one of her individual tapestries.) The majority of the objects in the collection that were made during this time are prototypes for modern fabrics, including several swatches of "reversible coat material" or of upholstery made from rayon, cellophane, and cotton. Of these samples, Fabric for Tubular Steel Chairs (c. 1925, no. 2), which was created for Marcel Breuer's initial Club Chair (1927–28, no. 3), is particularly important from a design perspective. The fabric doesn't just act as a surface, as upholstery, but rather as the primary bearer of weight. Made from mercerized cotton and *Eisengarn* (iron yarn), the fabric is flexible and durable enough to hold a seated person comfortably, but it is also easy to miss against the strong, iconic form of Breuer's design.[11]

In keeping with Stölzl's role as teacher, even her wall hanging Tapestry (1924, no. 4), an otherwise unique, pictorial work, reads as an instruction manual in various methods for introducing threads into a woven surface. Weft threads are brought in at various points using different types of patterns—some form chains, others zigzag. In certain areas we find play with the figure-ground relationship specific to weaving, as though Stölzl is demonstrating that even a "figure" or form on the surface is an inextricable function of the woven ground and its material. The lack of diagonals or curves and the consistent orientation of the tapestry's vertical-horizontal forms to the axis of the woven latticework provide a "picture" of the medium—its formal and practical limitations and

4. **Gunta Stölzl** (Swiss, born Germany. 1897–1983). Tapestry. 1924. Wool, silk, mercerized cotton, and metal thread, 69 1/2 x 45" (176.5 x 114.3 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Phyllis B. Lambert Fund

5. **Gunta Stölzl** (Swiss, born Germany. 1897–1983). Design for a Textile. c. 1923. Gouache on paper, 3 1/8 x 3 7/8" (8 x 9.8 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Estée and Joseph Lauder Design Fund

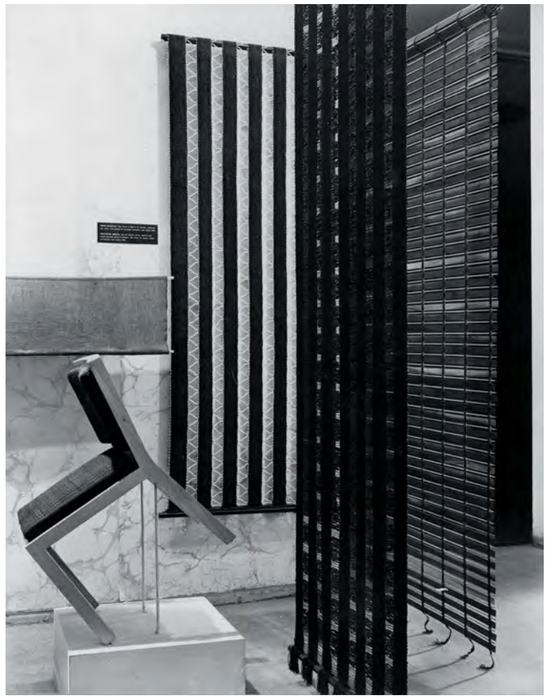
possibilities. A similar investigation of weaving's indistinct figure-ground relationship is performed in Design for a Textile (c. 1923, no. 5). Here, Stölzl's experimentation with the gouache medium articulates a woven vortex of lines around a slightly off-center black square, which appears, like an end knot, to keep the network from otherwise unraveling. (We might say that this "end knot" is not unlike Stölzl's role in the context of the weaving workshop.)

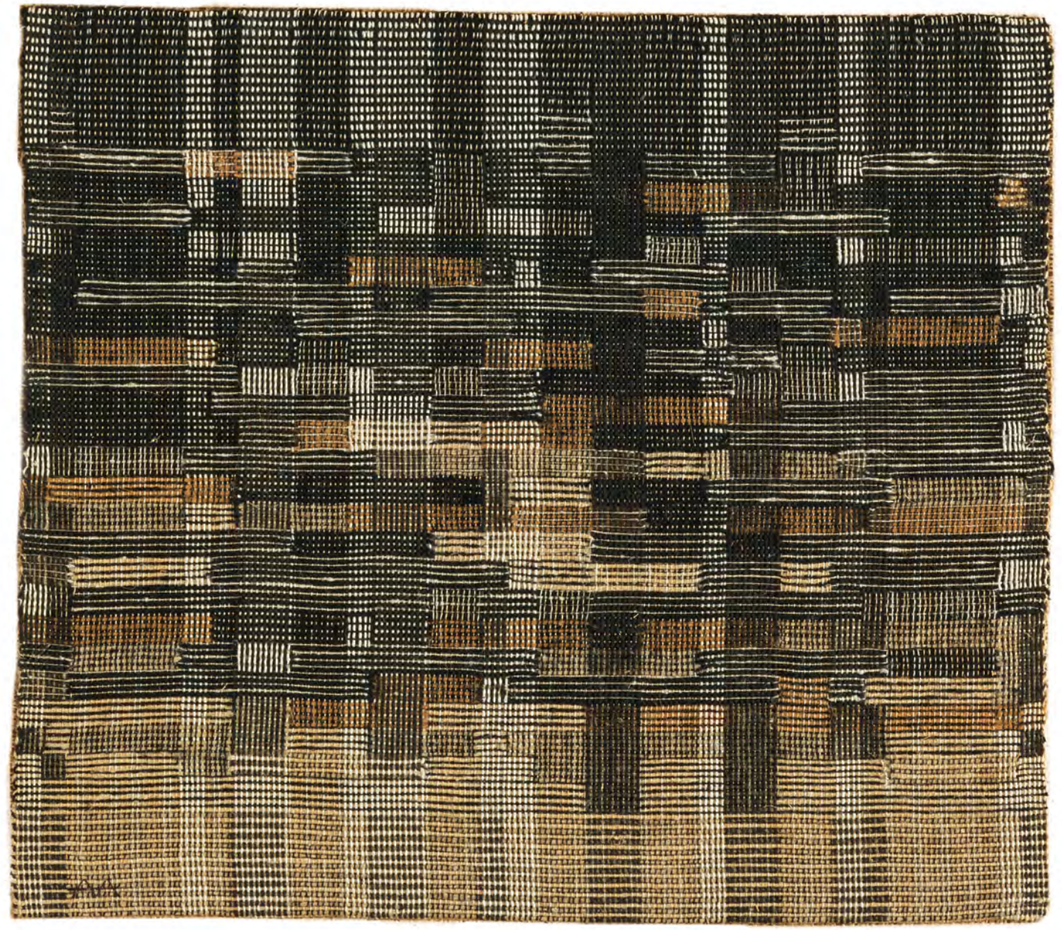
If a discussion of Stölzl's role as a representative of the weaving workshop is significant, it is because the investigations witnessed in her Bauhaus works were often part of the collective effort of the workshop. Although the gouache sketch and unique wall hanging are definitely "hers" (the sketch, for instance, bears a logolike signature in the lower right), the large number of industrial fabric samples attributed to her are less clearly so. For example, the attribution of the Fabric for Tubular Steel Chairs is thrown into question by the fact that a similarly strong fabric made of "metallized yarn"—a yarn "consisting of tightly twisted cotton threads, coated with paraffin"—was later manufactured by Tecta and credited to Grete Reichardt.[12] (The textile samples credited to Stölzl may have been woven or designed by her but the difficult threading of the loom accomplished by her students—or vice versa.)

Such ambiguities in attribution bring us back to the question of weaving and its gender. Weaving's so-called femininity at the Bauhaus is certainly related to its association with a collective of women, but this association itself is inextricable from the medium's lack of distinct formal marks—ones that would point back to the hand of the artist. It is not just coincidental that the school steered women away from the fields of individual mark- or form-makers, like mural painting or cabinetry, since these were more productive of celebrity figures. In the hierarchy of mediums, textiles are most often anonymous, less easily linked to a creator's "style" and "hand" using common methods of connoisseurship.

The title "wife" is meant to be provocative (and rather facetious), of course. By the end of her life Anni Albers was recognized as so much more: a master weaver who had mentored many students, an expert in South American weaving history and techniques, a printmaker, "a fabric engineer," as introduced by the wall text for her one-person show at MoMA in 1949[13] (nos. 6 and 7), and, perhaps most significant, author of two books on the practice and theory of weaving and design.[14]

At the Bauhaus, however, she was simply one student among many. Her contributions to the goings-on of the institution were, we might say, no more significant than those of any other weaver. She entered the school as Annelise Fleischman in 1922, began training in the





Opposite:
6. View of the exhibition *Anni Albers Textiles*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, September 14–November 6, 1949. Photographic Archive. The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York

7. Anni Albers (American, born Germany. 1899–1994). Tapestry. 1948. Handwoven linen and cotton, 16 1/2 x 18 3/4" (41.9 x 47.6 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Edgar Kaufmann, Jr. Purchase Fund

Opposite:
8. **Anni Albers** (American, born Germany. 1899–1994). Free-Hanging Room Divider. c. 1949. Handwoven jute and Lurex, 53 x 34" (134.6 x 86.3 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of the designer

9. **Anni Albers** (American, born Germany. 1899–1994). Design for a Textile. 1926. Gouache and pencil on paper, 13 3/4 x 11 5/8" (34.9 x 29.5 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of the designer

workshop in 1923, and received her diploma in 1930. In 1925 she married Josef Albers, who had recently been promoted to Junior Master of the Bauhaus. Then, in 1933, after the young architect Philip Johnson visited the school and was impressed by Josef's teaching methods for the preliminary course, the couple was invited to teach at Black Mountain College, in North Carolina, at Johnson's recommendation. With few other job possibilities and the political situation growing worse in Germany, especially for Anni, who was Jewish, the two decided to expatriate. In America Josef Albers would become the internationally recognized modern artist whose color and form theories would be taught at art schools worldwide and whose influence on at least two generations of American artists would become legendary. Anni's recognition is less pronounced—such that an art-world audience might respond, on hearing her name, "Oh yes, Albers's wife. She was a weaver, right?"

She certainly recognized the unfair privilege her husband enjoyed as a painter. The hierarchy of mediums and its determination of collecting practices were not lost on Anni, who, in spite of the fact that she received a one-person show at MoMA, was always somewhat frustrated that she lacked gallery representation.[15] Late in life she would sarcastically repeat a dictum she had come to understand all too well: "If it's on paper, it's art."[16]

But if she recognized and to a degree regretted the fact that "art" was something "on paper" and not made of fiber, she also made a point of emphasizing that in good design "it is better that the material speaks than that we speak ourselves."[17]

Her Free-Hanging Room Divider (c. 1949, no. 8) innovatively employs a complex woven structure borrowed from ancient Peruvian techniques and judiciously combines organic twine (jute) with synthetic metallic threads (Lurex) to create a "pliable plane" within architectural space, thus reflecting the concepts discussed in one of her essays.[18] This object, moreover, sufficiently achieved her goal of developing designs that were "anonymous," that don't cry out, "Here I am, look at me."[19]

But it is a particular sketch "on paper" that best reveals the degree to which her identity as a designer was considerably informed by her relationship to Josef. The tiny Design for a Textile (1926, no. 9) conveys an intimate stylistic relationship between her fabric and her husband's *Fugue*, a work in glass from 1925. Josef's object has come to represent an iconic moment in his production, and yet the patterning also evidences, perhaps, the influence of Anni's formal play with the vibrating

structural qualities of her medium, whose latticework and vertical-horizontal axial forms are its very ground condition. While her husband's fame has eclipsed her own (he is most often simply "Albers," yet she requires the qualification of her first name), it was also her connection to him (her role as "wife") that provided access to, and affiliation with, a whole network of famous individuals. Indeed, in some sense, this relationship would serve to make her the most individual of the Bauhaus women, if we are to go by the marker of name recognition and representation in collections.

Still, this domestic connection is not the full story. In an interview in 1995 she recounted a more complex version of the events that resulted in the couple's immigration to America—in particular as it hinged on her own chance encounter with Johnson one afternoon in Berlin in 1933. After meeting him on Lilly Reich's doorstep, she invited him over for coffee and showed him some of her fabric samples. One of these was of her wall-covering material for the Bundesschule in Bernau, Germany (1929, no. 10), a building designed by then—Bauhaus director Hannes Meyer. Made from cotton, chenille, and cellophane, the textile was created to help soundproof the walls of the school's auditorium, which had a problematic echo. The technically advanced material was then charted by Zeiss Ikon to document how the light reflection worked at certain angles. Johnson apparently found the soundproofing and light-reflective properties of the fabric so interesting that, as he told her in 1949 (when, as director of MoMA's Department of Architecture, he was doing the lighting for her show), this had been her "passport to America," indicating the degree of her singular achievement as a student of the Bauhaus.[20]

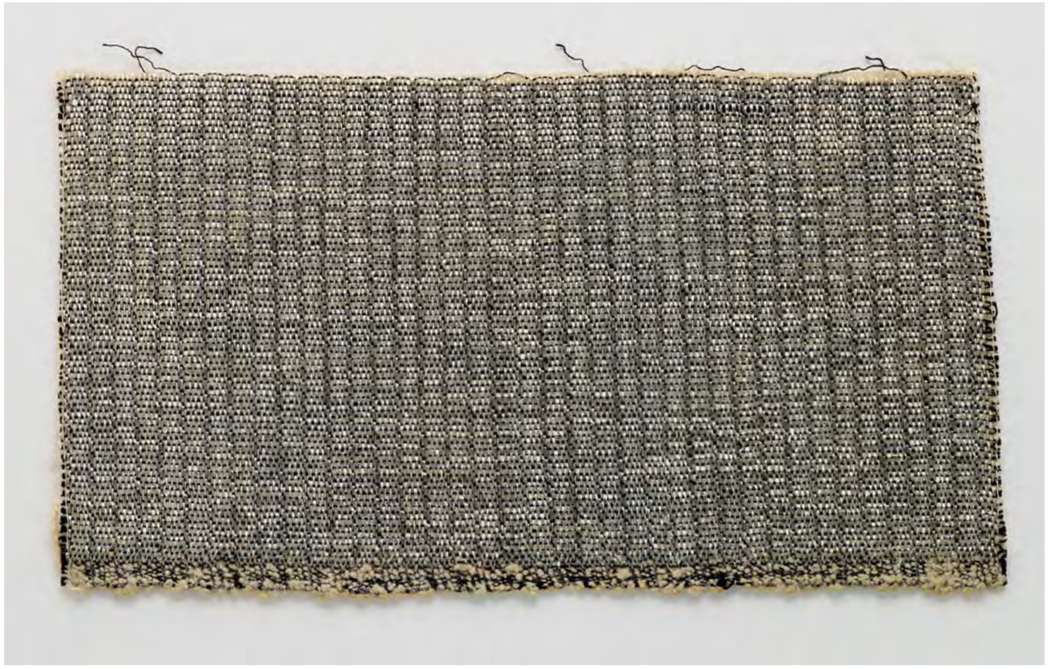
Anni ultimately came to iconic status with the publication in the 1960s of her *On Designing* (a collection of essays she began writing after her emigration) and *On Weaving* (a detailed elaboration of the fundamental elements of the medium). But what is significant about these texts is not only that they buttress her authorial identity, a singularly remarkable vision (although in many respects they do just that). In them, Anni reflected on, synthesized, and extended those theories that the weaving workshop had begun to develop more than thirty years earlier. In the graceful language of someone whose writing "bore a stunning resemblance to the process of creating a weaving on a loom" are found the Bauhaus network of ideas, the dialogues that had circulated among the Bauhaus weavers about their specific medium and practice.[21] Acting as a synthetic apparatus, Anni's books thus provided a voice for the Bauhaus weaving collective to an English-reading context of reception.

MARIANNE BRANDT: CONTRACT NEGOTIATOR

While metalwork was designated the purview of men at the Bauhaus, one woman, Marianne Brandt, did manage to enter the apparently masculine field. Brandt began her studies at the Bauhaus in January of 1924 and would eventually become the female master of the metal workshop. Inspired by what she saw at the first Bauhaus exhibition, in 1923, she gave up her career as an expressionistic painter and entered the school at ground zero, despite the many years of fine-art education she had already received in Munich and Weimar. In her first semester she took the preliminary course, then taught by Moholy-Nagy, and by the summer of 1924 decided to enter the metal workshop. Although most women were shuttled into the women's class and the associated weaving workshop, Brandt was given exceptional status, in part due to the strong encouragement of Moholy-Nagy, who was at the time the metal workshop's form master.

During her first year in the workshop, in spite of a generally unwelcoming atmosphere among her male colleagues (and the fact that she was set to menial tasks preparing the metal for use), Brandt produced significant designs for ashtrays, a metal teapot, and a full tea set—an item that would later be recognized, as historian Elizabeth

10. **Anni Albers** (American, born Germany. 1899–1994). Wall-Covering Material for the Bundesschule Auditorium in Bernau, Germany. 1929. Cotton, chenille, and cellophane, 5 x 9" (12.7 x 22.9 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of the designer



Below:
11. Marianne Brandt (German, 1893–1983). Teapot. 1924. Nickel silver and ebony, a. (teapot) 7 x 9" (17.8 x 22.8 cm), b. (lid) 3 1/4" (8.3 cm) diam., c. (infuser) 2 1/8 x 3 1/8" (5.4 x 8 cm). Manufacturer: Bauhaus Metal Workshop, Germany. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Phyllis B. Lambert Fund

Right:
12. Marianne Brandt (German, 1893–1983). Hin Bredendieck (German, 1904–1995). Ceiling Lamp. 1925. Spun aluminum and milk glass shade, 41 1/2 x 15" (105.4 x 38.1 cm). Manufacturer: Schwintzer & Gräff, Berlin. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Phyllis B. Lambert Fund

Opposite:
13. Marianne Brandt (German, 1893–1983). Kandem Bedside Table Lamp. 1928. Lacquered steel, 9 1/4" x 7 1/4" (23.5 x 18.4 cm). Manufacturer: Körtig & Matthiesen, Leipzig, Germany. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Phyllis B. Lambert Fund

Otto puts it, as "an icon of modern design."[22] For Teapot (1924, no. 11), Brandt molded the abstract vocabulary of the circle, triangle, and square into a functional, three-dimensional metal container. Taking on use value, these geometric shapes are no longer connected, as preliminary-course master Johannes Itten had taught before his departure in 1923, to their inherent symbolism or metaphysical truth: "Square: calm, death, black, dark, red; Triangle: intensity, life, white, bright, yellow; Circle: infinite symmetry, peaceful, always blue."[23] Instead, the whole form of metal and wood comes to voluptuous life, like an amusing toy in a child's play chest. The object's industrial metal speaks not of a coherent value but rather of paradoxical ones, of organic warmth combined with streamlined functionality.

According to Moholy-Nagy, the school's move to the industrial town of Dessau would help turn the workshop's designs "from wine jugs to lighting fixtures"—meaning that new materials such as nickel and chromium were introduced, and the designs were increasingly oriented toward technology and industry.[24] One of the first of these lighting fixtures was an aluminum ceiling lamp designed by Brandt in 1925 (no. 12). And, indeed, the sheer number of Brandt's inventive lamps would provide strong designs for the school's newly formed industrial image. But in the spring of 1927 Brandt was given the title of *Mitarbeiter* (associate) of the metal workshop and put in charge of securing contracts with lighting industry firms. At this point, her own work was put somewhat on the back burner as she did duty for the benefit of the collective.

In April 1928, when Brandt took over as director of the metal workshop, she began articulating its theoretical goals as a "process of rethinking contemporary society" in relation to form.[25] In an essay the next year for *bauhaus* magazine, she defended the workshop against the criticisms of Russian sculptor Naum Gabo, who concluded that Bauhaus design was ultimately a matter of superficial style. Arguing, for instance, that the spherical forms of a given lamp were not so much a matter of style as the result of "experiments and drawings with which we check, test and calculate," Brandt made the case for the workshop as a team of Constructivist engineers.[26] Her collaborative efforts with other members of the workshop were indeed significant. That same year, for Körtig & Matthiesen's, Kandem Licht line, Brandt developed with fellow workshop member Hin Bredendieck a bedside lamp (no. 13), a design that has become so ubiquitous that it signifies the plainest anonymity.[27]

Brandt must have been particularly hurt by Gabo's criticisms, which were, in part, directed at her, since the workshop's partnerships with industry were mostly a function of her silent negotiations. In many respects her securing of contracts, and therefore money, for the workshop was a generous act that left less time for her to focus on her own designs but made room for her students to do so.

While Brandt's practice in metal did not exactly fit in with the other women at the school (the weavers), her role in the metal workshop was similarly driven by an

interest in the collaborative practices of the collective. Except that here she acted more like a welder connecting inside to outside (the workshop's prototypes to industrial manufacturers) rather than a weaver crossing discursive threads of the school's internal debates. Brandt's position as "contract negotiator," it could be said, was particularly suited to the structural conditions of her medium.

Admittedly, what I have just performed and what I earlier described as my intent—to focus on the specific relationships between several women and the collective—is not altogether different from the plethora of literature on the Bauhaus. Most of it inevitably touches on the school's various subdivisions—its workshops and its individuals. What I aspire to open up here, however, is an investigation of the collective as an art-historical phenomenon and the *connections* that both define and undo it. The point is, ultimately, to discover another model for considering the "woman" in the collective's midst, and to begin showing how issues of gender intersect with questions of collectivity, or the mediums through which collectives work. The female *Bauhäusler* were not just women or individual practitioners but also theoreticians who, through their writing, formulated and reformulated their medial domain—their *Stoffgebiet* (material field) or *Gestaltungsgebiet* (formal field)—and thereby expressed the workshop's interest in carving out a space of recognition. They were, moreover, remarkably adept at performing their collective responsibility, perhaps because their craft practices of weaving and metalwork, unlike painting or sculpture, called on these women to act within and for the school's ambitions, not their own. The female individual in the collective must therefore be understood not as a discursive "token" of the Bauhaus's progressivism (or lack thereof) but as a point of connection between various threads in the institutional network.

Feminist art history is one of the best-positioned methods for rethinking the Bauhaus monograph—to change its parameters, even undo them.[28] Such a reframing might be difficult to negotiate in the context of art collections, which tend to be organized by last names. But by collecting the collective's diverse practices rather than its individuals, it would allow for an address of those mediums that are not at the top of the hierarchy, and account for those objects whose authors are more anonymous, or at least less certain.

1. Herbert Bayer, Walter Gropius, and Ise Gropius, eds., *Bauhaus 1919–1928* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1938). *Bauhäusler* is the German term for members of the school.
2. The recent exhibition was *Bauhaus 1919–1933: Workshops for Modernity,* The Museum of Modern Art, New York, November 8, 2009–January 25, 2010.
3. MoMA has a good number of Bauhaus works in the areas of painting, drawing, graphic design, photography, and industrial design. Although Greta Daniel, a former associate curator in the Department of Architecture and Design, pursued applied-arts objects in the 1950s, the crafts are largely underrepresented. Most of the textiles, for instance, are not from the early, craft-oriented phase of the Bauhaus but from the later phase.
4. For a discussion of these conflicts, see Éva Forgács, *The Bauhaus Idea and Bauhaus Politics*, trans. John Bátki (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1995); and Marcel Franciscono, *Walter Gropius and the Creation of the Bauhaus in Weimar: The Ideals and Artistic Theories of the Founding Years* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1971).
5. Marcel Breuer, for instance, frustrated Gropius when he patented and marketed his tubular steel chair under his own name instead of the school's, insisting that a design produced in his own studio and on his own time was "his," as a painting by Paul Klee would be Paul Klee's. Forgács, *The Bauhaus Idea*, p. 152; and Christopher Wilk, *Marcel Breuer: Furniture and Interiors* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1981), p. 40.
6. Helene Nonné-Schmidt, "Woman's Place at the Bauhaus," in Hans M. Wingler, *Bauhaus: Weimar, Dessau, Berlin, Chicago*, trans. Wolfgang Jabs and Basil Gilbert, ed. Joseph Stein (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1976), pp. 116–17. In fact, Nonné-Schmidt's essay might be read as articulating the complex roles women played at the Bauhaus, particularly in the transition from unique works to collective design. The best model for rethinking the school might already be found in the rich theoretical texts that issued from the *Bauhäusler*.
7. Anni Albers, *On Designing* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1979), p. 19. For original publication details, see n. 14.
8. Forgács, *The Bauhaus Idea*, p. 4.
9. The percentage of female students ranged between twenty-five and thirty-five percent.
10. In 1931 Stölzl was forced to resign after her student Grete Reichardt protested her Communist sympathies.
11. For a fuller discussion of this fabric and the issue of anonymity, see T'ai Smith, "Anonymous Textiles, Patented Domains: The Birth (and Death) of an Author," *Art Journal* 67, no. 2 (Summer 2008): 54–73.
12. Jeannine Fiedler and Peter Feierabend, eds., *Bauhaus* (Cologne: Könemann Verlagsgesellschaft, 2000), p. 632.
13. *Anni Albers Textiles*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, September 14–November 6, 1949. The exhibition subsequently traveled during the next three years to twenty-six other museums throughout the United States.
14. Anni Albers, *On Designing* (New Haven: Pellango Press, 1959); and *On Weaving* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1965).
15. In a 1984 letter to an admirer, Craig Fuller, Albers responded to his frustration over his lack of gallery representation and over being ghettoized to "craft." She regretted that she could not help because she was "in a similar situation . . . that is I am still without a gallery or museum that I can turn to for exhibitions." Box 2, folder 56, The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation Archives, Bethany, Conn.
16. "Anni Albers: Interview" (takes 1–3), February 1, 1995; unused footage shot for the film *Bauhaus in America,* 1995. Dir. Judith Pearlman (Clio Films Inc.). VHS copies of this interview are located at The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation.
17. Anni Albers, "Design: Anonymous and Timeless," in *Anni Albers: Selected Writings on Design,* ed. Brenda Danilowitz (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 2000), p. 39.
18. Anni Albers, "The Pliable Plane: Textiles in Architecture," in ibid., pp. 44–51.
19. Anni Albers, "Design: Anonymous and Timeless," in ibid., p. 39.
20. "Anni Albers: Interview" (takes 1–3).
21. Nicholas Fox Weber discusses Anni's unique writing style in his foreword to *Anni Albers: Selected Writings on Design*, p. vii.
22. Elizabeth Otto, *Tempo Tempo: The Bauhaus Photomontages of Marianne Brandt* (Berlin: Bauhaus-Archiv Berlin and Jovis Verlag, 2005), p. 136.
23. Johannes Itten, diary entry for October 20, 1916, in *Johannes Itten: Werke und Schriften*, p. 51; cited and translated in Fiedler and Feierabend, *Bauhaus*, p. 366.
24. László Moholy-Nagy, "From Wine Jugs to Lighting Fixtures," in *Bauhaus 1919–1928*, pp. 134–36.
25. Otto, *Tempo Tempo*, p. 139.
26. Marianne Brandt, cited in ibid., p. 139.
27. For further information on the metal workshop's Kandem Licht designs, see Justus A. Binroth, ed., *Bauhaus Lighting? Kandem Light!: The Collaboration of the Bauhaus with the Leipzig Company Kandem* (Stuttgart: Arnoldsche, 2002).
28. For one such approach, see Anja Baumhoff, *The Gendered World of the Bauhaus: The Politics of Power at the Weimar Republic's Premier Art Institute, 1919–1932* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang GmbH, 2001).

DOMESTIC REFORM AND EUROPEAN MODERN ARCHITECTURE: CHARLOTTE PERRIAND, GRETE LIHOTZKY, AND ELIZABETH DENBY

/ MARY McLEOD

For years the coupling of "women designers" with "modern architecture" was regarded more often than not as a contradiction in terms. The revered heroes of the European modern movement were all men: Le Corbusier, Walter Gropius, and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe; and so, too, were most of its noted secondary players, including J. J. P. Oud, André Lurçat, and Giuseppe Terragni. The very image of the self-assured genius, breaking with conventions and academic styles, was invariably male.

Much contemporary theory, even that written from a feminist position, reinforces this ingrained perception of modernism as male—autonomous, pure, and austere, "the privileged realm of male activities."[1] In contrast, mass culture is almost always considered female—commercial, impure, and inferior. However persuasive this argument might be for literature and other cultural forms, it is only partially true for architecture. If the machine imagery in Le Corbusier's 1923 manifesto *Vers une architecture* (*Towards a New Architecture*) still perpetuated the masculinist biases of modernism, other dimensions of modern architecture—its emphasis on domesticity, its social agenda, and its formal challenges to traditional gender conventions—suggest a more complex story, one that gives women a substantial role both as a source of inspiration and as creator. As feminist scholarship since the 1970s has shown, women were actively engaged in European architecture between the wars. The focus on domesticity and housing in modern architecture offered them new opportunities in the field, and they in turn helped shape these concerns; certainly more than their male peers, women designers were acutely aware of the need for reform. As late as 1939 British activist Margery Spring Rice lamented the "domestic slavery of mind and body of the millions with whom rests the immediate care of a home and a family."[2]

As might be expected, women practiced architecture earlier and in larger numbers in those countries with the most progressive attitudes toward gender roles: the United States, England, Germany (during the Weimar era), Finland, Sweden, the USSR, and Israel. The enrollment of women in architecture and design schools and the use of architecture competitions to award commissions facilitated their participation in the profession. New social mores, family patterns, and images of women's identities—especially that of the emancipated New Woman—made it easier for women to work in architecture firms, often with spouses or lovers. In this regard, the collaborative nature of modern architecture further facilitated their involvement, especially in the area of housing, where individuals with expertise in furniture design, kitchens, or working-class social conditions often served as outside consultants to architects. Ultimately what attracted women to modern architecture was their desire to be part of a movement that promised a new way of living. The thought of making a new world—one that was freer, more honest, and more beautiful—invigorated adventuresome young women, eager to rid themselves of repressive traditions and staid styles. In the 1920s European critics on both the right and left frequently linked the New Woman and new architecture.

Women brought an array of interests and skills to the field, whether from personal experience or from previous training in the decorative or fine arts. They tackled design on all scales, particularly in the area of housing, including household objects and furnishings, kitchen and room arrangements, and urban configurations of apartment blocks, a range of practices that is exemplified by the work of three women: Charlotte Perriand, Margarete (Grete) Schütte-Lihotzky, and Elizabeth Denby.[3]

1. Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky (Austrian, 1897–2000). Frankfurt Kitchen, Am Höhenblick Housing Estate, Ginnheim, Frankfurt. 1926–27. Various materials, approx. 61' 4 ¼" x 112' 10 5/16" (18.7 x 34.4 m) in plan. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Joan R. Brewster in memory of her husband George W. W. Brewster, by exchange, and the Architecture & Design Purchase Fund

Although male designers still dominated modern furniture design, women were probably more readily accepted in the field than in areas involving large-scale construction, since it was seen as an extension of interior decorating and women's traditional role as homemaker. Design schools admitted women students even before architecture schools did, to such an extent that Le Corbusier complained in 1925 that the decorative arts in France risked foundering "among young ladies."[4] Given this comment, it is all the more surprising that he would soon hire one of these "young ladies," a twenty-four-year-old designer, Charlotte Perriand.

Perriand had studied at the Union Centrale des Arts Décoratifs, a decorative-arts school in Paris for women students, where she received, as she put it, the training of an "upholsterer."[5] Only two years later, at the 1927 Salon d'Automne, she exhibited *Bar sous le toit* (Bar in the attic), with gleaming aluminum- and nickel-coated surfaces, glass shelves, and brightly colored leather cushions; a witty synthesis of casual bohemianism and chic luxury, it was widely praised in the professional press. Even before the exhibition's opening, however, Perriand was no longer satisfied with creating stylish images of modernity for a bourgeois elite and was determined to work for Le Corbusier, who was committed to serial production and the creation of low-cost housing. When she first approached him in October 1927 for a position, his response was hardly encouraging: "We don't embroider cushions in my studio."[6] But something about the determined young woman must have captured his imagination, and a month later he visited her stand at the Salon d'Automne. By December she was working in the atelier.

One of her first tasks was to develop a series of furniture pieces, an assignment that resulted in the three tubular-steel chairs for which the firm is famous: the *Siège à dossier basculant* (Armchair with a Tilting Back), the *Fauteuil grand confort* (Easy Chair), and the Chaise Longue (nos. 2–4). Le Corbusier had proclaimed the chair a "machine-for-sitting" and had stressed that such machines should accommodate different body positions necessary for different tasks, such as working, dining, conversing, lecturing, and relaxing.[7] He hoped to find generic solutions for these positions that could be industrially produced and used in a variety of spaces, whether in the firm's own modernist interiors or in other, more traditional environments.

Perriand described the creative relationship among Le Corbusier, Pierre Jeanneret (his partner and cousin), and her as being like "three fingers on one hand."[8] She credited Le Corbusier for setting the design parameters and for suggesting the basic forms of their furniture. She worked out with Jeanneret the designs and full-scale details, and then she took charge of the execution herself, fabricating the first prototypes in her studio apartment. In 1932 Le Corbusier stated that Perriand had "sole responsibility for the execution of all our domestic equipment," and over the years he regularly acknowledged her role in the firm's work.[9]

Le Corbusier envisioned the *Siège à dossier basculant* as a chair in which to sit for living room conversation. Following in his practice of adapting traditional types, it was a reworking of the colonial or British officer's chair, with the wooden legs replaced by tubular steel and the arm straps now tightly sprung. The idea was that the frame would remain standard, whereas the fabrics could vary depending on the setting or a client's preference. In its separation of structure and body support, in its lightness and its mechanistic aesthetic, the chair also recalled Breuer's 1925 Club Chair (page 161, no. 3), but with notable differences in scale and elaboration. The dimensions of the *Siège à dossier basculant* suggest a female occupant or a slender man, while it is easy to imagine a big executive sitting in Breuer's wider, more mannered model.

2. Le Corbusier (Charles-Édouard Jeanneret) (French, born Switzerland. 1887–1965). Pierre Jeanneret (Swiss, 1896–1967). Charlotte Perriand (French, 1903–1999). Armchair with a Tilting Back (*Siège à dossier basculant*). 1928. Chrome-plated tubular steel and canvas, 26 1/8 x 25 5/8 x 26" (66.3 x 65.1 x 66 cm). Manufacturer: Thonet Frères, Paris, France. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Thonet Brothers, Inc.

3. **Le Corbusier (Charles-Édouard Jeanneret)** (French, born Switzerland. 1887–1965). **Pierre Jeanneret** (Swiss, 1896–1967). **Charlotte Perriand** (French, 1903–1999). Easy Chair (*Fauteuil grand confort*). 1928. Chrome-plated tubular steel, horsehair, down, and leather, overall 26 x 30 x 27 3/4" (66 x 76.2 x 70.5 cm), seat h. 16" (40.6 cm). Manufacturer: Heidi Weber, Zürich. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Phyllis B. Lambert

4. **Le Corbusier (Charles-Édouard Jeanneret)** (French, born Switzerland. 1887–1965). **Pierre Jeanneret** (Swiss, 1896–1967). **Charlotte Perriand** (French, 1903–1999). Chaise Longue (LC/4). 1928. Chrome-plated steel, fabric, and leather, 26 3/8 x 23 x 62 3/8" (67 x 58.4 x 158.4 cm). Manufacturer: Thonet Frères, Paris, France. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Thonet Industries, Inc.

In contrast, the designers intended the *Fauteuil grand confort* to be a machine-for-relaxing. Squat and plush, it was a modern translation of the overstuffed easy chair in a club or a gentleman's library. It consisted of five bulging leather cushions, secured—indeed, squeezed—by a tubular-steel frame. This innovative design, with its exposed support, inverted the usual relationship between frame and upholstery in traditional easy chairs, while still offering the essence of luxuriant comfort. The chair was made in two sizes, suggesting that both men and women and a wide range of body types could enjoy its enveloping pleasures. None of the more *sachlich* European designers had yet successfully dealt with the issue of comfort. Breuer had called his 1925 model a club chair, but, unlike the *Fauteuil grand confort*, it was not a chair one could curl up in.

In the design of the serpentine Chaise Longue, the three partners addressed another aspect of relaxation. Their lounge chair permits different reclining positions, with the weight of the human body fixing the chosen angle of inclination, and since its creation has been widely praised for its comfort. Its precedents include bentwood rocking chairs, adjustable invalid chairs, Dr. Pascaud's patented Surrepos, the Morris lounge chair, ocean-liner deck chairs, and—fundamental to its sensuous quality—the earlier Duchesse or Duchesse Brisée. Eighteenth-century grace and eroticism have their twentieth-century equivalent in this light, undulating structure poised on four points, so beautifully illustrated by the classic image of Perriand relaxing on its stretched-canvas surface (no. 5). Yet both Perriand and Le Corbusier mentioned a man in their descriptions of the chair's creation: Perriand explained that she thought of "a simple soldier, who, when he is tired lies down on his back, puts his feet up against a tree, with his knapsack under his head"; and Le Corbusier imagined "a cowboy from the Wild West smoking his pipe, his feet in the air, above his head, against the chimneypiece: complete rest."[10] Nevertheless, the image they both chose to illustrate the Chaise Longue in use, in their respective

5. **Charlotte Perriand** on Chaise Longue (LC/4), 1929. Photograph by Pierre Jeanneret. Fondation Le Corbusier, Paris

accounts of the furniture, was the iconic photograph of Perriand, evoking the chair's seductive charm, which belies the purported neutrality of the machine aesthetic.

The abandonment of traditional masculine or feminine chair types was, in fact, one of modern furniture's most radical breaks with precedent. As late as the spring of 1927 Le Corbusier was still distinguishing between male and female furnishings, but by 1929 those distinctions had disappeared. Because tubular steel combined such traditionally male and female attributes as strength and lightness, straight lines and curves, the differences between a man's chair and a woman's chair no longer seemed relevant. Modernism's elimination of figurative imagery also reduced references to gender, leaving scale, color, and setting as the primary variables in design. Later, Breuer's and Mies van der Rohe's metal furniture would gain connotations of a masculine corporate world in part due to their use in office settings. However, the chairs by Perriand, Le Corbusier, and Jeanneret—with their smaller scale, humorous touches, mix of natural and industrial materials, and emphasis on relaxation—have largely escaped such associations.

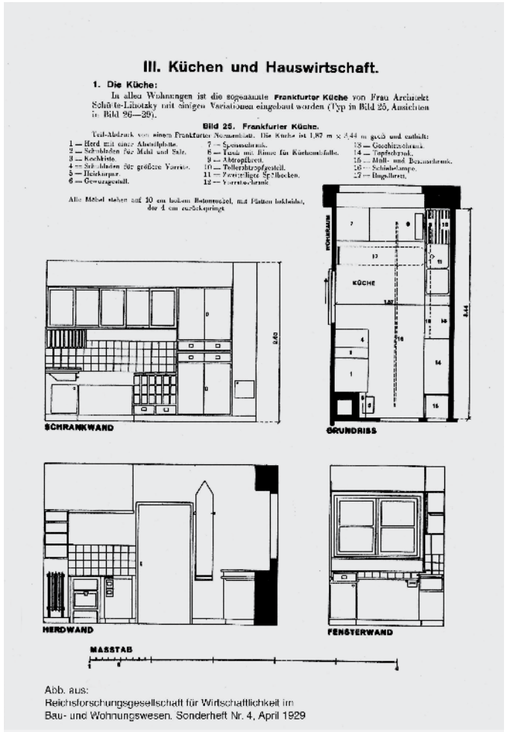
The rejection of gender distinctions was all the more evident in the model apartment at the 1929 Salon d'Automne that Perriand and Jeanneret designed as a showcase for the new "mobile" pieces (while Le Corbusier was in South America). They called the exhibit *Equipment intérieur d'une habitation* (Equipment for a dwelling), and it included, besides the three chairs, the so-called airplane table and Perriand's tubular-steel swivel chairs, which were intended for dining. The critic Max Terrier declared it "a manifesto . . . a declaration of war on the ideal of the padded and stuffed bourgeois salon."[11] Like the furnishings, it promised a more functional, flexible, and gracious form of domesticity that might appeal to the New Woman, if one that was too expensive and extreme in its aesthetic for most middle-class and working-class people.

Before World War II, production runs of the chairs were small and costs remained high—and in the case of the *Fauteuil grand confort*, prohibitively so, and it was probably in a representational role, not in the transformation of actual lives, that the three chairs had the most impact.[12] They were widely reproduced in print and displayed in exhibitions, and soon became design icons, presenting a seductive image of modernity, which more than anything embodied Perriand's "joy of creating and living in this century of ours."[13] Yet she felt dissatisfied with the elitism of her work—and life. In the 1930s she became actively engaged in leftist politics and increasingly focused her designs on the needs of the working class, creating affordable furnishings that would appeal to popular tastes. In contrast to the urbane sophistication of the tubular-steel chairs, her new pieces, simple wooden chairs and tables, possessed an almost primitive directness. Though strikingly different from the mechanistic elegance of her earlier designs, these new furnishings also defied gender categorizations, projecting the simplicity, calm, and harmony that she valued in domestic life.

THE FRANKFURT KITCHEN

There was probably no arena in which women had as much influence in modern architecture as the kitchen. For centuries architects had ignored the kitchen as a subject of design; it was considered a utilitarian space, one primarily for servants and housewives. By the late 1920s and 1930s this changed dramatically: architecture exhibitions featured model kitchens, professional magazines published articles on kitchen design, and architects included photographs of kitchens in accounts of their work.

This shift was inspired by the growing domestic-reform movement in Europe after World War I, led primarily by middle-class women. Their interest had been sparked by various factors, including the prewar women's movement, the purported servant shortage (said to have been exacerbated by greater employment of women during the war), and the promoting of rationalization of industry. Following



6. Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky (Austrian, 1897–2000). Frankfurt Kitchen, plan view. 1926. Printed in "Bericht über die Versuchssiedlung in Frankfurt a.M.-Praunheim," *Reichsforschungsgesellschaft für Wirtschaftlichkeit im Bau- und Wohnungswesen*, no. 4 (April 1929)

the example of Americans such as Christine Frederick and Lillian Gilbreth, these reformers actively campaigned to rationalize housework by applying to the organization of the home the principles of scientific management first developed by the American industrial engineer Frederick Taylor. Housework itself, they argued, would gain new professional stature and respectability. The European domestic-reform movement had its strongest impetus in Germany; in 1921 Irene Witte translated Frederick's *New Housekeeping: Efficiency Studies in Home Management* (1913) into German; and in 1926 Erna Meyer published her *Der neue Haushalt* (*The New Household*), which went into twenty-nine editions in two years.[14] Meyer's book was soon translated and was followed by numerous studies of household management in the Netherlands, France, Finland, England, and Italy, all of which devoted special attention to kitchens. Frederick had insisted that kitchens be used strictly for preparing food or clearing it away, and proposed the grouping of related activities, continuous work surfaces at the correct height, and proper lighting and ventilation. Many of the young European women designers, including Aino Aalto, Lilly Reich, and Salme Setäla, quickly embraced these ideas and proposed model kitchens.

The most famous of them was Grete Lihotzky's prefabricated kitchen (no. 6), designed in 1926 under the auspices of Frankfurt's Municipal Building Department, headed by Ernst May. One of the first "fitted" European kitchens, it came complete with stove, sink, and built-in cabinets. But what distinguished it most from other kitchen designs was its vast production. Approximately ten thousand units were installed in four years in the newly built settlements in Frankfurt alone.[15]

Lihotzky's interest in kitchen design dates back to the early 1920s, when she began working with Adolf Loos in the Viennese housing office. Here she studied kitchens as part of her research on low-cost housing, and proposed a concrete kitchen that was to be factory assembled and mounted by crane. Impressed by her work on household rationalization, May, shortly after he was appointed city architect of Frankfurt in 1925, invited her to join his team. In Frankfurt, as in Vienna, she was deeply committed to providing functional, comfortable, and affordable housing to thousands of workers. But her ambition, like May's, was broader: to create a new *Wohnkultur*, with athletic and other leisure activities available to all. Architecture—including her functional kitchen—was a means to a fuller and more egalitarian life.

Lihotzky's primary goal in designing the kitchen was

to reduce women's labor and ensure physical comfort. She considered the kitchen a step toward woman's self-development, which, contrary to the pervasive rhetoric of the time, she placed before "the family as a whole."[16] But she made no mention of women's special nurturing and aesthetic roles, unlike Swedish reformer Ellen Key, or even of the "new pleasures" and "joyful creativity" that Meyer believed would ensue with the rationalization of housework.[17] Undoubtedly Lihotzky viewed cooking and cleaning up as necessary chores, ones that in her time were the burden of the housewife. To assume otherwise in 1926 would have been utopian. In 1921, in May's magazine *Schlesisches Heim* (Silesian Home), she had declared, "First, [life] is *work*, and second, it is *relaxing, company, pleasures*."[18] The kitchen was for work, the more spacious living room for pleasure. Segregating the two would eliminate disturbing noises and smells in spaces used for relaxation.

As models of efficiency, she looked to professional cooking spaces intended for men, such as ships' galleys and railroad kitchens, compact spaces where one or two people could cook for hundreds. In addition, she closely studied Witte's translation of Frederick's *New Housekeeping*, which Lihotzky later described as her "bible."[19] However, unlike Frederick, Lihotzky also sought to extend rationalization to construction. She conceived the kitchen as one unit that would be serially produced to reduce costs, and thus be made affordable to as many as possible. To attain this goal, Lihotzky worked closely with the industrial manufacturer Georg Grumbach and several women's groups. An entire unit cost approximately fifty dollars, whereas the individual components, if purchased separately, would have cost about ninety dollars.[20]

Lihotzky proposed three models of kitchens: two larger ones intended to accommodate one or two servants and a smaller unit, Type 1—the renowned Frankfurt Kitchen (no. 6)—which was the cheapest and most popular of the three. Depending on the housing complex and the orientation of the apartment, minor variations in the layout were made, a flexibility made possible by the small production runs, only thirteen to fifteen units at a time.[21]

She kept the Type 1 kitchen intentionally compact, only 1.9 meters by 3.44 meters, so that several tasks could be completed while sitting on a pivoting stool, simply by extending one hand. Thus, all the equipment for cooking preparation and cleaning—double sink and drainage board, cold storage box, cutting board, and various utensils—were grouped together at one end of the kitchen, near the exterior window. Although the technology was kept modest to minimize costs, Lihotzky introduced a series of practical devices, including a removable waste drawer below the cutting board for scraps, a wooden rack attached to the underside of a cabinet for dishes to drip dry, and a special set of aluminum canister drawers that had pouring spouts and measuring bars for easy usage. Two other notable features were an insulated cooking box, which the housewife could use for slow cooking while she worked or did other household chores, and a hanging lamp that could be moved along a metal track, depending on where the woman was working.

Lihotzky's aesthetic choices—the glass cabinet panes, aluminum sink and drawers, tiled floor and splashboard, the linoleum counter surface—all reinforced this image of an efficient, hygienic workspace. In the oft-published photograph of the kitchen (no. 7), the floor and linoleum countertop are black, the Rabitz fabric walls and stove hood are white. The most popular color for the wooden frames of the cabinet doors was a grayish blue, a color specifically chosen because it repels flies. However, with its enameled wooden cabinetry and framing, this model of modernity seems modest, almost primitive, compared to kitchens designed a few years later, such as the prototype that Perriand displayed at the Salon d'Automne in 1929, with its reflective surfaces, chrome fittings, electric fan, built-in refrigerator, and modular metal-and-glass storage units.

Public reaction to the Frankfurt Kitchen was varied. Most modern architects and critics praised it, as did many housewives; a government report on kitchen design cited

7. Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky (Austrian, 1897–2000). Frankfurt Kitchen. 1926–27. Illustrated in *Das neue Frankfurt*, 1927. Collection Universität für angewandte Kunst Wien

the Frankfurt Kitchen as the best solution up to that time for those without servants. However, kitchen reformer Meyer and sociologist Ludwig Neundörfer criticized it for being too rigid, and too narrow for two people.[22] And although Lihotzky's opening to the dining area allowed for some social interaction (certainly more than many bourgeois urban kitchens, which were closed off from dining areas), in the 1980s a new generation of feminists in Germany would criticize the design for increasing the segregation of women and not sufficiently accommodating the creative dimensions of housework. Lihotzky herself rejected that assessment, arguing that the elimination of labor, regardless of who was cooking, was beneficial; she also raised the issue of whether "the dissolution of sex-specific practices of role behavior can be expected to result . . . from such an architectural/spatial transformation."[23]

No matter how one views the kitchen—as inadvertently regressive in reinforcing women's traditional role as housewife, or as progressive in allowing women more time for other activities, including working outside the home—the design represented a break with gender stereotypes and traditional images of domesticity. Like the domestic-reform movement in general, the Frankfurt Kitchen helped undermine long-standing assumptions that rationality, efficiency, and modernization were male values, and inversely that decoration, emotion, and coziness were essential qualities of women's spaces. In terms of architecture, Lihotzky and reformers such as Meyer and Witte can be seen as extending the domain of architecture itself to include domestic service spaces that had previously been considered unworthy of the architect's attention. By the early 1930s male architects as diverse as Gropius, Hugo Häring, and Robert Mallet-Stevens designed kitchens. Although there were limits to how much rationalization could improve the daily lot of women—certainly it did not resolve the gender division of labor and women's "double duty" (i.e., running a home as well as working outside of it)—the very recognition that household drudgery was oppressive to women and that domestic spaces required modernization undoubtedly encouraged a social climate that would later lead to further reform.

KENSAL HOUSE AND THE ALL-EUROPE HOUSE

Women's interest in the transformation of the domestic realm extended beyond furniture and the kitchen—arenas that might be seen as almost "natural" extensions of their traditional role—to housing on a larger scale. Perriand, for example, designed the residential units for Le Corbusier's Ville Radieuse and Algiers plans, and Lihotzky worked in both Vienna and Frankfurt on the design of numerous housing settlements. However, not everyone concerned with housing and urban development was trained as a designer or architect. This was true of two of the leading housing reformers of the period, Catherine Bauer in the United States and Elizabeth Denby in England. While Bauer's career has received considerable scholarly attention, Denby's career is almost unknown outside England. A writer, political advocate, and housing administrator, Denby had an important role in alerting modern British architects to the social dimensions of housing between the wars.[24]

Denby's involvement with design, like that of many women who became active in housing issues in England since the late nineteenth century, grew out of her experience helping to ameliorate the lives of the poor. For ten years she worked as an administrator of a voluntary organization, the Kensington Council of Social Services, where she also directed its housing trust. Increasingly interested in new construction, she decided in 1933 to embark on a new career as an independent housing consultant. That same year, she met Maxwell Fry, who had recently become a passionate proponent of modern architecture, and they began to collaborate on two seminal housing projects in London for low-income residents: R. E. Sassoon House (no. 8) and Kensal House. Sassoon House was the first modernist working-class housing in England and was widely praised for its spacious, well-planned units, but Kensal House gave Denby and Fry an opportunity to realize their social vision more fully. Denby seems to have been largely responsible for the programming and overall concept, Fry for the buildings' structure and architectural form.

Sponsored by the Gas, Light, and Coke Company (GLCC), Kensal House was intended to demonstrate the benefits of gas as a superior and low-cost source of fuel. However, Denby and Fry soon persuaded GLCC's directors to create a new kind of housing that would allow "people whose incomes allow them little above sheer necessity" to "experience as full a life as can be"; in particular, they sought to create a vibrant social community—what Denby called "an urban village."[25] They tackled these goals in two ways: by creating efficient, comfortable units intended to minimize the burdens of housework and by providing collective amenities they hoped would foster social connections and a sense of public participation.

Working closely with Fry, Denby brought to the designs an attention to functional details, especially concerning women's needs, that was rare even in most advanced modernist housing complexes. Among the innovative features in each apartment were the gaslit coke stove and built-in radio speaker in the living room; modern gas appliances in the kitchen, including an instantaneous hot water heater and a washing "copper" (a large pot in which sheets and diapers were boiled); and a recessed balcony intended for drying laundry, eliminating the burden of carrying wet laundry to the roof. Off the living room was a second balcony large enough to fit a table and for children to play in. To ensure that residents had a degree of privacy, the walls and floors at Kensal House were well insulated, and the parents' bedroom was entered off the living room, leaving them a private suite after the children had gone to bed. Ground-level storage spared mothers the labor of lugging baby carriages and bicycles up the flights of stairs. In addition, Denby furnished a model apartment with inexpensive, well-built pieces that residents could then purchase, if they wished, at the Home Furnishing Ltd., a nonprofit shop that she helped run.

8. **Edwin Maxwell Fry** (British, 1899–1987). **Elizabeth Denby** (British, 1894–1965). Sassoon House, Peckham, London, England, exterior view. 1934. Gelatin silver print, 8 7/8 x 6 1/4" (22.5 x 15.9 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Architecture & Design Study Center

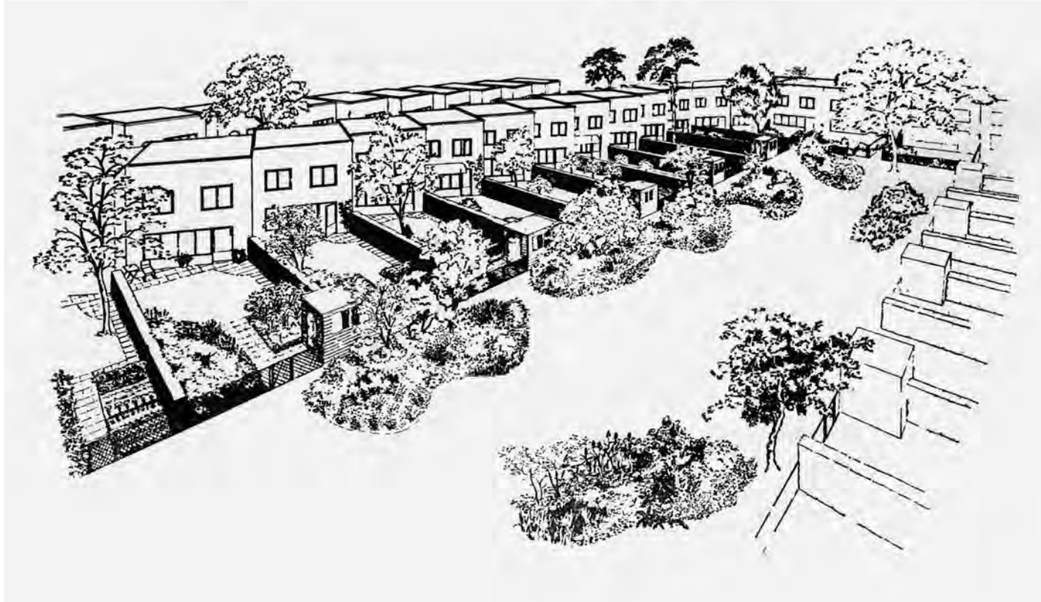
Denby sought, however, to create more than comfortable, affordable residences that would relieve some of the drudgery in women's lives. She was confident that household rationalization would "free the individual to take part in the other sides of life—the life of the mind and the spirit," and, in particular, that the application of scientific techniques to the private realm would allow women more opportunities for participation in the public realm.[26] Thus, providing collective facilities was of special importance to her, and the project included a rich array of them: a nursery school with a play terrace and wading pool; clubs for teenagers and adults with a sewing room for women and a workshop for men; allotment and leisure gardens; and a sports area. Denby hoped that the well-equipped nursery school would cut off "the slum tradition at the root."[27] It was open from nine to five so women would have time not only for housework but to participate in the Kensal club and other public activities. Denby had been highly critical of the physical and social isolation of most low-income housing projects and believed that the fostering of community in such housing would lead to a greater sense of community at large.

By all accounts, Kensal House was a successful endeavor. Rents and utility fees were low, and, according to contemporary testimonies, tenants were largely pleased with their new surroundings; in a 1942 survey, one resident, comparing Kensal House to her former slum quarters, remarked, "We thought this heaven."[28] The project was widely praised in the popular and professional press and, almost immediately upon completion, was featured in The Museum of Modern Art's exhibition *Modern Architecture in England*.[29]

By the time Kensal House was inaugurated in 1937, Denby's ideas about habitation had evolved further. She remained firmly committed to urban life but was skeptical of high-rise apartment blocks, even those with the amenities of Kensal House, as a solution for low-income families. Most working-class people, she maintained, still dreamed of a cottage with a garden, though not at the cost of social isolation. In a speech that she gave in 1936 at the Royal Institute of British Architecture, she concluded, "With all my heart I agree with the working man and woman that the choice for a town dweller between a flat at fifty and a cottage at twelve to the acre is a choice between two impractical and unnecessary extremes."[30] Denby now proposed mixed urban developments: apartments for single people and childless couples and low-rise, high-density housing for families that would be near schools, community centers, and collective amenities.

In 1939 she presented these ideas in a new project at the *Daily Mail Ideal Home* exhibition in London: the All-Europe House (no. 9). The project, which she designed on her own, synthesized her knowledge of British working-class life with the lessons she had learned from a yearlong study trip in Europe (hence the name "All Europe"). Again, by keeping costs and labor to a minimum, Denby sought to create housing that would improve women's lives. The exhibition catalogue proclaimed it "a house that is a woman's house book come true."[31]

Inspired by Georgian examples, Denby proposed a complex of stepped or "echeloned" terrace houses, at a higher-than-standard density of twenty per acre. The two-story, flat-roofed brick houses had minimal front yards, with only a paved terrace and flower boxes, resulting, as one critic noted, in "a pleasantly urban and humane street."[32] The backyards, in contrast, were generous, including a private triangular terrace shielded from the neighbor's view and a garden large enough for flowers and a few vegetables, which opened onto an extensively planted common garden—Denby's answer to the vast fields of asphalt in most London County Council projects. She placed the kitchen at the front of the house, where mothers might keep an eye on the street, and the living room at the back, so it would overlook the garden.[33] The house was furnished by a committee of women. Denby was in charge of the living room, Dorothy Braddell (the only trained designer in the group) the well-equipped kitchen, and Christine Veasey and Cycill Tomrley the three bedrooms upstairs.[34] Once more, the goal was to create a pleasant atmosphere that would appeal to the working class using well-built, inexpensive furnishings. If, as in so much of the modernist agenda, there was a paternalistic undertone to this endeavor to educate the taste of working-class consumers, Denby's efforts also suggest a realism about costs and an understanding of popular taste that was rare in the modern movement—certainly not apparent in the model apartment that Le Corbusier, Jeanneret, and Perriand designed for the 1929 Salon d'Automne.



9. **Elizabeth Denby** (British, 1894–1965). All-Europe House, perspective sketch (drawn by H. F. Clark). 1939. RIBA Library Photographs Collection

Like the Kensal House, the All-Europe House was received enthusiastically by the press. The fact that it fulfilled modernist ideals while maintaining a more traditional approach toward urbanism and employing conventional building materials seemed to find favor with English critics, who remained hesitant about embracing European modern architecture. Almost all claimed it was the best project in the show, with the *Times* urging everyone to see it, regardless of their income level.[35]

Denby was not alone in preferring low-rise to high-rise housing in the 1930s, but what was unusual was both her sensitivity to working-class values and her insistence that modern housing maintain the diversity of urban life. Her interest in consumerism, which she shared with her British peers who served with her on the Council for Art and Industry, anticipated the concerns of the postwar generation for affordable "good design" and the

10. **Lilly Reich** (German, 1885–1947). Ground-Floor House at *Die Wohnung unserer Zeit* (The dwelling of our time), German Building Exhibition, Berlin, view of woman's bedroom. 1930–31. Gelatin silver print, 6 11/16 x 9"(17 x 22.9 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Mies van der Rohe Archive, gift of the architect

appreciation of architects such as Alison and Peter Smithson and Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown for the "everyday" and "ordinary." Similarly, her commitment to low-rise, high-density housing foreshadowed critiques in the 1960s of modern urbanism, which called for mixed use and a variety of family types. Like Jane Jacobs after her, Denby realized how essential social and functional diversity was to women's engagement in the world—and to the vitality of cities as a whole.

The contributions of Charlotte Perriand, Grete Lihotzky, and Elizabeth Denby differ markedly in their formal character and social intentions, but each designer, in her own way, helped recast architecture from a profession that was primarily devoted to monumental institutional architecture to one that was deeply engaged with domestic reform, housing, and social issues. They were not, of course, the only women to do so—similar claims might be said about Aino Aalto, Märta Blomstedt, Ella Briggs, Lotte Cohn, Eileen Gray, Lilly Reich (no. 10), Judith Stolzer-Segall, and Helena Syrkus, who all had active careers before World War II.

This does not mean that modern architecture was free of the sexism and stereotypes so pervasive during that period. Architects were notorious for their sexist comments, and hierarchies persisted in artistic collaborations and office structures, often influencing the nature of responsibilities and designations of authorship. The formal inventions, or what might be called the "high culture" of modern architecture, still remained primarily the province of men. Hans Hildebrandt, who praised the Frankfurt Kitchen, hesitated to use the word "art" in discussing household reform and noted that women architects recognized that it was "fruitless" to compete with men for commissions to design large buildings. But others, such as architecture historian Gustav Adolf Platz, admired unequivocally the contributions of Lihotzky, Meyer, and Reich, rejecting the traditional emphasis in architecture on "art."[36]

This focus on habitation, however, introduces further complications concerning women's status in the profession or in the society at large. It might be assumed that women only gained power in their traditional realm—the home—and that modern architecture thus reinforced the persistent division of gender-defined social spheres. But the attention and seriousness that the house and housing had in the modern movement for both male and female designers belies any reductive generalizations about limitations on women's opportunities in the profession or facile assumptions of victimhood.[37] Indeed, one might assert the reverse: that women's leadership in this domain made men more aware of aspects of domestic and urban life that they had largely ignored up to that time, due to their traditional aesthetic preoccupations. Women designers, critics, and advocates of domestic reform, like their male peers, helped undermine the long-standing hierarchy in architecture that elevated public buildings over private ones, institutional buildings over residential ones, and, in the domestic sphere, spaces of display over service-oriented ones. In this respect, their efforts can be seen as extending the campaign of the domestic feminists at the beginning of the century to give the home greater stature as a place of labor and creativity, though now with a much greater awareness of urban conditions and working-class residents.

Beyond this transformation of the profession itself, the work of these three designers, and of women designers in general, can be seen more broadly as challenging conventions about gender imagery and sexual roles. In her tubular-steel furniture, Perriand introduced an elegance and whimsy not present in many earlier functionalist designs, blurring traditional gender associations by combining lightness with strength, texture with smoothness, variety with repetition. In contrast, Lihotzky demonstrated that the most traditional of women's spaces, the kitchen, might be rationalized and standardized, eroding the prevailing distinctions between work and home and ideas of rationality as inherently masculine. Denby brought a

new attention to popular taste and to the everyday needs of women and working-class residents, dissolving the divide between mass culture and art that seemed so endemic to earlier views of modernism. More than her peers, she articulated what most women involved in modern architecture must have sensed: that freedom in the domestic realm was integrally tied to women's participation in the public realm. It was not a question of separating domestic and public life, but rather of integrating them.

Modern architecture may have been largely male, but it was also deeply shaped and enhanced by these women's visions of living—visions that sought to liberate men and women from the constraints of outmoded traditions, and to provide them with opportunities for richer, more joyous daily lives.

1. Andreas Huyssen, "Mass Culture as Woman: Modernism's Other," in *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), p. 47.
2. Margery Spring Rice, *Working Class Wives: Their Health and Conditions*, 2nd ed. (London: Virago, 1981), p. 14.
3. For the remainder of the essay, I will refer to the second designer as Grete Lihotzky. She went by Grete, as opposed to Margarete, in her publications in the 1920s, and was not married when she designed the Frankfurt Kitchen, her best-known work. After her marriage to Wilhelm Schütte in 1927, she used Schütte-Lihotzky as her surname.
4. Le Corbusier, *The Decorative Art of Today*, trans. James I. Dunnett (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1987), p. 93; Le Corbusier, *Precisions: On the Present State of Architecture and City Planning*, trans. Edith Schreiber Aujame (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991), pp. 116, 118, 120.
5. Charlotte Perriand, interview by Suzanne Tise, 1985; quoted in Charlotte Benton, "From Tubular Steel to Bamboo: Charlotte Perriand, the Migrating Chaise-Longue and Japan," *Journal of Design History* 11, no. 1 (1998): 32.
6. Perriand, in conversation with the author, July 1, 1984.
7. Le Corbusier, *The Decorative Art of Today*, p. 93.
8. Perriand, interview by Marie-Edith Milleret, *Beaux-Arts: Mensuel de l'actualité des arts*, (February 1985): 90; quoted in Arthur Rüegg, *Charlotte Perriand: Livre de Bord, 1928–1933* (Basel: Birkhauser, 2004), p. 285 n. 164.
9. *Charlotte Perriand: Un Art de vivre* (Paris: Musée des Arts Décoratifs and Flammarion, 1985), p. 22; translation by the author.
10. Perriand, in *Cassina 1987* (Milan: Meda, 1987), p. 51; quoted in Volker Fischer, *The LC4 Chaise Longue by Le Corbusier, Pierre Jeanneret, and Charlotte Perriand* (Frankfurt: Verlag form, 1997), p. 13. Le Corbusier, *Precisions*; translation modified by the author.
11. Max Terrier, "Meubles métalliques (les sièges)," *Art et Décoration* 57 (January–June 1930): 33; translation by the author.
12. Thonet Frères did not fabricate any models of the *grand confort*, presumably due to their extreme expense; estimates done in 1929 indicated that the chair would have cost five to six times the price of Marcel Breuer's Club Chair. Rüegg, *Charlotte Perriand*, p. 282 n. 48.
13. Perriand, "Wood or Metal?" *The Studio* 97, no. 433 (April 1929): 279.
14. Nicholas Bullock, "First the Kitchen—Then the Facade," *AA Files* 1, no. 6 (May 1984): 63.
15. For a comprehensive account of the kitchen, see Susan Henderson, "A Revolution in the Woman's Sphere: Grete Lihotzky and the Frankfurt Kitchen," in Debra Coleman, Elizabeth Danze, and Carol Henderson, eds., *Architecture and Feminism* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996), pp. 221–53.
16. Lihotzky, "Rationalisierung im Haushalt," *Das neue Frankfurt* 1, no. 5 (1927): 120; translated and quoted in Bullock, "First the Kitchen—Then the Facade," p. 65.
17. Erna Meyer, *Der neue Haushalt: Ein Wegweiser zu wirtschaftlicher Hausführung* (Stuttgart: Frankch, 1928), p. 3; translated and quoted in Bullock, "First the Kitchen—Then the Facade," p. 65.
18. Lihotzky, "Einiges über die Einrichtung österreichischer Häuser unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Siedlungsbauten," *Das Schlesisches Heim*, no. 8 (August 1921).
19. Lore Kramer, "Die Frankfurter Küche," in Angela Oedekoven-Gerischer et al., eds., *Frauen im Design: Berufsbilder und Lebenswege seit 1900* (*Women in Design: Careers and Life Histories Since 1900*), vol. 1 (Stuttgart: Design Center Stuttgart, 1989), p. 166. Texts appear in German and English.
20. Catherine Bauer, *Modern Housing* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1934), p. 198. To enable residents to buy a kitchen, the government arranged special loans that could be paid off slowly over time, along with the monthly rent.
21. I am grateful to Juliet Kinchin for the information on production.
22. For the reception of the Frankfurt Kitchen among housewives and other German professionals, see Kramer, "Die Frankfurter Küche," pp. 166–67; Henderson, "A Revolution in the Woman's Sphere," pp. 238, 251 n. 34.
23. Schütte-Lihotzky, "Frauen, Räume, Architektur, Umwelt," *Beiträge zur feministichen Theorie und Praxis* 4 (Munich: Verlag Frauenoffensive, 1980); translated and quoted in Henderson, "A Revolution in the Woman's Sphere," p. 245. As someone deeply engaged in politics throughout her life, Lihotzky, more than many modern architects, was acutely aware of the limitations of architecture as an agent of political reform. In 1930 she joined Ernst May in the Soviet Union, where she worked until 1937, and then she moved to Turkey; in 1940 she joined the Austrian resistance and spent four and a half years imprisoned.
24. See especially Elizabeth Darling, *Re-forming Britain: Narratives of Modernity Before Reconstruction* (London: Routledge, 2007); and "'The Star in the Profession She Invented for Herself': A Brief Biography of Elizabeth Denby, Housing Consultant," *Planning Perspectives* 20 (July 2005): 271–300. Bauer and Denby might both be seen as inventing the role of "housing consultant," a title that Denby proudly used on her stationery.
25. Maxwell Fry, "Kensal House," and Elizabeth Denby, "Kensal House, and Urban Village," in *Ascot Gas Water Heaters, Ltd., Flats, Municipal and Private Enterprise* (London: Ascot Gas Water Heaters, Ltd., 1937), pp. 56, 60; quoted in Darling, *Re-forming Britain*, pp. 138, 143.
26. Denby, "The Role of Organized Services Outside the Home in Relation to Scientific Management in the Home," *Sixth International Congress for Scientific Management, Papers* (London: P. S. King, 1935); quoted in Darling, *Re-forming Britain*, p. 154.
27. Darling, *Re-forming Britain*, p. 157.
28. The tenant's comment appears in M. Bruce Allan, "What the Tenants Think of Kensal House," an unpublished survey conducted for the GLCC, 1942; quoted in Darling, *Re-forming Britain*, p. 166.
29. Fry, however, received sole credit in the exhibition. In a letter dated May 26, 1937, he wrote to Alfred H. Barr, Jr. (then the director of The Museum of Modern Art), requesting that Denby's name be added to the credit line. Here he also noted the parallels between Denby and Bauer. Reg. Exh. no. 58, The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York.
30. Denby, "Rehousing from the Slum Dwellers' Point of View," *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects* 44, no. 2 (November 21, 1936): 66. In her book *Europe Re-Housed* she was more caustic, alluding to the choice between "beehive buildings" in the urban center or "chicken coops" in the outskirts.
31. *International Homes* exhibition catalogue; quoted in Darling, "'The House That Is a Woman's Book Come True: The All-Europe House and Four Women's Spatial Practices in Inter-war England," in Darling and Lesley Whitworth, eds., *Women and the Making of Built Space in England, 1850–1950* (Aldershot, Hants: Ashgate, 2007), p. 126.
32. "The All-Europe House," *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*, 3rd series, 46, no. 16 (June 26, 1939): 814.
33. The kitchen, even better equipped than those at Kensal House, included a small refrigerator, a garbage disposal (much noted in the press), a washing machine, and a clothes dryer.
34. For information on these figures, see Darling, "The House That Is a Woman's Book Come True," pp. 128–33.
35. "An All-Europe House: A Pocket Ideal Home," *The Times*, April 28, 1939, p. 21. See also the review in *Architecture and Building News* 138, no. 2 (April 14, 1939): 25.
36. Hans Hildebrandt, *Die Frau als Künstlerin* (Berlin: Rudolf Mosse Buchverlag, 1928), p. 151. Gustav Adolf Platz, *Wohnräume der Gegenwart* (Berlin: Propyläen Verlag, 1933), pp. 66, 75, 94, 106, 126. I am grateful for Anna-Maria Meister's help with German sources and translation.
37. Both Perriand and Lihotzky adamantly rejected the idea that their careers in architecture were limited by being women. Perriand, in conversation with the author, June 30, 1997. Schütte-Lihotzky, in Mona Müry-Leitner and Ursula Spannberger, "Rationaler als die männlichen Kollegen: Ein Gespräch mit Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky," in Anita Zeicher with Ulla Schreiber, *Auf Frauen Bauen: Architektur aus weiblicher Sicht* (Salzburg: Pustet, 1999), pp 10–17.

1. **Anne W. Brigman** (American, born Hawaii. 1869–1950). *Study in Radiation*. c. 1924. Gelatin silver print, 7 3/4 x 9 3/4" (19.7 x 24.7 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Thomas Walther Collection. Purchase

The orientation in modern women's history toward the peaks of political mobilization—the First Wave culminating in 1920 with the victory of women's suffrage, the Second Wave cresting in the 1970s, arguably the Third Wave still forming now, if we've gotten beyond "post-feminism"—leaves the intervals between looking quite flat.[1] It's tempting to turn a blind eye to those "down times" as insignificant periods of women's experience, work, and self-expression, not the least in the arts. We need not reject the appeal of dramatic historical moments. But paying more attention to women's practices developed in the long troughs of less gender-oriented activity may disclose the residual energy of past waves and the gathering force—or "grounding," as one women's historian has deftly termed it—for later developments.[2] We then might start asking more nuanced questions about the continuities of social as well as individual vision: in the case of women's visuality between the "waves," do we find more signs of consolidation, reaction, or incubation?

Don't expect unequivocal answers. The record is full of ambiguities and ambivalence. Moreover, we still are just beginning to review this period with any sustained attention to the distinctive issues of women, their work, and the relation of both to modernism as framed by men. But given the opportunity to trawl The Museum of Modern Art's photography collection with the specific mandate to concentrate on women in photography during the interwar period, I'm impressed that the glass is at least half full. There's much to relish in the resolute inventiveness of the photography by women—but what else would one expect to find in the work collected by MoMA as singular aesthetic achievements? As striking is the recurring strain of what W. E. B. Du Bois, addressing the pernicious effect of the color bar, formulated at the start of the twentieth century as "double consciousness," whereby the sense of self is coupled with a sense of self-as-other.[3]

In the case of photography during the middle decades of the twentieth century, there's no getting around the fact that most women who excelled in the field did not expressly foreground their concerns *as women*. The period's cult of objectivity hardly fostered a distinctly women's point of view. Yet even a cursory review of the biographies of these notable women in photography reveals the outlines of significant gender-based networks in the interwar period. At a time when formal instruction in photography was still the exception rather than the rule, quite a few notable women in photography got their start by turning to other women to learn the basics or cultivate the sense of purpose to proceed on their own photographic path: Ilse Bing resolved to move from Germany to Paris, where Florence Henri was working, after seeing the latter's photographs exhibited at the Frankfurt Kunstverein in late 1929; the same year Gisèle Freund also turned to Henri for her first lessons in photography; Lisette Model credited Rogi André (Rosza Klein, the first wife of André Kertész) for initiating her into the mysteries of camera work; and in an unpublished essay on Barbara Morgan, Nancy Newhall credited that photographer with her earliest exposure to both view-camera practice in the studio and serious darkroom work.[4]

No doubt the greater representation of work by women in MoMA's photography collection compared to other mediums results from photography's lingering bastard status as an art. Before the post–World War II incorporation of photographic education into the academy, the making of almost any photographer tended to be a process of determined self-invention rather than more formal training, accreditation, and hazing along the way. This made it harder to separate rank amateurs and small

business operatives from those forging an independent modern vision with the optical machine. Of course the lack of established distinctions within the field provoked the artistically ambitious to form semiexclusive associations. Nevertheless, as Kathleen Pyne has cogently argued, the most aesthetically determined photographic fraternity, the Photo-Secession led by Alfred Stieglitz, was incessantly provoked by the specter of modern women—by the recognition of their otherness that these men partly envied and emulated, as well as desired. According to Pyne, women as much as any other force of innovation served as the seedbed for photographic modernism in the first decades of the twentieth century.[5] Even after that formative period of reorienting photography as a modern art, women by no means ceded all agency in the ongoing debate about how the camera might be used to see and represent the world anew.

Singular female innovators need not be viewed as isolated exceptions, for their example almost invariably altered the climate of receptivity to women's capacity to expand the visual field. A marked openness to women's camera work was especially evident in the modernist photography bred in the San Francisco Bay Area during the 1920s and 1930s, with particularly productive results. Thanks to the preeminent position of West Coast Pictorialist Anne Brigman—the only early-twentieth-century California photographer embraced and promoted by Stieglitz and his associates around *Camera Work*—the aspiring postwar modernists of the Bay Area continued to laud Brigman's pioneering work and life, which made no distinction between the personal and the political, the aesthetic and the social, in her quest for freedom. At one 1920s gathering, both male and female photographers literally bowed before her as photographic priestess.[6] More impressive than this ceremonial tribute was the way these same men took quite seriously the potential of their female associates to advance photography as an art. Edward Weston, for example, not only viewed Tina Modotti as an exquisitely compelling model for his camera studies, but, especially in Mexico, he just as ardently nurtured her independent potential as a photographer, ultimately sharing not just equipment but even exhibition venues with her.[7] Dorothea Lange made the transition from conventional studio portraiture to innovative Depression-era documentary with various forms of strong encouragement by local photographic innovators Roger Sturtevant, Willard Van Dyke, and Ansel Adams, as well as Bay Area arts patron Albert Bender.[8]

As for Adams, who retrospectively looms as a camera-wielding Hercules fulfilling an earlier era's appeal for "men who matched their mountains," we should not overlook the key points in his career when he sought to share the photographic stage with women. Long before his repeated collaborations with Nancy Newhall during the 1950s and 1960s, he promoted the perspectives of numerous women while still establishing his photographic identity. Adams's earliest book, *Making a Photograph* (1935), constituted the first effort to codify the principles and methods of post-Pictorial, ultra-Precisionist photography; to demonstrate the wide applicability of this method, Adams illustrated nearly all types of photography—landscapes, still life, portraiture, architecture, and even advertising imagery—with fine reproductions of his own pictures. However, when it came to the emerging category of documentary, though Adams had made a few photographs that arguably fit that bill, he opted instead to feature Lange's 1933 *Bread-line* (later known as *White Angel Bread Line, San Francisco*).

Nor was this the only occasion when Adams recognized the importance of not only work by a woman but more categorically "women's work" in photography. The Newhall correspondence in MoMA's archives contains two early letters from Adams to Beaumont Newhall setting forth strategies for developing a department for photography at the Museum by starting with a small committee composed chiefly of photographers. Both letters list the names of people he considered most worthy to serve as advisors, and each short roster includes the name of a woman photographer. In his first letter, from mid-1938, he champions Lange for her experience with social photography, but in the second letter, written a year later, perhaps for the sake of geographic practicality he switches his female nomination to New York photographer Berenice Abbott, this time specifically annotating that she be included "for the wonam's angle [*sic*]."[9] Call it tokenism, along with poor typing and proofing, but this was not an era that in most professional fields exhibited much interest in the "woman's angle" as such.

No such formal advisory committee of photographers was ever assembled. However, Beaumont Newhall in the late 1930s took increasing counsel not only from Adams but also from his wife, Nancy, even though she was just shifting her own interests from painting to photography. And after the founding of the Museum's Department of Photography in 1940, when Beaumont, as inaugural curator of that department, faced the prospect of military service in mid-1942, he and Adams lobbied hard to convince the Museum's board to accept Nancy as the best-qualified curatorial replacement for the war's duration. During the more than three years that Nancy Newhall worked at MoMA as "acting curator" (at half her husband's former salary), she not only organized solo exhibitions of photographs by Weston, Paul Strand, and Adams, but additionally mounted a small exhibition of Helen Levitt's photographs of children, and included in group shows works by Abbott, Lotte Jacobi, Model, and Morgan.[10]

Far more impressive than the relative paucity from that period of exhibitions featuring women's photography are the works by women collected by the Museum, both at the time of their production and over subsequent decades. In the aggregate, these works' remarkable range attests to women's decisive exploration of the medium—from radical revisions of portraiture (that default genre for women photographers, who long had been advised that this was where they could best apply their tact and intuition) to new work in landscape, urban and industrial studies, social documents (all areas previously treated as male domains) and a final category (or at least incipient cluster) of close studies of details that merge the abject with the abstract.

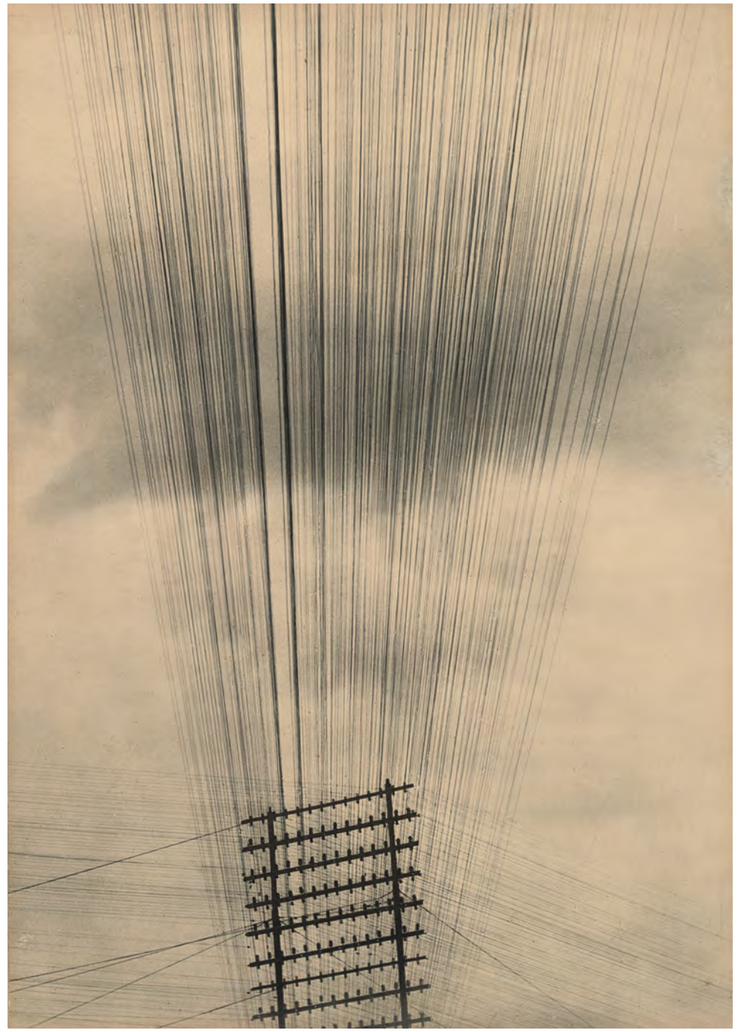
Although not numerous, the early photographic landscapes by women are particularly noteworthy, visually as well as historically. Is it a coincidence that just as women become enfranchised citizens, we see some of the first efforts by female photographers to enlarge the scope of their public vision? This raises another coincidence in relation to the Museum's collecting history: just at the start of the twenty-first century, when MoMA deaccessioned from its photographic study collection the only known photograph by Brigman with a 1910 verso inscription proclaiming her support for "Votes for Women,"the photography department supplanted that loss with the acquisition of a rare, quite abstract 1920s landscape by this same California photographer (no. 1).[11] No matter that the scale of Brigman's *Study in Radiation* is small, and that the optics are still softened at the edges in the older Pictorialist mode. The seeing is bold and stripped of the overwrought traces that shrouded her earlier nudes-in-the-wild. With this picture we recognize that at least briefly in the 1920s Brigman rejected her established figurative repertoire, previously favored by Stieglitz, to concentrate on the basic forces of nature that transcend human scale and significance. There is nothing extraneous in the interplay she frames between the blackened triangle of a shadowed cliff, the bright, almost blinding sea dissolving into misty sky, with just off-center a rocky outcropping serving as the source of radiating waves.

As Pyne has demonstrated, just when Stieglitz's interest shifted in the 1910s from Pictorialism to more vigorously abstract modern art in a range of mediums, he also shifted his personal attention from Brigman to the much younger Georgia O'Keeffe, while appropriating some of Brigman's earlier dryadic gestures and allusions in his photographic stagings of the young female painter as fledgling "Woman-Child."[12] However much Brigman regretted the attenuation of Stieglitz's interest—to the

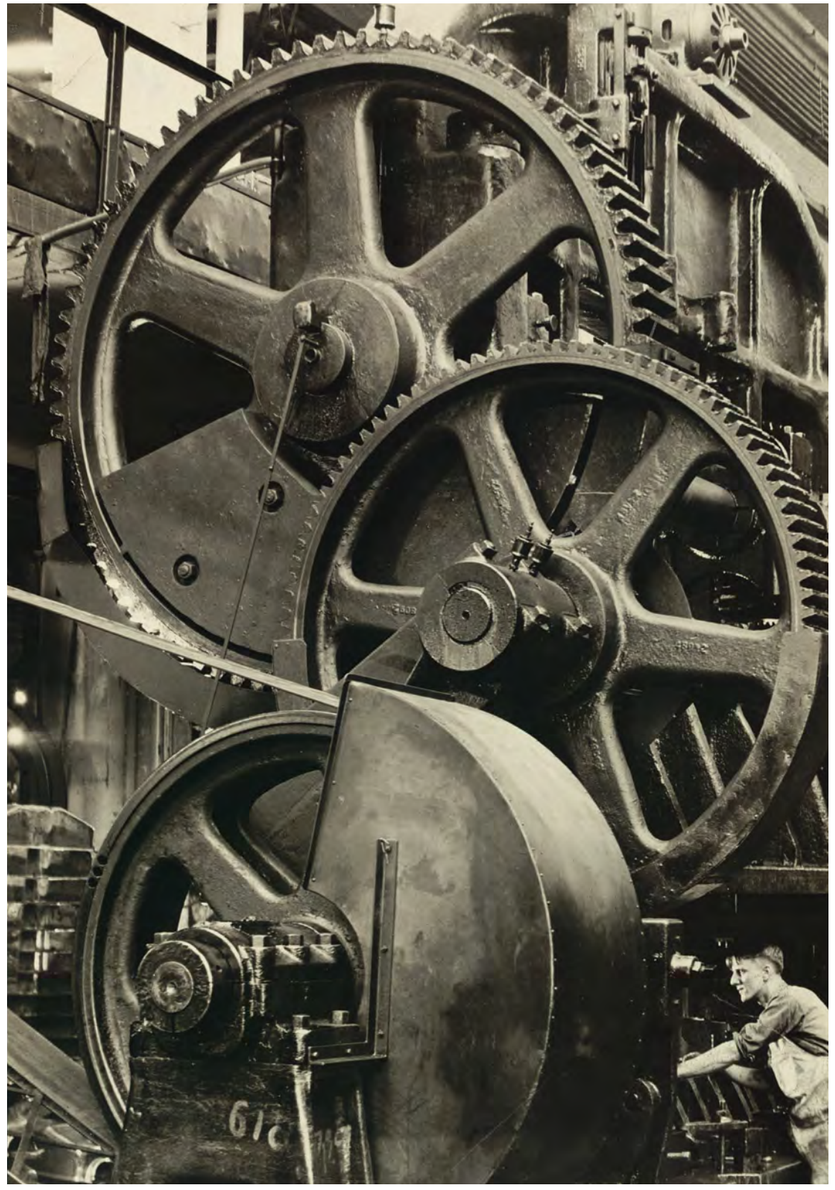
end of her long life she continued to credit him as the most important source of support for her photographic development—she absolutely refused the role of castoff, either female or Pictorialist.[13] On the contrary, in the mid-1920s she made her own version of a cosmic Equivalent, which Stieglitz simultaneously was pursuing back East in his determinedly abstract cloud studies. Compared to that extensive series by Stieglitz, just her one vertiginous framing seems far more modern; indeed, in the vibrating effects of its concentrated seeing it is closer to Marcel Duchamp's later mechanically generated Rotoreliefs. If there is metaphor here (or the possibility of metaphoric reading), it is that Brigman, a longtime reader of Walt Whitman, here identifies with the solitary outcropping that withstands the force of tides, winds, and waves while creating a radiant whorl etched on her perceptions and photographic plate by another form of energy waves—light.

Other women photographers in the post–World War I era were just as eager to stake new claims in the field of landscape work. For defiant contravention of both landscape and industrial studies, we have only to consider Modotti's photographs of technology spanning the modern terrain. While most of the pictures the diminutive Modotti made in 1920s Mexico were close-ups and close to the ground, she also shifted her viewpoint upward for two different views of telegraph and telephone wires, prints of which are in MoMA's collection. Of the two, *Telephone Wires* (c. 1925, no. 2) takes us further away from all reference to gravity and ground, excluding even the solid upright poles rooted symmetrically in *Telegraph Wires* (c. 1925). Those poles inspired one writer at the time to view them as "electrical antlers," a poetic way of treating them as signs of good government harnessing nature in its march of progress.[14] However, in this unmoored variant, the quest for "technological utopianism" gets clouded, literally and metaphorically. The classic objective studies of industrial forms favor blank skies, the better to highlight the spectacle of modernity.[15] Here the sky presses indecipherably yet thickly against the soaring lines of wire, presenting neither counterpoint nor springboard but rather a heavy resistant foil to all efforts at an overarching grid of planned communication.

A picture made eight years later by Margaret Bourke-White, surely the most famous US photographer of the period, skews no less the established man-machine pictorial equation. Her 1932 composition (no. 3) is a far cry from Lewis Hine's 1920 centrally positioned worker portrait, *Powerhouse Mechanic*, but the punch press operator in her scene is also no stick figure included solely for scale comparison. Owing to the photographer's careful attention to lighting, the worker remains legibly alert in face and gesture, but he is definitely dwarfed and marginalized in the overall industrial scheme. At the start of the 1930s Bourke-White became the premier photojournalist for Henry Luce's new business monthly, *Fortune*; yet while this photograph fit with Luce's managerial perspective, it was repeatedly reproduced in quite a few other 1930s publications to illustrate not power but powerlessness,and it is hard not to see it also as a graphic trigger for Charlie Chaplin's acrobatic defiance of moving gears in *Modern Times* (1936).[16] Such multivalence derived from the photograph's canny balance of mass and light effects, and no less the photographer's remarkable juggling of roles as corporate artist and very early promoter of Popular Front causes, starting with her early support for Soviet social and industrial development.[17] Often reprinted with the date of 1929, this picture actually was made in mid-1932, reflecting Bourke-White's new inclination, after her trips to the Soviet Union, to see and record more than just industrial design on a grand scale.[18] Her interest in probing the underside of capitalism grew more apparent in the later topics she sought to cover in the 1930s. It was probably her exposure to a different society governed by contrary ideology that contributed most to her expanding social concerns, along with the dramatic reversals of the Great Depression that challenged all sanguine views of the unfettered market.[19] But we should not overlook the



2. **Tina Modotti** (Italian, 1896–1942). *Telephone Wires, Mexico*. c. 1925. Palladium print, 8 $^{15}/_{16}$ x 6 $^{5}/_{16}$" (22.8 x 16.1 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Miss Dorothy M. Hoskins



3. Margaret Bourke-White (American, 1904–1971). *Chrysler Corporation*. 1932. Gelatin silver print, 12 7/8 x 9" (32.7 x 22.8 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of the photographer

possibility that Bourke-White's anomalous position as a woman reporter working in US industry also informed her recognition in this instance of the way most men who once aspired to be masters of their trades were now approaching the long-standing vulnerable position of most modern female workers.

Like Bourke-White, Abbott broke decisively through barriers of gender-based genres—first in her decadelong study of 1930s New York City, later in her turn to the photography of laboratory science. Consistency was key to both endeavors. When setting out at the start of the 1930s to make a serial portrait of New York's dynamic mix of old and new architecture, she concentrated her attention on urban facades. Notwithstanding the prevailing documentary focus on New Deal folk, urban dwellers—most often men—appear in only some of her views, and she never lets them upstage her focus on buildings as the richest sources of stories to tell, if only their surfaces and histories are carefully scrutinized. As part of her search for the oldest building relics and first-of-their-kind urban structures, she tracked down New York's earliest model tenement (situated not in the notorious Lower East Side but quite a bit north in the East Seventies). After circling the block and encountering a rear courtyard filled with laundry, Abbott threw consistency to the wind: if the rear view struck her as most architecturally rich, she could have returned at a time when there was less laundry obstructing the view; instead, she elected to make the winter wash hanging out to dry the preemptive feature in her record of this one building (1936, no. 4). Eclipsing nearly all of the architecture, the kaleidoscopic array of clothes on centripetal lines metonymically mapped the daily work of women filling the communal courtyard with their domestic labor. It is the least flat, rectilinear image in her entire series, yet she included the photograph in the systematic sequence of *Changing New York*. For that 1939 publication, her partner, writer and photography critic Elizabeth McCausland, prepared brief essays on each site's history to face the corresponding photographic plate. But in both Abbott's picture title and McCausland's commentary, there is no mention of the laundry.[20] Together they must have concluded that for those familiar with the anonymity of most women's work, the prominence of the laundry would easily speak for itself.

While the portrait impulse obliquely inflects some of the images already noted, the bulk of work by women from this period in MoMA's collection hews much more closely to this traditionally sanctioned genre. Yet these pictures, too, take grave or gleeful liberties with the traditions and expectations of modern portraiture. For radical upending of preexisting portraiture of and by women, nothing surpasses Claude Cahun's manipulations of gender norms in the self-portrait series she probably executed in collaboration with trained illustrator Marcel Moore, her lifelong partner (page 475, no. 10, and page 477, no. 12). The title of her slim, second literary publication translates as "all bets are on,"and that proclamation would ably serve as the defiant opener for her photographs.[21] In contrast to her writing, though, Cahun did not make these photographs with a view toward publication: more in the spirit of nineteenth-century women's albums, these were made for personal pleasure; the only public access to these portraits at the time was as tiny source bits for photomontages in Cahun's first book of writings, the main medium of her sustained work of public discourse.[22] Nevertheless, after being brought to public attention two decades ago and then repeatedly reproduced, Cahun's imagery—especially when printed much larger than the originals and often digitally enhanced—generated a spate of comparisons with the brazenly variable contemporary self-representations of Cindy Sherman.[23] This rush to find a perfect mirroring of the present in earlier women's imagery recalls Walter Benjamin's oft-cited warning that the reproduction of a unique artwork not only depreciates "the quality of its presence" but also jeopardizes "its historical testimony."[24] Most productive are recent studies of Cahun that mine the salient differences between her

4. Berenice Abbott (American, 1898–1991). *Court of the First Model Tenements in New York City, 361–365 East 71st Street, Manhattan*. March 16, 1936. Gelatin silver print, 9 3/8 x 7 9/16" (23.9 x 19.3 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchase

work and contemporary women's representations, acknowledging that in many of the originals we have to strain to see the signs of defiance, for those prints tend to be haphazardly machine processed in small snapshot format. For in Cahun's extraordinary endeavors and life, the personal was kept separate from her political and publishing activity, while radical politics figured for Cahun as something other, indeed bigger, than the struggle over visual representation.[25] Photography, Surrealism, discourses on sexuality, *and* politics all would have been richer for such a graphic interwar intervention. Regarding the historical impact of her posthumously published imagery, we would do best to explore its visual resonance in current and future generations of self-fashioning by women, and no doubt men, too.

Bracketing Cahun's practice in this way hardly forecloses investigation of the refiguring of gender in women's portraiture from this period. We only need look closely at work intended for public viewing to appreciate how much of women's imagery in the interwar years engages quite strongly questions of self, other, and the variable power relations in the photographer-sitter interaction. Feminists already have gravitated toward the gender implications in the portraits that Henri actively exhibited, especially those that position polished balls and mirrors in the frame. To date the discourse has seesawed between whether these additions are meant to register as a bid for phallic mastery, as a reflection on female specularity, or as some concatenation of both impulses by the bisexual photographer.[26] Complicating that debate, there is one photograph that itself seesaws between still life composition (Henri's other field of exploration) and portraiture while seeming to transcend binary gender division. Poised midway between those genres, Henri's *Composition No. 76* (1928) comments starkly on modern life as a mirrored cage, arresting contemporary commodities along with both men and women in the rebounding spectacle of blank reflective surfaces.

If Henri's staging of the solitary sphere emits a hollow chord, biting satire gains the upper hand in André's 1935 portrait of Florent Fels (no. 5). Donated to the Museum in 1940 by Frank Crowninshield, the longtime editor of *Vanity Fair*, the photograph probably had been commissioned for publication, especially since the portrait subject was another editor of arts and letters in Paris. In the aftermath of World War I, Fels declared war on Dada and Surrealism, initially in the short-lived journal *Action: Cahiers individualistes de philosophie et d'art*, then continuing his "call to order" during his much longer tenure as editor of *L'Art vivant*.[27] In spite of Fels's animus, André subjects this declared enemy of Surrealism to a slyly Surrealist photographic rendering. Not only is his owlish head doubled by its mirrored reflection, peering out below the spread of manuscripts on his polished desk, but also his two hands form a weird clasp around the phone receiver held to one ear. Balancing that configuration on the other side of his body is the tangled cord—kin to the ciphers of bewilderment in cartoon balloons or Alexander Calder's ludic circus figures from the period, and either way a final assault on the dignity of the man and his office. The defender of a conservative brand of individual anarchism here faces the anarchy of modern times with what one feminist later dubbed "the revolutionary power of women's laughter."[28] No wonder that another defiant *flâneuse*, Model, found André to be her most memorable initiator in the art of personal photography.

Two portrait groupings of and by women, both made in Germany, offer a study in contrasts quite apt for the polarized German sensibilities of the interwar period. While just a Bauhaus student before concentrating on the profession of architecture, Lotte Beese ingeniously framed a centripetal gathering of spirited young women whose contagious sense of mirth seems capable of spontaneous combustion (1928, no. 6). Instead of freewheeling energy, the other female ensemble embodies the discipline of synchronization (1936, no. 7)—and not just in swimming,

5. Rogi André (Rozsa Klein) (Hungarian, 1905–1970). *Florent Fels*. 1935. Gelatin silver print, 11 1/2 x 7 5/8" (29.2 x 19.4 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Frank Crowninshield

6. Charlotte (Lotte) Beese (German, 1903–1988). *Untitled*. 1928. Gelatin silver print, 3 3/8" (8.5 cm) diam., mount 5 13/16 x 5 1/2" (14.7 x 14 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Thomas Walther Collection. Gift of Thomas Walther

for the Nazis applied that engineering term, *Gleichschaltung*, to all types of social regimentation. Little surprise, then, that this recently acquired photograph was provisionally thought to be a rare still shot from this period by the most celebrated Nazi filmmaker, Leni Riefenstahl.

We might assume that Riefenstahl or another fascist created the hypercommanding "steel maiden" portrait (1936, no. 8), which makes it that much harder to comprehend as part of the photographic corpus of West Coast bohemian Imogen Cunningham. Already in 1929, ten of Cunningham's photographs in the sharp modern style were included in a vanguard survey mounted in Stuttgart, *Film und Foto*. However, Cunningham was no absolute purist, preferring to cycle eclectically between the softly lyrical and finely detailed formal studies. Likewise, her portraits ranged from family members, avant-garde artists, film stars, and figures encountered on the street to a series of the very aged made at the end of Cunningham's long life. Within that span, this portrait subject was arguably her most unusual: Helene Mayer, the half-Jewish German émigré world champion fencer, was at the time of this portrait session a lightning rod for criticism after she had petitioned the Nazi government to rejoin the German fencing team for the 1936 Olympics. Rebuffing the entreaties of fellow refugee Thomas Mann and progressive US rabbi Stephen S. Wise that she boycott the competition or else condition her acceptance on the admission of other exiled Olympians (whose prior participation as German competitors made them ineligible for other national teams), Mayer vigorously argued her own special case as a half-Jew unaffiliated with her father's religion or interest in Jews as a group. Once granted exceptional status to rejoin her former Olympic team, she proudly donned the official uniform replete with swastika. After winning only silver in the women's foil competition—a Hungarian Jew won the gold—she followed the patriotic script and delivered a Nazi salute at the awards ceremony. On learning these details of Mayer's unconscionably blind ambition, I hoped to learn that this portrait was, like Cunningham's Hollywood studies, produced on assignment, preferably before the athlete's Nazi salute. But according to Cunningham's son, photographer Rondal Partridge, Cunningham initiated the portrait after Mayer's return from the Olympics when she resumed teaching fencing and German at Mills College, near Cunningham in Oakland.[29] Cunningham's chief interpreter has written that the photographer considered Mayer a friend, so the portrait may have been a symbolic act of friendship at a time when Mayer faced wholesale condemnation in the press. Yet friendship alone hardly explains why this photograph achieves such striking results that it graces the cover of one publication devoted to the photographer.[30] Judging from the picture's graphic intensity, the photographer was deeply impressed with this stance by another

7. Attributed to Leni Riefenstahl (German, 1902–2003). *Untitled*. 1936. Gelatin silver print, 9 3/16 x 11 5/8" (23.4 x 29.5 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Thomas Walther Collection. Purchase

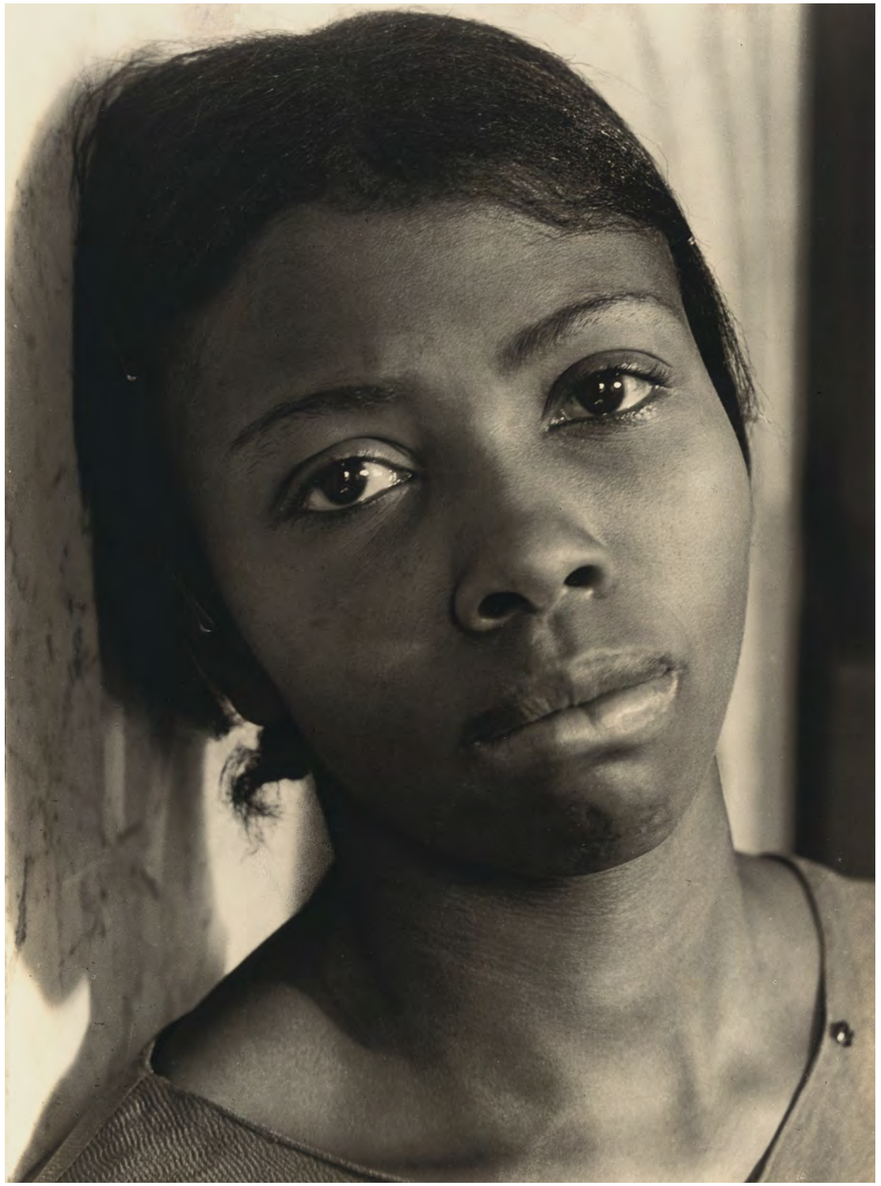
8. Imogen Cunningham (American, 1883–1976). *Helene Mayer*. 1936. Gelatin silver print, 9 1/8 x 7 1/4" (23.2 x 18.4 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Albert M. Bender

woman so committed to her profession that she refused to make any concessions to public opinion. If there is any allusion to the isolation that such single-minded determination courts, it is the unusually tight, indeed airless, framing, although that element surely adds to the portrait's riveting effect. Compounding these contradictory details, a print soon was acquired and then donated to MoMA by a first-generation American of Irish-Jewish heritage, San Francisco arts patron Albert Bender. Perhaps with his own brand of double consciousness, Bender found himself drawn to this unconventional rendering of ruthless self-advancement.

Sentiment is something women photographers had long been trained to embrace and embed in their work, but judging from much of the portraiture collected by MoMA, women in the interwar period as readily disdained as deployed it. Yet sentiment is not entirely absent. We find it mobilized very carefully in Consuelo Kanaga's memorable portrait of militant sharecropper Annie Mae Merriweather, made following the repression of a strike in Lowndes County, Alabama, when her husband, local organizer Jim Press Merriweather, was shot dead, and she was left for dead after being hung by a rope, whipped, and possibly raped (1935, no. 9). The portrait was commissioned by *New Masses* to accompany a story chronicling this instance of vigilante enforcement of the status quo.[31] Given these horrific facts, which Annie Mae Merriweather was publicizing in the North to garner support for the Share Croppers' Union after fleeing her home in Alabama, Kanaga's combination of proximity and restraint proves especially effective in attesting to this woman's extraordinary dignity in the face of devastating loss, as well as her beauty.

Kanaga was especially committed to portraiture of African Americans, but quite a few US women photographers from this period shared the concern more or less. Although none of the interwar photographers whose work was collected by MoMA was African American, a surprising number of the white women made a heightened consciousness of race integral to their photographic pursuits: this was certainly the case for Doris Ulmann, and to a lesser but still notable extent for Levitt, Lange, Marion Post Wolcott, Morgan, and Nancy Newhall.[32] We could dismiss this tendency as presumptuous exoticism or dogmatic submission to the reigning Left politics that treated the oppression of African Americans as the epitome of class as well as racial injustice. Yet we hardly see the same degree of investment in this cause by the white male photographers who are more extensively represented in MoMA's collection. Arguably owing to their own experience of gender inequality, women were predisposed to identify with another group subject to deep-seated prejudice; possibly also in reaction to the previous generation of politically active women in the suffrage movement—a struggle dominated by white women, and one that sometimes promoted the cause of disenfranchised white women at the expense of advancing racial justice—this next generation of women was predisposed to subordinate the unfinished fight for gender equality to the dramatic disparities still maintained by white supremacy.

Yet we also find in MoMA's collection from this period photographs by women that boldly confront key issues in the life cycle with which women were intimately familiar. Regarding the topic of birth (albeit birth-billed-as-cinematic-spectacle), Farm Security Administration (FSA) photographer Wolcott framed a set of posters advertising the 1930s docudrama *The Birth of a Baby* on what looks like the wrong side of the tracks of a West Virginia town (1938, no. 10). While these details jostle for attention, the meaning is far from pat. It is hard to deduce whether she hoped viewers would laugh or cry in response to the picture, or whether she meant the signage in this juxtaposition to signify mass enlightenment or lurid serial bait for those who could barely



9. **Consuelo Kanaga** (American, 1894–1978). *Annie Mae Merriweather*. 1935. Gelatin silver print, 11 1/4 x 8 1/4" (28.6 x 21.1 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Edward Steichen

10. Marion Post Wolcott (American, 1910–1990). *Movie Advertisement on the Side of a Building, "Birth of a Baby," Welch, West Virginia*. 1938. Gelatin silver print, 7 x 8 3/4" (17.8 x 22.3 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchase

afford the price of a movie ticket let alone doctors' and hospital bills. As for death, there's the utterly blunt view by the other female FSA photographer, Lange, who at the end of the 1930s already was garnering widespread recognition for her haunting 1936 portrait of a woman with children, first exhibited at MoMA in late 1940 as *Pea Picker Family* and retitled in the postwar period *Migrant Mother, Nipomo, California* (1936). By the end of the Great Depression, quite a few writers had begun lauding her photography, although often as the supreme expression of feminine empathy.[33] This stereotypical packaging of Lange depended on keeping out of sight some of her most hard-hitting images. We have only to consider the fate of another Lange photograph, also acquired by MoMA in 1940, to see that the institution took part in the essentializing process of framing the woman photographer while providing Lange with her most influential museum venue.

The photograph in question (1938, no. 11) initially bore Lange's quite detailed caption, "Doorway of Church, Pentecostal, in small California Town, April 1939." What she did not identify but left viewers to encounter without textual lead is the barely covered corpse lying across the doorway. Departing from her usual practice of shooting a variety of exposures that ranged from long views to close-ups, Lange seems to have produced just one negative at this site, maybe because she was uneasy recording an unknown body so oddly disposed of, at least at that moment. The sole negative offered a relatively long view, encompassing the entire facade of the church, plus a bit of sky and ground. Dissatisfied with this composition, Lange then replicated in the darkroom her shooting method to achieve a tight framing of just the doorway. According to this graphic revision, the photographer must have concluded that without such radical cropping, the figure would be overlooked or too easily mistaken for a live body merely sleeping in the shade of the church portal.

MoMA's large collection of Lange's photography includes five prints made from this negative. In addition to the vintage close-up, there are two full-frame prints—one an uncharacteristically big 24-by-30-inch enlargement made by Irwin Welcher for Lange's 1966 retrospective at MoMA—and two versions of an undated experiment in which Lange stacked on a single mount both full-frame and cropped work prints. During the 1965 planning for this retrospective, when Lange was terminally ill and could only review prints made under John Szarkowski's curatorial supervision, there was evident disagreement about which version should serve as guide for a modern exhibition print. Szarkowski must have favored the more architecturally conventional and inviting view, as both the exhibition and catalogue included a full-frame print.[34] But the collection's vintage cropped print that best reflects the photographer's historic deliberations—for it was mounted, signed, and titled, then quickly acquired from the photographer and donated to MoMA—demonstrates that initially Lange resolved to exclude all that might distract from the difficult central subject matter of corpse blocking church entrance . . . or is it church door closed to corpse? Here, too, the flatness associated with modernism is complicated by a more emphatically three-dimensional recessional space, in which the portal becomes an upended shallow coffin, drawing all attention to the body that has yet to find a final resting place. In an era justly celebrated for its 1935 passage of Social Security legislation designed to aid the elderly poor, Lange, some years after enactment of that law, was insistent that viewers reflect on the huge portion of lives and life cycles still lacking the most minimal assurance of care. If some found in her Depression group portraits reassuring signs of social bonds persisting in the face of great adversity, hope is altogether absent in this rigorously considered elegy to the limits of our lives. Owing once again to Bender, this print came to the Museum at the same time as Lange's *Pea Picker Family*, but the utterly unsentimental scene was not selected by Beaumont Newhall for his 1940–41 exhibition, and indeed it seems never to have been presented to the public as originally framed by Lange.[35]

11. **Dorothea Lange** (American, 1895–1965). *Grayson, San Joaquin Valley, California*. 1938. Gelatin silver print, 8 3/4 x 10 7/8" (22.3 x 27.6 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Albert M. Bender

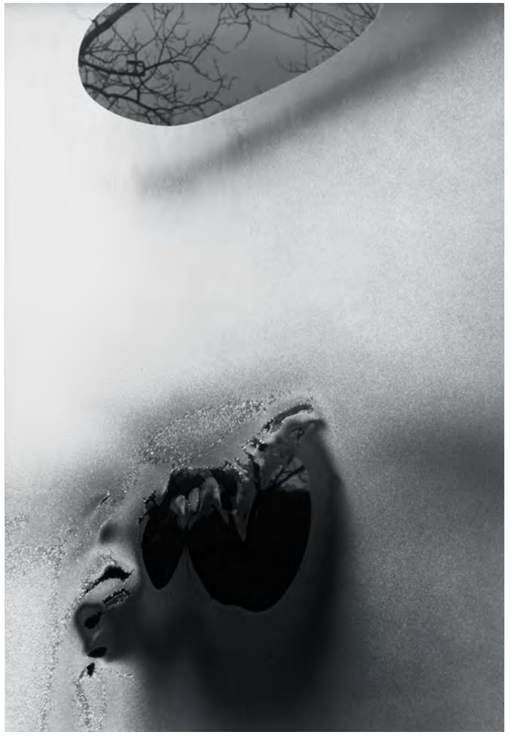
In the early 1950s, Lange conceived a series of photographs she aimed to exhibit on the theme of "The Indescribables." By way of provisional explanation she wrote to Nancy Newhall, "The photographs are truly just that. They say what only camera can pronounce. They have no literary connotations. Their interpretations are exceedingly personal."[36] Lange never completed such a series. Yet the impulse to exceed all conventional categories of easy naming and cognition runs through Lange's work, and "The Indescribables" also offers the best rubric to consider some anomalous images by other women photographers working simultaneously. In the strict sense of the word "obscene," Bing's 1933 study of champagne bottles with spiderwebs (no. 12) perfectly fits the bill, defying all protocols of what is visually permissible. She made the image as part of her commercial assignment to photograph the Pommery Caves, in Reims, France, which was aiming to expand its market with the lifting of Prohibition in the first months of FDR's administration. To that end, Bing produced a series in the conventional deep focus style that displayed rows of champagne bottles, or glasses filled with bubbly, looking modern, interchangeable, impeccably presentable with the bright glints of commodity appeal.[37] But in the course of this work, Bing could not resist making at least one exposure of the far-from-hygienic musty caves in which, presumably with very low flashbulb illumination, only the accretion of webs and the roughly painted numbers marking old vintages shine forth, almost repulsively. Rather like Modotti, Bing here delights vicariously in nature's capacity to undermine all efforts toward rationalization and the aesthetics of purity.

Morgan's *Solstice* similarly defies easy legibility (1942, no. 13). The constitutive elements are so heterogeneous that one might easily mistake it as a work of photomontage, which Morgan also made part of her practice. But this is one of her "natural photomontages," a technique she propounded for its close approximation to "our consciousness [that] is literally superimposed with jostling images."[38] Only with effort could I decipher

12. **Ilse Bing** (American, born Germany. 1899–1998). *Champagne Bottles with Spiderwebs*. 1933. Gelatin silver print, 11 1/8 x 8 3/4" (28.2 x 22.2 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Joseph G. Mayer Fund

the material basis for this image: a heavily frosted windowpane with a few melting areas revealing bare branches on the other side of the glass. Even after I had deciphered those prosaic references, I still had trouble organizing the scene into simple shapes of opaque and translucent areas. The off-putting thrust of congealed ice pressing outward like an unexpected orifice mocks all desire for a predictably flat photographic plane.

While not donated to MoMA by Morgan until 1972, this utterly strange image appeared much earlier in MoMA's exhibition catalogue *Art in Progress* (1944).[39] As acting curator of photography, Nancy Newhall must have selected it and its position as the concluding photograph of that portion of the survey's catalogue devoted to photography, where it followed reproductions of images



13. **Barbara Morgan** (American, 1900–1992). *Solstice*. 1942. Gelatin silver print, 15 11/16 x 10 11/16" (39.8 x 27.2 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of the photographer

by Eugène Atget, Strand, Henri Cartier-Bresson, and Weston to face the penultimate photographic view, of the constellation of Orion produced by the Mount Wilson Observatory, Los Angeles. Since her condensed survey of photography was followed directly by a section of the catalogue featuring the Museum's newest department, devoted to dance and theater design, the choice of one of Morgan's justly famous dance photographs might have been a more effective segue. But if anyone from the Museum proposed such an idea, Nancy doubtless resisted for two or three reasons: as a newly minted modernist particularly committed to the autonomy of photography, she would not have welcomed seeing a photograph used as mere illustration; having already developed quite decided views on picture layout,[40] she deliberately ended this condensed photographic sequence with a pairing that juxtaposed the astronomical with an extreme close-up, thus summarily alluding to William Blake's "[seeing] a world in a grain of sand," the opening image of his "Auguries of Innocence"; finally, although she had not featured Morgan's work in her recent curating, by choosing this image for the prominent closing position of her sequence, Nancy significantly advanced Morgan's public reputation beyond the known repertoire of her elegantly staged dance photographs.[41]

Nancy Newhall was just developing her professional identity when postwar demobilization forced her, along with many other women, to retire. On returning from military service, Beaumont Newhall floated the idea at MoMA that he resume his position in the photography department, only this time on a shared basis with his curatorially seasoned wife.[42] When that radical plan fell on deaf ears, he replaced his wife as curator for a few months before resigning in March 1946 after learning of the Museum board's decision to install Edward Steichen above him. Before relocating to Rochester, New York, where Beaumont first became photography curator of the George Eastman House (1948–58) and then its director (1958–71), the Newhalls remained in Manhattan to concentrate on writing projects. In 1946 Beaumont applied for and received a Guggenheim Fellowship to prepare the first edition of his *History of Photography* (1949), a major expansion of his earlier scholarship that informed the catalogue to his first photography survey at MoMA, in 1937. Simultaneously Nancy was writing articles while starting to collaborate with Strand on the manuscript that would be published as *Time in New England* (1950). However, for a few months in early 1948, Nancy's attention was diverted from her writing by the prospect of combining her interest in photography with feminism.

Yes, feminism—nearly with a capital F. Early in 1948 Nancy attended a gathering at the studio of sculptor Jo Davidson, then cochair of the Political Action Committee supporting the Progressive Party campaign of Henry Wallace. There she met Mary Jane Keeney, who introduced herself as "coordinating chairman" of the Congress of American Women (CAW), the US branch of the Women's International Democratic Federation, which had formed in Paris shortly after the war and soon grew to count its international membership in the millions.[43] Keeney quickly invited Nancy to organize a photographers' committee for the CAW that would assemble photographs by US women for an international exhibition of women in the arts and professions scheduled to open in Paris in June 1948. After securing the support of Abbott, Model, and Morgan, Nancy leapt at this freelance curatorial opportunity. Drawing on the contacts she had cultivated while at MoMA, she fervently pitched the idea to most of the leading representatives of US women's photography. Few could resist her enthusiasm, especially as Nancy assured each that the visual parameters were wide open given the all-encompassing progressive theme of the exhibition: "A cry for peace, and the struggle for women in all countries for democracy." To underscore the international prestige of the exhibition, she pointedly noted in a number of letters that Le Corbusier was designing the exhibition pavilion.[44] Even when it became apparent that the CAW would not cover framing and shipping costs for the Paris exhibition, Nancy persisted in sustaining the photographers' commitments after Keeney made the default proposal of sending the works to upstate New York for the women's gathering commemorating the centenary of the Declaration of Sentiments at the Women's Right Convention at Seneca Falls. When once again no funds materialized, Nancy returned to writing projects. Yet that brief period combining photography and feminism remained etched in her consciousness as a bittersweet memory.

The sweet part surfaced vividly a quarter century later when, in a 1973 review essay, Nancy anecdotally recalled assembling the women photographers based in the New York area for a 1948 midday planning meeting: "I have forgotten the restaurant but you should have seen the maitre d'hotel crumple as first Bourke-White, then Barbara [Morgan], Lisette [Model], Helen Levitt, Lotte Jacobi and I—and several others also—swept through the door. Few of us were really beautiful but we did have one trait in common—force. . . . We nearly knocked out that restaurant . . . [even without Bay Area photographers] Dorothea [Lange] and Imogen [Cunningham]." The event sounds so exhilarating that one longs for a picture.

The bitter part also surfaces in the same 1973 essay when she acknowledges that she only "realized later that the proposal came from a Communist group who could not fund it."[45] Already in 1949 what initially felt deliciously conspiratorial assumed a more dangerous cast when Keeney's name and picture appeared in the *New York Times* above the headline "U.N. Aide Accused as a Red Courier."[46] From 1949 to 1955 Keeney continued to figure in dozens more press reports as accusations led to hearings before the House Un-American Activities Committee and then conviction for contempt of Congress as an uncooperative witness. (The conviction would be overturned on the grounds that Keeney had rightly claimed special immunity as an employee of the United Nations, but by the time of this legal vindication Keeney also had lost that position.)[47] While all the photographers considered themselves progressives of one stripe or another, Nancy and her associates must have felt duped for agreeing so readily to Keeney's rather idealistic-sounding exhibition proposal.

The sensational investigation and then conviction of their erstwhile contact doubtless made all these women fearful of guilt by association in a fearmongering period. As a result, they evinced no further interest in similar appeals to internationalism, and likewise their brief stance of female solidarity was nipped in the bud. There were no more group luncheons, nor any further plans for the former wartime curator to organize exhibitions of women's photography. In the Cold War climate that hardly fostered

either women's self-assertion or solidarity, these women were quick to throw the feminist baby out with the tainted red bathwater.

Judging from the well-organized files of Nancy Newhall, many of these women remained in close personal touch, carrying on energetic private debates. Professionally, however, they went their separate ways. Nancy, the leading woman writing about photography, restricted nearly all her subsequent effort to projects with or about male photographers. And those rare women photographers fortunate to enjoy major exhibitions and publications found their work paired with male writers as well as curators, and quite possibly sought out such a cross-gender imprimatur to avoid being pigeonholed as women artists appealing mainly or exclusively to that secondary class of women. When, in a 1952 article coauthored with her son, Lange advocated concentrating photographically on the familiar (rather than the extraordinary), she carefully qualified her advocacy: "The photographer *need not suspect the familiar for fear of the domestic*. The two are not the same. Nobody likes to look at dull photographs; boredom, in the end, is as outlandish as outrage; and certainly the tedious is as easily registered as the outrageous" [emphasis mine].[48] Curiously, Lange issued this caveat just as she began to initiate quite a few series of pictures on the details of domestic life.

Photographic publications on or by women were so rare between the late 1940s and early 1970s that any discernible trend could be dismissed as statistically insignificant. That said, it is no less striking that for more than two decades following 1949, women in photography publicly avoided the company of other women. In addition to the books Nancy Newhall published with or on Strand, Adams, and Weston, there are her many shorter texts on Stieglitz, Peter Henry Emerson, Wright Morris, Brett Weston, Ben Shahn, Brassaï, Cedric Wright, T. H. O'Sullivan, Alvin Langdon Coburn, and so on. As for texts on women photographers, Nancy was commissioned in 1951 by James Thrall Soby, then editor of the *Magazine of Art*, to write about Lange. A few years earlier she had expressed the highest regard for Lange's work, and Soby appeared to share that view when he generously offered to reproduce eight photographs—still quite costly at the time—in advance of seeing the article.[49] Despite this editorial commitment, no article by Nancy Newhall on Lange materialized. Books on Lange that did appear in the 1960s included the monograph accompanying Lange's retrospective at MoMA, with an essay by George P. Elliott (1966), and a year later *Dorothea Lange Looks at the American Country Woman*, with commentary by Beaumont Newhall (1967).

Nancy Newhall did produce a short review of Morgan's 1951 book *Summer's Children*.[50] In 1968 she wrote a more substantial and personally revealing text on Morgan's work and life that was meant to serve as a long essay for an issue of *Infinity* (the journal of the American Society of Magazine Photographers) slated to feature Morgan's work. The draft essay languished when the planned feature was killed. Yet since it was already written and had initially been hailed by the photographer's adult son, Douglas Morgan, there was even more reason for printing it, or a revision based on it, when the Morgan family press that specialized in photographic publications prepared in 1972 a monograph on Barbara Morgan. The only commentary appearing in that book was a short introduction by Peter C. Bunnell, an apt inclusion since the publication coincided with a MoMA exhibition of her work that Bunnell organized; however, since this was not a MoMA publication, the photographer was free to add, for example, a biographical afterword by Nancy Newhall. Yet that opportunity was passed over, and this unusual text, reflecting the burgeoning feminism of the late 1960s, remains unpublished. The evidence is disturbingly clear: between the late 1940s and the early 1970s, both women writers and women photographers sought to advance their careers by associating themselves with male photographers and writers respectively.

This pattern in postwar photography of women's compulsory identification with men as the proper subjects of their interpretive scholarship or interpreters of their photographic work was finally broken with the publication of Anne Wilkes Tucker's *The Woman's Eye* (1973). I bought that book when it first appeared, studied it closely, then put it aside. Very quickly during feminism's Second Wave, a rash of more assured feminist texts on photography and art followed, quickly dating Tucker's anthology of ten women photographers for its halting recourse to bits of feminist theory as well as its structure, which compartmentalized the ten women as isolated individuals, each introduced with discrete biographies followed by portfolios of their work. Both male and female reviewers protested the strain of Tucker's pleading a special case for women; if some of these responses were blatantly sexist, Tucker's defensive stance already had been famously rejected in 1971 by feminist art historian Linda Nochlin in her pioneering call for social critique of all patriarchal barriers combined with an insistence on no lowering of artistic standards for the sake of identity politics.[51] Still, Tucker's first book represents a significant advance on the far more diffuse exhibition she previously had assembled in 1971 while a curatorial intern at MoMA: *Photographs of Women* consisted of forty-three photographs by thirty-three photographers, twenty of them male; as such, it constituted an excellent example of what Griselda Pollock has critiqued as the "Images of Women" syndrome, for its confounding of female signifieds and signifiers.[52] For the book that developed two years after the exhibition, Tucker at least concentrated her attention on photography by women, while stopping short of exploring what these individual females might share, and mutually illuminate, in their practice of photography. Nevertheless, reconsidered some thirty-five years later, and six decades after women photographers briefly gathered over lunch in New York to coordinate their own exhibition of contemporary imagery presented first and foremost for other women, this preliminary treatise, spawned by even more preliminary curatorial work at MoMA in the early 1970s, represents a milestone in the culture of photography. By bringing together the work of those women photographers while starting to raise questions about "'women's art' . . . [and] the status of women artists in society," that 1973 publication reasserted in the culture of photography the authority of women to express themselves with an eye and ear attuned to the canny knowledge, also criticism, of other women as key players in a changing world of art and power.

1. For various forms of advice, assistance, and criticism in the process of researching and writing this essay, I thank Connie Butler, Whitney Gaylord, Kara Kirk, Drew Johnson, Annetta Kapon, Jan Kesner, Susan Kismaric, Ernest Larsen, Dan Leers, Lynn Mally, Mary Warner Marien, Laurie Monahan, Kate Norment, Mary Panzer, Allan Sekula, Romy Silver, and Ina Steiner.

2. See Nancy F. Cott's pathbreaking study of self-conscious US women's thought, activity, and organizations in the two decades following passage of the Nineteenth Amendment: *The Grounding of Modern Feminism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987).

3. For recent commentaries on the sources and intentions of W. E. B. Du Bois's use of the term "double consciousness," see the essays by Dickson D. Bruce, Jr., and Eric J. Sundquist, along with the reprint of Du Bois's seminal 1903 text, in the recent critical edition edited by Henry Louis Gates, Jr., and Terri Hume Oliver, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1999).

4. On Ilse Bing's first exposure to Florence Henri's work inspiring her move to Paris, see Nancy C. Barrett, *Ilse Bing: Three Decades of Photography* (New Orleans: New Orleans Museum of Art, 1985), p. 18. On Gisèle Freund's becoming Henri's student, see Diana C. DuPont, *Florence Henri: Artist-Photographer of the Avant-Garde* (San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1990), pp. 134–35. On Lisette Model's casual but utterly memorable lessons from Rogi André, see Ann Thomas, *Lisette Model* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1990), p. 44. On Nancy Newhall's short but significant apprenticeship in Barbara Morgan's informal but technically rigorous studio circa 1938, see her unpublished manuscript, written in 1968 and originally intended for publication in an issue of *Infinity,* a journal of the American Society of Magazine Photographers spanning the years 1952–73, which

had planned to feature Morgan, "Barbara Morgan," pp. 12–13. The Beaumont and Nancy Newhall Papers (920060; B.76, F.8), Research Library, The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.

5. Kathleen Pyne, *Modernism and the Feminine Voice: O'Keeffe and the Women of the Stieglitz Circle* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2007), pp. 76–80.

6. For further details about this 1925 photograph, see Sally Stein, "Starting from Pictorialism: Notable Continuities in the Modernization of California Photography," in Drew Heath Johnson, ed., *Capturing Light: Masterpieces of California Photography, 1850 to the Present* (Oakland: Oakland Museum of California; New York: W. W. Norton, 2001), pp. 121–23.

7. Sarah M. Lowe, *Tina Modotti: Photographs* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1995), p. 27; Letizia Argenteri, *Tina Modotti: Between Art and Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), p. 78.

8. For further discussion of Dorothea Lange's development as a mature photographer, see Stein, "Starting from Pictorialism," pp. 126–29.

9. Ansel Adams, letters to Beaumont Newhall, April 15, 1938, and July 12, 1939. Beaumont Newhall Papers, The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York.

10. Erin O'Toole, "Nancy Newhall, and The Museum of Modern Art, 1942–1946," in *Nancy Newhall: A Literacy of Images* (San Diego: Museum of Photographic Arts, 2008), pp. 15, 227.

11. The postcard-size picture that Anne Brigman sent to a female friend in 1910 is not visually one of her strongest. Yet the verso inscription that quickly notes "our 'Votes for Women' poster" makes it a most significant document for the period as well as for Brigman's biography, and it is cited and reproduced in Susan Ehrens's catalogue, *A Poetic Vision: The Photographs of Anne Brigman* (Santa Barbara, Calif.: Santa Barbara Museum of Art, 1995), p. 31, and more recently reproduced again in Pyne, *Modernism and the Feminine Voice*, p. 68; the latter reproduction was published courtesy of Jan Kesner, the astute photography collector who acquired it at Sotheby's 2002 auction of photographs deaccessioned by MoMA.

12. Pyne, *Modernism and the Feminine Voice*, pp. 108–13.

13. The only book Brigman published, at the end of her life, names Alfred Stieglitz in her dedication and includes as frontispiece a facsimile of a letter Stieglitz wrote to her years earlier. Brigman, *Songs of a Pagan* (Caldwell, Idaho: The Caxton Printers, 1949).

14. Germán List Arzubide, quoted in Lowe, *Tina Modotti*, p. 26.

15. On the concept and canonical examples, see Herbert Molderings, "Urbanism and Technological Utopianism: Thoughts on the Photography of Neue Sachlichkeit and the Bauhaus," in David Mellor, ed., *Germany: The New Photography, 1927–1933* (London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1978), pp. 87–94.

16. Credited uses of this photograph in 1930s publications ranging from liberal-progressive to avowedly socialist include Charles Cross, *A Picture of America* (New York: Simon and Schuster for League for Industrial Democracy, 1932), p. 69; second thematic issue, devoted to "Labor's Challenge," *Photo History* 1, no. 2 (1937): 32; and S. A. Spencer, *The Greatest Show on Earth* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Doran, 1938), p. 9.

17. Combining photographs with anecdotal commentary, her 1931 book would offer an early, enthusiastic account of her recent visits to the USSR. Margaret Bourke-White, *Eyes on Russia* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1931). For a review of this photographer's inconsistent but repeated involvement in the 1930s with Communist ideas, party, and Front organizations, see Vicki Goldberg, *Margaret Bourke-White: A Biography* (New York: Harper & Row, 1987), pp. 151–58, 209, 328–30.

18. Given the dating inconsistencies, I'm enormously grateful to Marien for checking in the Bourke-White archive housed at Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York, and providing a detailed time frame for its making "between August 26 and September 18, 1932." Marien, e-mail to the author, September 26, 2009.

19. Most marked as a departure from her industrial repertoire is the study of Southern poverty that Bourke-White coauthored with Erskine Caldwell, *You Have Seen Their Faces* (New York: The Viking Press, 1937).

20. Berenice Abbott, with text by Elizabeth McCausland, *Changing New York* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1939), pp. 162–63.

21. Claude Cahun, *Les Paris sont ouverts* (Paris: José Corti, 1934).

22. Claude Cahun, *Aveux non avenus* (Paris: Éditions du Carrefour, 1930).

23. The excellent recent anthology of essays on Cahun, organized by the Jersey Heritage Trust curator Louise Downie, offers a strong corrective in its determined facsimile reproductions of the original images' scale and often murky quality, as noted in the curator's introduction, which emphasizes the radical discrepancies between the works of Cahun and Cindy Sherman. Downie, ed., *don't kiss me: The Art of Claude Cahun and Marcel Moore* (New York: Aperture, 2006), pp. 7–9.

24. Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," 1936, in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken, 1968), p. 221.

25. Gen Doy's recent monograph on Cahun offers the most nuanced treatment of Cahun's politics and its relation to her visual aesthetics. Doy, *Claude Cahun: A Sensual Politics of Photography* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2007).

26. For a judicious review of this debate and a different proposal of an interpretive synthesis, see Melody Davis, "Androgyny and the Mirror: Photographs of Florence Henri, 1927–38," *Part* (Journal of the CUNY PhD Program in Art History) 8 (2002), web.gc.cuny.edu/dept/ArtHi/part/part8/articles/davis.html.

27. For two opposing discussions of Florent Fels, see Romy Golan, *Modernity and Nostalgia: Art and Politics in France between the Wars* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), pp. 6, 9, 40, 138–42; and Walter G. Langlois, "Anarchism, Action and Malraux," *Twentieth Century Literature* 24 (Autumn 1978): 272–89.

28. Jo Anna Isaak, *Feminism & Contemporary Art: The Revolutionary Power of Women's Laughter* (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 11–46.

29. Rondal Partridge, telephone conversation with the author, August 16, 2009.

30. Richard Lorenz, the author of numerous books on Imogen Cunningham, selected the Helene Mayer portrait for the cover of his monograph, *Imogen Cunningham, Portraiture* (Boston: Little Brown, 1997); in his text Lorenz glosses over the notoriety surrounding this figure, referring to her simply as a "courageous athlete," p. 23. Thanks to a more recent biography that reproduces the same photograph on its cover, the many controversies surrounding this athlete's life are amply detailed. Millie Mogulof, *Foiled! Hitler's Jewish Olympian: The Helene Mayer Story* (Oakland, California: RDR Books, 2002).

31. *New Masses* 17, no. 4 (October 22, 1935): 17; cited in Barbara Head Millstein and Lowe, *Consuelo Kanaga: An American Photographer* (Brooklyn: Brooklyn Museum; Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1992), pp. 38–39, 55 n. 121. Judith Fryer Davidov also discusses Kanaga's Negro Studies, including this portrait, in *Women's Camera Work: Self/Body/Other in American Photography* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1998), pp. 193–214. For further discussion of the strike in the context of militant rural organizing in the 1930s South, see Robin D. G. Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists during the Great Depression* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), pp. 164–68.

32. MoMA's collection also includes the deluxe gravure edition of Doris Ulmann's major series of photographs of southern blacks, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, published shortly before the photographer's death in 1934 (Ulmann and Julia Peterkin, *Roll, Jordan, Roll* [New York: Robert O. Ballou, 1933]). In the spring of 1937 the topic of race became one of the manifest and contentious points of differences between Lange and her FSA boss, Roy Stryker, before he decided in a period of budget-cutting to terminate her regular employment with the New Deal publicity unit. Letters between Stryker and Lange, June 18, 1937 (from Stryker), and June 23, 1937 (when Lange proposes that FSA photography be more balanced by a heavier concentration on blacks and on urban subjects), as well as their resumption of this topic in the letters exchanged in October 1938. Stryker Archive, University of Louisville. On Marion Post Wolcott's quite radical take on race relations in the South, see my essay in the catalogue *Marion Post Wolcott: FSA Photographs* (Carmel, Calif.: Friends of Photography, 1983), pp. 3–10. Nancy Newhall notes particularly the recurrence of this topic in FSA work produced in the South by both Wolcott and Lange; Newhall mentions her plan to systematically review such work "for the Negro book" in a letter to Lange, April 7, 1948. The Beaumont and Nancy Newhall Papers (920060; B.68, F.3), Research Library, The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles. As for Morgan and Nancy Newhall, correspondence reviewed for this essay reveals that both spoke repeatedly and quite passionately about their plans for a "Negro book"; since none materializes, it's not clear whether they are speaking about one and the same project or projects separately envisioned. Nancy Newhall, letter to Morgan, December 4, 1948; and Morgan, letter to to Beaumont and Nancy Newhall, November 9, 1951. The Beaumont and Nancy Newhall Papers (920060; B.76, F.7), Research Library, The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.

33. See, for example, Pare Lorentz, "Dorothea Lange: Camera with a Purpose," *U.S. Camera* 1 (1941): 93–98.

34. In the publication accompanying the retrospective, both title and date are also altered. "Grayson, San Joaquin Valley, California. 1938," *Dorothea Lange* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1966), p. 41.

35. In that 1940–41 exhibition highlighting recent acquisitions by MoMA's new Department of Photography, quite a few of the male photographers were represented by a handful of photographs, but all the female photographers were represented by just one picture, as Lange was with *Pea Picker Family, California, 1936*, no. 23 in "Check List," *Bulletin of The Museum of Modern Art* 8, no. 2 (December 1940–January 1941): 6.

36. Lange, letter to Nancy Newhall, June 18, 1953. The Beaumont and Nancy Newhall Papers (920060; B.69, F.3), Research Library, The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.

37. The commission is described by Barrett in *Ilse Bing*, p. 20. One example of the predictably modern advertising image she produced on this assignment is reproduced as plate 21, p. 56.

38. Morgan, "Photomontage," in Willard Morgan, ed., *The Complete Photographer* 44, no. 8 (1942): 28–56.

39. *Art in Progress, A Survey for the Fifteenth Anniversary of The Museum of Modern Art* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1944), p. 161.

40. MaLin Wilson-Powell documents Nancy Newhall's early attentiveness to layout in "An Eloquent Image," in *Nancy Newhall*, p. 24.

41. The photographer's first book was published a year earlier. Morgan, *Martha Graham: Sixteen Dances in Photographs* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1941).

42. Beaumont Newhall refers to this proposal in his autobiography, *Focus: Memories of a Life in Photography* (Boston: Little Brown, 1993), p. 143. Privately Nancy also alludes to this proposal in a wonderfully frank letter to Morgan a year before her death, in which she adamantly espouses equal pay and professional status for women. Nancy Newhall, copy of letter to Morgan, June 14, 1973. The Beaumont and Nancy Newhall Papers (920060; B.76, F.31), Research Library, The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.

43. To date, there is only one historical investigation of the short-lived CAW and its "inventive efforts to bring past and present, gender and race together." Amy Swerdlow, "The Congress of American Women: Left-Feminist Peace Politics in the Cold War," in Linda K. Kerber, Alice Kessler-Harris, Kathryn Kish Sklar, eds., *U.S. History as Women's History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), pp. 296–312.

44. Nancy Newhall, letter to Bourke-White, March 19, 1948. In an April 8, 1948, letter, Nancy sought Bourke-White's participation while listing the other women participating: Berenice Abbott, Esther Bubley, Louise Dahl-Wolfe, Consuelo Kanaga, Laura Gilpin, Dorothea Lange, Helen Levitt, Lisette Model, and Barbara Morgan; while Nancy was still hoping that Lange would sign on, she had not secured her consent, as Lange was about to be hospitalized for gastrointestinal problems that would intermittently leave her debilitated for the remaining two decades of her life. Nancy Newhall, letter to Bourke-White, April 8, 1948. The Beaumont and Nancy Newhall Papers, Research Library, The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (920060; B.10, F.10).

45. Nancy Newhall, *Afterimage* 2, no. 1 (March 1974): 8.

46. *New York Times*, July 26, 1949, p. 10.

47. On Mary Jane Keeney and her husband, Philip, both of whom began their careers as librarians, see the remarkably evenhanded study based on recently released Soviet espionage sources as well as the couple's diaries. Rosalee McReynolds and Louise Robbins, *The Librarian Spies: Philip and Mary Jane Keeney and Cold War* Espionage (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2009).

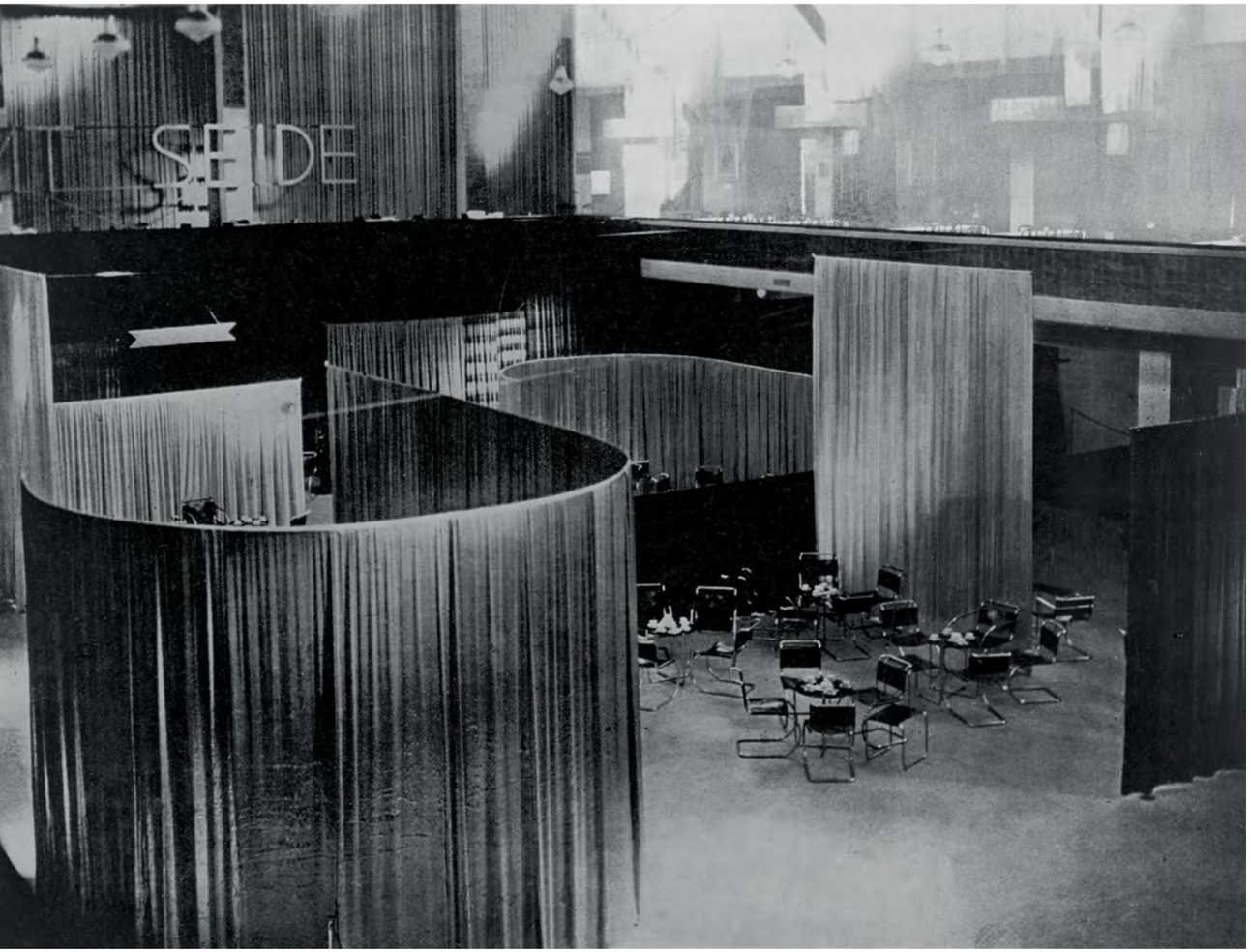
48. Lange, with Daniel Dixon, "Photographing the Familiar," *Aperture* 1, no. 2 (1952): 4–15; reprinted in *Photographers on Photography*, ed. Nathan Lyons (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1966), pp. 68–72.

49. "We can give you 8 or possibly more illustrations. I feel it extremely important the article be well illustrated since so little of Lange's work has been published." "jim" [Soby], letter to "Mrs. Nancy Newhall," May 19, 1951. The Beaumont and Nancy Newhall Papers (920060; B.246, F.2), Research Library, The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.

50. Nancy Newhall, *Popular Photography*, October 1951, pp. 146–47.

51. Linda Nochlin, "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?" 1971; reprinted in Nochlin, *Women, Art, and Power and Other Essays* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), pp. 143–78.

52. Griselda Pollock, "What's Wrong with Images of Women?" 1977, in Rozsika Parker and Pollock, eds., *Framing Feminism: Art & the Women's Movement, 1970–1985* (London: Pandora Press, 1987), pp. 132–38.



WITH, OR WITHOUT YOU: THE GHOSTS OF MODERN ARCHITECTURE

/ BEATRIZ COLOMINA

"With," and not "and," is the way in which women architects are more frequently credited alongside men in the official records, if they are credited at all.[1] Women are the ghosts of modern architecture, everywhere present, crucial, but strangely invisible. Unacknowledged, they are destined to haunt the field forever. But correcting the record is not just a question of adding a few names or even thousands to the history of architecture. It is not just a matter of human justice or historical accuracy but a way to more fully understand architecture and the complex ways it is produced. Architecture is deeply collaborative, more like moviemaking than visual art, for example. But unlike movies, this is hardly ever acknowledged. Until recently, it has been a secret carefully guarded.

To better understand the field of architecture would liberate new creative potential. The gap between the words "and" and "with," which institutions so vigilantly guard, needs to be rethought. "With" implies a helper, a secondary source of energy. "And" implies partnership and equality. What is positive about "and" is that it feeds on differences, on complexity. "And" may encourage more nuanced forms of production and discourse.

I will tell you a story.

About ten years ago, I gave a lecture in Madrid, the city where I was born. The lecture was on the work of Charles and Ray Eames, and most of the discussion at the dinner afterward centered on the role of Ray—her background as a painter, her sense of color, and so on—much to my surprise, since I was surrounded by very well-known Spanish architects, all of them men. Soon we were talking about Lilly Reich and what an enormous role she must have played in the development of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's architecture, about the importance of such projects as the Velvet and Silk Café (no. 1), a collaborative work by Reich and Mies for the 1927 *Exposition de la mode* (Fashion exhibition) in Berlin, where draperies in velvet and silk hung from metal rods to form the space. Everyone agreed that there was nothing in Mies's work prior to his collaboration with Reich that would suggest this radical definition of space by suspended sensuous surfaces, which would become his trademark, as exemplified by his Barcelona Pavilion of 1929. And then one of the architects said something that has stayed with me since: "It is like a dirty little secret that we—all architects—keep. Something that we all know, that we all see, but we don't bring ourselves to talk about it."

The secrets of modern architecture are like those of a family. And it is perhaps because of the current cultural fascination with exposing the intimate that they are now being unveiled, little by little. If one is to judge by the publications of recent years, there is increasing interest in the ways in which architecture works. It is as if we have become just as concerned with the "how" as with "what." And the "how" is less about structure or building techniques—the interest of earlier generations of historians—and more about interpersonal relations. The previously marginal details of how things actually happen in architectural practice are now coming to light.

The focus is shifting from the architect as a single figure, and the building as an object, to architecture as collaboration. Attention is starting to be paid to all professionals involved in the project: partners, engineers, landscape architects, interior designers, employees, builders. Even photographers, graphic designers, critics, curators, and all of those who produce the work in the media are being considered. It is no longer possible to ignore how much of modern architecture is produced both in the

1. View of Velvet and Silk Café by Lilly Reich and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, *Exposition de la mode*, Berlin, 1927. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Mies van der Rohe Archive, gift of the architect

media and as media. As Richard Neutra said about the photographer Julius Shulman, "His work will survive me. Film [is] stronger and good glossy prints are easier [to] ship than brute concrete, stainless steel, or even ideas."[2] Today even the clients—who were previously treated only as "problems" for the architect or as "witnesses" to the effects of the architecture—are being considered as the active collaborators that they are.

The postwar period inaugurated a new kind of collaborative practice that has become increasingly difficult to ignore or to subsume within a "heroic" conception of an individual figure. The Museum of Modern Art held an exhibition on the Chicago firm Skidmore, Owings & Merrill in 1950, acknowledging for the first time a corporate office. Individuals gave way to a more anonymous collective, but wherever their names did appear, a key woman architect in the firm, Natalie de Blois, was systematically left out. Also during this period, all the "great masters" associated with other architects on key projects. Mies van der Rohe worked with Philip Johnson on the Seagram Building (with the crucial intervention of Phyllis Lambert as both patron and young architect) (no. 2). In 1945 Walter Gropius founded The Architects Collaborative (TAC) with a group of younger architects, and in 1963 he collaborated with the corporate office of Emery Roth & Sons on the Pan Am Building. Wallace Harrison "stole" from Le Corbusier the forms for the new headquarters of the United Nations in New York. Rem Koolhaas suggests that such partners are always overlooked, even though they often contribute the more idiosyncratic features of the buildings, the "perversions" of the masters' usual style: "From the 1930s, when he began 'working' with Lilly Reich, on, Mies left the theatrical to others—perversion by proxy. From her silk and velvet to Johnson's chain mail in the Four Seasons, what is the connection? Who took advantage?"[3] Once again, it takes an architect and not a critic or historian to point to the obvious, even if in fact Reich had been collaborating with Mies since the mid-1920s.

Collaboration is the secret life of architects, the domestic life of architecture. Nowhere is this more emblematic than with architects who live and work together, with couples for whom there is complete identification between home life and office life. Charles and Ray Eames (no. 4) in the 1950s provided a model for "couplings" in following generations, in particular for Alison and Peter Smithson, whose partnership in turn provided a model for Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown, and for Enric Miralles and Carme Pinós (no. 3) a generation later.

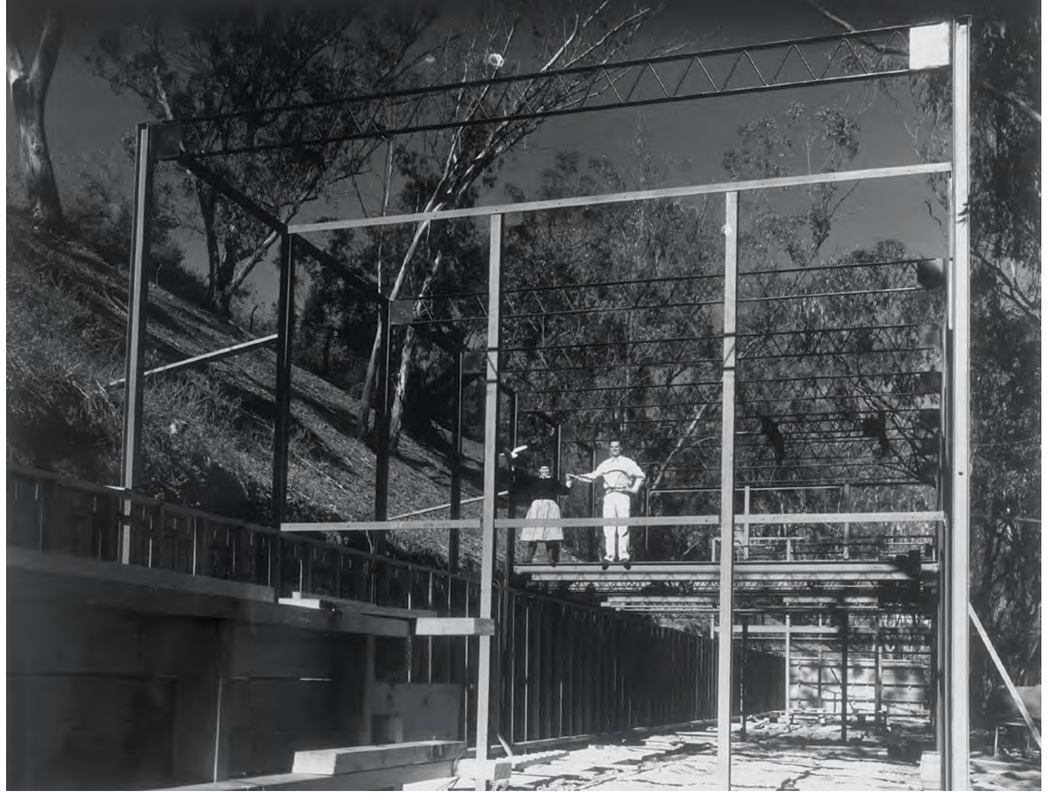
Couplings raise an enormous level of nervousness and resentment from all camps (including women). The phallic myth of the solo architect, the isolated genius, is one of the most regressive and reactionary understandings of architecture—but unfortunately still the most pervasive. In this climate there is much to learn from the Smithsons' analysis, if only to remind ourselves that it took more than half a century before women architects were on equal footing in partnerships with men. Margaret Macdonald collaborated with Charles Rennie Mackintosh, Reich with Mies, Charlotte Perriand with Le Corbusier, Aino Aalto with Alvar Aalto . . . but their extraordinary influence was never completely acknowledged. Only with Charles and Ray Eames did we have for the first time a firm which recognized, at least in its name, the two partners as equals. And only with the Smithsons did a woman's name come first, her work fully acknowledged by all.

Of course institutions, particularly East Coast institutions—The Museum of Modern Art, the *New York Times*, Harvard University—were in denial. A devastated Esther McCoy wrote to the Eameses apologizing for the *New York Times*'s erasure of Ray's name from the article she had just published about their work:

> Dear Charles and Ray: The *Times* story was an embarrassment to me as it must have been painful to you. It was originally (as requested) a 5000 word story and was cut at their request to 3500, and when Paul Goldberger received it he called and said

2. **Philip Johnson**, **Ludwig Mies van der Rohe**, and **Phyllis Lambert** in front of an image of the model for the Seagram Building, New York, 1955. Phyllis Lambert Fonds. Collection Centre Canadien d'Architecture/Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal

3. **Carme Pinós** and **Enric Miralles**, n.d. Photograph by Marti Catala Pedersen



it was fine. Then he turned me over to the editorial assistant, a Barbara Wyden who had endless complaints I won't bore you with, but the two things we settled down in a death struggle were that Ray's name must be included and that the chaise must not be called a casting couch. . . . For twenty years I have worked peaceably with editors. Now already in 1973 I have come up against two editors who are unbelievably arrogant, the basis of their complaint being that I didn't understand the broad audience. This is sheer nonsense; the broad audience isn't titillated by the phrase casting couch nor does it object to a woman being credited for work.[4]

MoMA never fully acknowledged Ray Eames either.[5] Only Charles was credited in the institution's first exhibition of their work, a "one-man" show titled *New Furniture Designed by Charles Eames* (1946).[6] Other members of the Eames office were also not credited for their work, including Gregory Ain, Harry Bertoia, Herbert Matter, and Griswald Raetze, all of whom resigned from the office as a consequence, "ending a particularly fertile period of the Eameses' careers."[7] The exhibition and catalogue of the Museum's *Good Design* (November 21, 1950–January 28, 1951) likewise did not credit the work to Ray, who is, however, seen in many photographs installing the show next to the curator, Edgar Kaufmann, Jr. (no. 5). Only on the last page of the catalogue are there a few lines crediting her with "assistance" in preparing the show and the book. Even in 1973 Arthur Drexler's introduction to the exhibition *Charles Eames: Furniture from the Design Collection* did not properly credit Ray in the first draft, which mentions her only as an assistant. The manuscript of the second version, however, includes an addendum that credits Ray as having been from the beginning "closely associated with furniture design and the production of films and exhibition."[8] One wonders what prompted such radical change and whether the Eameses themselves were involved.

If institutions had difficulties acknowledging the Eames partnership, the Smithsons could identify. At one level, their bond with the elder couple was personal. Their standard form of address in correspondence is to "R&C" from "A&P," and they usually close with effusive displays like "Ys. v. affectionately," "We think of you often," and "Much love."[9] Their writings are full of expressions of admiration. One by one, pieces of the Eames oeuvre are treated as precious icons, magical tokens that are presented as paradigms for their own practice. They describe the Eames chair, for example, as "like a message of hope from another planet," as the only chair one could put in any interior today, the only one they would put in their own living room: "Eames chairs belong to the occupants not to the building. Mies chairs are especially of the building and not of the occupant."[10] Of the Eames "select and arrange technique" they say, "As a design method, it is close to flower arrangement and to good taste in the furnishing of rooms with collector's pieces." They claim to have used the method themselves in the "designing and equipping" of their own houses. "The Eameses have made it respectable to like pretty things. This seems extraordinary, but in our world, pretty things are equated with social irresponsibility."[11] And they emulated the older designers' unique

Opposite:
4. **Charles** and **Ray Eames** on the steel frame of the Eames House under construction, Pacific Palisades, California, 1949. Photograph by John Entenza

5. **Charles Eames**, **Ray Eames**, **Dorothy Shaver**, and **Edgar Kaufmann, Jr.,** at the exhibition *Good Design*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1950–51. Photograph by Leo Trachtenberg. Photographic Archive. The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York

photographic technique: "We ourselves are very attentive listeners and watchers of everything the Eameses have made. We have taken their invention of the 'flat-on colour documentation' of objects as part of the way we now also work."[12]

In every instance, we are presented with an acute observation of an aspect of the Eameses' work and at the same time the way in which the Smithsons have appropriated it, made it theirs. Take, for example, their smooth transition from using the Eames chair to designing their own furniture design:

> With the first interior sketches of this project [Burrows Lea Farm (1953)] . . . we realised we had a problem . . . what was to be put in as furniture? We needed objects that achieved a cultural fit . . . there could not be falling back on the Thonet sold in France and used by Le Corbusier. . . . As a response to the realisation came the Trundling Turk, a chair which looked as if it might follow its owners from room to room and out onto the beach.[13]

The Smithsons' chairs take on precisely the same characteristics they had ascribed to the Eameses' chairs. They occupy the space vacated by the Thonet, they are from the same period as the architecture, and they belong to the occupant, not to the building. The Smithsons put themselves in the place of the Eameses, absorbing their mode of operation rather than the specific details of their forms.

But the key symptoms of the identification between the Smithsons and the Eameses are not just these endless references to particular aspects of the Eameses' work; they are also in the couple's techniques of presenting themselves, in the kind of obsessions they manifested. Above all, and perhaps this is not so surprising when one couple bonds with another, the symptoms are in the pervasive sense of domesticity. Literal domesticity, as when Peter reflects on the Eameses' breakfast table, only to go back in time to the Walter and Ise Gropius breakfast table in their house in Massachusetts (no. 6) and to end with an image of Alison at breakfast, on a snowy day in their country house at Fonthill (no. 7).[14] And conceptual domesticity, as when, in the same article, he organizes the history of architecture from the Renaissance to the present as that of a family, a small family of only six members: Filippo Brunelleschi, Leon Battista Alberti, Francesco di Giorgio (representing three generations of the Renaissance) and Mies, the Eameses, and the Smithsons (three generations of modern architecture).[15]

The Smithsons made many more family trees, and the couple's insistent inclusion of themselves is key. In the modern architectural genealogy, which they knew so well and which they were able to communicate in such a brilliant way in their writings, the Smithsons wanted to see themselves as following the tradition of Mies (Peter writes, "My own debt to Mies is so great that it is difficult for me to disentangle what I hold as my own thoughts, so often they have been the result of insights received from him").[16] But if Mies was the architect of the heroic period, the Eameses were the ideal for a second, less heroic generation straddling World War II, and it was with them, in fact, that the Smithsons felt in closer alliance.

Among the various genealogies charted by the Smithsons the projects change but the family members stay the same. In a lecture by Alison Smithson, a short visit to the Farnsworth House became the occasion for a reflection on the "pavilion in its territory" and "new kinds of light-touch inhabitation."[17] On this occasion a new chart was prepared, linking the Farnsworth House, the Eames House, and the Solar Pavilion at Fonthill. And in "Phenomenon in Parallel: Eames House, Patio and Pavilion," a lecture by Peter in connection with the 1990 reconstruction of the 1956 exhibition *This Is Tomorrow*, he links the "Patio and Pavilion" with the Eames House and points out that the Eameses had to have been familiar with Mies's sketch for a glass house on a hillside from 1934.[18] Again, different projects, same characters, which

6. Walter and Ise Gropius at Gropius Residence, Lincoln, Massachusetts, c. 1938. Photograph by Paul Davis. Harvard Art Museum, Busch-Reisinger Museum, Cambridge, Massachusetts. Gift of Ise Gropius

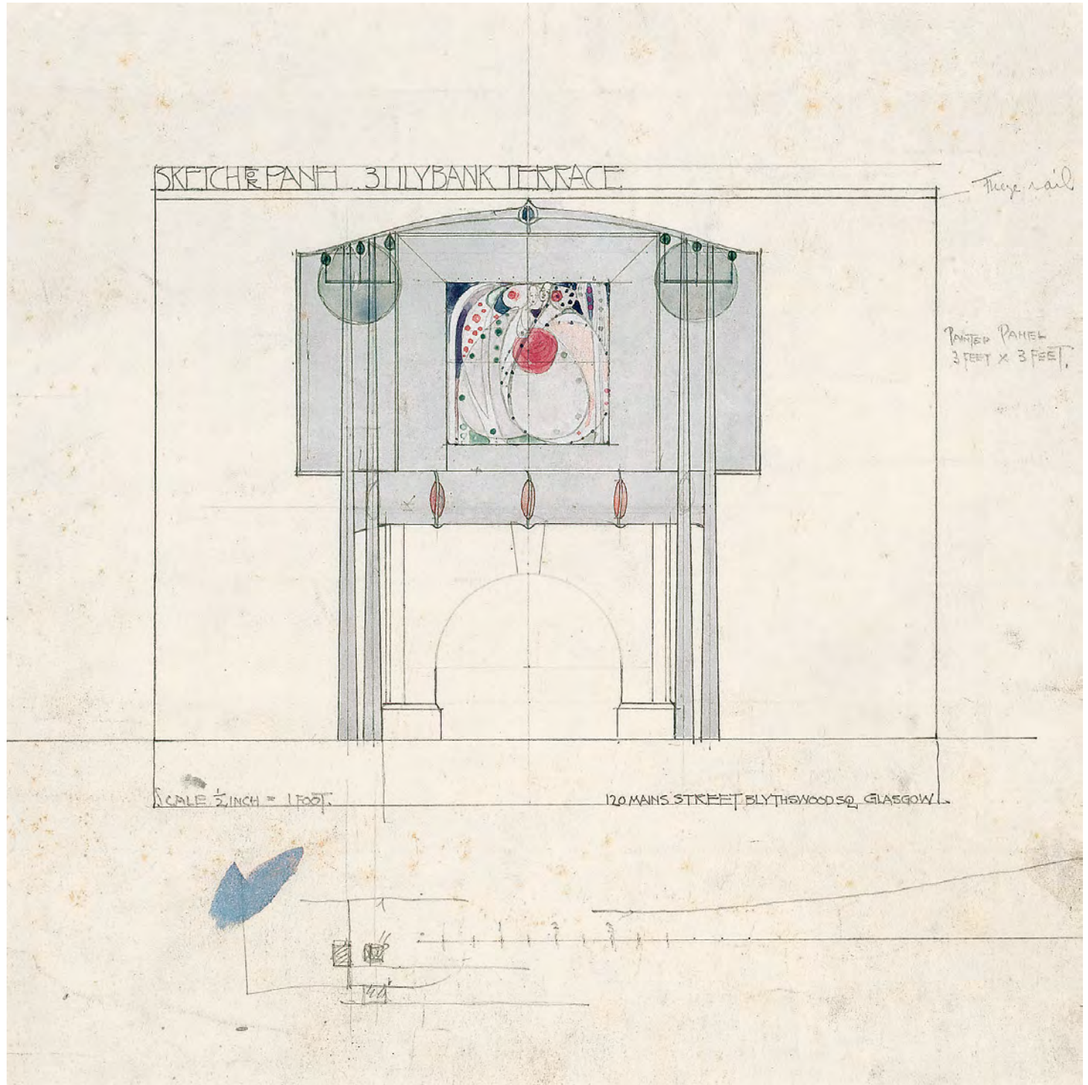
7. "Alison Smithson at breakfast on the winter morning of the 'big snow,'" 1978. Photograph by Peter Smithson. Smithson Family Collection

8. **Ludwig Mies van der Rohe** and **Lilly Reich** on an excursion boat, Wannsee, Germany, 1933. Photograph by Howard Dearstyne. The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York

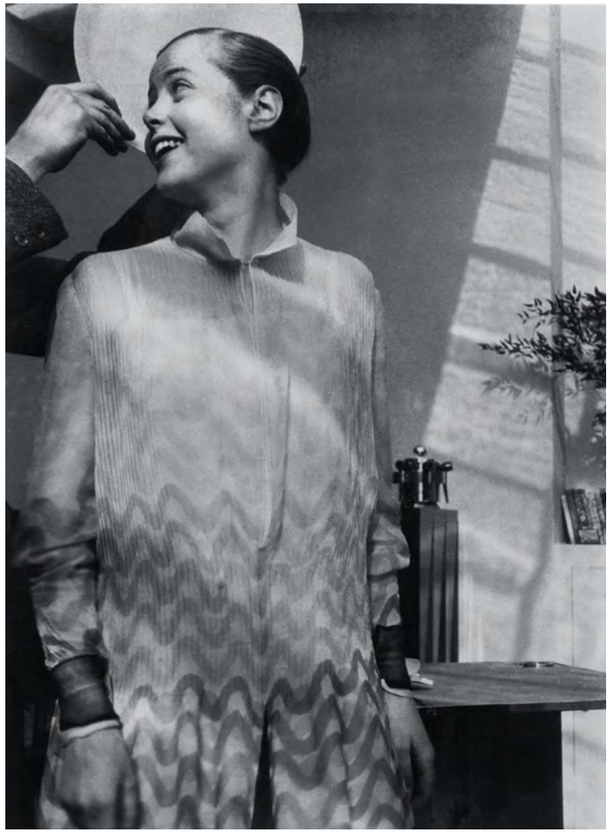
9. **Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh**, c. 1906. Photograph by James Craig Annan. T & R Annan, Glasgow

demonstrates that the real issue in the genealogies is the family.

In these family trees, the emphasis on women surfaces again, in what Peter calls "the female line": "Much of our inheritance reaches us through the female line . . . Truus Schröder-Schräder, Lilly Reich, Charlotte Perriand, Ray Eames." The line continues all the way down to Alison Smithson, in what Peter calls a "conscious homage to the founding mothers."[19] The Smithsons were very sensitive to women's presence in the history of architecture in our century, more than any historian or critic of the period. But the women they identify are always in couples. They refer to Margaret Macdonald and Charles Rennie Mackintosh (nos. 9 and 10), Charlotte Perriand and Le Corbusier (no. 11), Truus Schröder-Schräder and Gerrit Rietveld, Reich and Mies, and so on. They are a couple identifying other couples, perhaps identifying themselves with those couples, as when Alison writes, "I can see the part played by Ray Eames in all that they do: . . . the perseverance in finding what exactly is wanted; although the seeker may not know the exact object until it is finally seen."[20] Or when writing about Mies, Peter suddenly remarks, as if talking to himself, "I want to know more about Lilly Reich."[21] And, in a footnote to this blunt comment, he points to a picture of Mies and Reich in 1933 (no. 8), published in Ludwig Glaeser's little silvery book on Mies's furniture in the collection of The Museum of Modern Art, but says nothing about it.[22] It is a picture



10. **Charles Rennie Mackintosh** (British, 1868–1928). **Margaret Macdonald** (British, 1865–1933). 3 Lilybank Terrace, Glasgow, Scotland. Elevation sketch; design for mantelpiece incorporating painted panel, 1901. Pencil and watercolor on paper, 11 1/2 x 10 3/4" (29.2 x 27.3 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Joseph H. Heil, by exchange



11. Charlotte Perriand, with Le Corbusier holding a plate behind her head like a halo, at her home in place Saint-Sulpice, Paris, 1928. Photograph by Pierre Jeanneret

12. Eileen Gray, Paris, 1926. Photograph by Berenice Abbott. National Museum of Ireland Collection

Opposite:
13. Pierre Jeanneret and Le Corbusier boxing on the beach, c. 1926. Photographer unknown; possibly Charlotte Perriand. Fondation Le Corbusier, Paris

of Mies and Reich on a boat, where they each look in the other's direction but their gazes symptomatically never cross.

Perhaps the obsession with couples also explains the surprising absence of Eileen Gray in the Smithsons' writings. Furniture as architecture was a continuous obsession of the Smithsons and a key part of their fascination with Mackintosh, Rietveld, Mies, and Eames. Gray (no. 12) is mentioned in the couple's essay "The Heroic Period of Modern Architecture" (1965) only for her house in France, at Roquebrune, which is credited to her and Jean Badovici. Her house in Castellar, France, and her many other house projects, interiors, and furniture pass unnoticed.

It is not just heterosexual couples that interest the Smithsons. When discussing Johannes Duiker in "The Heroic Period of Modern Architecture," Peter writes, "It is not for me to deal with the relationship of Duiker and [Bernard] Bijvoet, I speak of them as one emanence."[23] And on the occasion of Pierre Jeanneret's death, Alison and Peter wrote a moving "tribute":

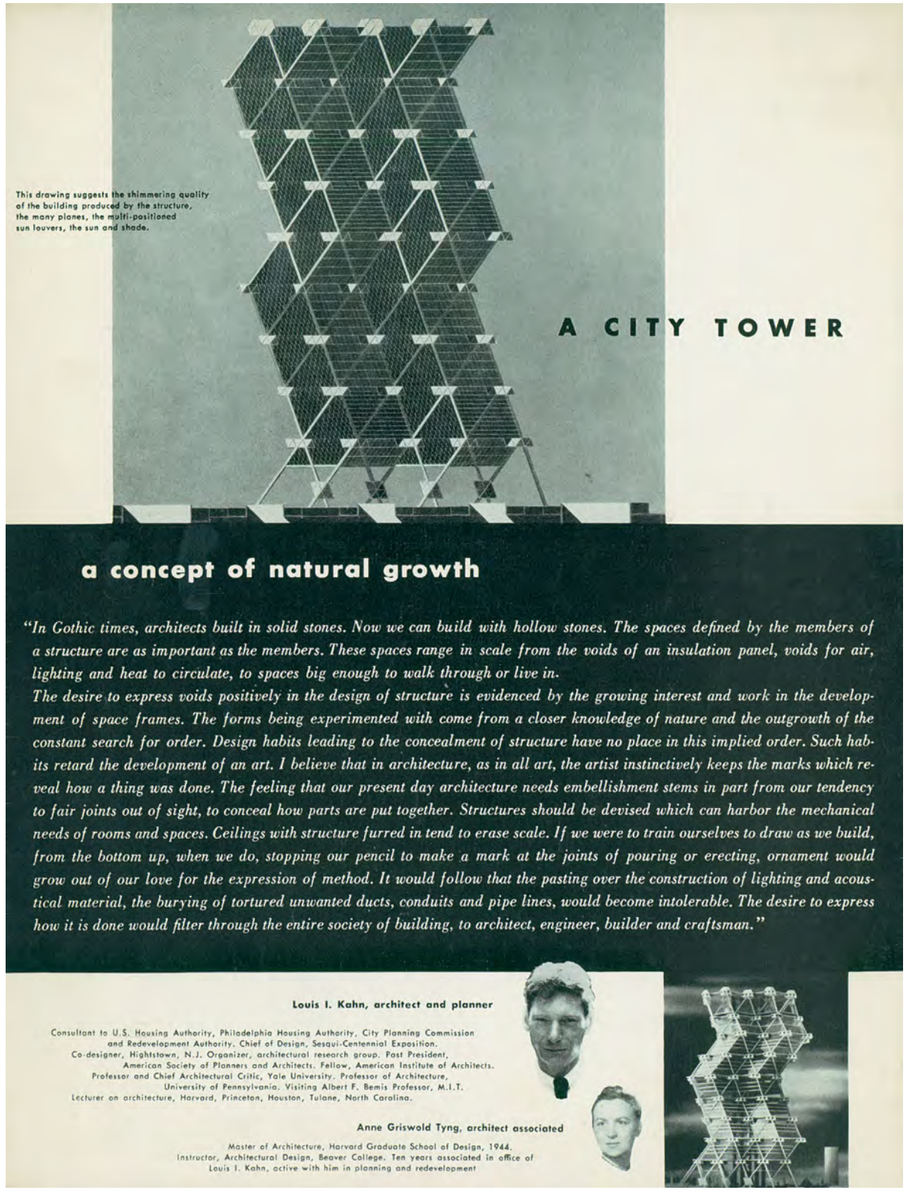
> We have a very spare file called *Significant Houses*. In it is the Farnsworth, a few early Rudolf houses, and very little else. The earliest document is from the *Architect's Journal*, June 27, 1946. It was this we rethought of on the death of Pierre Jeanneret. The house shown there, embodies the sweetest collaboration with Jean Prouvé—who really has been unfortunate in his architect collaborators.[24]

The Smithsons pay tribute to Jeanneret by showing his house with Prouvé. They remove him from Le Corbusier's gigantic shadow only to pair him up again, in "the sweetest collaboration." In the process, they introduce the question of Prouvé's unhappy "marriages" to a succession of architects, including Tony Garnier, Marcel Lods, Le Corbusier, and Georges Candilis. But since the homage is to Jeanneret, bringing up the matter of partnership raises questions about what is perhaps the most unexplored partnership of the century, that between Jeanneret and Le Corbusier (no. 13), and about what the former may have contributed to the latter's work.

The 1950s offered many other couplings as well. Gwendolyn Wright has shown how Catherine Bauer, a social historian, "metamorphosed" the practice of the architect William Wurster, whom she met and married in 1940, by "politicizing" him, infusing his domestic designs with her social and political ideas, just as he helped her to "become aware of the needs of middle-class American families, both in city apartments and suburban homes."[25] Bauer, Wright contends, had earlier radically transformed the work of Lewis Mumford, by spurring him "to take on the grand themes of technology and community, which will become the basis of his best-known books," and Mumford, in turn, encouraged Bauer to "contemplate aspects of design that could not be quantified, to broaden and humanize her definition of housing reform," during the several years of their love affair while he was married to someone else.[26]

Mumford had met Bauer in 1929: "We were drawn together by our common interest in modern architecture. . . . From the beginning we were excited by each other's minds, and plunged and leaped in a sea of ideas like two dolphins, even before our bodies had time for another."[27] Bauer helped Mumford organize the "housing" section of the 1932 MoMA exhibition *Modern Architecture: International Exhibition*,[28] and he described her as a "challenging mind":

> Catherine's challenging mind, particularly during the first two years of our intimacy, had a stimulating and liberating effect upon my whole development. In effect, she played the part of Hilda Wangel in [Henrik] Ibsen's play: the voice of the younger generation, bidding the Master Builder to quit building modest, commonplace houses and to erect instead an audacious tower, even if, when he had reached the top, he might fall to his death.[29]



14. **Louis I. Kahn** (American, born Estonia. 1901–1974). **Anne Griswold Tyng** (American, born China 1920). Page from an Atlas Cement brochure about the City Tower project, Philadelphia, 1957. The drawing at the top is by Tyng. Louis I. Kahn Collection. University of Pennsylvania and the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission

Anne Tyng, one of the first woman architects to graduate from Harvard, became Louis I. Kahn's lover while working in his office and collaborating closely on key designs. In a letter to Tyng, while she was in Rome in 1954, he wrote, "I am waiting anxiously for us to be together again in our wonderful way of love and work which again is nothing really but another form of that love."[30] And Tyng later said, "We were both workaholics in fact, work had become a kind of passionate play. We were able to bring out each other's creativity, building on each other's ideas."[31] As the full tragedy of the relationship and Kahn's ultimate selfishness unfolds, the letters between them remain filled with the details of designs. Published design becomes inseparable from private soap opera.

As the institution of record for the field, MoMA found itself right in the middle of many questions and disputes of attribution. Tyng, for example, who had ended her relationship with Kahn in 1960, shortly before the Museum's *Visionary Architecture* exhibition, was surprised not to be credited for her work in the exhibition, particularly the City Tower in Philadelphia (no. 14):

> I did not get an invitation to the opening. When I asked our secretary about it, she said my name might not be on the credit label. I immediately asked Lou if my name was credited. He answered no, so I suggested it might be better if he called the museum than if I called. There was no Sturm und Drang; he simply called and my name was added. I was profoundly shocked that Lou would do such a thing, especially since *Perspecta* 2 (1953), *Progressive Architecture* (May 1954) and the *Atlas Cement* brochure on the tower (1957) gave credit to both of us. I could not believe that his desire for recognition would erode his integrity, since sharing credit with me would not necessarily diminish his fame.[32]

In the end, the City Tower appeared as "Louis Kahn and Anne Tyng, architects associated." And in subsequent exhibitions both she and Kahn were credited. Kahn publicly, if inadequately, acknowledged her role when in 1973, a year before his death, he gave the National Academy of Design a self-portrait along with a portrait he had made of her in 1946 inscribed, "This is a portrait of Anne Tyng Architect who was the geometry conceiver of the Philadelphia Tower. Well that is not exactly so because I thought of the essence but she knew its geometry. To this day she pursues the essence of constructive geometry, now teaches at the U. of P. and other places like Harvard etc. We worked together on my projects from a purely conception base. Dec 27, 1972."[33] Even in the moment of acknowledgment, he draws a line between essence and geometry that really makes no sense in a project that is all geometry.

Perhaps the new fascination with collaboration is part of a new voyeurism. Television and the Internet have brought a new sense of limits. Talk shows, blogs, and social networking sites are changing the standards for what we consider "private." Can we expect architecture to remain immune? We don't care anymore so much about the heroic figure of the modern architect, about the facade, but about his internal weaknesses. Architects themselves have started to tell us private stories about their desperate attempts to get jobs, about their pathological experiences with clients, about falling in the street, and even about their masseuses. And we pay more attention than when they were trying to dictate to us what their work meant. On the one hand, there is a concerted effort to demystify architectural practice and debunk the heroes. On the other hand, all the details of private life are being incorporated into the heroic images, as if in a kind of therapy. Is this just a new form of attention to the same old figures, demystifying them, but in a way that keeps them at the center of our attention in a moment when we might otherwise be drawn to alternative figures, alternative practices?[34]

15. Madelon Vriesendorp (Dutch, born 1945). Untitled collage illustration for *Fiz*, no. 1 (December 1978): 15. Collection the artist

And who has been keeping the secret so long? Historians and critics have felt more confident—reassured—responding to the idea of an individual author and the formal qualities of the building as an art object than to the messiness of architectural practice. Paradoxically, practicing architects have tended to be more sensitive to the subject, perhaps because they know from their own experience what goes on and are endlessly curious about other architects' practices. Architects in partnerships, from Denise Scott Brown to Rem Koolhaas (no. 15), have publicly complained about the obsession of critics and the media with the single figure, despite their offices' efforts to provide precise credit. Since Scott Brown's talk to the Alliance of Women in Architecture in New York in 1973, on sexism and the star system in architecture, and the subsequent article "Room at the Top? Sexism and the Star System in Architecture"—which circulated privately for many years before it was finally published in Ellen Perry Berkeley and Matilda McQuaid's *Architecture: A Place for Women* in 1989—a number of women architects have been raising issues of their own.[35] It is not by chance that women and gay scholars have been leading the way; the issue of collaboration is indebted to feminist criticism, with its focus on the veiling of contributions and the domesticity of power. More recent scholarship in the areas of race, sexuality, cultural studies, and postcolonial studies has also begun to act as a crucial resource. While rarely referring directly to this scholarship, architectural history is starting to absorb many of its lessons and open research to new questions. Many more secrets are bound to come out.

1. I am grateful to Daria Ricci for her assistance with the research in the MoMA archives.
2. Richard Neutra, letter, January 29, 1969; quoted in Joseph Rosa, *A Constructed View: The Architectural Photography of Julius Shulman* (New York: Rizzoli, 1994), p. 49.
3. Rem Koolhaas, "Eno/abling Architecture," in R. E. Somol, ed., *Autonomy and Ideology: Positioning an Avant-Garde in America* (New York: Monacelli Press, 1997), pp. 292–99.
4. Esther McCoy, letter to Ray and Charles Eames, April 23, 1973. Box 68, Eames Archives, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
5. This was part of the reason for the *Times*'s misattribution in McCoy's article: "Wyden insisted that MoMA omitted Ray," McCoy wrote in an addendum to her letter to the Eameses, referring to the Museum's exhibition *Charles Eames: Furniture from the Collection*, with which her piece was timed to coincide.
6. "His first one-man show of furniture" is how MoMA described the 1946 exhibition in an obituary note, August 22, 1978.
7. Pat Kirkham, *Charles and Ray Eames: Designers of the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1998), pp. 219–20.
8. Arthur Drexler, manuscript of exhibition text, April 10, 1973. The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York.
9. Correspondence of Charles and Ray Eames. Eames Archives, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
10. Alison Smithson, "And Now Dhamas Are Dying Out in Japan," in "Eames Celebration," special issue, *Architectural Design*, September 1966, p. 448; Peter Smithson, "Reproduction Modern," *Architectural Review*, August 1964, p. 144; and Peter Smithson, "Just a Few Chairs and a House: An Essay on the Eames-Aesthetic," in "Eames Celebration", p. 446.
11. Alison and Peter Smithson, *Changing the Art of Inhabitation* (London: Artemis, 1994), p. 79; Peter Smithson, "Just a Few Chairs and a House", p. 445.
12. Peter Smithson, "Three Generations," *ILU&AD Annual Report* (Urbino, Italy, 1980); reprinted in Alison and Peter Smithson, *Changing the Art of Inhabitation*, p. 89.
13. Alison and Peter Smithson, *The Shift* (London: Academy Editions, 1982), p. 22.
14. Peter Smithson, "Three Generations."
15. To accompany the "Three Generations" article, the Smithsons prepared a didactic chart with just one design representing each generation: Mies van der Rohe's House on a Hillside (1934; first generation); the Eameses' wire-chair legs (1951; second generation); and A. & P. Smithson's Lucas Headquarters (1973; third generation).
16. Alison and Peter Smithson, *Changing the Art of Inhabitation*, p. 14.
17. Alison Smithson, "Territory of the Pavilion," lecture given on October 30, 1988; reprinted in ibid., p. 33.
18. Peter Smithson, "Phenomenon in Parallel: Eames House, Patio and Pavilion," lecture given at the University of California, Berkeley, March 1991; reprinted in *Places: A Quarterly Journal of Environmental Design* 7, no. 3 (1991).
19. Ibid.
20. Alison Smithson, "And Now Dhamas Are Dying Out in Japan," p. 447.
21. Peter Smithson, "Going Back Work Points," *Quaderns*, October–December 1984; reprinted in *Changing the Art of Inhabitation*, p. 31.
22. Ludwig Glaeser, *Ludwig Mies van der Rohe: Furniture and Furniture Drawings from the Design Collection and the Mies van der Rohe Archive* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1977), p. 6.
23. Alison and Peter Smithson, "The Heroic Period of Modern Architecture," *Architectural Design*, December 1965; reprinted as *The Heroic Period of Modern Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1981). The quotation appears on page 42 of the book.
24. Alison and Peter Smithson, "Tribute to Pierre Jeanneret," *Architectural Design*, April 1969, p. 178.
25. Gwendolyn Wright, "A Partnership: Catherine Bauer and William Wurster," in Marc Treib, ed., *An Everyday Modernism: The Houses of William Wurster* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), p. 188.
26. Ibid.
27. Lewis Mumford, *My Works and Days: A Personal Chronicle* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1932), p. 302.
28. By the early 1930s Catherine Bauer was already a well-known and outspoken authority on housing. Her book *Modern Housing* was published in 1934 to high acclaim. Besides her collaboration in the 1932 exhibition, she was on a committee on architecture and landscape art at MoMA and was involved in several housing exhibitions at the Museum.
29. Mumford, *My Works and Days*, p. 302.
30. Anne Griswold Tyng, ed., *Louis Kahn to Anne Tyng: The Rome Letters, 1953–1954* (New York: Rizzoli, 1997), p. 7.
31. Ibid., p. 34.
32. Ibid., p. 202.
33. Ibid., p. 213.
34. An example of a recent book that returns a heroic figure to center stage by accumulating unflattering personal details is Nicholas Fox Weber, *Le Corbusier, A Life* (New York: Knopf, 2008).
35. Denise Scott Brown, "Room at the Top? Sexism and the Star System in Architecture," in Ellen Perry Berkeley and Matilda McQuaid, eds., *Architecture: A Place for Women* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989), pp. 237–46.

MIDCENTURY

1. **Robert Aldrich** (American, 1918–1983). *The Big Knife.* 1955. 35mm film (black and white, sound), 111 min. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Film Stills Archive
Ida Lupino

This independent yet unglamorous persona Lupino created and the film industry and audiences embraced may have been the means by which a woman could simultaneously have a successful acting career, learn the techniques of master directors, and establish a thriving production company.

A production photograph taken on the set of the film *Not Wanted* (1949) shows Ida Lupino in the director's chair, balancing a script on her lap, while the official director, Elmer Clifton, is seated behind her. Clifton suffered a heart attack just a few days before production started and Lupino, who had coauthored the screenplay with Paul Jarrico and was producing the film, quietly but expertly stepped into his role. Lupino—who used a director's chair embroidered with "mother of us all"—denied the obvious to reporters and declined screen credit as director, yet she invited Dorothy Arzner, one of the first women directors in Hollywood, to view a "first cut of the first one I've directed."[1] Privately, Lupino announced her directorial career to a community unaccustomed to women power-brokers; publicly, Clifton was the director. Here Lupino is shown at once having power and fearing what such power might bring, much like the female characters in the films she produced and directed between 1949 and 1954 with her company The Filmmakers.

Born in London, Lupino began her Hollywood career as an import promoted as the "English Jean Harlow" for Allan Dwan's film *Her First Affaire* (1932).[2] The adolescent Ida had accompanied her mother, actress Connie Emerald, to a screen test for the film at Paramount Pictures, only to be cast in it herself. The privileged daughter of the Lupino theater dynasty went on to hone roles in which she was a self-reliant woman, but one to whom life happened. This independent yet unglamorous persona Lupino created and the film industry and audiences embraced may have been the means by which a woman could simultaneously have a successful acting career, learn the techniques of master directors, and establish a thriving production company.

After Lupino left Paramount Pictures for Warner Brothers in 1940, she began referring to herself as "the poor man's Bette Davis,"continually losing major roles to the studio favorite.[3] She often incurred the ire of studio boss Jack Warner by objecting to her casting or making script revisions deemed unacceptable. In 1942 she rejected an offer to star opposite Ronald Reagan in *Kings Row* and was immediately placed on suspension at the studio. Eventually a tentative rapprochement was brokered, but the relationship remained strained, and when *Deep Valley* (1947) wrapped, neither party moved to renew her contract.

Lupino now had the creative freedom to evolve beyond acting and into directing. She formed Arcadia Productions and announced that she would star in unsentimental films that encouraged new talent. Her attraction to stories about "poor, bewildered people . . . what we all are" was not surprising—social realism in American cinema was burgeoning, with films by Samuel Fuller, Henry Hathaway, and Nicholas Ray.[4] While Arcadia Productions and the short-lived Emerald Productions proved to be early missteps, they laid the foundation for her third company, The Filmmakers, and a personal and professional alliance with film executive Collier Young (no. 2).

Both Lupino and Young valued low-budget, independent production, on-location shooting, unfamiliar actors, and narrative experimentation that combined fiction and nonfiction. Biographer William Donati notes that a watershed moment in Lupino's move away from more conventional Hollywood films came in 1946, when she met with Italian Neorealist director Roberto Rossellini, who asked her when she would begin making "pictures about ordinary people in ordinary situations."[5] Just three years later, with a two-week shooting schedule and a $150,000 budget, The Filmmakers began production of Lupino's debut as credited director, *Never Fear (The Young Lovers)*, a film that fully manifested her interest in a sociological realism that privileged female characters (no. 3).

Carol (Sally Forrest) and Guy (Keefe Brasselle) are a young dance team poised on the brink of success on the California nightclub circuit. Despite Carol's nerves on opening night, their sensuous dance garners enthusiastic reviews. In a romantic, celebratory moment on the beach, Guy proposes to Carol and she accepts. As the sun sets the lovers embrace, believing their future will be bright.

2. **Collier Young** and **Ida Lupino** at Cocoanut Grove, Los Angeles, 1949. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Film Stills Archive

3. **Ida Lupino** on the set of *Never Fear (The Young Lovers)* (1950), Los Angeles, 1949. The Estate of Ida Lupino

But at rehearsal the next day, Carol, feverish and disoriented, collapses. She is diagnosed with polio.

Here Lupino moves the narrative from the glamorous Club 18 to the sterile interior of the Kabat-Kaiser Institute for Carol's physical rehabilitation. Unlike Guy, who is clearly self-assured and independent, Carol has at all times been in the protective company of her fiancé, her father, or her doctor. In the clinic a now-solitary Carol is urged to work hard to regain the ability to walk—and perhaps one day to dance. Her health and libido are gone and she descends into self-pity, reluctantly encouraging Guy to move on. Fellow patient Len (Hugh O'Brian) offers companionship to Carol, who hysterically begs, "Len, tell me I'm a woman! Please love me!" After Len's tender rejection, and with uncharacteristic defiance, Carol digs deep and musters the courage to triumph over polio. Soon she is ready to leave the clinic and resume her life. Walking tentatively with a cane, she approaches the exit and bravely tells Len, "I'll be fine now." Shown for the first time by herself in the external world, she hugs the building as pedestrians race by. Guy appears in the blinding light in the distance, and as the music swells and he encourages her, Carol decisively drops her cane.

Lupino's arduous path to this transcendent point in her career—as producer, co-screenwriter, and director of *Never Fear* at the age of thirty-one—is similar to Carol's challenging physical rehabilitation, as well as her own: she battled polio in 1934, only to recover and make three films the following year. The "mutilated, dependent intersubjective version of womanhood" that Carol represents in her illness is eventually cast aside, allowing her to enter a fuller relationship with Guy (even if midcentury assumptions that men are responsible for the well-being of women run throughout the film).[6] Similarly Lupino rebounded from career-crushing disagreements with studio bosses to renegotiate stronger, more lucrative contracts, in which she called the shots for her own production company. This multifaceted employability within the construct of Hollywood was radical and her own in the mid-twentieth century. By 1955, with five directorial credits to Lupino's name, The Filmmakers could no longer sustain the expense of self-distribution and ceased production (also that year, Lupino starred in *The Big Knife* [no. 1], directed by Robert Aldrich). She successfully transitioned to television directing and in 1966 directed her last feature film, *The Trouble With Angels*.

Lupino once called herself a "bulldozer" in order to secure financing for her production company, and she referred to herself as "mother"—the quintessence of creation—while on set.[7] She was an independent filmmaker who understood her worth as a star and challenged studio expectations concerning beauty and female compliance, yet labeling her as a brainy iconoclast seems inadequate—appropriately romantic but frivolously sentimental. Ida Lupino's work as an actress, director, producer, and screenwriter remains singular, a vital contribution to the evolution of women in cinema and of American independent film production in general.

1. William Donati, *Ida Lupino: A Biography* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1996), p. 152.
2. Ally Acker, *Reel Women* (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 1997), p. 74.
3. Annette Kuhn, "Introduction: Intestinal Fortitude," in Kuhn, ed., *Queen of the 'B's: Ida Lupino Behind the Camera* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger Publishers, 1995), p. 2.
4. Donati, *Ida Lupino*, p. 135.
5. Ibid., p. 146.
6. Ronnie Scheib, "Never Fear (1950)," in *Queen of the 'B's*, p. 54.
7. Donati, *Ida Lupino*, p. 167.

ELIZABETH CATLETT (Mexican and American, born USA 1915) / EMILY TALBOT

"A work of art may be spiritually, emotionally or intellectually rewarding," sculptor and printmaker Elizabeth Catlett suggested in 1975, "especially in the realm of the real/ordinary/popular. It does not need revolution as its subject in order to be revolutionary . . . but it can provoke thought and prepare us for change."[1] Catlett has been an active proponent of this statement throughout her career, especially with her graphic art, which has allowed her to respond to contemporary politics and denounce social injustice while also engaging in substantial aesthetic experimentation.

Catlett's artistic identity was cultivated as a graduate student at the University of Iowa in the late 1930s, where she was encouraged by one of her most influential teachers, painter Grant Wood, "to take as her subject what she knew best."[2] Catlett resolved to focus on the depiction of black women, a subject she felt was often overlooked or relegated to the realm of the exotic in contemporary art.[3] As the granddaughter of slaves, Catlett was fully aware of the privilege and responsibility of being an artist, a perspective that informed her desire to make art for the working classes.[4] Participating in artistic communities in the early 1940s, such as the South Side Community Art Center in Chicago and the Art Students League and George Washington Carver School in New York, further shaped Catlett's vision of art as a tool for teaching, motivating, and inspiring people.

1. *Malcolm X Speaks for Us.* 1969. Linoleum cut, sheet 41 $^{5}/_{16}$ x 30 $^{11}/_{16}$" (104 x 77.9 cm). Publisher and printer: the artist, Mexico City. Edition: 40. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of the artist

Prints are an ideal conduit for this endeavor; they are inexpensive to produce and distribute to a wide audience. Catlett first studied lithography in 1944, while working with Harry Sternberg at the Art Students League, but her interest in the medium was greatly influenced two years later, when she traveled to Mexico City on a Julius Rosenwald Fellowship.[5] In Mexico Catlett worked as a guest artist at El Taller de Gráfica Popular (the People's Graphic Workshop, or TGP), an artists' collective and print workshop focused on making visually accessible art for the public. Catlett was inspired by the Taller's project *Estampas de la Revolución Mexicana* (1947), a series of eighty-five linoleum cuts featuring the everyday heroes of the Mexican Revolution. For her Rosenwald project she made a series of fifteen linocuts depicting the black woman's experience in America, including portraits of important historical figures such as Sojourner Truth and Harriet Tubman alongside scenes of forced labor, social inequality, and violence. Calling the portfolio *The Negro Woman*, Catlett printed the series on colored tissue paper and sold them at book fairs for an affordable three pesos each.[6]

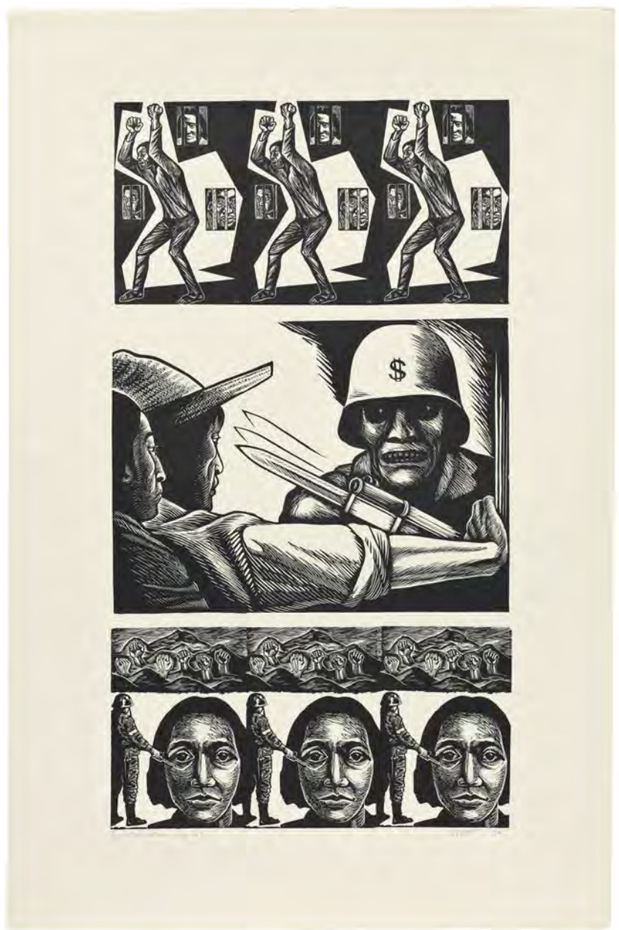
Catlett moved to Mexico permanently in 1947 and continued working at the TGP for another twenty years, contributing to projects for various nonprofit organizations and unions as well as the Mexican government's education campaign. The Taller encouraged a graphic approach that employed bold black-and-white imagery and straightforward descriptive techniques to make the visual message as direct as possible. Catlett's subjects were well suited to this style, and she began experimenting with her carved marks to convey rounder forms and intricate shading. *Sharecropper*, a linoleum cut from 1952 (no. 2), demonstrates Catlett's adroitness at suggesting a variety of textures, such as skin, textile, and straw, using a limited range of short, decisive lines. The subject was inspired by the sharecroppers Catlett saw in North Carolina while visiting her grandmother, but here, unlike previous versions of the theme, she shifts focus from the act of labor to the intimate perspective of the worker herself.[7] Seen from below, only the woman's head and shoulders are depicted, portrayed in a state of dignified contemplation. Although the sharecropper's aging features and threadbare clothing are evident, they do not diminish her dignity; instead, Catlett utilizes the tactile evidence of poverty to reinforce her subject's strength.

Catlett became a Mexican citizen in 1962, but she has remained socially and artistically engaged with African American politics, actively participating in the black art movement in the 1960s and 1970s. Her color linoleum cut *Malcolm X Speaks for Us* (1969, no. 1) represents the famous activist surrounded by three anonymous female faces, each printed multiple times in three distinct rows. Melanie Anne Herzog has suggested that Catlett's design "demands inclusion" for women "in a movement reluctant to acknowledge them," but it is also a meditation on shape and color.[8] To organize her composition, Catlett rearranged the placement of the heads until the image was as effective as possible:

> I had the idea of a lot of women . . . of different ages around the head of Malcolm—as though they were absorbing from him. . . . I experimented with the heads in different ways—repeated one that I had already printed someplace else. And I used repetition

2. *Sharecropper.* 1952, published 1968–70. Linoleum cut, sheet 18 1/2 x 18 15/16" (47 x 48.1 cm). Publisher: Taller de Gráfica Popular and the artist, Mexico City. Printer: the artist and José Sanchez, Mexico City. Edition: artist's proof outside the edition of 60. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. The Ralph E. Shikes Fund and Purchase

3. *Central America Says No!* 1986. Linoleum cut, sheet 47 9/16 x 31 9/16" (120.8 x 80.1 cm). Publisher: the artist, Mexico City. Printer: José Sanchez, Mexico City. Edition: 10. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. The Ralph E. Shikes Fund



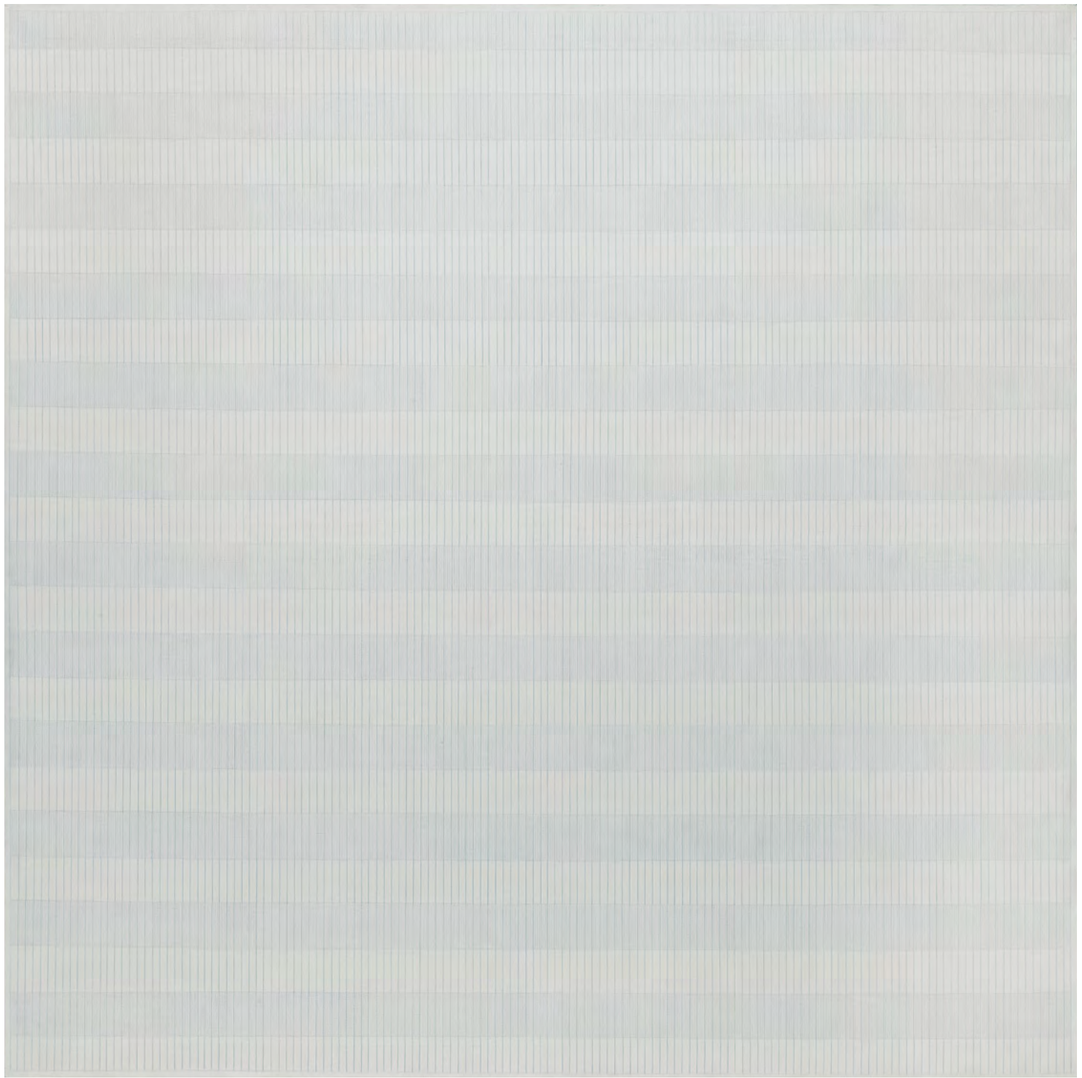
to strengthen the idea. I think that this kind of experimentation is important in remaining creatively and esthetically productive.[9]

The linocut technique—a printing method that can produce large editions without wear on the plate—allowed Catlett to work and rework her composition.[10] She sourced the top frieze of female faces from one of her *Negro Woman* plates, and combined several well-known photographs of Malcolm X to construct the version seen here. Catlett formed a weaving, weblike monotype to link the various faces together, reinforcing her message that the legacy of Malcolm X should unite the black community.[11]

Catlett similarly experimented with format and meaning in her large linoleum cut *Central America Says No!* (1986, no. 3). In this piece Catlett used a more explicit triptych structure to denounce the United States' occupation of the titular region, combining three of her earlier plates to form the image. At the top and bottom her linocuts *Chile II* (1980–82) and *Chile I* (1980), respectively, are reproduced three times each, while the central panel is culled from the 1968 print *Latin America Says No!*[12] Catlett's reuse of previous plates demonstrates the universality of her imagery but also suggests a rethinking of the rules of modern art altogether. *Central America Says No!* was conceived in response to a specific political crisis, but Catlett conveys the subject in terms of clearly identifiable emotions that translate across national and racial boundaries. Originality and exclusivity are irrelevant to her process as she employs visual material in the service of her message, reprinting plates as necessary.

Seven decades into her career, Catlett continues to address issues of race and social inequality in her graphic work. She made six lithographs for Margaret Walker's illustrated book *For My People* (1992) and recently produced a lithograph for the NAACP to commemorate their centennial in 2009. "Artists," Catlett has said, "should work to the end that love, peace, justice, and equal opportunity prevail all over the world; to the end that all people take joy in full participation in the rich material, intellectual, and spiritual resources of this world's lands, peoples, and goods."[13] Promoting this concept in her artistic practice, Catlett has engaged the freedom and versatility of printmaking to create powerful, innovative art for the people.

1. Richard J. Powell, "Face to Face: Elizabeth Catlett's Graphic Work," in Jeanne Zeidler, ed., *Elizabeth Catlett: Works on Paper, 1944–1992* (Hampton, Va.: Hampton University Museum, 1993), p. 52.
2. Melanie Anne Herzog, *Elizabeth Catlett: An American Artist in Mexico* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000), p. 19.
3. Ibid., pp. 6–7, 23.
4. "I was able to study and become [an artist]," Catlett has said, "only because my ex-slave grandparents could educate my mother, and she, in turn, as a widow would dedicate herself to the education of her children. So you see, I am not of the exceptional. I am rather of the fortunate." Ibid., pp. 14–15.
5. The Mexican muralists provided a relevant example to African American artists who were seeking ways to articulate their own history and culture. See Lizzetta LeFalle-Collins and Shifra M. Goldman, *In the Spirit of Resistance: African-American Modernists and the Mexican Muralist School* (New York: The American Federation of Arts, 1996).
6. Ellen Sragow, "An Interview with Elizabeth Catlett," *Journal of the Print World* 17, no. 4 (Fall 1994): 30.
7. Catlett included a sharecropper in her *Negro Woman* series, depicting a full-length, barefoot woman tilling a row of vegetables in *I Have Always Worked Hard in the Fields* (1946). Ibid. See also Herzog, "Elizabeth Catlett," in Elizabeth G. Seaton, ed., *Paths to the Press: Printmaking and American Women Artists, 1910–1960* (Manhattan: Marianna Kistler Beach Museum of Art, Kansas State University, 2006), pp. 108–9.
8. Herzog, *Elizabeth Catlett*, p. 137.
9. Catlett, quoted in Samella Lewis, *The Art of Elizabeth Catlett* (Claremont, Calif.: Hancraft Studios, 1984), p. 91.
10. Catlett says she mostly made linoleum prints "because that is a suitable medium for public art—easy and inexpensive and you can make the editions as large as you need them." Catlett, quoted in Samella S. Lewis, "Elizabeth Catlett," in Zeidler, ed., *Elizabeth Catlett*, pp. 8–9.
11. Catlett, interview with the author, January 6, 2009.
12. Two editions of *Chile II* are known, one edition of twenty dated 1980 and a second edition of forty dated 1982. I am grateful to the Sragow Gallery for providing helpful information regarding the dates of *Chile I* and *Chile II*.
13. Lewis, "Elizabeth Catlett," p. 26.



1. *The Tree*. 1964. Oil and pencil on canvas, 72 x 72" (182.8 x 182.8 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Larry Aldrich Foundation Fund

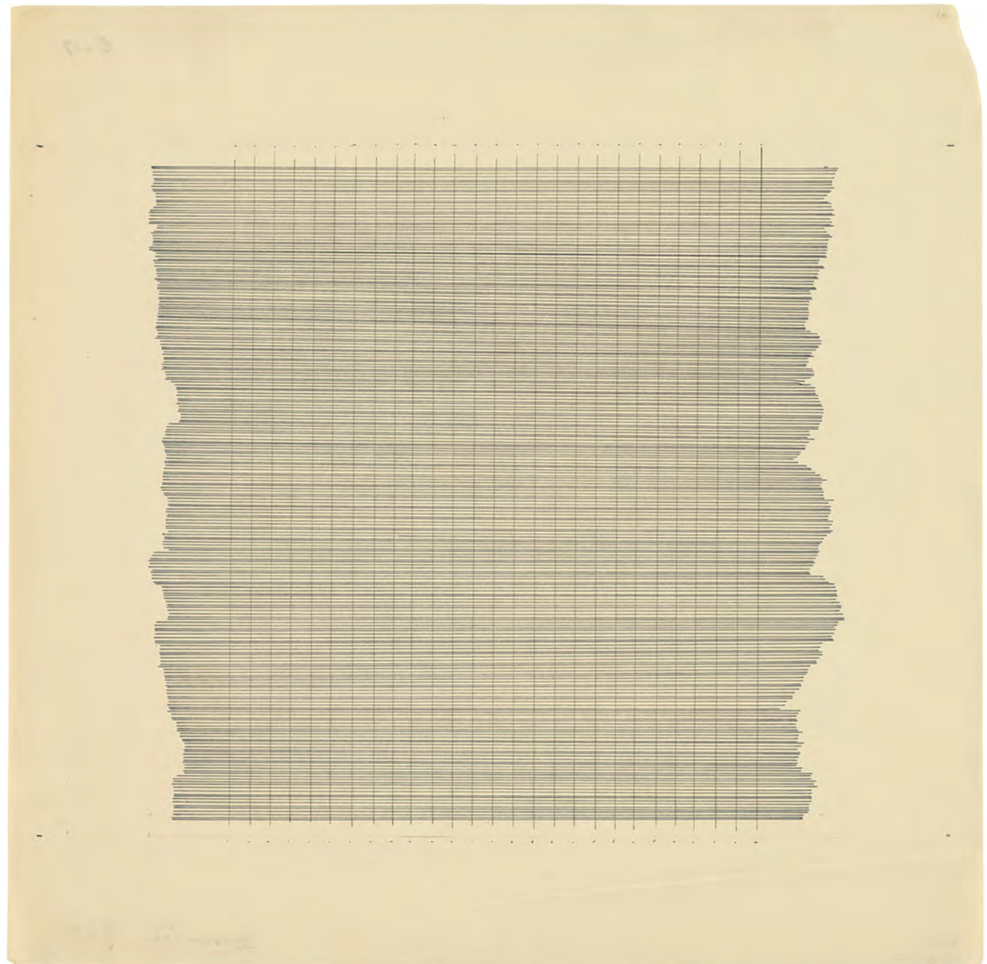
When asked if she was friendly with the avant-garde composer John Cage, Agnes Martin answered that she was, "But I don't agree with him."[1] When prodded, she offered, "Well for one thing, he wrote a book called *Silence* and in the very first line he said 'there is no such thing as silence.' But I think there is. When you walk into a forest there are all kinds of sounds but you feel as though you have stepped into silence. I believe that is silence." This brief analysis speaks volumes about Martin's artistic philosophy and her oeuvre. Martin's work, which takes the grid as its organizing principle, reflects a belief that opposites can simultaneously coexist within a whole. Her intricately executed paintings and drawings are imbued with a sense of liminality, meaning they exist on a threshold between two states and reflect a position in which one's identity becomes barely perceptible.[2] Her work strikes a balance between binaries, between uniformity and difference, visibility and invisibility, and materiality and spirituality, which has allowed viewers to see what they want in her work and has contributed to her consistently wide appeal.

Martin's artistic philosophy was shaped by a combination of her Presbyterian upbringing, particularly her belief in predestination;[3] the writings of Chuang Tzu and Lao Tzu, Chinese philosophers associated with Taoism who focused on humility; and Zen Buddhism, which teaches the importance of detachment and quieting the mind.[4] In her early career she moved from representational images to biomorphic shapes and eventually to geometry, having been influenced by the ancient Greeks, who she felt recognized the impossibility of finding perfect circles and straight lines in nature but, like her, strove for perfection nonetheless.[5] Martin blended these varied influences into a highly personal perspective which informed her work throughout her career, especially as she moved toward full abstraction.

Martin took up the grid in 1960, while living in New York City, in an effort to express her own emotional experiences, particularly, she said, abstract conditions like "happiness and innocence and beauty."[6] *Untitled* (no. 2), a drawing from that year, is an early example of the way in which her work employs both standardization and variation. The undulating sides contrast with the grid's quiet interior, creating the appearance that the drawing is measuring something, such as sound or movement. A strong tension exists between the strict regularity of the lines and the individuality stemming from the artist's hand. This is evident at the edges of the horizontal lines, where the ink is often darker, and in those lines which come so close together that they merge. The tiny boxes of the grid, moreover, vary slightly in height and length. Martin's interest in such infinitesimal differences may be explained by her belief, inspired in part by Christian theology, that one should imagine oneself as a grain of sand or a blade of grass; each at first looks like every other, but in reality they are always unique. Like so many other paradoxical positions in her work, Martin's strict repetition achieves something totally unexpected, an almost infinite variety of difference.[7]

The Tree (1964, no. 1) epitomizes the balance between visibility and invisibility in Martin's use of the grid. Her subtle use of color gradations makes the delicate pencil lines seem almost to disappear. Martin's self-effacing and spare compositions led many to view her work within the context of the emerging Minimalist movement, but her interest in metaphysical experience allied her more with Abstract Expressionism's spiritual ambitions. At the same time, she rejected the self-indulgent, egocentric aspects of Abstract Expressionism, whose practitioners used color, texture, and scale to create emotionally expressive canvases that came to stand for American individuality and who were often known for their bravado and self-importance. Instead, Martin sought to express her emotions as experienced "when our minds are empty of ego and the distractions of the everyday world."[8] Martin's focus on egolessness sets her apart from many of her male peers.[9] The somewhat anonymous nature of the grid, which reveals nothing about the artist's biography, gave her the freedom to succeed without being marginalized because of her gender. The often barely perceptible nature of her presence in the work provided her with a shroud of invisibility that focused attention on the work itself.

In 1967, frustrated with the distractions of New York and caught in a "confusion that had to be solved," Martin got into her pickup truck, drove across the United States and Canada, and settled near the village of Cuba, New Mexico.[10] She stopped making art until 1971, when Parasol Press invited her to create a series of prints, which, titled *On a Clear Day*, was exhibited at The Museum of Modern Art in May 1973. She returned to painting soon thereafter.

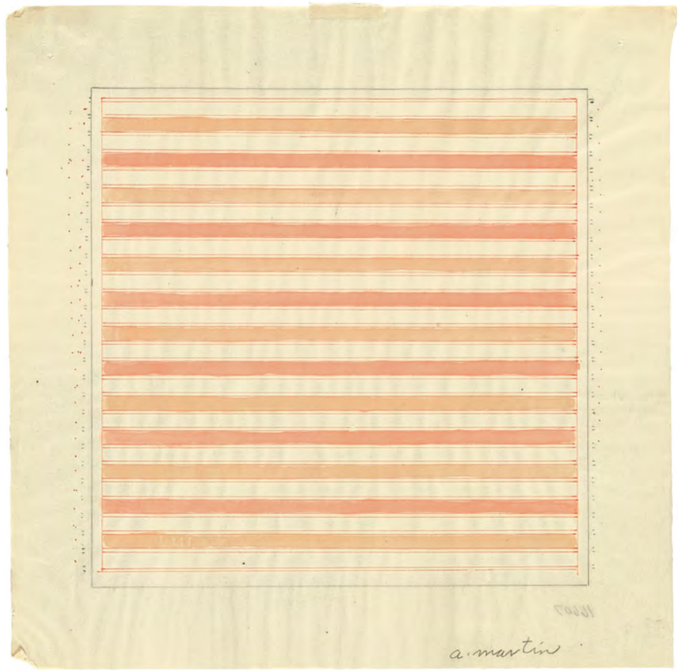


The work Martin made in the next phase of her career, which lasted until her death in 2004, is marked by horizontal or vertical bands of translucent color as well as a tension between spirituality and materiality, as exemplified by *Untitled* (1978, no. 3). This drawing, done in watercolor and colored ink, suggests both containment and boundlessness. Indeed, like the "empty" rectangles created between the lines in her earlier grid works, the blank horizontal bands provide a quiet space, crucial to meditation.[11] At the same time, the alternating bands of light and darker orange highlight the soft materiality of the surface, and produce the illusion of movement. The composition, like her other work from this period, at once suggests a higher realm and brings us back to our own bodies, making us aware of ourselves in relation to the work of art and our physical environment.

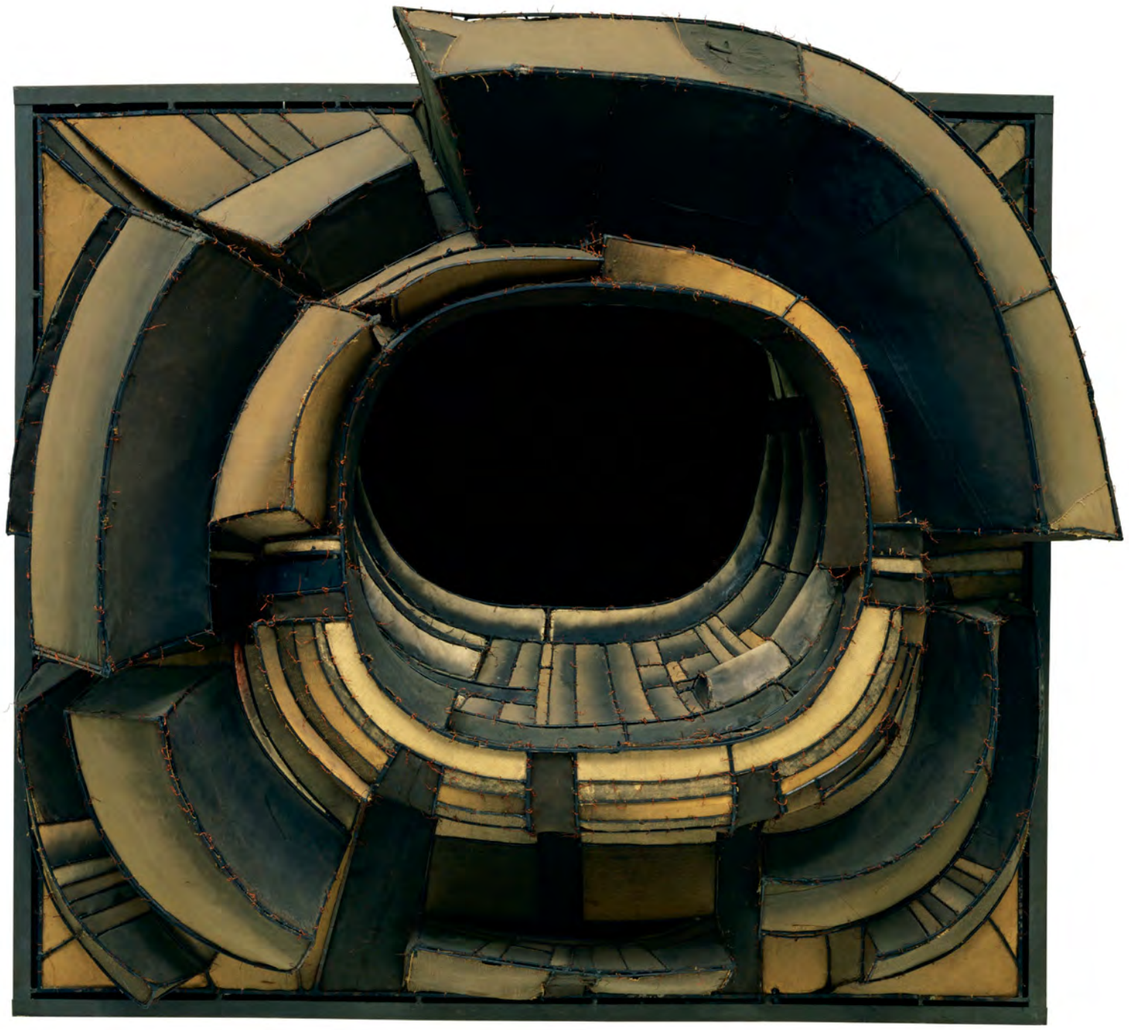
2. Opposite:
Untitled. 1960. Ink on paper, 11 7/8 x 12 1/8" (30.2 x 30.6 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired with matching funds from The Lauder Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts

3. *Untitled*. 1978. Watercolor and colored ink on transparentized paper, 9 x 9" (22.9 x 22.9 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. The Judith Rothschild Foundation Contemporary Drawings Collection Gift

Martin's work reflects her fascination with those dangerous and often messy spaces in between opposing sides. In her canvases and drawings we can see individuality or uniformity, the artist's presence or her absence, the spiritual realm or the concrete world, or all of the above, because they are all present in some way. Some critics try to categorize Martin as a Minimalist or an ascetic artist-monk; her work, however, consistently shakes off these constraints. It helps us to realize that silence can exist in sound; all we have to do is clear our minds and listen.



1. Agnes Martin, quoted in Irving Sandler, "You Have to Do What You Have to Do," in Patricia Bickers and Andrew Wilson, eds., *Talking Art: Interviews with Artists since 1976* (London: Art Monthly, Ridinghouse, 2007), p. 423.
2. On the liminal, see Victor Turner, *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1967), pp. 95–99.
3. Martin once said that "everybody grows up to be what they were born to be." Holland Cotter, "Like Her Paintings, Quiet, Unchanging and Revered," *New York Times*, January 19, 1997, Sect. 2, p. 45.
4. On Martin's study of Buddhism, see Barbara Haskell, "Agnes Martin: The Awareness of Perfection," in Haskell, ed., *Agnes Martin* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1992), p. 95. In the late 1940s Martin attended free lectures by D. T. Suzuki, who is known for bringing the teachings of Zen to much broader audiences in the United States.
5. Ibid., p. 102.
6. Cotter, "Like Her Paintings, Quiet, Unchanging and Revered," p. 45.
7. On Martin's infinite variety, see Briony Fer, "Drawing Drawing: Agnes Martin's Infinity," in Carol Armstrong and Catherine de Zegher, eds., *Women Artists at the Millennium* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2006), pp. 177–78.
8. Haskell, "Agnes Martin," p. 93.
9. Like Martin, artists associated with the Minimalist movement often used the grid as well as industrial techniques to efface their own individuality in their work, but they sought to achieve different aims, to do away with emotion completely.
10. Haskell, "Agnes Martin," p. 111.
11. These "empty" rectangles have been called "a visual equivalent to the emptiness of the mind" necessary to perceive "the absolute." Ibid., p. 106.



1. *Untitled.* 1961. Welded steel, canvas, black fabric, copper wire, and soot, 6' 8 1/4" x 7' 5" x 34 3/4" (203.6 x 226 x 88 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Kay Sage Tanguy Fund

Lee Bontecou's oeuvre unfolds like an upward-bound spiral, at once expanding in and revolving around mutating motifs that appear and reappear in her sculpture, drawings, and prints with vigorous assertiveness, rendered with breathtaking skill. These themes cover a veritable universe: "My most persistently recurring thought," she has said, "is to work in a scope as far-reaching as possible; to express a feeling of freedom in all its ramifications—its awe, beauty, magnitude, horror and baseness. This feeling embraces ancient, present and future worlds; from caves to jet engines, landscapes to outer space, from visible nature to the inner eye, all encompassed in the cohesiveness of my inner world."[1]

Bontecou's sustained career has followed both ordinary and unusual paths. Born in Providence, Rhode Island, in 1931, she attended the Art Students League in New York from 1952 to 1955, and went to Rome for two years, starting in 1956, on a Fulbright scholarship. She was one of few women artists to achieve extensive critical and commercial acclaim in the 1960s, but in the 1970s she deliberately stepped back from the art world, withdrawing her work from public view.[2]

She has earned the reverence of many women artists who feel she has opened up the possibility for work that is at once entirely personal and highly aggressive, but Bontecou has been reluctant to embrace a feminist platform or sensibility, emphasizing in her statements and interviews her work's openness and autonomy and the specific thought and engineering processes that pervade her practice. Her work in the collection of The Museum of Modern Art, drawn from more than forty years of astonishing output, displays an enthralling internal coherence, in particular in a recurrent archetypal structure that serves as a conduit between various bodies of drawing and sculptural work: a composite armature made of multiple sections or facets, forging, perhaps against the odds, an object that alternates between synthetic wholeness and disjunctive entropy.

This structure and its process of construction date back to Bontecou's student years. While in Rome in the mid-1950s, she began to experiment extensively with drawings, testing innovative techniques and discovering, for example, that "by cutting off the oxygen from my blowtorch tanks and just drawing with the acetylene, I got a beautiful black line. I started making huge soot drawings. I finally got that dark I wanted, the black I wanted. And a kind of landscape, or a worldscape."[3] A stunning untitled drawing from around 1958 (no. 2) is minutely constructed of hatched juxtaposed areas in a manner not dissimilar from patchworked sculptural surfaces she had already made and would later make. This drawing also introduces a circular void that became, in the following years, a pervasive iconographic and structural element. Identified by critic Dore Ashton as "central to anything Bontecou undertakes," with its connotations of "sexual imagery and sadistic symbols of destruction, most prominently the mouth of a gun," this motif is isolated as the main subject of three untitled drawings from the early 1960s.[4] In these, the literal opening appears simultaneously as void and filled, an entity that fluidly morphs from the identifiable—the bodily orifice, the topographic cavity, the watchful eye—into abstract depictions of the hollow and the unknown.

This circular motif is the defining feature of an untitled sculpture from 1959 that typifies a radical departure Bontecou made in the late 1950s. During this period the welded-metal armatures, latent in her previous, more naturalistic sculpture, began to surface and come into the foreground, and this now-visible structure became a distinctive, primary element. These armatures were lightweight frames to which Bontecou secured pieces of canvas with wire, and she then reinforced the overall construction with rabbit-skin glue. The result, a playful twisting of the conventions of frame and image, allowed Bontecou to bring a pictorial, painterly quality into her sculpture, inviting the viewer's perception to shift back and forth between the "image" and the imposing concrete quality of her materials. She later remarked about her fragmented, cumulative practice, "I still work in pieces. That way I can extend the surface way beyond what it naturally will do. I get involved with space."[5]

In the early 1960s these welded metal-and-canvas boxes gained in complexity, scale, and suggestiveness, eloquently culminating in an untitled sculpture from 1961 (no. 1). Like other works from this period, it suggests a range of associations, from cosmic to anthropomorphic, from mechanistic to sexual, reflecting the range of Bontecou's interests, including natural forms and space exploration. Its construction implies a series of concentric elements that simultaneously advance and retreat in a succession of outward and inward movements, an endless process of alternating absorption and expulsion—alluding, perhaps obliquely, to the operating mechanism of a jet plane. Bontecou incorporated into this work a range of found materials scavenged from the street and the laundry below her studio (conveyer belts, heavy-duty canvas mailbags) or purchased on nearby Canal Street (grommets, bolts, washers, spools, tarpaulins). The rough

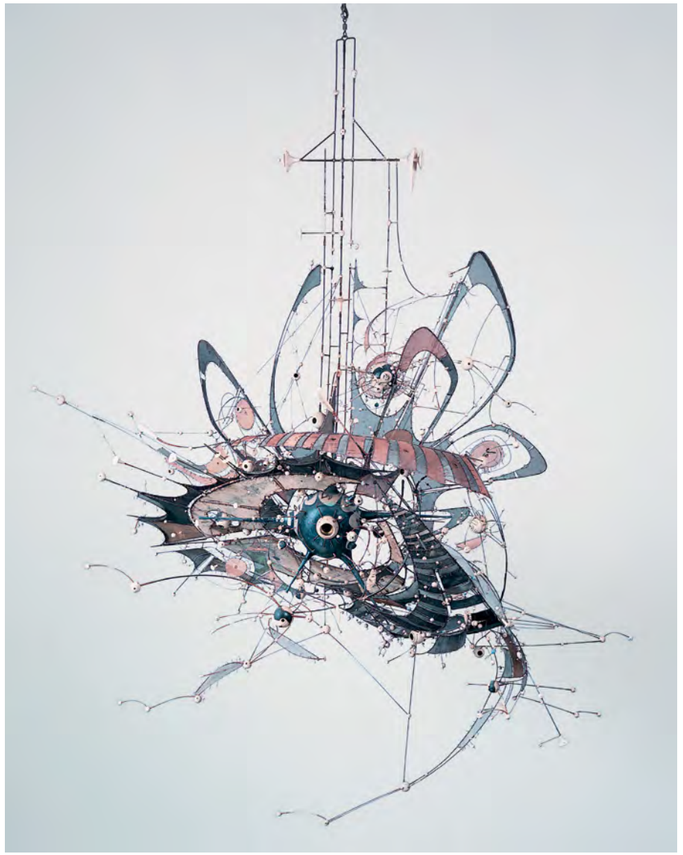
2. *Untitled.* c. 1958. Soot on paperboard, 30 x 40" (76.2 x 101.6 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. The Judith Rothschild Foundation Contemporary Drawings Collection Gift

Opposite:
3. *Untitled.* 1980–98. Welded steel, porcelain, wire mesh, canvas, and wire, 7 x 8 x 6' (213.4 x 243.8 x 182.9 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Philip Johnson (by exchange) and the Nina and Gordon Bunshaft Bequest Fund

materiality of these ready-made utilitarian objects—and perhaps the new layers of meaning that they brought into the work—seemed to attract her: "Old mailbags—I found them under the mailboxes. I started cutting up the canvas. And I would get wonderful values with it. I could get depth that was not possible in the regular pieces of canvas. If I did it all in steel or metal, I wouldn't get the kind of illusion that you have in painting."[6]

The synergy between nature and fiction that had characterized Bontecou's work began to transmute in the late 1960s into a more denotative language that directly corresponded to forms observed in biological life. An untitled drawing from 1970, featuring three transparent fish rendered in white charcoal on black paper, relates directly to the vacuum-formed fish that she was making around that time, echoing the sculpture's translucent materials as well as the exposed, intricate method the artist used to assemble them. The forms are naturalistically rendered, but their disturbingly fantastic mechanomorphic features verge on the grotesque. Similarly hypnagogic images appear in subsequent drawings of extraordinary waves and plants, which continuously morph into progressive variations on the human eye.

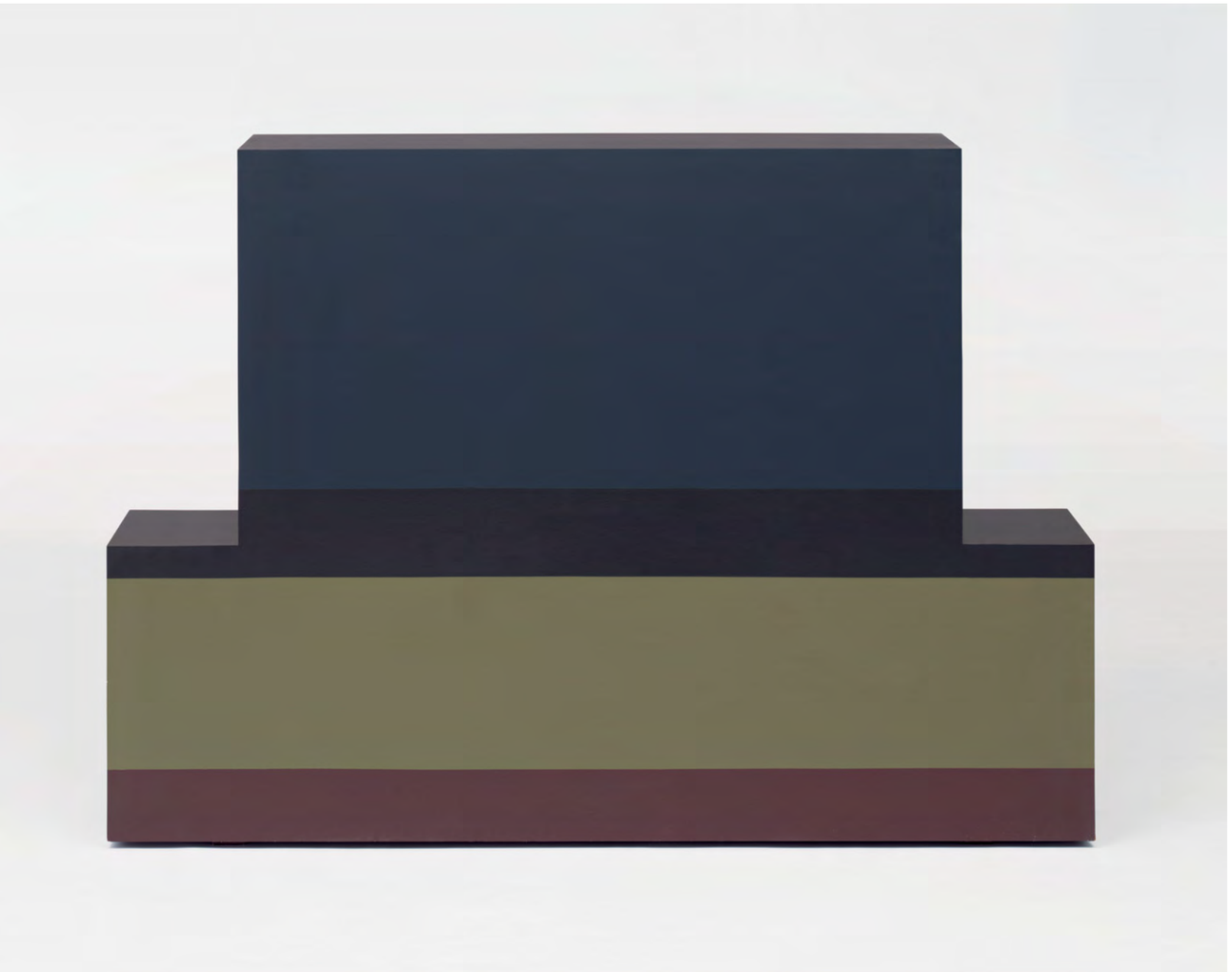
Toward the end of the 1970s Bontecou went back to working with clay, although in a manner quite distinct from her terracotta sculptures of the mid-1950s, and subsequently produced a series of delicate sculptures of irregular spherical porcelain beads connected with wire. One of the largest and most spectacular, from 1980–98 (no. 3), is a marvelously intricate display of adjoining diaphanous, saillike planes made of screen wire, evocative of eyes and celestial bodies. This work is one of several structures that were suspended from the ceiling like a mobile: "I always wanted to move away from the wall, so I began hanging the works. I started small, combining porcelain, different clays, and screen wire. The process was getting closer to drawing, which is so free.



And it can go on endlessly. A lot of ships. A sense of wind."[7]

When suspended, these full-blown structures opened for Bontecou a range of options, allowing her to work on a variety of scales and create ever more complex internal spaces. With each addition of wire and beads she created level upon level of architectural structures, each level extending the works farther into space to remarkable effect: a scattering of structural elements in a cosmological system in which gravity seems temporarily suspended. Here Bontecou has reinvented once again her practice of amalgamation, bringing her work full circle, as if one of her earlier welded-metal-and-canvas pieces had been captured in perfect stillness as it dramatically burst in space. "No matter how much you think you're doing something different, you're repeating yourself," Bontecou once remarked. "It's almost like a spiral. Hopefully, you go around and come back again and go up higher if possible."[8] Thus she invokes the continuous interplay, at once formal and philosophical, between the organic and the artificial, in work at once personal and universal, both firmly grounded in keen observation of the natural world and yet deliriously oneiric, transforming what is seen into what might be.

1. Lee Bontecou, quoted in Elizabeth A. T. Smith, "Abstract Sinister," *Art in America* 81, no. 9 (September 1993): 87.
2. By 1966 Bontecou had had three solo exhibitions at the influential Leo Castelli Gallery in New York, and had participated in a number of major exhibitions, both nationally and internationally, including the 1961 Bienal de São Paulo; *Americans 1963* at The Museum of Modern Art, New York; the 1963 Corcoran Biennial; *Recent American Sculpture* at the Jewish Museum, New York, in 1964; and Documenta III in Kassel, Germany, in 1964, where she was one of few woman exhibitors. In addition to numerous reviews in prominent art journals, magazines like *Cosmopolitan*, *Life*, and *Newsweek* dedicated articles to her work. She is the only woman featured in *New York: The New Art Scene*, with photographs by Ugo Mulas and text by Alan Solomon (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967), alongside a roster of male artists that includes Robert Rauschenberg, Jasper Johns, Frank Stella, Roy Lichtenstein, Andy Warhol, and Claes Oldenburg.
3. Bontecou, lecture, Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Summer 1988. The Skowhegan Lecture Archive, The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York; quoted in Lilian Tone, *Lee Bontecou*, exhibition brochure (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2004), p. 2.
4. Dore Ashton, "Art," *Arts & Architecture* 80, no. 1 (January 1963): 5.
5. Bontecou, quoted in Eleanor C. Munro, *Originals: American Women Artists* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979), p. 383.
6. Bontecou, quoted in Tone, *Lee Bontecou*, p. 4. Bontecou's light and dark values, as well as bulging circular shapes, would later resonate, though in greater stylized form, in the drawing *Untitled* (1967) in the Museum's collection.
7. Bontecou, Skowhegan lecture; quoted in Tone, *Lee Bontecou*, p. 13.
8. Bontecou, Skowhegan lecture (see n. 3).



1. *Catawba.* 1962. Painted wood, 42 1/2 x 60 x 11" (106.6 x 152.4 x 27.9 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Given anonymously

"How dependent I am on this kind of psychological and physical knowledge of where I am."

The east-west-north-south coordinates, latitude and longitude, of my sculptures exactly reflect my concern with my position in space, my location. This concern, an obsession since earliest childhood, must have been the root of my 1961 decision—taken unconsciously in a wave of conviction so total as to have been unchallenged by logic—to place my sculptures on their own feet as I am on mine.
—Anne Truitt, *Daybook*

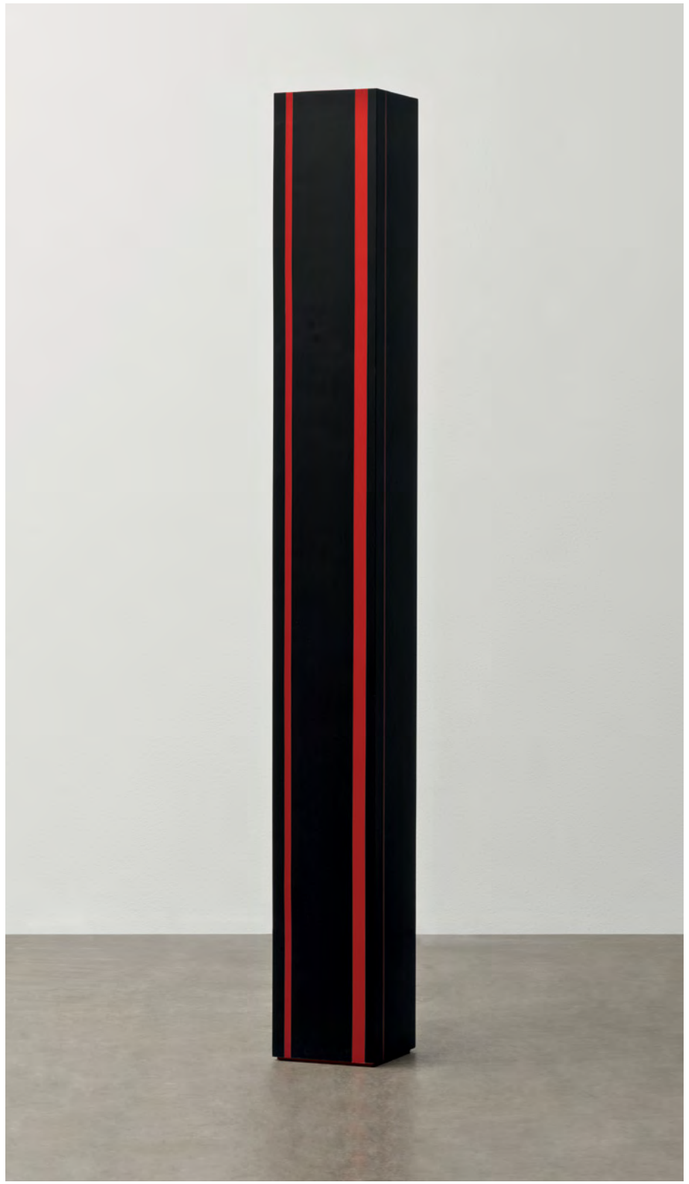
This excerpt from *Daybook*, the first of three volumes Anne Truitt published from her journals, reveals several of the concerns central to this artist's singular philosophy and practice.[1] Over the four decades of her mature career, Truitt remained deeply, if subtly, involved with the issue of placement in space, aligning her sculptures with both real and imagined geographies. The "unconscious," career-changing decision to abandon her figurative clay, cement, and wire work of the 1940s and 1950s to make *First* (1961), a wood sculpture resembling a white picket fence, testifies to the artist's respect for intuition as the motor behind her production. And in her writings Truitt often draws analogies between sculptures and people, expressing metaphorical equivalencies between her creations and her children, or herself—"on their own feet as I am on mine." These concerns point to a tension between abstraction and reference at the core of Truitt's project, in which personal experience is intrinsically embedded in seemingly pure form.

For an artist interested in placement—"How dependent I am on this kind of psychological and physical knowledge of where I am,"she wrote—Truitt's position within art history is not simple.[2] She credited the Abstract Expressionist canvases of Barnett Newman and Ad Reinhardt with teaching her the freedom of feeling "for once in my life enough space, enough color."[3] As a colorist living in Washington, D.C., friendly with Kenneth Noland and championed by Clement Greenberg, Truitt was often aligned with the Washington Color School painters. And as a sculptor producing massive, geometric abstractions in the early 1960s, she was even more closely associated with Minimalist sculptors. Despite the fact that her works' allusive titles and "additive" color ran contrary to the program of Minimalism,[4] which tended to eschew both referential meaning and surface composition, the timing and look of Truitt's first solo exhibition, at André Emmerich Gallery in 1963, linked her to the burgeoning trend.[5]

Catawba (1962, no. 1), one of the six sculptures included in this debut exhibition, hovers characteristically between an expression of form and a form of expression. Executed during a highly productive streak just one year after Truitt considered her mature production to have begun,[6] *Catawba*'s subtle gradations of color emphasize the sculpture's low horizontality in "a marriage of chroma and structure" that could constitute an end in itself.[7] Yet the work's title alludes to the street in Asheville, North Carolina, where the artist lived as a teenager, after a childhood spent on Maryland's Eastern Shore. If Truitt's works "result from a more or less conscious concentration on a particular area of emotionally charged personal experience—a person, say, or a series of events, or a period in my life,"[8] then *Catawba*'s structure, palette, and presence can be seen as an alchemical distillation of some remembered architecture, light, and sensation. "Her works are not depictions of images or events," James Meyer has written, "but metonyms pointing to a complex of associations."[9]

Twining Court I (2001, no. 2), executed three years before the artist's death, similarly suggests a site from her past. The title refers to the Washington carriage house studio that Truitt rented from Noland from 1962 until 1964, when Truitt's husband accepted a job in Japan, moving the family abroad for several years.[10] The viewer can't know exactly what about this column's graceful proportions or distinctive coloration—sharp reds zipping, Newman-like, up a black post—suggested that studio for Truitt; a certain amount of private meaning is embedded, like a secret, in her work.[11] Nonetheless, the subtlety of her formal choices "[evokes] a staggering array of associations" on the part of the observer.[12] "The red and black *Twining Court I* (2001), deep and rich like lacquerware, is as dignified as a sentry, sudden as an electric shock. Its De Stijl stripes incise the shaftlike fluting," one critic observed.[13] Indeed, this sculpture's play between physical presence and optical surface seems to encourage such correspondences, calling to mind a body with blood coursing up its lifelines, a pillar of rock laced with veins of ore, a thermometer's vertical measure of temperature—or the accompanying sensations of adrenaline, discovery, heat.

Executed thirty-nine years apart, *Catawba* and *Twining Court I* were essentially made according to the same technique, a testament to the steady consistency of Truitt's practice.



2. *Twining Court I.* 2001. Synthetic polymer paint on wood, 70 1/4 x 8 x 8" (178.4 x 20.3 x 20.3 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Agnes Gund

Her unique process combined the immediacy of intuition, the remove of prefabrication, and the intimacy of laborious handwork. Truitt insisted that her sculptures began by "simply [presenting] themselves somewhere in an airy space high up over my head, as if already whole, real."[14] She conveyed these conceptions in to-scale drawings, so that the wooden forms could be produced by a cabinetmaker; many were outfitted with weights, to ground them, and hollowed with holes "so that they can breathe in various temperatures."[15] Truitt primed the wood with several coats of gesso and applied successive layers of acrylic paint, sometimes as many as thirty to forty coats, sanding with "successively finer sandpapers" between layers.[16] The coats were "alternated vertically and horizontally, with and against the grain of the wood," a meticulous method that both adds depth to the sculptures' surfaces and subtly communicates the sense of longitude and latitude of which this artist remained ever-conscious.[17]

Truitt's drawings demonstrate this directional concern more plainly, perhaps, than her sculptures, in whose facture such coordinates are more subtly embedded. An often overlooked component of her practice, these compositions in pencil, acrylic, or ink are autonomous works—related to her sculptures but not simply studies for them.[18] In *30 July 1973* (1973, no. 3), white acrylic is applied solely to the upper left quadrant of the sheet; the medium diffuses fuzzily beyond its penciled confines. This drawing was executed six months before Truitt's first retrospective exhibition, a time when she was facing "the re-surfacing of emotional experience that had been distilled into her works."[19] It was at this moment that Truitt, overwhelmed by the process of revisiting the first twelve years of her mature career, began the journal-writing that would lead to three volumes of lucid reflections on art-making, motherhood, and, eventually, aging.

3. *30 July 1973.* 1973. Synthetic polymer paint and pencil on paper, 21 3/4 x 29 3/4" (55.2 x 75.6 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchase

Like her journal entries, Truitt's works on paper mark time, bearing as titles the dates on which they were executed. While *30 July 1973* remains foremost an abstraction, an exploration of pure parallels and perpendiculars, its levels of meaning proliferate in the context of Truitt's art and life. The echo of *First* is present in its fencelike verticals, and the memory of her hometown's clapboard houses is conjured by its even horizontals.[20] These two modes of meaning meet at a line, which is bisected by another: directionals of longitude and latitude that underlie this composition. "It's as if the outside world has to match some personal horizontal and vertical axis," Truitt explained. "I have to line up with it in order to be comfortable."[21]

1. Anne Truitt, *Daybook: The Journal of an Artist* (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1984), pp. 119–20.
2. Ibid., p. 33.
3. Ibid., p. 151. It was directly after seeing Barnett Newman and Ad Reinhardt's work at the Guggenheim Museum's 1961 exhibition *American Abstract Expressionists and Imagists* that Truitt executed *First*, her first mature sculpture.
4. Robert Morris, "Notes on Sculpture," *Artforum* 4, no. 6 (February 1966): 43; reprinted as "Notes on Sculpture, Part 1," in *Continuous Project Altered Daily: The Writings of Robert Morris* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press; New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1993), p. 4.
5. Truitt's sculpture was included in such landmark exhibitions as the Wadsworth Atheneum's *Black, White and Gray* (1964) and the Jewish Museum's *Primary Structures* (1966), and her name appears among the litanies of such polemical essays as Barbara Rose's "ABC Art" (1965) and Clement Greenberg's "Recentness of Sculpture" (1967). For a full analysis of her work in relation to Minimalism, see James Meyer, "Truitt at André Emmerich" and "The Case for Truitt: Minimalism and Gender," in *Minimalism: Art and Polemics in the Sixties* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), pp. 63–74, 222–28.
6. Truitt recalls that "in 1962, I made thirty-seven sculptures" (*Daybook*, p. 153), while Walter Hopps describes the "incredible outpouring of work during 1962" as consisting of "a large number of important drawings and 32 pieces of sculpture." Hopps, "Biographical Sketch," in *Anne Truitt: Sculpture and Drawings, 1961–1973* (Washington, D.C.: The Corcoran Gallery of Art, 1974), p. 15.
7. Jane Livingston, introduction to *Anne Truitt: Sculpture, 1961–1991* (New York: André Emmerich Gallery, 1991), n.p.
8. Truitt, *Daybook*, p. 93.
9. Meyer, "Truitt at André Emmerich," p. 72.
10. Hopps, who organized Truitt's first retrospective, called the two-year span spent in this studio "one of the most, if not the most, important periods of her career." Hopps, "Biographical Sketch," p. 14.
11. For Newman's influence on Truitt, see n. 3.
12. Lance Esplund, "Anne Truitt at Danese," *Art in America* 91, no. 7 (July 2003): 86.
13. Ibid.
14. Truitt, *Prospect: The Journey of an Artist* (New York: Penguin Books, 1996), p. 22.
15. Truitt, *Turn: The Journal of an Artist* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1987), p. 56.
16. Truitt, artist questionnaire, object file, Painting and Sculpture Study Center, The Museum of Modern Art, New York.
17. Truitt, *Prospect*, p. 22.
18. Truitt's drawings were not formally exhibited until the Whitney Museum of American Art and The Corcoran Gallery of Art retrospectives of 1973–74, both organized by Hopps. Their absence in her first solo exhibition undoubtedly contributed to the perception of her as exclusively a sculptor.
19. Kristen Hileman, "Presence and Abstraction," in *Anne Truitt: Perception and Reflection* (London: D. Giles, 2009), p. 36.
20. Truitt has acknowledged the connection between the architectural forms of her hometown and the language of her art. See Truitt, *Turn*, p. 183.
21. Truitt, *Daybook*, p. 34.

1. *Current.* 1964. Synthetic polymer paint on composition board, 58 3/8 x 58 7/8" (148.1 x 149.3 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Philip Johnson Fund

"I thought that women as artists should focus on how to start, lead, and sustain a creative life. It's not a question of style or a break with tradition."

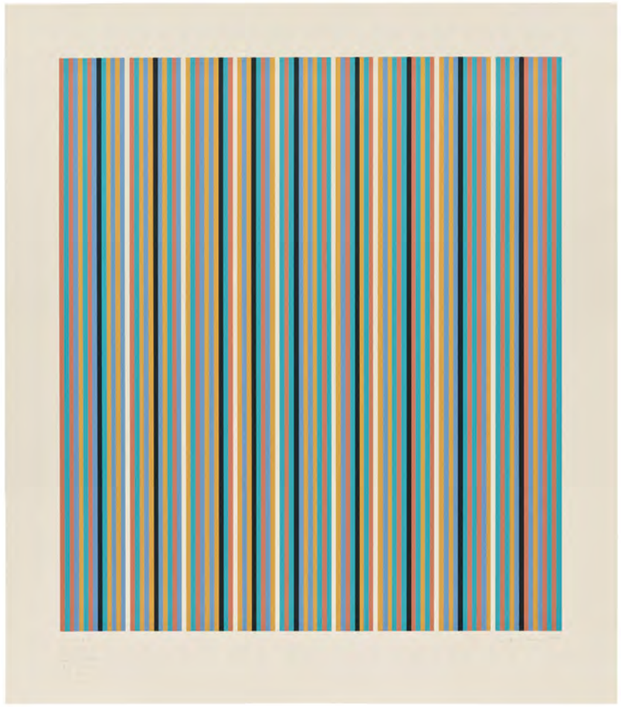
Bridget Riley excavates certain truths that have existed throughout the history of art. "While one has to accept that the role of art and its subjects do change," she has explained, "the practical problems do not. . . . How . . . to treat colour, pictorial space, structure etc.?"[1] Her black-and-white paintings from the 1960s, grouped under the rubric of "Op art," first earned her widespread notoriety.[2] Since then, her geometric compositions have consisted of discrete colored planes or stripes, such as *Silvered 2 (21 Reds, 21 Blues, 24 Turquoises, 24 Yellows, 9 Blacks, 8 Whites)* (1981, no. 2); her most recent work is the New Curve series, including *Painting with Verticals 2* (2006, no. 3), which features arabesques in a mural format. Despite her commitment to formal abstraction, Riley's early work was co-opted, especially in the United States, in the name of commercialism and science—associations she has vehemently rejected. In her quest for artistic purity she also refused to align herself with feminism in the 1960s and 1970s. These factors left her both outside the feminist canon and, until recently, on the margins of mainstream art-historical discourse.

Riley, who was born in England, first broke into the New York art scene in 1965, when her paintings *Current* (1964, no. 1) and *Hesitate* (1964) were included in the exhibition *The Responsive Eye* at The Museum of Modern Art.[3] The show, organized by William Seitz, brought together works of art that engaged the viewer on a predominantly perceptual level. The illusory kinetic effects of Riley's works triggered physiological responses in the viewer, proving that the dynamic elements of a painting were not necessarily bound by the confines of the picture plane. Some visitors even complained of vertigo and nausea, though there had been no such complaints in Europe.[4] *The Responsive Eye* drew vast crowds and elicited a media frenzy, becoming "the first contemporary blockbuster."[5] It accelerated Riley's career but left her feeling that her work had been appropriated for causes that had nothing to do with the art itself. "*The Responsive Eye* was a serious exhibition," she has explained, "but its qualities were obscured by an explosion of commercialism, band-wagoning and hysterical sensationalism."[6] Upon her arrival for the opening, she was surprised to discover that *Current* had been reproduced on the cover of the catalogue and overprinted with the exhibition title, five times and in as many colors, without her permission. "Feelings of violation and disillusionment" intensified when she learned that a local clothing manufacturer had copied *Hesitate* for the pattern on a dress.[7]

In England, Riley's paintings became emblematic of "Swinging London" in particular, and forward-thinking politics of the 1960s in general. For years after World War II, Britain had been dubbed the "Sick Man of Europe," for its austere economic and social climate.[8] By the 1960s, however, the country had entered an age defined by optimism and liberation from social conventions. A young and vibrant art scene expressed the rising spirits of its citizens and helped England secure a position in the international cultural arena. This role was solidified by such exhibitions as *The New Generation*, held in 1964 at the Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, and *London: The New Scene*, which traveled through the United States and Canada in 1965–66. In the catalogue for the latter exhibition, Martin Friedman noted the heterogeneous nature of new British art but perceived distinctly "British" qualities in Riley's work, defined by the "theoretical nature of her art [and] its avoidance of the sensuous."[9]

According to Friedman, Riley's work "[proceeded] from scientific principles elucidated in every elementary textbook of physics," an observation supported by art historians and critics on both sides of the Atlantic.[10] In England the marriage of art and science had been promoted in the 1950s by Richard Hamilton and the Independent Group of artists.[11] This attitude found currency through the next decade, such as in the political campaign of Harold Wilson, the new leader of the Labour Party, which stressed science as "the key to the fulfillment of a new and progressive social vision."[12] In New York, just prior to *The Responsive Eye*, Seitz declared, "It is only recently that a meeting ground is being established on which artists, designers, ophthalmologists and scientists can . . . expand our knowledge and enjoyment of visual perception."[13] However, as Frances Follin has observed, "The perceived links between Op and science/technology . . . encouraged its rejection by some modernists as embodying the 'wrong' sort of progress."[14] Thomas Hess, for example, dismissed Op art as "gadgetry, bitten by art, dreaming about science."[15]

Riley refuted claims that her work is founded on science: "I have never made any use of scientific theory or scientific data, though I am well aware that the contemporary



2. *Silvered 2 (21 Reds, 21 Blues, 24 Turquoises, 24 Yellows, 9 Blacks, 8 Whites).* 1981. Screenprint, comp. 34 3/16 x 29 15/16" (86.8 x 76 cm). Publisher: the artist, London. Printer: Artisan Editions, Hove, England. Edition: 75. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Karsten Schubert

psyche can manifest startling parallels . . . between the arts and the sciences," she stated in 1965.[16] She has also disagreed with claims of uniquely British qualities in her work, citing the French Impressionists and Post-Impressionists as her "closest historical 'relatives'" in their understanding of color and visual sensations.[17] She is a prolific writer who readily imparts a range of experiences and interests that inform her work, but she is careful to keep her aesthetic discussions framed by the history of art and the philosophical and formal concerns she tackles in her practice. On only one occasion has she breached these self-imposed boundaries, when, in a 1973 essay titled "The Hermaphrodite," she wrote, "Women's liberation, when applied to artists, seems to me to be a naïve concept. . . . At this point in time, artists who happen to be women need this particular form of hysteria like they need a hole in the head."[18]

Riley wrote "The Hermaphrodite" at the apex of the feminist art movement, in response to critics and art historians apt to define her work by her femininity. It was a preemptive warning to younger artists about the limitations of classifications based on gender identity. "It's a red herring," she has explained. "I thought that women as artists should focus on how to start, lead, and sustain a creative life. It's not a question of style or a break with tradition."[19] According to Riley, feminism differed from the emancipation of women, which she considers "an accomplished social fact."[20] This assumption was ingrained in her at an early age, while growing up on the Cornish coast with her mother, sister, and aunt, when her father was on active service during World War II. In that period "women shared the work of men in the armed forces, on the land in ammunition factories, in the Red Cross and of course in their traditional occupations of nursing, educating children and running households."[21] It was not until 1949, when she moved to London to study art at Goldsmiths, that she became aware of issues of gender in the contemporary art scene. "I already thought I belonged to that world," she has explained.[22]

Riley's quote in "The Hermaphrodite" is occasionally taken out of context in a way that implies a polemical stance against feminism. Considered in relation to her oeuvre and the rest of the text, however, it rather suggests an identity composed of both "male and female psychological patterns," transcending and embracing the polarities of gender.[23] "I have never been conscious of my own femininity as such, while in the studio," she has written. "Nor do I believe that male artists are aware of an exclusive masculinity while they are at work."[24] For her, the realm of art-making is a neutral place where one "recovers poise, balance, and space in all dimensions," liberated from the impositions of public identity.[25] The personal content in Riley's work lies embedded in her artistic vocabulary. Compositions may be inspired by sensations connected to certain memories, such as the smells, light effects, or overall atmosphere of a place; visceral and ephemeral experiences are translated into forms, rhythms, and color combinations that trigger the senses. "It's the recognition of the

3. *Painting with Verticals 2*. 2006. Oil on linen, 6' 4 1/2" x 12' 8 3/4" (194.3 x 388 cm). Private collection

sensation *without* the actual incident which prompted it," she has explained.[26] "There should . . . be something akin to a sense of recognition within the work so that the spectator experiences . . . something known and something unknown."[27] That which seems mechanical in Riley's work is therefore actually personal, a manifestation of the singular experience and organic memory of the artist. Like a memory, it is abstract yet intimate, conjuring various external associations but ultimately defined by none.

1. "Bridget Riley in conversation with Jenny Harper," in *Bridget Riley: Paintings and Drawings, 1961–2004* (London: Ridinghouse, 2004), p. 95.
2. The term "Op art" is generally credited to Jon Borgzinner, in "Op Art: Pictures That Attack the Eye," *Time*, October 23, 1964, pp. 78–86.
3. *Hesitate* is in the Tate collection.
4. See Thomas B. Hess, "You Can Hang It in the Hall," *Art News* 64, no. 2 (October 1965): 41, 43.
5. David Rimanelli, "Beautiful Loser: Op Art Revisited," *Artforum* 45, no. 9 (May 2007): 315.
6. Bridget Riley, "Perception Is the Medium," *Art News* 64, no. 2 (October 1965): 32.
7. Ibid., pp. 32–33. See also Pamela M. Lee, "Bridget Riley's Eye/Body Problem," *October* 98 (Fall 2001): 26–46. Barnett Newman brought Riley to see his lawyer. Many other artists defended and supported Riley during this time, including Ad Reinhardt, who later collaborated with her in the publication *Poor Old Tired Horse*, no. 18 (ed. Ian Hamilton Finlay [Edinburgh: Wild Hawthorne Press, 1966]), and Jasper Johns, whom she had befriended at his solo exhibition at the Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, in December 1964.
8. Riley, telephone conversation with the author, February 22, 2009. I am grateful to Riley for her generous and thoughtful collaboration on this essay.
9. Martin Friedman, "London: The New Scene," in *London: The New Scene* (Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 1968), p. 50.
10. Ibid., p. 49.
11. Notably in the 1956 exhibition *This Is Tomorrow*, held at the Whitechapel Art Gallery.
12. Frances Follin, *Embodied Visions: Bridget Riley, Op Art and the Sixties* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004), p. 26. Harold Wilson served as prime minister from 1964 to 1970.
13. William Seitz, "The New Perceptual Art," *Vogue*, February 15, 1965, pp. 141–42; quoted in Lee, "Bridget Riley's Eye/Body Problem," pp. 30–31.
14. Follin, *Embodied Visions*, pp. 46–47.
15. Hess, "You Can Hang It in the Hall," p. 50.
16. Riley, "Perception Is the Medium," pp. 33–34.
17. Riley, "A Visit to Egypt and the Decoration for the Royal Liverpool Hospital," 1984, in *The Eye's Mind: Bridget Riley, Collected Writings, 1965–1999*, ed. Robert Kudielka (London: Thames & Hudson, 1999), p. 106.
18. Riley, "The Hermaphrodite," 1973, in *The Eye's Mind*, p. 39.
19. Riley, February 22 author conversation .
20. Riley, e-mail to the author, November 17, 2009.
21. Ibid.
22. Riley, conversation with the author, February 3, 2009.
23. Riley, "The Hermaphrodite," p. 39.
24. Ibid.
25. Riley, February 3 author conversation.
26. Riley, "A Reputation Reviewed," in *Bridget Riley: Dialogues on Art*, ed. Kudielka (London: Zwemmer, 1995), p. 72.
27. Riley, "Perception Is the Medium," p. 33.

Eva Hesse's *Repetition Nineteen III* (1968, no. 1) has long been an anchor of The Museum of Modern Art's holdings of contemporary sculpture. When it was acquired in 1969, it was the first work by a member of Hesse's generation to enter the collection—the Museum did not yet own a sculpture by Richard Serra, Bruce Nauman, or Robert Smithson, for instance. But the long-standing fame of *Repetition Nineteen III* has obscured its significance as part of a larger, multiwork series. The Repetition project encompassed the crucial year between the summers of 1967 and 1968, the period during which Hesse entered the final and most celebrated phase of her work. Overall the series exemplifies the ways in which repetition was a key artistic strategy for Hesse—a means for idiosyncrasy and unpredictability rather than, as it had been for her Minimalist predecessors, for establishing systems or logic. The Repetition series, much like each sculpture within it, represents a set of unique experiments instead of precisely planned variants.

Repetition Nineteen I (no. 2) dates from the summer of 1967, when Hesse was still working with papier-mâché, the material for many of her great sculptures of 1966 and 1967. The conception of the project is seen in a pair of pen-and-ink drawings that describe a "first of three versions" and a "second of three versions" (nos. 3 and 4).[1] The first shows nineteen empty containerlike forms standing scattered on the floor. Some are closely huddled, some apart, some leaning, some upright—as alike and different as a gathering of strangers. The quirky feel of the drawing is retained in the finished sculpture, the units of which are about ten inches in height and diameter, with rather thick walls and gently curving rims. Dutch Boy paint gives them a glossy sheen, and they look neither like functional objects nor like what could be surely called sculpture.

Hesse's second pen-and-ink drawing specifies a sculpture in metal, fabricated at Arco Metals, covered with Sculp-metal or sprayed with gloss paint. Here, in contrast to the first version, the metal "buckets" are uniform in height and diameter, their sides straight, and each includes a gray rubber hose emerging from within. Each bucket has a false bottom, beneath which there is space to attach the protruding hose. In the pen-and-ink drawing Hesse notes a sheet metal divider four inches from the floor but offers an option of varying its height from one to seven inches inside the eight-inch-deep buckets. This rather tricky detail is studied in cross section in a pencil drawing on graph paper (1967, no. 5), in which the false bottom is given a new height of three inches.

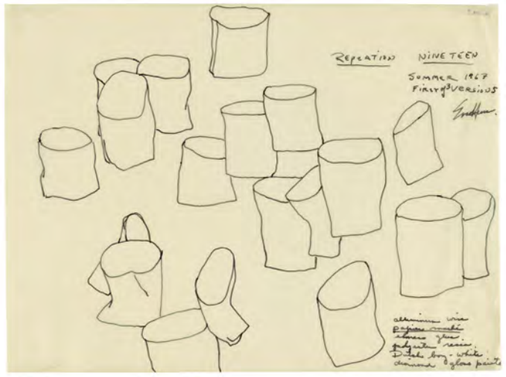
Based in contrasts—between hard and soft, rigid and flexible—this version went no further than paper. In September 1967, just as Hesse finished sanding and painting the nineteen papier-mâché units of *Repetition Nineteen I*, she went to buy her first supply of liquid rubber, or latex, which she immediately recognized as "a great media [*sic*] for me."[2] She excitedly began making latex units for *Repetition Nineteen II*. Once Hesse made what seems to be the instant decision to abandon metal for latex, the units became irregular in size and shape, as they had been in *Repetition Nineteen I*. That fall Hesse made several latex test pieces about three inches tall, later assigned to the glass pastry cases in which she displayed such elements. She also made some larger latex units, about ten inches tall. The full set of these first latex works was not completed, however, and *Repetition Nineteen II* was never made.

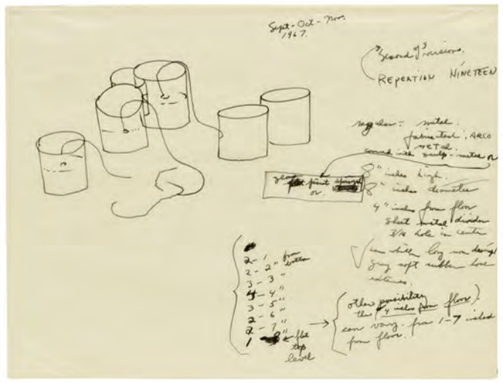
The Repetition Nineteen project fueled Hesse's first experiments in latex, and it would perform the same service for fiberglass. This was a material she would consider for the first time after Robert Morris introduced her to Doug Johns, of Aegis Reinforced Plastics in Staten Island, in February 1968. Johns began to work with Hesse on *Repetition Nineteen III* a few months later. By this time Hesse had abandoned the idea of the rubber hoses, and was back to the simple buckets of *Repetition Nineteen I*. Hesse disliked Johns's first buckets, which were uniform and rigid (even though one summer earlier she herself had envisaged such a format in metal). For the second attempt, Johns has recalled, Hesse brought him nineteen irregularly sized and shaped buckets (made, like *Repetition Nineteen I*, in papier-mâché, but double in size), which he and his crew then coated with fiberglass and resin.[3] The final result has a translucence that gives it the effect of extraordinary delicacy and near-weightlessness.

At some point during 1968 Hesse looked back to *Repetition Nineteen I* in a beautiful presentation drawing done in gouache and watercolor (*Repetition Nineteen I* [1967–68]).[4] This was the first place Hesse cited the title as *Repetition Nineteen I*. In the two 1967 pen-and-ink drawings, as well as the pencil study on graph paper, she wrote the title as *Repeation 19*. Hardly a language error, this invention was a typical manifestation of Hesse's keen fascination with words, the artist creating a new noun (adding to "repeat" the suffix *–ion*) rather than merely using the established noun forms: "repeat" or "repetition." Eventually, however, she rejected this invention and opted for using "repetition," a decision she formalized in this newer drawing.[5]

Repetition Nineteen III was one of eight sculptures on view in the artist's first (and only) one-person exhibition, *Eva Hesse: Chain Polymers,* at the Fischbach Gallery in New

1. *Repetition Nineteen III*. 1968. Fiberglass and polyester resin, nineteen units, each 19 to 20 1/4" (48 to 51 cm) x 11 to 12 3/4" (27.8 to 32.2 cm) diam. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Charles and Anita Blatt





Top to bottom:
2. *Repetition Nineteen I.* 1967. Paint and papier-mâché on aluminum screening, nineteen units, each 9 1/8 to 10 1/2" (23.2 to 26.6 cm) x 6 1/2 to 9 1/8" (16.5 to 23.2 cm) diam. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Murray Charash

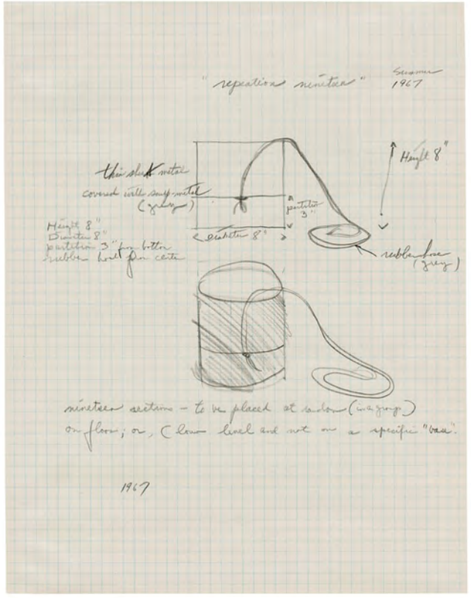
3. *Repetition Nineteen, First of 3 Versions.* Summer 1967. Pen and ink on transparentized paper, 8 7/8 x 11 7/8" (22.5 x 30.3 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of the Eva Hesse Estate

4. *Repetition Nineteen, Second of 3 Versions.* 1967. Pen and ink on transparentized paper, 8 7/8 x 11 7/8" (22.5 x 30.3 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of the Eva Hesse Estate

York in November 1968 (no. 6). The exhibition featured only sculptures made in Hesse's latest materials, fiberglass and latex. But that Hesse viewed her project as interconnected is evident in the exhibition's announcement postcard (no. 7), for which she used an image of *Repetition Nineteen I*. *Repetition Nineteen II* was represented by one of the large latex units, complete with trailing hose, displayed on a shelf.

Repetition Nineteen III was bought by MoMA a year after the exhibition. It first went on view in the collection galleries in late May of 1970, a few days before Hesse's death from brain cancer at age thirty-four. That same month her work was featured on the cover of *Artforum* magazine, a mournful tribute to an artist whose final year of work displayed a startling, exhilarating vitality.

Three years later, the artist's family donated *Repetition Nineteen I* to the Museum, a gift arranged by Donald Droll, the former director of Fischbach Gallery. At this early point, the understanding of Hesse's work was at a primitive stage. Droll first referred to the



Clockwise, from far left:
5. *Repetition Nineteen.* 1967. Pencil on graph paper, 10 7/8 x 8 1/2" (27.9 x 21.6 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of the Eva Hesse Estate

6. View of the exhibition *Eva Hesse: Chain Polymers*, Fischbach Gallery, New York, November 1968

7. *Eva Hesse: Chain Polymers* exhibition announcement (recto and verso), Fischbach Gallery, New York, November 1968, showing *Repetition Nineteen I* (1967)

sculpture as a "prototype" for *Repetition Nineteen III* and only later rescinded this description.[6] But coupled with the conventional sense of papier-mâché as a material more for maquettes than finished works (despite the counterproof of Hesse's many such sculptures of 1966–67), this was enough to cause the gift to be placed in the Department of Painting and Sculpture's Study Collection.[7] In 2009 it was reassigned to the collection proper.[8]

In Hesse's oeuvre, the so-called masterpiece is much the richer when seen in context of its related works, including attendant detours and experiments. The yearlong Repetition project shows how Hesse carried an idea from medium to medium and form to form—or perhaps better, how an idea thus carried her. Repetition was for Hesse not just a matter of style, but a foundation of sculptural process.

1. It remains unclear whether Eva Hesse had intended three versions from the start, as the "of three" and the *s* in the word "versions" appear to have been added to the drawings later, given the cramped spacing of the notations.
2. Hesse, letter to Dorothy James, September 1967; quoted in Lucy R. Lippard, *Eva Hesse* (New York: New York University Press, 1976), p. 106.
3. Doug Johns, quoted in "The Fourth Dimension: Doug Johns interviewed by Alison Rowley," in Griselda Pollock and Vanessa Corby, eds., *Encountering Eva Hesse* (Munich: Prestel Verlag, 2006), pp. 89–90.
4. Here she specifies the second version as "fiberglass" and a third as "rubber (silicone)," suggesting that even while working on *Repetition Nineteen III* she intended to complete the latex version.
5. The change of mind is also documented in an undated typed list of words, some of them defined, some just given as titles of works. Hesse typed *Repeation Nineteen* and accompanied it by a small sketch of six buckets, but then crossed out the a in "Repeation" and wrote "REPETITION" in ink above the typed word. The page is reproduced in Elisabeth Sussman, "Letting It Go As It Will: The Art of Eva Hesse," in Sussman, ed., *Eva Hesse* (San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), p. 32.
6. Donald Droll, letter to Kynaston McShine, January 9, 1973. Museum Collection files for *Repetition Nineteen I* (1967), Department of Painting and Sculpture, The Museum of Modern Art, New York.
7. That the sculpture arrived at the Museum possessing only eighteen of the nineteen elements indicated by the title seems to have caused little concern. Over the years the work was rarely displayed, appearing for the first time in the traveling retrospective exhibition of 2002.
8. The Museum's total holdings include four additional sculptures, a relief, two paintings, and ten drawings from a period spanning nine years.

When she reflected on families, she revealed her ambivalence, saying, “All families are creepy in a way,” and also, “I want to do something unfathomable, like the family.”

Diane Arbus made this portrait of Eddie Carmel and his parents (1970, no. 1) when she was forty-seven years old, twelve years after she had separated from her husband, whom she had married when she was seventeen. Although Arbus is generally known as a photographer of “freaks” (no. 2), a characterization that diminishes her great achievement, she not only photographed those who were at the edges of society but also was very interested in families.[1] Her particular vision of the subject was realized with a hard scrutiny and bluntness more common to news pictures (no. 3), but, for all that, her portraits are no less tender or complex. Arbus searches for the meaning of family: how people related by blood and marriage coexist, for better and for worse. In her pictures of twins, triplets, parents and children, and husbands and wives, she seems to be asking how these people came to live under the same roof. When she reflected on families, she revealed her ambivalence, saying, “All families are creepy in a way,”[2] and also, “I want to do something unfathomable, like the family.”[3]

1. *A Jewish Giant at Home with His Parents in the Bronx, New York*. 1970. Gelatin silver print, 15 $^{9}/_{16}$ x 15 $^{1}/_{16}$" (39.6 x 38.3 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Lily Auchincloss Fund

Around 1946 Arbus’s husband, Allan, gave her a Graflex camera, a camera favored by news photographers because you can see in its ground glass exactly what will be in the photograph. She took a photography class at The New School for Social Research in New York with Berenice Abbott, who was known for her photographs of the city’s architecture. Arbus learned the technique of photography from Abbott, which she then taught her husband. For the next ten years she and Allan photographed as a team, mostly making fashion pictures for magazines such as *Vogue*, the *New York Times Magazine*, *Glamour*, and *Harper’s Bazaar.* By the mid-1950s she was photographing people at Coney Island, in Central Park, on the streets, and in movie houses with a 35mm camera. In 1960 she began shooting at Hubert’s Flea Museum on Forty-second Street, which featured a flea circus in the basement and sideshow attractions such as Lady Olga, a bearded lady, and Lady Estelline, a sword swallower. There Arbus met Eddie Carmel, who was working as “The World’s Tallest Cowboy.” In 1956 she struck out on her own, both as a person and a photographer, when she came to feel that she was playing a secondary role as “art director” or “stylist” in the picture-making process with her husband. That year she studied privately with Lisette Model, whose work had been shown at The Museum of Modern Art and published in *Harper’s Bazaar*. Model seems to have liberated Arbus as a photographer. “One day I said to her, and I think this was very crucial, I said: ‘Originality means coming from the source, not like [Alexey] Brodovitch—at any price to do it differently.’ And from there on, Diane was sitting there and—I’ve never in my life seen anybody—not listening to me but suddenly listening to herself through what was said.”[4] Allan corroborated: “It was an absolutely magical breakthrough. After three weeks she felt totally free and able to photograph.”[5]

Carmel had been of normal size until he became a teenager, when he began to grow uncontrollably, reaching a height of eight feet nine inches. As a kind of coping mechanism, he became something of a public figure, appearing in two B movies, *The Brain that Wouldn’t Die* (1962) and *50,000 B.C. (Before Clothing)* (1963). He recorded two 45 rpm records, “The Happy Giant” and “The Good Monster,” and at one point was billed as “The Tallest Man on Earth” in the Ringling Brothers Circus at Madison Square Garden. Arbus had met Carmel ten years before this picture was made and had photographed him and his parents in their home in 1960; she apparently misplaced the negative. But on June 28, 1970, she wrote in a postcard to the British journalist and writer Peter Crookston, “I went back and did a picture I wanted to do a few years ago for your family issue. Marvelous.”[6] Arbus returned to the apartment in the Bronx and, according to the contact sheet, made twelve exposures.[7] She chose this picture, which appears at the bottom center of the original contact sheet, the frame in which both parents look up at their son, whose head seems to be grazing the ceiling. Carmel’s mother appears to be reacting to something he is saying. His right arm and his mother’s left form parentheses that bracket the relationship of mother to child, as her vulnerable body and her hands

2. *Albino Sword Swallower at a Carnival, Maryland*. 1970. Gelatin silver print, printed by Neil Selkirk, 14 11/16 x 15 1/16" (37.3 x 38.2 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchase

behind her back emphasize their connection. The picture is the only one in which Carmel stands apart from his parents, not touching them. He looms over them in profile with his cane, conjuring images of both Jack in the folktale Jack and the Beanstalk, and Quasimodo, the reviled hunchback of Victor Hugo's novel *Notre-Dame de Paris* (*The Hunchback of Notre Dame*) (1831). The father is left slightly out of the equation. The formality of his suit in relation to his son's somewhat rumpled shirt and his wife's informal, slightly soiled housedress signals a distinct reserve, as does his hand in his pocket, as though he were posing for a nineteenth-century studio portrait. What is most rewarding about the picture is that it is a photograph of a mother and father with their child. Arbus's explicit caption emphasizes the familial aspect and, somewhat strangely (because she only occasionally identified the ethnic origins of her many subjects), calls our attention to the family's Jewishness. Perhaps Arbus identified with Carmel's minority status as a Jew, and also that of the woman in her photograph *Puerto Rican woman with a beauty mark, N.Y.C.* (1965) and the Russians in *Russian midget friends in a living room on 100th Street, N.Y.C.* (1963), because of whatever actual prejudices and slights she may have felt as a Jew in post–World War II America. All of it—her subjects' minority ethnic status and/or their lives at the edges of society—may have reflected and embodied her feelings of alienation from her conventional, wealthy Park Avenue Jewish family, which she had separated herself from, out of artistic need or as a matter of survival, her nature in conflict with the mores and strictures of a conventional middle-European heritage.

The photograph can also be seen to describe nature's betrayal of a man and the perfidy of his parents through a toss of the DNA. By situating the family in their home, a site we like to think provides privacy and refuge, Arbus feeds our commonly endured existential fears. Middle-class life is evident in the "artwork" on display—the oil painting under a light—and the plastic encasing the lamp shades. But the bareness of the room, the wire under the painting, the missing shade for the sconce, the cracks in the plastered ceiling and walls (did Carmel cause them?), the synthetic curtains that don't touch the floor, the worn rug, and the tissues on the couch fall short of a reassuring picture of comfort, cleanliness, and normalcy.

Finally, after all, don't all parents at some point during their children's lives feel a glimmer of incredulity like what seems to be radiating from the postures and faces of Eddie's parents? On a grander scale, the picture can be read as a metaphor for those things that had spun out of control in the country by 1970—the Vietnam War and the nation's rebelling children. As a body of work, Arbus's portraits identify the particulars of a society in upheaval; to some, her photographs represented the opening of countless Pandora's boxes that had been resting untouched and out of reach for a long time. The ambition and fearlessness required to bring this about are inestimable.

The print of *A Jewish Giant at Home with His Parents in the Bronx, New York* in the Museum's collection was acquired in 1972, after the Museum organized a posthumous retrospective exhibition of Arbus's work in September of that year. Fifteen other photographs by her were acquired at the time, eight of which, along with the one of the "Jewish giant," were printed by Arbus herself. This print of Eddie Carmel and his parents was included in the posthumous exhibition.

3. *A Young Man in Curlers at Home on West 20th Street, New York City*. 1966. Gelatin silver print, 15 1/2 x 14 3/8" (39.3 x 36.5 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired through the generosity of the International Program of The Museum of Modern Art

1. Diane Arbus photographed dwarves, a sword swallower, cross-dressers, nudists, and other people generally considered "outside" accepted society, but the majority of her photographs were of everyday people. Of the eighty photographs in the 1972 Aperture monograph of her work, some thirty-two of them might be regarded as representing "freaks." The majority of her subjects were people like you and me, and one of the great achievements of her pictures rests on the question of how these ostensibly "normal" people attain the magnetic individuality they do in her photographs.
2. Arbus, letter to Peter Crookston, c. June 1968; quoted in *Diane Arbus Revelations* (New York: Random House, 2003), p. 331.
3. Arbus, letter to Crookston, January 1969; quoted in Sandra S. Phillips, "The Question of Belief," in ibid., p. 64.
4. Lisette Model, interview with Doon Arbus (daughter of Diane), February 1972; quoted in ibid., p. 141.
5. Allan Arbus, interview with Doon Arbus, February 17, 1972; quoted in ibid., p. 141.
6. Arbus, letter to Crookston, June 28, 1970; quoted in ibid., p. 209.
7. The contact sheet is reproduced in ibid., p. 209.

1. **Lella Vignelli** (Italian, born 1934). Ribbed Pitcher for San Lorenzo. 1971. Silver, 7" (17.8 cm) x 3" (7.6 cm) diam.

DENISE SCOTT BROWN (American, born South Africa 1931)
LELLA VIGNELLI (Italian, born 1934) / PAT KIRKHAM AND YENNA CHAN

Both Lella Vignelli and Denise Scott Brown trained as architects and work in collaboration with and independently of the architect-designers to whom they are married: Massimo Vignelli and Robert Venturi. Each has enjoyed a long career—Vignelli in design and Scott Brown in architecture and urban planning—during which she has experienced being considered the "lesser" partner because she is "the wife" of a noted architect or designer.[1]

One major difference between their experiences is that the Vignellis began collaborating while at university, where the playing field was more even, although Massimo (three years older) began making a name for himself while Lella was still a student. They married in 1957, and the design studio they established four years later bore both their names. Passionate about minimal modernist design, they collaborated on every project, from prizewinning melamine stacking dishes to showrooms for Olivetti and Rank Xerox. The studio was run from their Milan apartment, which gave Lella the flexibility of combining work and motherhood after their first child was born, in 1962. She recalls their discovering of their complementarity—"Massimo the visionary/dreamer, Lella the more realistic"—but feels that broader social attitudes rather than her greater practicality fueled expectations that she would be responsible not only for child care and running the home but also for running the office. Her close involvement with interior design brings a conventionally gendered division of labor to the partnership, as interior design tends to be considered "women's work." This is partially offset, however, because unlike many women interior designers, she does not design domestic interiors; it is also disrupted by her involvement with product design, a hugely male-dominated field.

Their second child arrived shortly after they moved permanently to New York in 1966, but Lella managed to continue working: Massimo cofounded, with Ralph Eckerstrom, the Unimark International design studio, and she headed the interiors department. Realizing they preferred the control afforded by their own firm, the couple then established Vignelli Associates in 1971. When that was getting too large, they started Vignelli Designs in 1978, which focuses on interiors and product design, with Lella as CEO—a public proclamation of her talents as an independent designer in those fields. Nonetheless, even when not working on joint projects, they serve as sounding board and critic for each other.

Their collaborative designs include Heller plastic stacking dinnerware (1967–70) and Heller glass bakeware (1975), with Massimo as lead designer of the former and Lella of the latter. Some of Lella's most elegant independent designs are in silver, including a ribbed pitcher (1971, no. 1), a gently undulating necklace for the Senza Fine company (1985), and a Bauhaus-influenced teapot (1999). Among the collaborative Vignelli interiors for which Lella served as lead designer is St. Peter's Church in New York (1977), wherein adjustable platforms and seating create a space flexible enough to hold both concerts and religious services. Her European stores for Poltrona Frau use light to great expressive effect (2001–07, no. 2).

Scott Brown has consistently spoken out about the marginalization of women in architecture and her frustration with being perceived primarily as Robert Venturi's wife. When the couple met in the mid-1960s, she had worked in architecture offices in Johannesburg, London, and Rome, and taught at the University of Pennsylvania and UCLA, where she helped develop an urban planning program. Even so, Venturi's public profile was far greater. He had achieved celebrity status, in part as author of *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* (1966), a publication that drew on many ideas shared with Scott Brown, particularly those validating vernacular design and popular culture. They married in 1967. She joined the firm that Venturi ran with John Rauch in 1968, taking responsibility for urban design and campus planning, and in 1980 the firm became Venturi, Rauch, and Scott Brown. Meanwhile, the birth of the couple's son in 1971 brought home to them the difficulties of juggling child care and work, and the firm remains innovative on that front, offering staff with children the opportunity to work part-time without losing out on the more interesting projects.

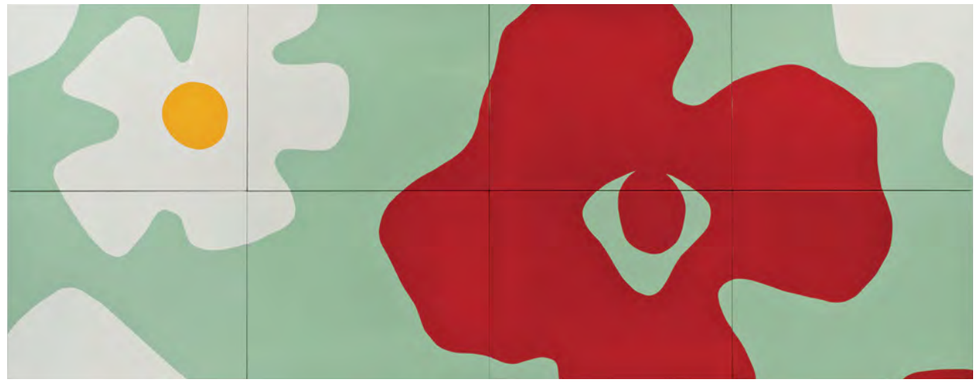
Although their main areas of professional responsibility diverge, Scott Brown and Venturi occasionally write and work together. Even when her name appears as author or in the captions they send to magazine editors, however, it is often omitted from the discussions about their joint work. For example, despite their attempts to correct the record, *Learning from Las Vegas: The Forgotten Symbolism of Architectural Form* (1972)—a seminal text on the popular material culture of Las Vegas—is frequently credited only to Venturi, the male "star" architect, when in fact Scott Brown and Steven Izenour were coauthors, and courses created by Scott Brown served as its foundation.

Two collaborative designs reveal their fascination with popular decoration. The porcelain-enameled steel facade panels of the Best Products showroom in Pennsylvania (1973–79, no. 3) are covered with a floral, domestic-looking pattern blown up to billboard size, representing architecture

2. **Lella Vignelli** (Italian, born 1934). Showroom Store for Poltrona Frau, Milano. 2001–07

3. **Robert Venturi** (American, born 1925). **Denise Scott Brown** (American, born South Africa 1931). Facade Panels from Best Products Showroom, Langhorne, Pennsylvania. 1973–79. Porcelain-enameled steel, 7' 8" x 19' 7 3/4" x 1 3/4" (233.7 cm x 6 m x 4.4 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Carlin McLaughlin, Nalin Patel, Rajnikant Shah, and Gregory Zollner

4. **Robert Venturi** (American, born 1925). **Denise Scott Brown** (American, born South Africa 1931). Queen Anne Side Chair. 1983. Maple plywood and plastic laminate, 38 1/2 x 26 5/8 x 23 3/4 x 18 5/8" (97.8 x 67.6 x 60.3 x 47.3 cm). Manufacturer: Knoll International, Inc., New York. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of the manufacturer



as surface. The idea for the design arose while they were selecting wallpaper for their home, and their molded-plywood-and-plastic-laminate Queen Anne Chair for Knoll International (1983, no. 4) likewise features a rich floral print reminiscent of tablecloths and wallpapers.[2] Although Scott Brown helped design the pattern and acted as project manager, many continue to attribute the chair solely to Venturi.

Scott Brown's interests have increasingly affected the type of work undertaken by the office, and she has served as lead designer on several major campus-planning projects in the United States and China. A passionate advocate, she is well known for engaging in important public debates on various subjects, from expanding opportunities for women in architecture to revitalizing cities, such as New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina.

The careers of Vignelli and Scott Brown attest to the kinds of marginalization experienced by women designers and architects working with high-profile spouses, as well as to the opportunities that spousal partnerships can open up for women. Both women find collaboration to be a stimulating experience and enjoy brainstorming at home as well as at work. Theirs are not the only ways of being a woman architect or designer, or of working within a husband-wife partnership but, like their designs, they remain instructive and inspiring.

1. Biographical material is from interviews Pat Kirkham conducted with the Vignellis in 2000 and 2009 and with Denise Scott Brown in 2000. See also Kirkham, ed., *Women Designers in the USA, 1900–2000: Diversity and Difference* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000); Andrea Gabor, *Einstein's Wife: Work and Marriage in the Lives of Five Great Twentieth-Century Women* (New York: Penguin, 1995); and Denise Scott Brown, "Room at the Top? Sexism and the Star System in Architecture," in Ellen Perry Berkeley and Matilda McQuaid, eds., *Architecture: A Place for Women* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989).

2. David B. Brownlee, "Form and Content," in Brownlee, David G. DeLong, and Kathryn B. Hiesinger, eds., *Out of the Ordinary: Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown and Associates: Architecture, Urbanism, Design* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art; New Haven, Yale University Press, 2001), p. 79.

In the process she turned the camera on herself and mused about what was left of her body and her life after seventy-two years, and found the residue both melancholic and exhilarating.

At eighty-two, moving-image artist Agnès Varda remains as active, adventurous, and original as she was at twenty-five, when she was the official photographer of Avignon's Théâtre National Populaire and decided, without any formal training, to make a feature film. A year later she completed *La Pointe Courte* (1954), a film suggested by the narrative structure of William Faulkner's novel *The Wild Palms* (1939), in which two separate stories are related not by incident but location, in her case the eponymous fishing community outside Sète. It may be argued that Varda's debut feature heralded the French New Wave in its maverick construction, unorthodox treatment of relationships, and on-location shooting. *La Pointe Courte* appeared five years before both François Truffaut's *Les Quatre Cents Coups* (*400 Blows*) (1959) and Jean-Luc Godard's *À bout de souffle* (*Breathless*) (1959) and may have planted the seeds for them just as those films did for Varda's next feature, *Cléo de 5 à 7* (*Cléo from 5 to 7*) (1962, no. 1), her first international success, which arrived as audiences in Europe and the United States were welcoming those on the crest of the New Wave.

Cléo de 5 à 7, a ninety-minute film, describes in abbreviated "actual time" two hours in the life of a young woman anxiously waiting a potentially catastrophic prognosis from her doctor. The approaches and concerns Varda would use throughout her filmmaking career can be clearly discerned in this early work, including a tendency to inflect narrative with reality, a serious playfulness with ideas, and a deep interest in ordinary women in extraordinary circumstances. To make the film, Varda, a critical feminist, established her own company or "atelier," Tamaris, and twenty years later developed it into Ciné-Tamaris, a production and distribution company still going strong in 2010. According to Varda, filmmaking is a personal and artisanal activity similar to weaving: the film's shots and edits are like the weft and warp of fabric.[1]

Varda's third feature, *Le Bonheur* (1964), remains provocative. In gorgeous color suffused with dappled light, the film follows a young couple who appear very happy, and indeed they are, until the husband takes up with another woman who agrees to share him with his wife. He tells his wife, who then drowns. Thereafter widower, mistress, and children become their own happy family unit. It all appears quite normal, even banal, but Varda deflects criticism that the husband "got away with it" by insisting that the film is not about a woman's collapse in the face of "bad" behavior but rather about the deep cruelty behind domestic bliss.[2]

Varda's art lies in the real world. Her nonfiction works generally celebrate humanity: she finds in everyday people and places the remarkable and the special, as evidenced by *Daguerréotypes* (1974), a portrait of her own neighborhood on Rue Daguerre in Paris. Even her fictional works have a strong bias toward actuality and nature. *L'Une chante, l'autre pas* (*One Sings the Other Doesn't*) (1976) chronicles the fictional relationship between two women over a fourteen-year period, but given the film's settings and the ease of the performances, the work seems less a dramatic contrivance than a long-gestating documentary. In *Sans toit ni loi* (*Vagabond*) (1985, no. 2), the protagonist is an enigmatic and angry homeless woman (played compellingly by Sandrine Bonnaire) who eschews society, sympathy, and compassion, but the film is as much about cold landscapes and unforgiving country roads as it is about unexplained rage (the film's French title translates as "without roof or law"). The only work in which Varda does not adhere closely to reality is the feature-length fantasy she devised for the centenary of cinema, *Les Cent et Une Nuits de Simon Cinéma* (*A Hundred and One Nights*) (1996), which was barely seen and was the last work she actually made using film (as opposed to newer electronic processes).

In 2000 Varda made what has already become a classic documentary, *Les Glaneurs et la glaneuse* (*The Gleaners and I*). Shooting with a handheld digital camera and the most minimal of crews, Varda, inspired by Jean-François Millet's 1857 painting *Les Glaneuses* (*The Gleaners*), crossed France in search of that-which-is-left-behind after harvesting in the fields and after the close of urban farmers' markets. She spoke with

1. *Cléo de 5 à 7* (*Cléo from 5 to 7*). 1962. 35mm film (black and white, sound), 90 min. The Museum of Modern Art, New York
Corinne Marchand (right)

those who gleaned, either by necessity or avocation, and with their judicial advocates. In the process she turned the camera on herself and mused about what was left of her body and her life after seventy-two years, and found the residue both melancholic and exhilarating. *Les Glaneurs et la glaneuse* led Varda directly into a new arena of artistic practice: moving-image installation, which has since become a major mode of expression for her.

Diaristic single-screen work and installation making has kept Varda in constant motion in recent years. Her latest feature-length film, *Les Plages d'Agnès* (*The Beaches of Agnès*) (2008), described in press material for the film as an "auto-bio-filmo-puzzlo self-portrait," is a memoir about the various watersides that have marked her life, including the Belgium seashore of her early childhood; harbors in the south of France where she made *La Pointe Courte*; beaches in Southern California that she and her late husband, the filmmaker Jacques Demy, visited while making films in Hollywood; the shores of the Seine in Paris; and, most significantly, Noirmoutier in Normandy.

At low tide Noirmoutier is part of the mainland, and at high tide it becomes an island. It was here where Varda and Demy bought an abandoned windmill, in 1960, and made a home. Noirmoutier inspired her 2006 exhibition at the Cartier Foundation for Contemporary Art in Paris, the humorously titled *L'Île et elle* (which literally means "the island and her" but also plays on *il et elle*, or "he and she"). In the eight installations "inspired by that island," Varda wrote, "I tried to capture different aspects of the place, from the exuberant flashy color of plastic (objects of summer, vacation, and camping) to the dark wandering of fishermen's widows along the beach. I'm now a widow too, but my work mostly is to find shapes, images and sounds inspired by my own life but not telling it."[3]

Realizing that she knew more widows than widowers, especially on Noirmoutier, Varda photographed and interviewed fourteen of them, young and old, and placed videos of these encounters in a rectangle of fourteen monitors around a fifteenth—a large central screen occupied by images of "the widows of Noirmoutier" walking on the beach. Varda positioned chairs in front of the screens, each equipped with headphones so the viewer might listen to the widows' voices separately, one at a time.

In the spirit of *Les Veuves de Noirmoutier* (*The Widows of Noirmoutier*) (2004), but less explicit and more mysterious, is Varda's installation *Le Triptyque de Noirmoutier* (*The Triptych of Noirmoutier*) (2005, no. 3), a secular altarpiece with three video screens as panels. Viewers can open and close the side panels at will, but only when they are open is the triptych fully revealed. The central panel shows an intimate domestic interior, a kitchen inhabited by three people—a man, a woman in modern dress, and an older woman in regional costume. The flanking images are of a beach. The work is silent, and questions arise as to identities of and relationships among the three subjects. Do they exist in the same time and space? The viewer is uncertain. The Noirmoutier triptych subtly and deeply suggests the passage of time, a subject that has always been near to an artist who has never feared change or loss.

3. *Le Triptyque de Noirmoutier* (*The Triptych of Noirmoutier*). 2005. 35mm film transferred to three-channel video (color, sound), wooden screen, hinges, and system of pulleys, 9:58 min., open 41 1/8" x 14' 11 15/16" (104.5 x 457 cm), closed 41 1/8" x 10' 4 3/8" (104.5 x 326 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of The Hess Foundation, Committee on Media Funds, and Department of Film Funds

2. *Sans toit ni loi* (*Vagabond*). 1985. 35mm film (color, sound), 105 min. The Museum of Modern Art, New York
Sandrine Bonnaire

1. Agnès Varda, in conversation with the author, 1997.
2. Ibid.
3. Varda, interview by Laurence Kardish, *V Magazine*, Spring 2008, p. 65.

In 2002, using fabrics from her past, Louise Bourgeois constructed a memory book. But the process she employed had started earlier, in the 1990s. After working for decades in materials ranging from wood and plaster to latex, marble, bronze, and glass, she turned to her own old clothes as sculptural elements. Coats, dresses, nightgowns, and slips appeared on various hanging devices, then occupied the enclosed installations she calls "cells." Such fabrics soon formed the outer skins of her figural sculptures. Through these means, the artist was able to mine the remnants of her long life in a new way.

Bourgeois has saved nearly every item of clothing she wore, just as she has saved almost everything else. She is an accumulator. But as the artist reached her eighties and left the house less and less frequently, she no longer needed outfits for various occasions. She finally stopped going out altogether. While she still enjoyed a particular hat, scarf, or sweater, Bourgeois was not concerned with fashion in the same ways she had been in her younger years. But the garments she chose for her sculpture were rich in associations. "You can retell your life and remember your life by the shape, weight, color, and smell of those clothes in your closet," she said.[1] Soon Bourgeois added sheets, towels, tablecloths, and napkins to her repertoire. All these fabrics, with textures as varied as their histories, became a major sculptural preoccupation. Meanwhile, leftover scraps were accumulating. Her longtime assistant, Jerry Gorovoy, remembers gathering them into bags, separated by color.[2]

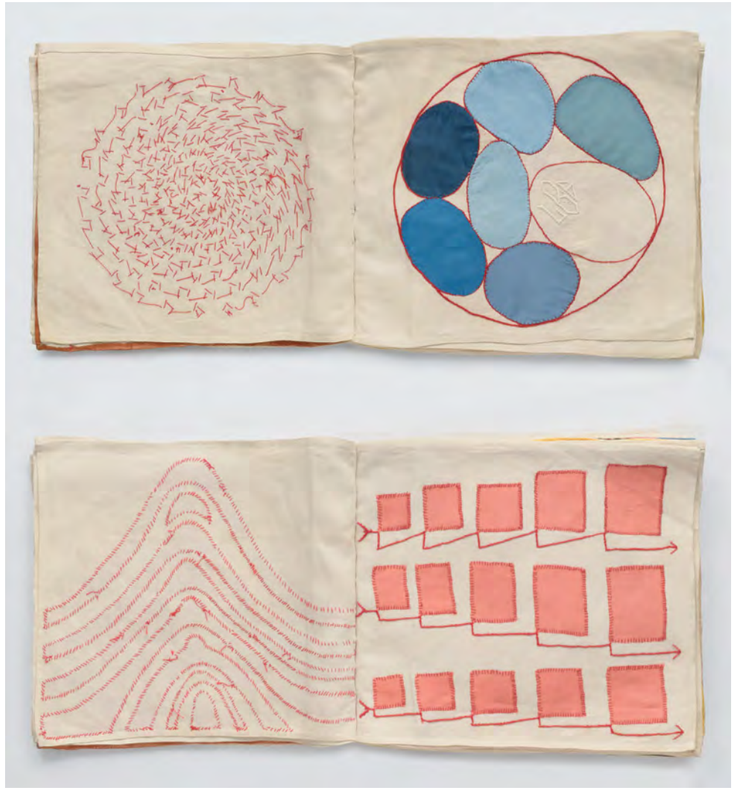
Alongside her sculpture, Bourgeois has created a voluminous body of drawings and prints, and fabric soon became a backdrop for those mediums as well. Handkerchiefs and napkins immediately evoked sheets of paper, but with an added physicality; such materials eventually prompted her to form the pages of a book.[3] Bourgeois would go on to make several such volumes, the first being *Ode à l'oubli* (Ode to forgetting) (2002, no. 1).[4] For this work, she chose monogrammed linen hand towels of the kind reserved for guests in refined households. The embroidered initials LBG, for Louise Bourgeois Goldwater, are visible on the cover and on several pages of the book. These hand towels had been part of Bourgeois's wedding trousseau when she married American art historian Robert Goldwater in 1938, having left France to join him in New York.

Bourgeois folded the rectangular towels across the middle, making each into four pages. She asked the seamstress she works with to sew eighteen folded towels together, with a cover, to form a kind of binding. By this time, having worked with fabric for many years, Bourgeois relied on a professional seamstress who came to her house daily to help with these projects. In fact, although the artist pins fabrics together, and sometimes does loose basting, she prefers the stitches of a professional.[5] According to Gorovoy, she also takes a certain pleasure in creating a workshoplike environment, with a skilled artisan, which reminds her of her parents' tapestry-restoration atelier.[6]

When it came to fashioning imagery for the pages of *Ode à l'oubli*, the process of working with the ungainly sewn-together object proved awkward. In later fabric book projects, including an editioned version of this one (2004, no. 3), Bourgeois devised a fastening system for the pages, incorporating ties and buttonholes that could be unbound.[7] But the disadvantages of the sewn binding in her initial foray into making a cloth book also led to unique qualities for *Ode à l'oubli*. Rather than the planned sequence of pages found later, a spontaneous, sketchbook quality exists here. As she finished with the design of one page and turned to the next—in a process that took about six months to complete—she clearly responded to what came before. But every day was a new one, and she might have an impulse to go off in different directions. The pages became a kind of visual diary, with kaleidoscopic effects. Ovals begot other ovals; geometry called for a biomorphic response; one woven plaid gave way to a variation. Whimsical surprises appear, as in a page of fancy, lacelike netting that follows a checkerboard grid. Ghostlike knots and stitches on the versos of many pages create echolike memories of what came before and also act as foils for their mates on opposite sides of double-page spreads (no. 2). As pages are turned, shifting shapes and patterns create a sense of ongoing metamorphosis.

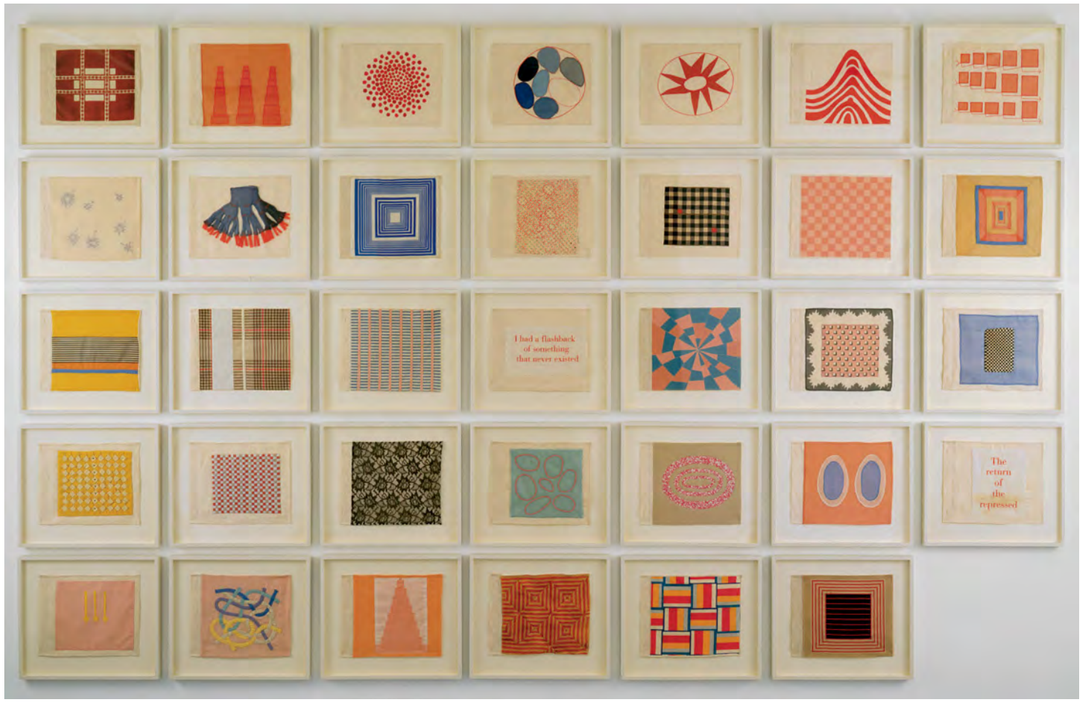
Abstraction is the basis of Bourgeois's page designs in *Ode à l'oubli*, and such nonrepresentational imagery has been integral to the vision she has developed throughout her career.[8] While some designs here suggest cellular structures, body parts, or bursting stars, others are based on geometry, which the artist has relied on time and again in a search for order and rationality. Repetitive

1. *Ode à l'oubli* (Ode to forgetting). 2002. Unique fabric book with embroidery; lithographed cover and text, page 11 3/4 x 13" (29.8 x 33 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of the artist



2. *Ode à l'oubli* (see no. 1). 2002

3. Opposite:
Ode à l'oubli (Ode to forgetting). 2004. Editioned fabric book with lithographs, digital prints, embroidery, and appliqué (unbound pages, shown framed), page 10 5/8 x 13 5/16" (27 x 33.8 cm). Publisher: Peter Blum Edition, New York. Printer and fabricator: Solo Impression, New York, and Dyenamix, Inc., New York. Edition: 25. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of the artist



abstract strokes and shapes have often served her as a calming ritual in drawing, and she duplicates that effect here, both in designs from ready-made fabrics and in those constructed from scraps. Overall, the effect of this compendium of abstract patterns is one of musiclike rhythms rather than any preconceived, unfolding narrative, however abstract.

But Bourgeois's *Ode à l'oubli* functions in other ways as well. This is not simply pure, otherworldly design. Fine linen, silk, chiffon, netting, tulle, burlap, and synthetic nylons and rayons signal the fingertips: soft, rough, smooth, delicate, sturdy. Colors range from bright and forceful to muted and gentle. In heft and in pliability, the volume resembles a comforting pillow on which to lay one's head. It is a poignant object, emitting a sense of vulnerability. With many stains and scorch marks, the fabrics evoke their pasts and the evidence of many launderings. Burned cigarette holes on one page are vivid and visceral. The resonance of the everyday joins Bourgeois's mesmerizing abstraction.

In a filmed passage in Brigitte Cornand's 2007 film about Bourgeois, *La Rivière gentille*, the artist reveals how *Ode à l'oubli* may function for her. She is shown slowly turning its pages, rubbing her hand across each one, absorbing the order and variety of its designs, but also patting, smoothing, and straightening out, as the traditional woman-of-the-house might put her linens in order. It is clear that each touch brings back memories the artist has sublimated and contained within this volume. Printed texts on two of the pages, one containing the word "flashback" and the other the phrase "the return of the repressed," make that evident. *Ode à l'oubli* is both comforting and forgiving. It fulfills one of Bourgeois's primary goals since she began making art: to provide a tool to conquer and control her emotions.

1. Louise Bourgeois, quoted in "Paulo Herkenhoff notes, 16 Nov. 1995," in "Clothes," in Frances Morris, ed., *Louise Bourgeois* (London: Tate Publishing, 2007), p. 82.
2. In January 2009 Jerry Gorovoy discussed his recollections of Louise Bourgeois making *Ode à l'oubli* with the author. References to specific steps she took in constructing the work come from that conversation.
3. By this time, Bourgeois had a long relationship with the book as an art format. Following a family tradition, she has been a collector of books, particularly those with illustrations. In the late 1950s she opened a short-lived shop for prints and illustrated books, and she has made many illustrated volumes, incorporating her own texts and those of other authors.
4. Between 2002 and 2006 Bourgeois completed eight books entirely from fabric.
5. Bourgeois's admiration for the professional seamstress is not unlike her deference to the professional printmaker. As far back as the 1940s, when she worked at the atelier of the renowned engraver Stanley William Hayter, Bourgeois expressed reverence for the skills of such experts. Deborah Wye, "A Drama of the Self: Louise Bourgeois as Printmaker," in Wye and Carol Smith, *The Prints of Louise Bourgeois* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1994), p. 27.
6. Bourgeois relates to a few master printers in the way she relates to her seamstress. Printers come and go, with proofs that she amends and alters. She also has small printing presses installed in the lower level of her house, where proofing can take place. The seamstress and sewing machine reside there as well.
7. In 2004 Bourgeois issued the editioned version of *Ode à l'oubli*. The edition comprises twenty-five examples. The tie-and-buttonhole fastening allows the pages to be unbound and seen as a group (no. 3).
8. Robert Storr's essay "Abstraction: L'Esprit géométrique," in *Louise Bourgeois*, pp. 21–35, offers a sustained analysis of the abstract aspects of Bourgeois's art.

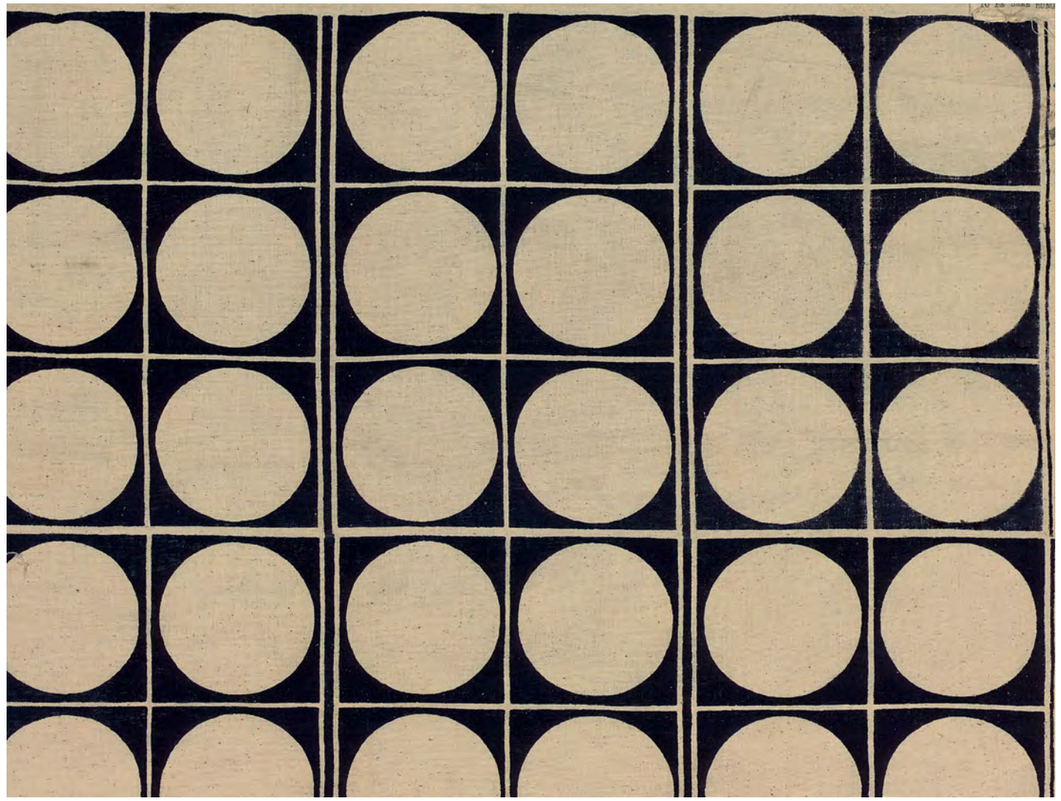
Cecil Beaton's stylish photograph of the winners of the International Competition for Low-Cost Furniture Design (no. 2), organized by The Museum of Modern Art in 1948, captures the resolutely masculine ethos of the midcentury design profession and its presentation in the Museum. Through its publication in a popular women's magazine, *House & Garden*, the image also encouraged female consumers to identify with core masculine design values. The winners, clad in dapper suits and gazing steadfastly ahead, are shown ranged to one side of Wilhelm Lehmbruck's *Kneeling Woman* (1911). The nakedness, subservient pose, and downcast eyes of the sidelined sculpture create an air of gentle introspection, even melancholy. Nameless, "timeless," and elegantly classical, her figure remains at a remove from the clubbish grouping of the gentlemen winners. At the same time, her elite status as a work of fine art casts an aura of credibility over the individual design "stars" and serves to mythologize this gender-inflected view of midcentury design as part of some higher, almost "natural" order.

Yet out of sight are a host of "significant female others" intimately linked to this competition, not least the wives—each a designer in her own right—of Charles Eames (no. 1), Davis Pratt, and Robin Day. In the press release for the awards ceremony, Pratt made a point of acknowledging the contribution of his wife, Elsa, and Eames was likewise at pains to acknowledge Ray as more than a "muse" or domestic helpmate: "She is equally responsible with me for everything that goes on here," he stated in a 1949 interview following the competition. "She works on the furniture program, on architectural problems." But even this unambiguous statement was undercut by the title of the article—"Artist Wife Contributes Her Bit, Too"—and captions describing the furniture as his alone and Ray as merely "interested" in her husband's projects.[1]

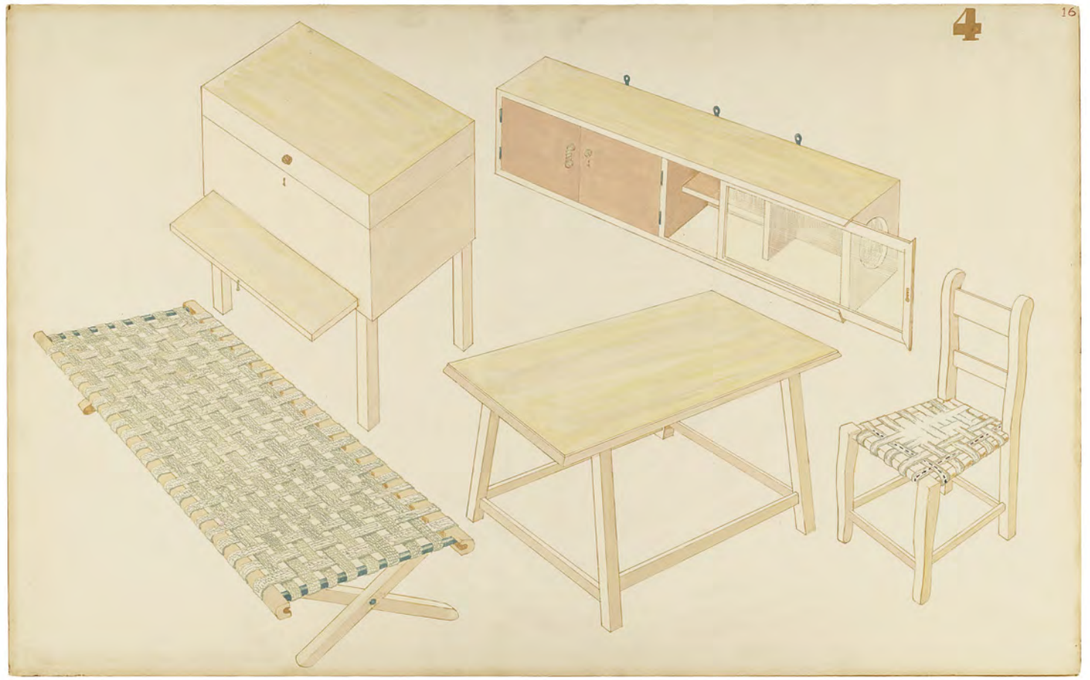
MoMA's earlier Organic Design in Home Furnishings competition and exhibition (1940–41) offers a further example of the ease with which the creative contributions of women could be erased or subsumed. On this occasion, the textiles of Noémi Raymond (no. 3) and furniture designs of Clara Porset (no. 4), both prizewinning, were attributed to their respective husbands. (This did not, however, stop either woman from receiving commissions as a direct result of the competition.)

1. **Charles Eames** (American, 1907–1978). **Ray Eames** (American, 1916–1988). Full Scale Model of Chaise Longue (La Chaise). 1948. Hard rubber foam, plastic, wood, and metal, 32 1/2 x 59 x 34 1/4" (82.5 x 149.8 x 87 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of the designers

2. Finalists in The Museum of Modern Art's International Competition for Low-Cost Furniture Design, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1948. Photograph by Cecil Beaton. Published in *House & Garden*, April 1, 1949, p. 119



3. **Noémi Raymond** (American, 1889–1980). Circles Printed Fabric, c. 1939–40. Cotton, 43 3/4" x 6' 4 1/2" (111.1 x 194.3 cm). Manufacturer: Cyrus Clark Co., Inc., New York. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of the designer



4. **Clara Porset** (Mexican, born Cuba. 1895–1891). **Xavier Guerrero** (Mexican, 1896–1974). Entry Panel for MoMA Latin American Competition for Organic Design in Home Furnishings. c. 1940. Gouache and ink on panel, 20 x 30" (50.8 x 76.2 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of the designer

Such a pattern of erasure was well established, and by no means exclusive to MoMA. In the decades before the women's movement got under way in the 1960s, there seemed to be a degree of complicity in, or at least acceptance of, this state of affairs by many women. Indeed, a high proportion of female designers represented in the collection lived and worked with prominent male designers and were able to gain access to otherwise exclusive male domains through these relationships.

The only female juror in both the Organic Design and Low-Cost Furniture competitions was Catherine Bauer, an architect who had been involved in several MoMA architecture exhibitions in the 1930s. A protégée of Lewis Mumford and an influential author (*Modern Housing* [1934]), consultant, and architecture professor, Bauer had been instrumental in the passage of the Housing Act of 1937, which brought the interwar housing problem to the attention of a broad audience.[2] Yet despite her professional expertise, Bauer was described first and foremost as a "housewife" in a MoMA press release announcing the terms and conditions of the 1948 competition—in other words, as a generic consumer rather than an individuated practitioner of good design.[3]

Issues of self-definition were a continual struggle for women. Another architect, Ann Hatfield (joint first-prize winner of the Organic Design competition), was identified as an "interior decorator," a term reserved almost exclusively for women at the time. Its use connoted an affinity for ornament and an intuitive rather than rational approach to design, a characterization that many women found irritating. Sensitive to the implied denigration, Porset expressed her "outright hostility" to the label and always insisted on being called a "designer" or "interior architect." "The art of the interior is to us a question of perfection of form and the relationship between masses," she wrote, "not of superimposed elements."[4] Greta Magnusson Grossman (no. 5), who showed in the 1950 and 1952 *Good Design* exhibitions at MoMA, was equally forthright: "The old idea that women are no good at mechanical work is stuff and nonsense. . . . The only advantage that a man has in furniture designing is his greater physical strength."[5]

CONSTRUCTING A CANON AND DEFINING INNOVATION

To coincide with the Low-Cost Furniture competition, MoMA published an enlarged, more lavishly illustrated edition of Nikolaus Pevsner's *Pioneers of the Modern Movement: From William Morris to Walter Gropius*, first published in 1936. With its almost exclusive concentration on individual "masters" and iconic buildings, this text played a key role in propagating a male-dominated canon of modernist design that looked to the paradigm of architecture and to clean, abstract forms stripped of "superfluous" ornament. In the linear, evolutionary progression traced by Pevsner, tectonic values of form and structure and mechanized production were steadily given priority over decorative impulses, "styling," fashion, and handcraft. It was a narrative couched in tones of moralizing rhetoric about "truth to materials" and "truth to construction" that demonized ornament, fashion, ephemerality, and obsolescence—all qualities conventionally associated with the world of women. The impulse to discuss design in such moral terms was anchored in the Design Reform movements of the late nineteenth century, and it became part of a larger concept of "good design" that gained significant international currency beginning in the 1930s in academic, political, and economic contexts.

The seductively simple thrust of Pevsner's argument was to be reinforced and extended by MoMA. The winning low-cost furniture designs of 1949 celebrated standardization, reproducibility, and values of simplicity, economy, and utility in ways that appeared to continue the evolutionary trajectory outlined by Pevsner into the present. Midcentury design by women was selected and packaged by MoMA to suit this narrative, emphasizing certain aspects of their creative contribution and suppressing or diminishing others. The predominantly

5. Greta Magnusson Grossman (American, born Sweden. 1906–1999). Cobra Lighting Fixture. c. 1948. Enameled aluminum, enameled steel, and chrome-plated steel, 27 1/2 x 11 1/4 x 13" (69.9 x 28.6 x 33 cm). Manufacturer: Ralph O. Smith Co., Los Angeles. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Ralph O. Smith Co.

“beige” representation of textiles designed by Marianne Strengell and Dorothy Liebes, for example, betrays no hint of the riotous colors and glittering yarns they also favored. Likewise, Ray Eames’s “functioning decoration” (arrangements of objects that encouraged an interplay between craft and machine work) and the “folk” sources from which she and many of her female contemporaries drew inspiration have been edited out of the picture presented by MoMA.[6]

Freda Diamond is represented in the collection by a few plain glass tumblers manufactured by Libbey in 1950, which at best give a limited sense of her creative accomplishments. The phenomenal success of such glassware (*Life* magazine reported in 1954 that “more than 25 million dozen of her glasses have been sold by Libbey during the past 12 years”) was matched by comparable sales of other products like her kitchen canisters by Continental Can and wrought iron furniture by Baumritter. This was in part due to her ability to predict and interpret consumer preferences by using market research. Having started her professional career in retail, she effectively developed strategies for coordinated merchandising. In the case of Libbey glasses, she designed lively, witty advertisements and innovative packaging of sets, the most popular of them decorated with playful pictures (MoMA has only undecorated ones). “Designer for Everybody. Millions of U.S. Homes Profit by Her Good Taste” ran the title of the article in *Life* magazine. “Freda Diamond has probably done more to get simple, well-styled furnishings into every room of the average U.S. home than any other designer.”[7] Her range of lifestyle products put the consumer at the center of the design process; she professionally nurtured and gave shape to *consumers’* creativity.

In the Museum the style of labeling and cataloguing, based on a hierarchical fine arts model, continues to prioritize the individual designer at the expense of other factors. The emphasis remains on the *construction* of space and the *shaping* of objects rather than the creative roles of intermediaries and consumers, so many of them women, who shape the “social life of things.” Despite the Museum’s extensive holdings of 1950s Tupperware, for example, a search through the institution’s documentation will reveal no mention of Brownie Wise, who in a sense “invented” the product along with Earl Tupper. Arguably, it was Tupperware Home Parties (no. 6)—the new sales method pioneered by Wise—that revolutionized the use and perception of domestic plastic wares on an international scale.[8]

Likewise, it is questionable whether the floppy spring brought home by a marine engineer in 1943 to entertain his children would have inspired a multimillion-selling toy had it not been identified as a “Slinky” by his wife, Betty James. She collaborated on the prototyping and marketing of the toy from the outset, and she continued to develop both the product and the company after her husband left her and their six children in 1960 to join a South American religious cult.[9] The empirical design knowledge and career trajectories of women like Wise and James demonstrated the porous nature of the boundary between amateur and professional, categories that MoMA and the design establishment were keen to demarcate.

The nature and extent of the creative collaborations involving women in midcentury design are hidden from view in the Museum’s collection and presentation, and can perhaps never be unraveled conclusively. Extricated from the complex machinery of commerce, manufacture, and the media, and from patterns of daily use, items designed by women in the design collection all too often appear scattered, apparently inconsequential, or “supplemental”; the many textiles and ceramics by women announce themselves less easily as innovative products than do attention-seeking, iconic works of architecture

6. Joe Steinmetz (American, 1905–1985). *Tupperware Party, Sarasota, Florida*. 1958. Gelatin silver print, 10 1/16 x 12 15/16" (25.5 x 32.9 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Barbara Norfleet

and furniture design. The persistent decontextualization of designed objects in MoMA—spotlighted or elevated on platforms within spare white galleries—undermines the value of women’s significant engagement with the project of modernism. It allows only a partial view of professional practices that often embraced an innovative blend of handcraft and machine production, or creative achievements in business management, marketing, journalism, education, and exhibition design. But by highlighting the complex nature of the progressive tendencies in which midcentury women were involved, we can perhaps enrich MoMA’s narrative of modernist design.

CREATIVE CURATION AND EXHIBITION DESIGN, 1942–45

Through the selection of works, the design of installations, and the control of press and marketing, a number of women also actively contributed to the perception of midcentury design, both within the context of MoMA and in the institution’s communication with outside audiences. In the Departments of Architecture and Industrial Design, women played a more prominent role as curators than in other departments of the Museum, making a crucial contribution to MoMA at a time when the significance of design in postwar social reconstruction was being

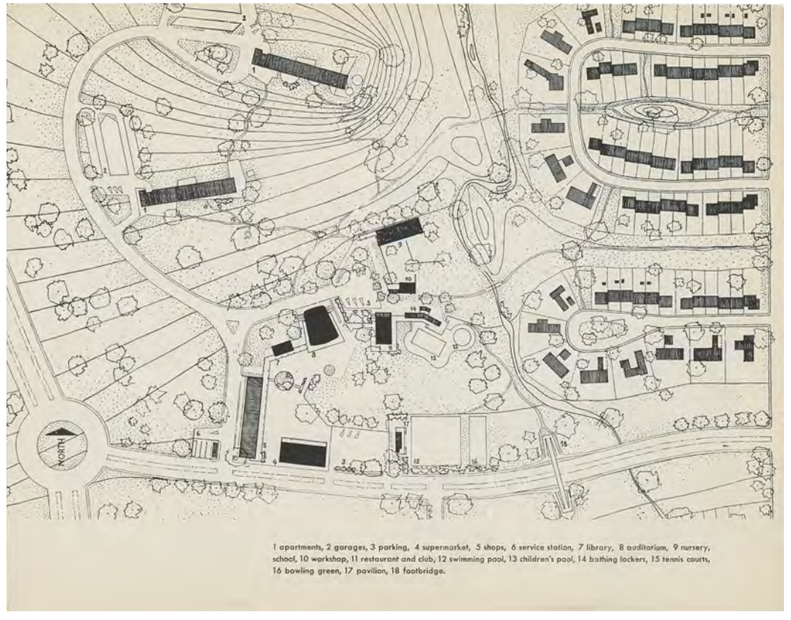
recognized and the direction of its subsequent development plotted. Several women were brought in temporarily to replace curators such as Eliot Noyes and Edgar Kaufmann, Jr., during their military service in World War II. The brief but intensely productive tenures of the architects Elizabeth Mock (Curator of Architecture, 1942–46) and Susanne Wasson-Tucker (Acting Curator of Industrial Design, 1944–45) are often overlooked, but they initiated and designed a significant series of exhibitions from 1940 to 1945 that brought women's needs and perspectives to the fore, and they trained the next generation of curators, like Greta Daniel, who had arrived from Germany in 1938 and began working at the Museum not long after.[10]

Unlike many of her male colleagues, Mock (whose sister was Catherine Bauer) took a proactive interest in the Department of Education and in child-centered design. She prepared a traveling exhibition and book, *Modern Architecture for the Modern School* (1942), with her husband, the Swiss architect Rudolf Mock, as well as an exhibition called *Modern Interiors*, which circulated from 1941 to 1943.[11] Although designed as a lesson in open planning and functionalism for "young people" and "children," *Modern Interiors* also traveled to colleges and universities. An innovative feature was an experimental model with movable wall sections and twenty-eight pieces of furniture, painted in Bauhaus primary colors, for children themselves to arrange.[12] Once again emphasizing an integrated approach to the domestic interior and presenting a view of architecture from the inside out, Mock organized another exhibition in 1945 on kitchens, bathrooms, and storage, this time in collaboration with Wasson-Tucker, who was born and trained in Vienna, and assisted by Daniel. "The house should be considered as a complete living unit," they announced, "rather than as shelter for a confusion of separate and unrelated items of equipment."[13]

That year Mock and Wasson-Tucker also organized the exhibition *Tomorrow's Small House*, based around house models designed for *Ladies' Home Journal*.[14] The magazine's model program was expanded to include a project for a house within a community, designed by Wasson-Tucker herself, in collaboration with Serge Chermayeff and Vernon DeMars (no. 7).[15] "Unlike an automobile, a house is not a self-contained commodity," wrote Mock. "A great part of its value, present and future, depends upon the community of which it is part."[16] The two women shared a keen sense of the social context of architecture and design. In 1945 Wasson-Tucker selected the objects and designed the installation for the sixth *Useful Objects* exhibition and a circulating exhibition called *Modern Textiles*, the Museum's first dedicated to this medium. The latter featured work by her friend Anni Albers and by many women artists appearing at MoMA for the first time, such as Strengell and Liebes.[17] Interestingly, the textiles exhibition also marked the MoMA debut of Louise Bourgeois, a fact that was soon subsumed by her reputation as a fine artist.

Wasson-Tucker left shortly afterward to work for Knoll International Associates as an interior architect, a connection that laid the groundwork for the Museum's developing relationship with Knoll and its promotion of Scandinavian modernism. Her design in the 1950s of the interiors of North American embassies in Cuba, Copenhagen, and Stockholm confirmed the alignment of official American culture with the kind of "good design" she had promoted at MoMA.[18] She also won international acclaim for her innovative designs for touring exhibitions that could be erected and dismantled with a minimum of fuss, a skill first honed at the Museum.

One does not have to look far to find other exhibitions that complicate and subvert the perception of MoMA's modernist stance as inimical to women. Starting with a challenging exhibition in 1944 entitled *Are Clothes Modern?* (no. 8) the maverick émigré architect and designer Bernard Rudofsky attempted to introduce more anthropological, ethical, and psychosocial approaches to the presentation of design in the Museum. For Rudofsky, the design of clothing, tools, eating utensils—everything we use in daily life—was an important indicator of a culture's values. He credited Kaufmann with dignifying domestic "pots and pans" by showing them in the Museum's memorable



7. Site plan for The House in Its Neighborhood, designed by Susanne Wasson-Tucker in collaboration with Serge Chermayeff and Vernon DeMars. Published in *The Bulletin of the Museum of Modern Art* 12, no. 5, *Tomorrow's Small House* (Summer 1945): 18

8. View of the exhibition *Are Clothes Modern?* The Museum of Modern Art, New York, November 28, 1944–March 4, 1945

Good Design exhibitions from 1950 to 1955, but was struck by how Kaufmann divorced them from the act of eating. "To his mind a kitchen pot was an *objet d'art*; its use for preparing food was purely incidental."[19] Even though Rudofsky's exhibitions resulted in few acquisitions for the collection and failed to alter the Museum's exclusion of areas like fashion, they fueled virulent debates in the press and helped to broaden the discourse surrounding "feminine" areas of design.

SOFTENING AND DOMESTICATING MODERNISM, 1946–56

As reflected in MoMA's competitions, the number of women working in the fields of interior architecture, engineering, and industrial design remained small, an exception to the rule. But on closer inspection, a large number of women emerge, unsung heroines who were instrumental in subtly modifying and challenging a dogmatic brand of modernism. Paradoxically, and in many ways contrary to the message of Beaton's photo, more work by women designers was exhibited and acquired by MoMA from 1946 to 1956 than at any other time before or since. This was not least due to the efforts of Kaufmann, who became director of the Department of Industrial Design in 1946. Study in Vienna and experience with retail through both his mother's boutique and the family department store had attuned Kaufmann to a more domesticated and commercially appealing style of modernism than that promoted by Philip Johnson, who was chairman of the Department of Architecture in 1932–35 and the dominant personality in first the Department of Architecture and then the Department of Architecture and Design in 1946–54. Although he may have adopted Pevsnerian rhetoric in the Museum publication *What Is Modern Design?* (1950), in practice Kaufmann blurred Johnson's clear-cut demarcation between industrial design and craft, bringing many female practitioners on board in the process. The majority were North American, joined by a significant number of European émigrés who had arrived in the 1930s and a token representation of Latin Americans. A few key figures such as Eva Zeisel, Ray Eames, Porset, Anni Albers, and Marguerite Wildenhain have since been the subject of biographies and exhibitions. However, many other less celebrated women also contributed to the phenomenon of American midcentury modern, in the development of which MoMA played such an influential and complex role.

A number of exhibitions in 1946 set the tone for the design competitions and *Good Design* series that were to follow: *New Furniture Designed by Charles Eames* (produced collaboratively with his wife, Ray, despite the title), *Modern China* (works by Hungarian-born Zeisel), *Design Trends in Unit Furniture, Fabric and Tableware* (featuring upholstery and drapery by Liebes and Marli Ehrman), and *Modern Handmade Jewelry* (including work by Claire Falkenstein, better known as a sculptor). Above all, however, it was the highly publicized series of *Good Design* exhibitions (no. 9), organized by Kaufmann from 1950 to 1955 in association with the Chicago Merchandise Mart, that channeled design by many women into the collection. This program featured design for the domestic sphere in installations that "humanized" modernism with a profusion of plants, textiles, and ceramics (often handcrafted). There was some skepticism about the "use value" of the selections, but Kaufmann understood the importance of the press and retailers in promoting modern design. He courted support from "The First Lady of Retailing," Dorothy Shaver, who presided over Lord & Taylor from 1945 to 1959. In collaboration with women's magazines and television (he appeared daily for weeks on Margaret Arlen's *Morning Show* in 1954), he offered practical advice about household furnishings and equipment to female consumers. An unprecedented number of professional women, including Zeisel, were given a public platform in roundtable conferences sponsored by MoMA, on topics such as "How Good Is Good Design?"

It comes as no surprise that the majority of works by women fell into the domestic and more decorative areas of design conventionally accepted as feminine (i.e., ceramics, textiles, and, to a lesser extent, lighting and glassware). Difficulty penetrating the corporate culture of larger companies and continuing a career after marriage drove many middle-class women to find outlets for their skills and energy in independent design consultancies, craft studios, and/or teaching. For such women, frequently working in relative isolation, the series of competitions organized by MoMA from 1946 to 1951 offered valuable opportunities for public recognition, contact with manufacturers and furnishings stores across the US, and access to new markets. Participation in the competitions could have a far-reaching effect on their careers, even if their work was not given an award or selected for the collection.

The initiative for the first printed textiles competition and exhibition, in 1946–47, came from Zelina Brunschwig, a designer and partner in the firm Brunschwig & Fils, who had a vested interest in developing textile talent. As an incentive she offered to produce the winning designs and provide $1,000 in prize money. Eventually, about twenty stores across the US also became involved, including Kaufmann's in Chicago. The competition generated huge interest and the submission of 2,443 designs, many of them from women.[20] Notes in the Museum archives show the care and control Brunschwig exercised over the printing of the winning textiles: "1408 First Prize. To be printed on tinted fabric. Please plan for light textured cloth, similar to linen, if possible—VERY IMPORTANT. Please note that there are gradations in value in the spots and we would like to keep these as they enhance the design."[21]

The Cuban-Mexican designer Clara Porset's submissions to the International Competition for Low-Cost

9. **Charles Eames**, **Ray Eames**, **Dorothy Shaver**, and **Edgar Kaufmann, Jr.**, at the exhibition *Good Design*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1950–51. Photograph by Leo Trachtenberg. Photographic Archive. The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York

10. Greta von Nessen (American, born Sweden. 1900–1978). Anywhere Lamp. 1951. Aluminum and enameled steel, 14 3/4 x 14 1/4" (37.5 x 36.2 cm). Manufacturer: Nessen Studio, Inc. (now Nessen Lamps, Inc.), New York. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Architecture and Design Fund

Furniture Design in 1948 won no award but attracted interest from United Nations representatives in New York, who offered her a furniture commission. Although Porset was not able to bring the commission to fruition, the experience contributed to her next major project, the organization of *Art in Daily Life: An Exhibition of Well-Designed Objects Made in Mexico* (*El arte en la vida diaria*), held in 1952 at the Palacio de Bellas Artes in Mexico City and later the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México in conjunction with the Seventh Pan-American Congress on Architecture. This exhibition emulated the concept, installation, and catalogue of the MoMA competitions and exhibitions and helped Porset connect designers like Zeisel and Wasson-Tucker with Mexican manufacturers.

On a smaller scale than the MoMA competitions for textiles or furniture, *New Lamps* (1950–51), sponsored by the manufacturer Yasha Heifitz, provided a vital stimulus to the emerging talents of several young women. Stylishly contemporary table lamps by Marion Geller and the Israeli artist Zahara Schatz were put into production after the exhibition. Flexible and popular lighting by two Swedish expatriates also received the MoMA seal of approval: Grossman's Cobra Lamp (no. 5) (exhibited in *Good Design* in 1950 and the *Design for Use* circulating exhibition) and Greta von Nessen's Anywhere Lamp (1951, no. 10) (included in *Good Design* in 1952). There has been a recent resurgence of interest in Grossman as a significant architect-designer in the development of "California Modern," but von Nessen's reputation remains subsumed by that of her husband, Walter, a German émigré who established an innovative architectural lighting company in the late 1920s.[22] Yet it was Greta who single-handedly revived and developed Nessen Studio in New York after World War II, and her ingenious Anywhere design remains the firm's best-known product.

BETWEEN CRAFT AND INDUSTRY, VERNACULAR AND MODERN

Closer investigation of women represented in the Museum's collection sheds light on the complex dialectic among vernacular traditions, craft, and industry that characterized midcentury modern design. Uneven patterns of industrialization and modernization were evident in the continued importance of traditional crafts and folk art in many varieties of international modernism at this time. Using craft as a means of designing for industrial production, particularly in the fields of ceramics and woven textiles, was a concept embedded in the design training that many émigrés brought with them from the Nordic countries, Central Europe, and Latin America.

MoMA's intense relationship with the German Bauhaus has been well documented. Of the women associated with this school who emigrated to the US, it was Albers who most effectively linked the cachet of the Bauhaus to MoMA, where, through Johnson, she had the first solo exhibition devoted to woven textiles, in 1949. Textile samples by Ehrman, a fellow alumna, were highlighted in MoMA's Organic Design in Home Furnishings competition and exhibition, but as with so many upholstery fabrics, the role of her textile in the winning chair designed by Eero Saarinen and Charles Eames is often overlooked. It was as teachers that these Bauhaus women were most visible and influential—Albers at Black Mountain College and Ehrman at the Chicago Institute of Design, where she was invited by László Moholy-Nagy to teach weaving from 1939 to 1947. Wildenhain had been immersed in traditional craft production in the ceramic workshops of the Weimar Bauhaus before working as an industrial designer for the Berlin Staatliche Porzellan-Manufaktur. Once she reached the US in 1940, she was robustly critical of the California College of Arts and Crafts, where she taught for a while, and skeptical about corporate design culture and being featured in MoMA's *Good Design* exhibitions. At her Pond Farm community,

however, she gathered a "family" of students who breathed new life into California ceramics.

Porset studied briefly with Albers at Black Mountain College and worked closely with several other ex-Bauhaus members after settling in Mexico in 1936. As her furniture designs for the Organic Design and Low-Cost Furniture competitions indicate, she was a committed modernist, but—like many North Americans, including the Eameses, the Wasson-Tuckers, and textile artist Sheila Hicks—she was also profoundly inspired by indigenous design talent in Mexico, which "even the arbitrary demands of the uncultured tourist, lacking understanding of the people or products, have not destroyed."[23] The 1952 exhibition she organized in Mexico City, *Art in Daily Life*, displayed items such as La Vasconia kitchen utensils, a DM Nacional fitted metal kitchen, and tableware manufactured to Zeisel's designs by Loza Fina Company (Guadalajara) alongside traditional Mexican baskets and wooden wares for preparing chocolate. "During this time of technological transformation," she wrote, "it is important to infuse industry—that is, the machine—with the extraordinary sensitivity of the Mexican, who over the millennia, has created so many and such a variety of beautiful forms using manual techniques."[24] The intention was not to encourage the mechanization of folk art but to emphasize the continued vitality of craft traditions and their relevance to modern industry.

Ceramics were brought to the fore in the 1946 *Modern China* display of Zeisel's elegantly sculptural white Museum Dinner Service (no. 11), the result of an intensive four-year collaboration between MoMA, the designer, and the Castleton China company.[25] Although small, this exhibition was a first for MoMA on two counts, in being devoted to contemporary ceramics and to an individual female designer. The project demonstrated the growing acceptance of women designers by manufacturers, as well as the increasing influence of museums on "taste" and manufacture. Zeisel, who was born in 1906 in Budapest and is still living and designing in New York, describes how the shape of her Museum Dinner Service was meant to be modern but also "stately and formal, simple and elegant, fit to become an 'heirloom.'"[26] Zeisel had arrived in 1939, fleeing war-torn Europe. Within a few months she was working at Pratt Institute, where she established a new course in industrial ceramic design, but it was this exhibition that effectively launched the high-profile American phase of her career as an industrial designer.[27]

She brought with her an impressive range of experience. Before designing prototypes for industrial production in Hungary and Germany, she had served an apprenticeship with an artisan potter in Budapest, becoming the first woman to qualify as a journeyman in the Hungarian Guild of Chimney Sweeps, Oven Makers, Roof Tilers, Well Diggers and Potters. In 1932, like many of the left-wing intellectuals and artists in her immediate circle, she was drawn to the Soviet Union, where she rocketed to prominence and was party to the process of industrial modernization on a vast scale. At first she worked in remote factories in the Ukraine, then the Lomonosov Factory in Leningrad and the colossal Dulevo factory near Moscow. By 1935, at the age of only twenty-nine, she had become chief designer of the China and Glass Factories of the Russian Republic, only to be caught up in a Stalinist purge the following year and imprisoned for sixteen months, much of it in solitary confinement. Despite this trauma, she continues to acknowledge the positive aspects of her Soviet experience, which bridged her artisanal craft training in Hungary and the further development of her prototyping skills in Germany with her subsequent career as an industrial designer in the US.

For Zeisel, craft was an aesthetic and intellectual stimulus to industrial production, a means of making "soul contact" with her public, as she put it in 1931. The 1946 exhibition put her at the forefront of the American trend for softer forms and "friendly," communicative lines. Justly celebrated in numerous publications and exhibitions, Zeisel epitomizes the way in which many émigrés (like Finnish-born Strengell or German-born Gertrud Natzler)

11. **Eva Zeisel** (American, born Hungary 1906). Museum Dinner Service. c. 1942–45. Glazed porcelain, covered sugar bowl: overall 3" (7.6 cm) high x 4 3/4" (12.1 cm) diam.; hot-water pot: 8 3/4 x 6 x 4 1/4" (22.2 x 15.2 x 10.8 cm); creamer: 5 1/2" (14 cm) high x 2 3/4" (7 cm) diam.; teacup: 2 x 5 3/8 x 4 1/2" (5.1 x 13.7 x 11.4 cm); saucer: 1" (2.5 cm) high x 6 5/8" (16.8 cm) diam. Manufacturer: Castelton China Co., New Castle, Pennsylvania. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of the manufacturer

have been seamlessly absorbed into the design history of the more dominant North American culture with which they became associated, often with little reference to their country of origin.

Another semi-mass-produced range of "contemporary dinnerware" in MoMA's collection was put into production in 1946 by Edith Kietzner Heath and her husband, Brian, in California. An early advertising brochure (no. 12) vaunted Heathware's modernist "structural" credentials and the conscious blend of handcraft and industrial production: "Where necessary to obtain maximum strength and uniformity they use industrial techniques . . . their product is technically sound . . . with all the charm of the handmade . . . distinguished for its graceful shapes and quiet dignity. Both men and women like its sturdy quality, functional handles, drip-less spouts and oven-proofness. It is used by architects, has been exhibited in many museums." Following the example set by Russel Wright, the thirty-five component pieces were designed to be sold both individually and in sets. The naming of the glazes—"brownstone," "sea and sand," "apricot," "sage"—reflected the designers' preoccupation with an organic palette and textures.

Contrary to the conventional breakdown of male and female roles, Heath, Natzler, and Maria Martinez were the form-giving potters, while their husbands focused on the glazing and decoration. As a child Martinez had learned pottery skills from her aunt and went on to become one of the few female Native American artists to be credited in her own right in international circles. With her husband, Julian, and other family members she developed traditional Pueblo pottery styles and techniques through a process of trial and error, perfecting the art of blackware pottery, which became much sought after in the interwar and postwar periods. Although MoMA acquired ceramics by Martinez—as well as artifacts by Natzler and other artists who reference a craft ethos and preindustrial techniques—the Museum's anticraft bias (except during Kaufmann's tenure) has meant that they were rarely exhibited.

12. Edith Heath (American, 1911–2005). Heath Ceramics Brochure for Contemporary Dinnerware. 1947. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Department of Architecture & Design Files

Relatively few and far between in MoMA's collection, such objects are nonetheless important in illustrating the broad spectrum that exists between one-off and mass production.

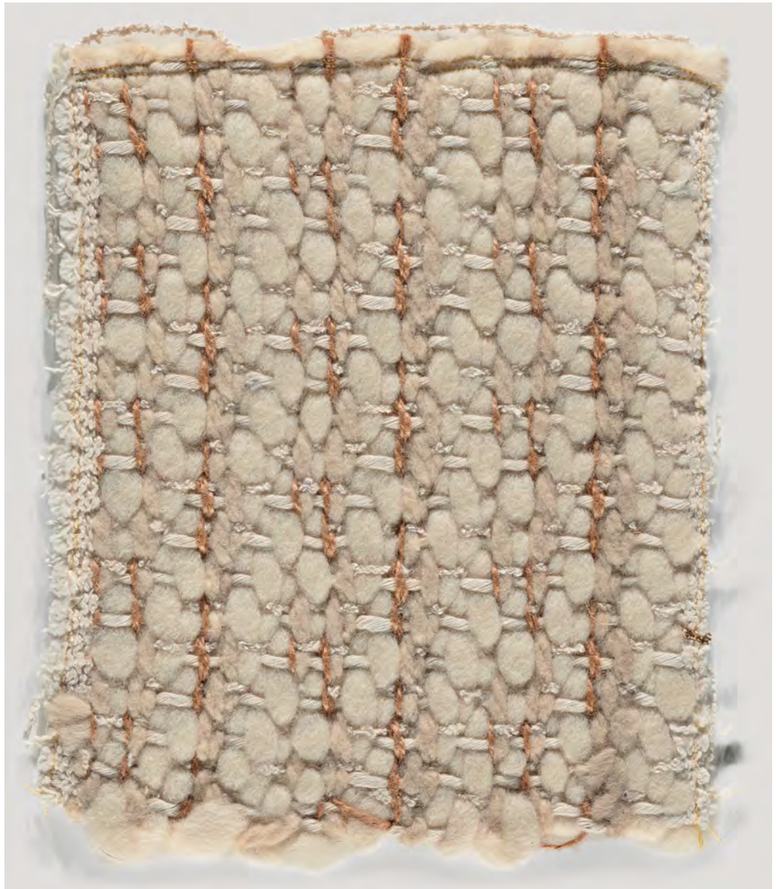
In the 1940s Strengell, who arrived from Finland in 1936, sponsored by Eliel and Loja Saarinen, added vitality to the American textile scene. Like Albers at Black Mountain College, Strengell taught hand-weaving as a model for industrial production at Cranbrook Academy of Art. For Strengell, textiles contributed to the experience, understanding, and pleasure in architecture, clarifying relationships between parts, manipulating the depth and opacity of spaces, or demarcating function. In addition to designing textiles for architecture firms such as Skidmore, Owings & Merrill and the Saarinen partnership, Strengell also designed upholstery for General Motors and Ford cars and introduced a power-assisted loom to the Cranbrook teaching studios. (Despite her strong professional identity, *Interiors* magazine felt it necessary to describe her as a "wife and mother of three.")[28] Florence Knoll (who had also been "adopted" by the Saarinens) employed her as the first consultant directing Knoll's separate textiles division, established in 1947. "Straightforward, sturdy and safe background materials are those which Marianne Strengell has designed specifically for US machine production. She capitalizes on basic contrasts of cotton, mohair, and wool yarn, and she enlivens one cloth by a warp of black and a woof of clear color and another by a diagonal weave in a flat textured cotton."[29]

Strengell had no compunctions about mixing organic and inorganic fibers, provided it worked, but the other preeminent "industrial" weaver, Liebes, was even more adventurous with synthetic fibers.[30] Her name and fashionable identity became virtually synonymous with Lurex in the 1940s and DuPont's new fibers in the mid-1950s. In the context of MoMA her fabrics were most frequently shown as a taut skin of upholstery with a single clear color or a strong texture (no. 13). "With interiors devoid of traditional moldings and other decorative articulation textiles themselves become architectural elements in which texture has a new importance," wrote Daniel. "Some of the fabrics strongly resemble the surfaces of building material: striated sand, rough earth, or the metallic glint of stone. Others supply brilliant color and bold geometric pattern to contrast with subdued architectural backgrounds."[31] Despite Liebes's hugely influential business and her rise to the highest echelons of corporate industry, *Life* magazine, in a 1947 color spread, photographed her sitting at a hand loom and described her as "First Lady of the loom."

As head of Knoll's planning unit, Florence Knoll played the triple role of architect, design consultant, and furniture designer. Her own designs were consistently selected for MoMA's *Good Design* exhibitions, though the permanent collection includes only one of her objects, a table. She designed the new Knoll showroom in 1947, including an innovative system for displaying upholstery fabrics wound around wood blocks and fastened to wire screen. The roster of international architects, artists, and textile designers she brought together was impressive, including Astrid Sampe (no. 14), from the Nordiska Kompaniet Textilkammare in Sweden, a company with which Knoll developed a commercial affiliation. From 1949 to 1955 the Hungarian textile designer Eszter Haraszty, a brilliant colorist and friend of Marcel Breuer, took over as director of Knoll Textiles. The textiles by these artists associated with Knoll are among the most important in MoMA's collection.

CONCLUSION

Design by and for women, stereotypically cast as useless, decorative, fashion-led, and anti-industrial, has typically been seen as the antithesis of the cool, spare rationality and macho-modernist aesthetic of the 1934 *Machine Art* exhibition that initiated the Museum's industrial design collection under the auspices of Johnson. Yet midcentury



13. **Dorothy Liebes** (American, 1899–1972). Upholstery Sample. c. 1930–47. Cotton, rayon, jute, and wool eiderdown, 9 x 7" (22.9 x 17.8 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of the designer

14. **Astrid Sampe** (Swedish, 1909–2002). Sateen Striped Upholstery. 1951–54. Cotton, fiberglass, and wool, 36 1/2 x 28" (92.7 x 71.1 cm). Manufacturer: Nordiska Kompaniet Textilkammare, Stockholm. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Given anonymously

15. Unidentified visitors at the exhibition *Textiles and Ornamental Arts of India*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, April 11–September 25, 1955. Photograph by Charles Eames. The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York

exhibitions curated by Catherine Bauer, Elizabeth Mock, Suzanne Wasson-Tucker, Bernard Rudofsky, and Edgar Kaufmann, Jr., presented a socially grounded and humanist view of modern design that encompassed women's creative contributions. In 1955 this feminine "other" surfaced with a vengeance in Kaufmann's parting MoMA exhibition, the spectacular *Textiles and Ornamental Arts of India*, which was hugely popular but is rarely mentioned in studies of MoMA's design history. When Ray and Charles Eames captured this glittering, cluttered treasure trove of handcrafted textiles, jewelry, and "folk" art in an educational film for the Museum, Ray exemplified the contribution of the many women who, working as communicators, teachers, editors, journalists, and retailers, ensured that this more inclusive take on modern design would reach a wide spectrum of people and be presented in new settings (no. 15).

A close look at the MoMA collections reveals that the contribution of women to midcentury design was both more subtle and more far-reaching than we have generally been led to believe. Although the way their work is presented continues to offer only a partial reading of their innovations and contributions overall, there is sufficient evidence to illuminate women's roles as advocates of contextual, social, and craft-based design, which enriches the male-oriented, more technologically driven modernism that predominates at the institution. Much of the design by women in The Museum of Modern Art demonstrates that it is possible to validate the personal and handmade at the same time as the uniform and mass-produced, and to fuse them all in ways that are innovative, modern, and still relevant.

1. June Lee Smith, "Artist Wife Contributes Her Bit, Too," *Christian Science Monitor,* June 22, 1949, p. 86. See also Beatriz Colomina's essay in this volume, "With, or Without You: The Ghosts of Modern Architecture."
2. H. Peter Oberlander and Eva Newbrun, *Houser: The Life and Work of Catherine Bauer* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1999).
3. Press release announcing terms and conditions of the International Competition for the Design of Low-Cost Furniture, January 5, 1948, p. 3. REG Exh #446, The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York.
4. Clara Porset, "Contemporary Decoration: Its Adaptation to Cuba," lecture presented May 22, 1931, Havana Auditorium, Havana, Cuba. See *El diseño de Clara Porset: Inventando un México moderno / Clara Porset's Design: Creating a Modern Mexico* (Mexico City: Museo Franz Mayer, 2006).
5. Greta Magnusson Grossman, quoted in Rose Henderson, "A Swedish Furniture Designer in America: An Interview with Greta Magnusson Grossman," *American Artist,* December 1951, p. 54.
6. Pat Kirkham, "Humanizing Modernism: The Crafts, 'Functioning Decoration' and the Eameses," *Journal of Design History* 11, no. 1 (1998): 15–29.
7. "Designer for Everybody. Millions of U.S. Homes Profit by Her Good Taste," *Life*, April 5, 1954, pp. 69–70.
8. The groundbreaking study by Alison Clarke, *Tupperware: The Promise of Plastic in 1950s America* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1999), is an example of the feminist scholarship in this area.
9. Betty James remained president of James Industries until 1998.
10. Another important female curator at this time was Alice Carson (Acting Director of Industrial Design, 1942–43).
11. Elizabeth Mock joined the Museum in 1937 after studying with Frank Lloyd Wright at Taliesin. Consideration of school architecture and children's education would have been uppermost in her mind in 1942, when her first child was born.
12. Details from internal memos. CE II.1 79(3) 1/1, The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York.
13. Mrs. Mock and Mrs. Tucker to Miss Newmeyer, internal memo, February 14, 1945. REG 278, The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York.
14. *The Bulletin of the Museum of Modern Art* 12, no. 5, *Tomorrow's Small House* (Summer 1945): 3–19. The models were originally intended not for display but as the basis for color photography in the magazine.
15. Vernon DeMars's wife, artist Betty DeMars, also produced model furniture for the exhibition.
16. *Tomorrow's Small House*, p. 8.
17. Others included Kitty De Leeuw, Galena Dotsenko, Donelda Fazakas, and Pamela Hume, and as well as Anni Albers, Marli Ehrman, and Virginia Nepodal, who had already participated in MoMA exhibitions.
18. For several years, Susanne Wasson-Tucker was the exhibition architect for the Svensk Form Design Center in Stockholm. In the 1970s she devoted much of her time to creating interiors for offices, ocean liners, and aircraft, including planes for SAS and Malaysia-Singapore Airlines. Her archive is in the Museum of Architecture in Stockholm.
19. Bernard Rudofsky, unpublished and unidentified lecture; quoted in Andrea Bocco Guarneri, *Bernard Rudofsky: A Humane Designer* (Vienna: Springer, 2003).
20. Among the prizewinners were Yvonne Delatre, Ray Eames, Lilly Elkan, June Groff, Dawn Guichard, Juliet Kepes, Nepodal, Marianne Strengell, and Reba Weiner.
21. Notes from Zelina Brunschwig forwarded by Greta Daniel to Frank Ahern, June 1946. Cur Exh #295, The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York.
22. *Greta Magnusson Grossman* (New York: R 20th Century Gallery, 2000); *Greta Magnusson Grossman: Furniture and Lighting* (New York: The Drawing Center, 2008).
23. *Los Angeles Times*, October 19, 1952, p. 115.
24. Porset, "El diseño en México," *El arte en la vida diaria (Art in Daily Life)* (Mexico City: Departamento de Arquitectura del Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, 1952), p. 17.
25. "It is the first experiment in the fine china field that has been carried out according to the exacting demands of a museum," claimed the manufacturers. "MUSEUM has been hailed both in America and Europe as marking a new epoch in ceramic history. The forms . . . have the quality of superb sculpture and at the same time are functional and durable." Press releases issued by Castleton China, September 14, 1949, and June 28, 1950.
26. Ronald Labaco, "The Playful Search for Beauty: Eva Zeisel's Life in Design," *Studies in the Decorative Arts* 8, no. 1 (Fall–Winter 2000–2001): 126.
27. See Martin Eidelberg, *Eva Zeisel: Designer for Industry* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), the catalogue for an international touring exhibition; Lucie Young, *Eva Zeisel* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2003); Zeisel, *Eva Zeisel on Design* (New York: Overlook Press, 2004). The Eva Zeisel Forum (www.evazeisel.org) was established in 1999.
28. *Interiors* 101, no. 7 (February 1952): 92.
29. "Integrated Textiles," *Art News* 46, no. 3 (May 1947): 36.
30. "Fabrics," *Arts & Architecture* (March 1948): 34.
31. Daniel, "Some Aspects of Textiles USA," *American Fabrics*, special edition, 1956, pp. 4–5.

1. **Maya Deren** (American, born Ukraine. 1917–1961). **Alexander Hammid** (American, born Austria. 1907–2004). *Meshes of the Afternoon*. 1943. 16mm film (black and white, silent; music by Teiji Ito added 1959), 14 min. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchase from the artist

Three identical women sit at a kitchen table, playing Russian roulette; each tentatively picks up a key and turns it over, and in the hand of the third woman it becomes a knife, transforming her into a murderess. This scene takes place in Maya Deren's *Meshes of the Afternoon* (1943, no.1), the most well-known American experimental film, which was groundbreaking in its conceptual and expressive use of nonnarrative structure. Deren was a pioneer in experimental cinema from the 1940s through the 1950s, one of a few women working in avant-garde film, influencing future generations of filmmakers and artists and changing the direction of moving-image mediums in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Deren investigated the relationship between film form and themes of ritual, myth, dance, and the individual's place in society; she envisioned experimental cinema as an alternative, low-cost, creative, and ethical medium; and she tirelessly toured, lectured, and distributed her own films, establishing a model for independent film production that is still used today. Despite harsh criticism of her films and theories by male critics in the 1940s and '50s, many filmmakers—women directors, in particular—have been inspired by her films and artistic integrity.[1] Deren's theoretical and practical concepts and the unique shape of her artistic expression have influenced the artists Carolee Schneemann, Barbara Hammer, and Su Friedrich, as far back as their earliest films.

Deren was born Elenora Derenkowsky in Kiev in 1917. Fleeing the Russian Civil War, her family emigrated to Syracuse, New York, in 1922. Her mother had studied music and dance, and, later, language; her father had studied the advanced techniques of neurologist Vladimir Bekhterev at the Psychoneurological Institute in St. Petersburg and became a prominent psychiatrist in Syracuse. As a teenager Deren, with her mother, lived in Europe and studied at the League of Nations' International School in Geneva.

When she returned to the States at the age of sixteen in 1933, worldly from her time abroad, she attended Syracuse University, where she studied journalism and political science, and after two years she married a fellow student, the socialist activist Gregory Bardacke. In 1935 they moved to New York, where she worked for the Young People's Socialist League (YPSL) and completed her bachelor's degree at New York University. By 1937 Deren and Bardacke were separated and, soon thereafter, divorced. Deren continued her studies, earning a master's degree in English Literature at Smith College in 1939, with a thesis on symbolism in French and English poetry; back in New York City, she worked as an editorial assistant and freelance photographer.

Deren's burgeoning interest in dance and anthropology led her to seek an introduction to Katherine Dunham, a pioneering choreographer in American modern dance and an anthropologist of Caribbean culture and dance. She was hired as Dunham's assistant and publicist for nine months in 1941 and traveled with her company to the West Coast when Dunham was performing in the musical *Cabin in the Sky* (1940). Dunham's Caribbean fieldwork inspired Deren's own study of Haitian culture, Voudoun mythology, and the dancelike movements of religious possession, which she wrote about in a series of articles for *Educational Dance* magazine and would later pursue in great depth.[2] While in Hollywood Deren met and married Alexander (Sasha) Hammid (born Alexander Hackenschmied), an accomplished filmmaker who introduced Deren to the avant-garde film movement. Together they made *Meshes of the Afternoon*.

Set in their Hollywood Hills bungalow, with the directors playing the two protagonists, the silent, black-and-white, fourteen-minute film was shot and completed in two months for a modest budget of $275, using camera equipment and lights from Hammid's production studio.[3]

Although made before Deren's theories of filmmaking had been developed or written down, *Meshes of the Afternoon* was the first manifestation of her ideas, featuring several of her most influential tropes and techniques, including simultaneous realities, protofeminist ideas about identity, and filmmaking as time-space manipulation. By visualizing poetic concepts through film, Deren, at the age of twenty-six, had discovered the key to her artistic expression. It was at this same time that she adopted a name befitting her new identity: Maya, the Hindu word for "illusion."

Together, out of their different strengths—Deren's poetic visual expression and Hammid's fluid cinematography—a new, imaginative use of the camera emerged. The first scenes of this tightly structured film set up its uncanny atmosphere.[4] A mannequin arm descends from the sky, places a white poppy on a roadway, and then vanishes. A woman's shadow covers the flower, and she reaches into her own shadow to pick it up. She runs after a tall, mysterious figure that disappears around a distant bend in the road, then she abruptly gives up the chase and turns toward a cottage door. She reaches for a key, then fumbles, drops, and retrieves it, and enters the house. The mechanical arm, mysterious figure, black-and-white film, and nonverbal scenario reinforce a feeling of mystery and doom.

As the female protagonist enters the house, we are brought into her perspective, seeing, as she sees, newspapers spread on the floor, a knife stuck in a loaf of bread on the kitchen table, a telephone on the stairs with its receiver off the hook. The knife slips onto the table, as if by its own will. The woman ascends the stairs to a bedroom and turns off a record player; she returns downstairs and slips into an armchair near a window, where she sinks into sleep and begins to dream. As her dream world flows into the street below, the story begins to circle in upon itself and external realities enter her dreaming subconscious.

The sleeping woman dreams three times that she chases a figure draped in black robes with a mirrored face and then reenters the house. Slight but disturbing variations occur each time, and the protagonist's deteriorating state of mind is given emphasis by handheld-camera shots and a moving, tilted frame that drastically shifts perspective. Each time she climbs the stairs to the bedroom, her demeanor and actions alter and the camera frame changes, showing her world becoming topsy-turvy and increasingly fragmented and menacing. She makes her first ascent with a graceful and airy bounce; in the second she appears to float without gravity; in the third she clings to the walls, which fling her from side to side; and in the final trip she marches up as if in a trance. Deren noted of these effects that she wanted the inanimate objects of the house—the phone, the knife, and the staircase—to appear to conspire to disrupt the protagonist's intentions. With a handheld camera Deren and Hammid shifted the image frame in the opposite direction from the woman's movement as she falls against the walls of the staircase: "The movement of the frame, in effect, had been transferred to the objects in the frame."[5]

To suggest "the defiance of normal time . . . and . . . normal space," Deren used a striking editing style that would influence many filmmakers: multiple shifts of geographic location in a single sequence.[6] The third dreamer, turned murderess, rises from the kitchen table, takes several huge steps, dagger drawn, and is transported from the house into a natural landscape, landing first in sand, then on grass, then on pavement, and then back in the house, with the knife pointed toward the sleeping woman. With these four steps she covers what Deren called a "symbolic statement of the vast psychological distance, which lie between people who may be in close proximity."[7] Deren later wrote, "What I meant when I planned that sequence was that you have to come a long way—from the very beginning of time—to kill yourself, like the first life emerging from the primeval waters. Those four strides, in my intention, span all time."[8] The film's final scenes contain a double denouement that mirrors the film's doubling and intertwining of identities. The seated woman, awakened, hurls the knife at the male protagonist, her lover; his face turns into a mirror, which reflects the ocean and shatters; its shards land not in the house but on the seashore. He then reenters the cottage to find the woman's body on the chair, covered with seaweed and impaled by broken glass.

Meshes of the Afternoon makes plain Deren's interest in the extremes of consciousness and was, at least partially, informed by Gestalt psychology's part-whole relations, which she had studied at Smith, and her research into the build of emotion in trance possession. Her impulse, she said, was to portray "the inner realities of an individual and the way in which the subconscious will develop, interpret and elaborate an apparently simple and casual incident into a critical emotional experience."[9] But *Meshes of the Afternoon* was widely interpreted, in the years following its release, as Surrealist, because of its use of dream imagery and object/symbols, and as a psychological study. Deren felt that such readings obscured the work's formal construction as well as her intent. When James Agee, writing for *The Nation* in 1946, called the film "pretentious and arty" and derided Deren's acting as emotionally lacking and her style as derivative of the European Surrealists, Deren responded in a letter to the editor: "Whereas the surrealists go to great length to eliminate any conscious censorship from their creative effort, I, on the contrary, impose as rigid a censorship as I can maintain—the censorship of form. . . . The dramatic-psychological inevitability must also be a cinematic inevitability—or the train will jump the tracks, as most surrealistic fantasy does."[10]

Although many scholars and contemporaries responded supportively to Deren's films, including George Amberg, a curator in the Department of Dance and Theater Design at The Museum of Modern Art, she also had her detractors. It was widely reported that MoMA's Film Library director, Iris Barry, was more supportive of documentary than of American avant-garde film in general and, like Agee, found *Meshes of the Afternoon* derivative of the French Surrealists.[11] *Meshes of the Afternoon* did indeed reside between the European avant-garde of the late 1920s, based in Surrealism and abstraction, and the American avant-garde filmmakers of the 1930s and '40s, less tied to specific movements. It was more often compared to films such as Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí's *Un Chien Andalou* (1928) and Jean Cocteau's *La Sang d'un poète* (*Blood of a Poet*) (1930) than to the films of the Whitney brothers (in the 1940s) and Mary Ellen Bute (from the 1930s to the 1960s).[12]

Deren's subsequent films built on the theories that emerged in *Meshes of the Afternoon*. *At Land* (1944, no. 2) is more allegorical and visually minimal. It opens with a woman, played by Deren, deposited on the seashore by waves. Emerging from the water like a mermaid, she pulls herself up along the roots of a large piece of driftwood and finds herself in another world, at the center of a formal dining table surrounded by animated society guests who are oblivious to her. As she crawls toward a chess player at the opposite end of the table, her surroundings alternate between the table and an underwater seascape; when she reaches the end, she lunges after one of the pawns and falls into an abyss that leads back to the seashore, like Alice in Wonderland falling down the rabbit hole.

These leaps through time and space are frequent and organic and taken by her entire body; she is no longer fragmented, as was the protagonist of *Meshes of the Afternoon*, and the disorientation is provided by external sources rather than the subconscious. "*At Land* has little to do with the internal world of the protagonist," Deren wrote. "It externalizes the hidden dynamic of the external world, and here the drama results from the activity of the external world."[13] At one point the protagonist finds herself walking along a country road, in conversation with a male companion; each time she turns to him, he is a different person, although looking disarmingly similar, played in succession by friends of Deren: poet Philip Lamantia, editor Parker Tyler, composer John Cage, and her then-husband, Hammid. Later, once again pursuing the pawn, she joins two women playing chess on the beach. She cunningly distracts them with conversation, snatches the white queen, and runs off triumphantly down the shore,

2. **Maya Deren** (American, born Ukraine. 1917–1961). *At Land*. 1944. 16mm film (black and white, silent), 15 min. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchase from the Estate of Maya Deren

now at one with the rules of her new environment, with the land as opposed to the sea whence she emerged.

Deren called this work a "mythological voyage of the twentieth century" and an "inverted *Odyssey*."[14] After *Meshes of the Afternoon*, Deren searched for "the elimination of literary-dramatic lines," trying to find "a purely cinematic coherence and integrity."[15] *At Land*, she felt, presented "a relativistic universe—one in which the locations change constantly and distances are contracted or extended; in which the individual goes toward something only to discover upon her arrival that it is now something entirely different; and in which the problem of the individual, as the sole continuous element, is to relate herself to a fluid, apparently incoherent, universe."[16]

In her third film, *A Study in Choreography for Camera* (1945, no. 3), Deren explored the direct relationship between movement, space, and the camera, with dancer and choreographer Talley Beatty fluidly dancing across place and time, from one location to another in defiance of geographic possibility. Deren used shooting and editing techniques to create the illusion of continuous motion and specific movements that could exist only on film rather than onstage. This idea set the stage for her fourth film, *Ritual in Transfigured Time* (1946, no. 4), which linked form and meaning to ritual, art, and dance, furthering her exploration of creative geography.

Four main protagonists—played by dancers Rita Christiani and Frank Westbrook, along with Deren and Anaïs Nin—embody different social roles. A young woman (Christiani) is introduced to society, overseen by a silent, disapproving older women (Nin) and a younger, more animated woman (Deren). On arriving at a party, Christiani's character, an outsider, floats among the guests, slowly becoming integrated with the group in a mesmerizing dance built out of edits. Deren choreographed this scene by eliding conversations and following the movement from interaction to interaction, so that "the elements of the whole derive their meaning from a pattern which they did not themselves consciously create; just as a ritual—

3. **Maya Deren** (American, born Ukraine. 1917–1961). **Talley Beatty** (American, 1923–1995). *A Study in Choreography for Camera*. 1945. 16mm film (black and white, silent), 4 min. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchase from the Estate of Maya Deren

which depersonalizes by the use of masks, voluminous garments, and homogeneous movement—fuses all individual elements into a transcendent tribal power toward the achievement of some extraordinary grace."[17] Ultimately Christiani's character breaks away from a romantic liaison (Westbrook), merges with Deren's character, and enters the sea in a gesture of both death and rebirth, a continuation of Deren's emergence from the sea—perhaps the next phase after symbolic emergence as an artist—in *At Land*.

Between 1945 and 1946 Deren lectured widely about film in venues around the country. In 1946 she published *An Anagram of Ideas on Art, Form and Film*, her most extensive essay on film theory, in a chapbook published by Alicat Book Shop Press. The essay employs the form of an anagram, made up of individual chapters "so related to every part that whether one reads horizontally, vertically, diagonally or in reverse, the logic of the whole is not disrupted, but remains intact."[18] Deren used this form to encourage her readers to approach her ideas from a receptive, nonlinear perspective; she wanted to move away from, to transcend the linear dramatic narrative favored by Hollywood films, the kind that moves from point A to

4. **Maya Deren** (American, born Ukraine. 1917–1961). *Ritual in Transfigured Time*. 1946. 16mm film (black and white, silent), 15 min. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Alexander Hammid

5. **Maya Deren** (American, born Ukraine. 1917–1961). *Divine Horsemen: The Living Gods of Haiti*. 1977. 16mm film (black and white, sound), 52 min. Edited by Teiji Ito and Cherel Ito from original footage by Deren. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchase from the Film-Makers' Cooperative

point B to tell a story in a manner she described as "horizontal in attack." She was more concerned with expressing emotional qualities and depth through a poetic understanding of film composition, a process she described as "vertical investigations." "A truly creative work of art," she felt, "creates a new reality."[19]

In February of that year Deren rented the Provincetown Playhouse in Greenwich Village for a series of screenings called "Three Abandoned Films," of *Meshes of the Afternoon*, *A Study in Choreography for Camera*, and *At Land*.[20] The screenings drew a large crowd and quickly sold out. In April of that year she received the first Guggenheim Fellowship awarded "for creative work in the field of motion pictures," and she put the funds toward previous lab costs and research on Haitian Voudoun, which resulted in a definitive ethnographic study, *Divine Horsemen*: *The Living Gods of Haiti,* published in 1953, as well as photographs and footage for an unrealized film (no. 5).[21] Between 1954 and 1961 she continued making films and writing, and she established the Creative Film Foundation to support avant-garde filmmakers with awards of recognition. But there was no precedent for the support of experimental film, and she struggled to find funding for her work as well as for the foundation. Her last completed film, *The Very Eye of Night* (1952–59), took three years to complete and four more years to release. Deren was working on another film, *Season of Strangers*, and had recently married composer Teiji Ito when she died unexpectedly in 1961, at age forty-four.

It is impossible to know what Deren would have gone on to do as an artist had she lived longer, but her influence continues to be felt through her ideas made manifest in *Meshes of the Afternoon* and in her subsequent films, which laid the groundwork for artists such as Schneemann, Hammer, and Friedrich, all of whom made works that drew direct inspiration from Deren's life and films. By performing in front of the camera, using semiautobiographical content, and combining literary, psychological, and ethnographic disciplines with rigorous formal technique, Deren inspired future generations of experimental filmmakers.

CAROLEE SCHNEEMANN

Carolee Schneemann and James Tenney, a musician, were introduced to Deren in 1958 by Stan Brakhage, who was living with Deren in the West Village. Schneemann later recalled:

> I was shocked by Maya's singular struggle, her lack of money and that the attention of three ardent, naïve young artists could have value for her. I was shocked by Stan's expectations that Maya, as the adult woman should feed us, provide care. We smoked her cigarettes, drank her whiskey, and ate bowls of noodles she prepared while she painfully debated if she should project for us her original 16mm footage of Haitian rituals. She had not been able to raise funds for prints of the rhapsodic and fierce shamanic dance entrancements, which she had been invited to join and to film.[22]

Schneemann is no stranger to controversy. Since the 1960s her work has focused on the body, sexuality, and gender, using her own body and autobiography as primary resources in painting, performance, film, and installations. She was nineteen when she met Deren and discovered Deren's kindred passion for the exploration of myth, ritual, and female desire, as well as her ability to be both "camera eye and subject" of her films.[23] Deren's influence is evident in Schneemann's performance sequence *Eye Body: 36 Transformative Actions* (1963), in which Schneemann, using her nude body, sought a trancelike state, becoming "a primal archaic force" or integral element as she moved among and became part of environments made of painted wall panels, glass, and mechanized parts.[24] "Maya occupied the creative prefeminist thresholds where I could anticipate the complexities, resistances to my own creative will," Schneemann has said, "and her visual focus on the body and nature was part of an aesthetic we shared."[25]

Schneemann's first film, *Fuses* (1967, no. 6), bears traces of Deren in its malleable, responsive camera movements and in the artist's role as both image and image-maker. This passionate work was made without grants, using borrowed Bolex cameras and bits of film donated by friends. Schneemann's aim was to depict overt heterosexual erotic pleasure from a woman's point of view, something not represented in art and film at that time; *Fuses* explores the sex life of Schneemann and Tenney as a continuous series of activities at home, with seasonal changes reflected through the bedroom window. In a manner somewhat akin to the party scene in *Ritual in Transfigured Time*, Schneemann edited together scene after scene of sexual play to create a trancelike, rhythmic flow, so that *Fuses* focuses on only one aspect of their domestic lives. There is no backstory and no character development, just a feeling of prolonged desire and a visual exploration of sexuality. The intimacy and privacy is enhanced by the film's having been shot by the lovers themselves, with the camera propped on a chair, hung from a lamp, or held by hand; the film's splices are visible, creating an additional physical quality. Schneemann used a layered method of editing the film influenced by Tenney's complex musical compositions and Brakhage's brilliantly colored film collages; she burned, baked, scratched, and painted on the film footage and then reshot the original film through an optical printer (a machine that combines a projector and camera to achieve special effects) to create a collage of "infinite painterly frames structured in time" that follows an "internal rhythm of gesture and musicality."[26]

Before *Fuses* Schneemann had been an artists' model and had had roles in other artists' projects, such as Claes Oldenburg's *Store Days* (1962) and Robert Morris's *Site* (1964), in which she played the part of Édouard Manet's *Olympia*; *Fuses*, begun around this time, marks the beginning of her self-representation, in a direct response to Brakhage's *Loving* (1957), *Daybreak* (1957), and *Cat's Cradle* (1959), three films featuring Schneemann and Tenney's relationship.

6. Carolee Schneemann (American, born 1939). *Fuses*. Part one of *Autobiographical Trilogy*. 1964–67. 16mm film transferred to video (color, silent), 22 min. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of the Julia Stoschek Foundation, Düsseldorf, and Committee on Media Funds

7. Carolee Schneemann (American, born 1939). *Plumb Line*. Part two of *Autobiographical Trilogy*. 1971. Super 8mm film step-printed to 16mm film (color, sound), 18 min. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired from preservation work

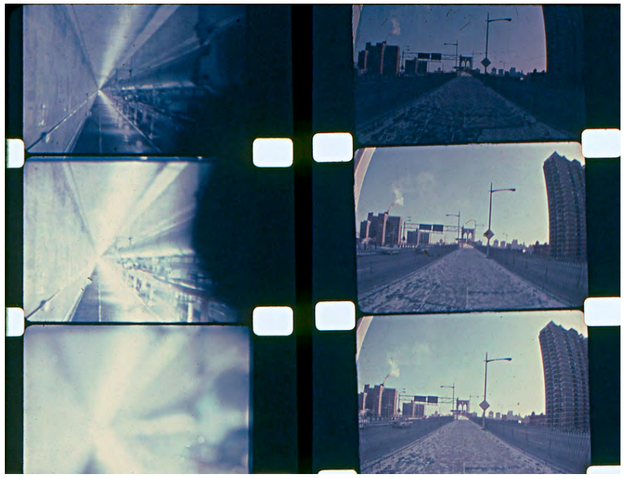
Schneemann screened *Fuses*, when it was still a work in progress, in her studio for friends and visitors, so that audiences could learn to catch the work's nuances, obscured by its complex layering, and because she felt it was something for women to share: "In some sense I made a gift of my body to other women; giving our bodies back to ourselves."[27] As she did so she took note of comments and criticism and responded to questions; she found that the overt sexual content was distancing and overwhelming for some, overriding the work's structure, and for others it was illuminating and gratifying. Many women told her that they had never examined their own bodies or seen such intimate images of a woman's sexuality.

As a young artist in New York, Schneemann had carefully observed other women artists to see how they managed their careers and their personal lives, and in Deren she saw a great talent subsumed by a lack of resources and by the demands of others to be looked after.[28] Schneemann's work, especially her autobiographical trilogy, *Fuses*, *Plumb Line* (1971, no. 7), and *Kitch's Last Meal* (1976), deals with her female self and the roles of eroticism, domesticity, and creativity in her life. "Everything I observed in Deren," she has said, "was cautionary and/or inspiring."[29]

BARBARA HAMMER

In the early 1970s Barbara Hammer was a film student at San Francisco State University, where she and a few other outspoken feminists were looking for women film directors as role models.[30] Week after week in their classes they watched films by male directors—Sergei Eisenstein, Vsevolod Pudovkin, Jean Cocteau, and François Truffaut—until one day the class featured *Meshes of the Afternoon*, and Hammer experienced a radical shift of "different sensibilities," finding that "[Deren's] ability to show personal feelings in an individual way made me know that there was a place for me in filmmaking. This was work that I wanted to do."[31]

Hammer felt *Meshes of the Afternoon* was a film about "a woman clearing the veil, the fog, the restrictions from her eyes, her being," and it inspired her to make experimental films about her own life and women's issues and to become a pioneer of queer cinema, a choice that had personal echoes for her as a woman changing avocation and lifestyle to become an artist, filmmaker, and lesbian.[32] Her first 16mm film, *I Was/I Am* (1973), an homage to *Meshes of the Afternoon*, shows Hammer extracting from her mouth the key to her motorcycle; like Deren's key—which turns into a knife and kills the sleeping woman so that she can wake up, transformed—it is a symbol of freedom and empowerment, although considerably more direct. Soon afterward, Hammer began making films that boldly and sensitively depicted lesbian sexuality and identity, including *Dyketactics* (1974) and *Women I Love* (1976), which brought her renown as the first filmmaker to do so. This autobiographical impulse has continued over the course of her career, including her first feature film, *Nitrate Kisses* (1992), which integrates the story of four same-sex couples with the history of queer identity from the 1920s to contemporary times. Discovering Deren's work in the 1970s inspired Hammer to search for and champion women filmmakers who have been underrecognized, such as Marie Menken, as well as the hidden



8. **Barbara Hammer** (American, born 1939). *Bent Time*. 1983. 16mm film (color, sound by Pauline Oliveros), 21 min. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchase

histories of lesbian and gay artists and writers. "I guess I was looking for company," Hammer has said.[33]

From the 1960s through the 1980s structural filmmaking, in which the process of shaping a film and its physical cinematic material are foregrounded, became a mainstay of experimental cinema in formal studies by filmmakers such as Paul Sharits, Hollis Frampton, and Michael Snow. During this time Hammer made films following various structural concepts, and in *Bent Time* (1983, no. 8) she employed a version of Deren's creative geography:

> I simulated walking across the United States, from one high-energy location to another. I began in the underground passageway of the linear accelerator lab at Stanford University, continued through the mound culture of indigenous Native Americans in southern Ohio, and ended at the World Trade Center and Brooklyn Bridge in New York City. I simulated one geographic step in time to be one frame of film time. The result is a jittery but continual binding of the nation end to end, held in place by the first North American calendar discovered in the '80s at Chaco Canyon, New Mexico.[34]

For *Optic Nerve* (1985) Hammer manipulated documentary footage of her grandmother being wheeled into a nursing home. The degenerated images and stuttering motion reveal Hammer's hesitation and sadness, echoing Deren's vertical investigations and returning some emotion to structuralism. "The heart had been left behind in these dry analytic works," Hammer has reflected. "I wanted to return feeling to images, while still showing the processes of film."[35]

A Horse Is Not a Metaphor (2008, no. 9), based on Hammer's experience of surviving cancer, has echoes of *Ritual in Transfigured Time*, flowing from gesture to gesture and showing a transformative death and rebirth. The film evolves over the course of Hammer's illness and recovery, including footage of chemotherapy and steroid drips, in a work akin to Deren's "documentary of the interior":

> It was an experiment to start at one edge of the canvas, the beginning of the film, and make my way, day by day editing and layering, to the end of the piece. In the past I have made many densely collaged films, but always I have structured and restructured until the film was "right." In this case, the meaning became clear as I worked: the feelings, the emotional content, the personal intimacy revealed when health is challenged.[36]

9. **Barbara Hammer** (American, born 1939). *A Horse Is Not a Metaphor*. 2008. Digital video (color and black and white, sound by Meredith Monk), 30 min. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchase

Su Friedrich was pursuing a career in photography in the mid-1970s when a course in Super 8mm film production led her to research film history and borrow a 16mm print of *Meshes of the Afternoon* from the New York Public Library:

> I was absolutely blown away when I watched it the first time, and I then projected it at least two more times; I felt I couldn't get enough of it. At that point a friend came in and pointed out that I had been projecting it on a black wall rather than the screen. I had been too excited to notice, and the film was so powerful that it survived those miserable projection conditions. Needless to say it was even more dazzling when I watched it again properly on the screen. [It] is a flawless work; it has a structure like hardened steel and at the same time uses all the formal devices at hand to describe the convoluted workings of the mind.[37]

Friedrich's first 16mm film (originally shot on Super 8mm), *Cool Hands, Warm Heart* (1979, no. 10), was the beginning of what would be an ongoing feminist exploration of ordinary women. *Cool Hands*, employing black-and-white film and sensual, rhythmic cinematography and editing to create a dreamlike atmosphere and emotional core, pays homage to the psychological undercurrents and formal tropes of *Meshes of the Afternoon*, focusing on a woman caught between a traditional role and the freedom to make her own choices. The protagonist watches three women enacting private female rituals on a public stage in front of curious onlookers—one shaves her legs, another shaves her underarms, another braids her hair, all of them oblivious to the crowds that surround them and the spectacle they make. Friedrich has taken Deren's three identical women out of their interior domestic sphere and exposed them to the streets, out of a dream world and into the reality of a new feminist era. The protagonist is ambivalent about what she witnesses, slathering one woman with shaving cream and placing a white flower (a coincidental echo of the poppy in *Meshes of the Afternoon*) in the lap of another. Soon she, too, is onstage, performing a symbolic domestic gesture, peeling the skin from an apple in one long, curling loop. The program notes for *Cool Hands* contain a question that is also at the heart of *Meshes of the Afternoon*: "Can we hold a knife without stabbing ourselves? Can we hold a knife without thinking of stabbing ourselves?"[38]

Friedrich went on to create films that examine identity through experimental approaches to autobiography and nonfiction, as well as to drama, combining and interweaving forms and techniques in a way that sets her work apart from the conventions of either form but links the two nonetheless. *The Ties That Bind* (1984) sets up a dialogue between past and present, pairing an extended interview with the artist's mother, about growing up in pre–World War II Nazi Germany, and images from her current life in Chicago with footage of protests against the Vietnam War and Friedrich at home in her studio; *Damned If You Don't* (1987) begins with a

10. Su Friedrich (American, born 1954). *Cool Hands, Warm Heart*. 1979. 16mm film (black and white, silent), 16 min. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchase

retelling of Michael Powell's *Black Narcissus* (1947) and then becomes a melodramatic seduction of one woman by another. Friedrich's work, like Deren's, remains uncompromised by the conventions of mainstream cinema and has a strong rhythmic quality; where Deren expresses her ideas through poetic visual structures, Friedrich brings the voice and words of the storyteller into the work, in text, voice-over narration, interviews, and commentary.

Sink or Swim (1990, no. 11) is one such hybrid, unfolding in twenty-six chapters, each labeled with a letter, starting with *z* (for "zygote") and working back to *a* (for "Athena/Atalanta/Aphrodite"). A young girl narrates a story that the viewer comes to understand is both mythological and autobiographical, on the collision between daughters and fathers and their different ways of interpreting and experiencing the world. Friedrich, like Deren, depicts an interiority that cannot be directly communicated. Her images and stories evoke childhood events and their ongoing effects in an impressionistic, tactile manner that builds in power, as in the *q* chapter (for "quicksand"), the story of being taken to a frightening movie and forced to watch it; the chapter is accompanied by an image of a roller-coaster ride, which continues long past the narration, carrying the psychological sensations of the experience into the present. *Sink or Swim*, like all of Friedrich's experimental films, has a complex formal structure that combines structural cinema with Deren's vertical investigations: a framework of autobiographical and fictional narratives, amplified with mythological references and expressive images.

At the end of *Sink or Swim* the narrator, now an adult, continues to behave in ways that please her father until she realizes that she can make her own choices; this is a realization achieved without pleasure, since it comes with the awareness that he will never accept her. Thus, the double ending of *Meshes of the Afternoon* is echoed in a double wounding. Friedrich provides questions without answers, suggesting that it is more important for the viewer to complete the work:

> Although Deren gives clues to the viewer, she still leaves certain things open or mysterious or sort of challenging . . . we have to do some work while we're watching, we have to connect the dots in order to get everything that's there. I leave a certain amount of work up to the viewer on the assumption that that makes the film more engaging, makes the experience more of a participatory sport than a passive one.[39]

Deren wanted to define film as an art form, to create an artist's cinema based on neither Hollywood entertainment nor documentary—the prevailing forms of her time—rather, a kind of film concerned with the "type of perception which characterizes all other art forms, such as poetry, painting, etc., and devoted to the development of a formal idiom as independent of other art forms as they are of each other."[40] She was not the only woman in search of such a definition: the majority of women directors in MoMA's film collection worked and continue to work in the arena of experimental film. Some of them, such as Bute and Sara Kathryn Arledge, preceded Deren; others, such as Menken, were her contemporaries; still others worked in the 1960s and '70s, when many American and European women had turned to experimental film, including Laura Mulvey, Chantal Akerman, Peggy Ahwesh, Yvonne Rainer, Leslie Thornton, Trinh T. Minh-ha, VALIE EXPORT, and Yoko Ono. And in recent years video art and performance, which are extensions and permutations of what early experimental film began, have become mainstays in the contemporary art landscape; Eija-Liisa Ahtila, Irit Batsry, Abigail Child, Ximena Cuevas, Miranda July, and Jennifer Reeves are just a few of the many women exploring this territory. Directly or obscurely, minimally or to a great extent, anyone who takes interest in film as an art form is touched by Deren's legacy and her advocacy. Her films continue to inspire filmmakers and audiences and set the stage for future works of experimental film and video art.

11. **Su Friedrich** (American, born 1954). *Sink or Swim.* 1990. 16mm film (black and white, sound), 48 min. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchase

1. This harsh criticism included James Agee, "On Film," *The Nation*, March 2, 1946; reprinted in Vèvè A. Clark, Millicent Hodson, and Catrina Neiman, eds.,*The Legend of Maya Deren: A Documentary Biography and Collected Works*, vol. 1, part 2, *Chambers, 1942–47* (New York: Anthology Film Archives/Film Culture: New York, 1988), pp. 382–84; and Manny Farber, "Maya Deren's Films," *The New Republic*, October 28, 1946; cited in *The Legend of Maya Deren*, vol. 1, part 2, p. 378. Dylan Thomas, on a panel at a 1953 poetry symposium organized by Amos Vogel's Cinema 16, also dismissed Deren's ideas. Annette Michelson, "Poetics and Savage Thought," in Bill Nichols, ed., *Maya Deren and the American Avant-Garde* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001), pp. 22–25.
2. Elenora Deren, "Religious Possession in Dancing," *Educational Dance*, March 1942; reprinted in Clark, Hodson, and Neiman, eds., *The Legend of Maya Deren: A Documentary Biography and Collected Works*, vol. 1, part 1, *Signatures, 1917–42* (New York: Anthology Film Archives/Film Culture, 1984), pp. 477–96.
3. Maya Deren, "Overhead, Production and Distribution: Costs and Income, 1943–46" (submitted to the U. S. Treasury in support of tax-exempt status application for the Creative Film Foundation), June 25, 1957; reprinted in *The Legend of Maya Deren*, vol. 1, part 2, p. 334.
4. Deren added a complementary soundtrack by her companion and musical collaborator Teiji Ito in 1957.
5. Deren, "Adventures in Creative Filmmaking," *Popular Photography* (Home Movie Making Annual), 1960; reprinted in *The Legend of Maya Deren*, vol. 1, part 2, p. 96.
6. Deren, "The Witch's Cradle Program Notes," letter to Sawyer Falk, March 3, 1945; reprinted in *The Legend of Maya Deren*, vol. 1, part 2, p. 149.
7. Deren, "Adventures in Creative Filmmaking," p. 96.
8. Deren, letter to James Card, April 19, 1955; reprinted in *Film Culture*, no. 39, p. 30, and in *The Legend of Maya Deren*, vol. 1, part 2, p. 99.
9. Deren, "Magic Is New," *Mademoiselle*, January 1946; reprinted in Deren, *Essential Deren: Collected Writings on Film by Maya Deren*, ed. Bruce R. McPherson (Kingston, N.Y.: Documentext, 2005), p. 204.
10. See n. 1 for Agee and Farber citations; Deren, letter to the editor, March 3, 1946; reprinted in *The Legend of Maya Deren*, vol. 1, part 2, p. 384.
11. On Iris Barry's views on Deren, see *The Legend of Maya Deren*, vol. 1, part 2, pp. 240–41.
12. Deren's work was and continues to be difficult to comprehend or categorize. It was many years before scholars such as Michelson and Renata Jackson, among others published in 2001 in Nichols's volume *Maya Deren and the American Avant–Garde* (see n. 1), identified her literary influences: nineteenth-century French Symbolism, Imagism, and Roman Jakobson's theories on the structure of language.
13. Deren, letter to James Card, (see n. 8).
14. The first quotation is Deren, quoted in Shelley Rice, "Inverted Odysseys," in Rice, ed., *Inverted Odysseys: Claude Cahun, Maya Deren, Cindy Sherman* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1999), p. 15. The second is Deren, program notes for "Three Abandoned Films," 1946; reprinted in *Essential Deren*, pp. 247–48.
15. Deren, "Magic Is New," *Essential Deren*, p. 205.
16. Ibid.
17. Deren, program notes for "Chamber Films," 1960; reprinted in *Essential Deren*, p. 252.
18. Deren, *An Anagram of Ideas on Art, Form and Film* (Yonkers, N.Y.: Alicat Book Shop Press 1946); reprinted in *Essential Deren*, p. 36.
19. Deren, "Cinema as an Independent Art Form" (brochure), August 1945; reprinted in *Essential Deren*, p. 245.
20. The title came from something critic and poet Paul Valéry is said to have said, that a work is never finished, only abandoned.
21. Deren, *Divine Horsemen: The Living Gods of Haiti* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1953; reprint ed. Kingston, N.Y.: McPherson/Documentext, 1970). In her research, Deren consulted with anthropologist Gregory Bateson and author Joseph Campbell; the latter wrote the foreword included in both editions.
22. Carolee Schneemann, interview with the author, March 9, 2009.
23. Ibid.
24. Schneemann, *More than Meat Joy: Performance Works and Selected Writings*, ed. McPherson (New Paltz, N.Y.: Documentext, 1979), p. 52.
25. Schneemann, author interview.
26. Ibid.
27. Ibid.
28. Schneemann, author interview.
29. Ibid.
30. Barbara Hammer, "Maya Deren and Me," in *Maya Deren and the American Avant-Garde*, pp. 261–65.
31. Hammer, interview with the author, March 1, 2009.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid.
37. Su Friedrich, interview with the author, March 3, 2009.
38. Friedrich, program notes for *Cool Hands, Warm Heart*, Film Study Archive, The Museum of Modern Art, New York.
39. Friedrich, author interview.
40. Deren, "Cinema as an Art Form," *New Directions* 9, 1946; reprinted in *Essential Deren*, p. 19.

1. Gego (Gertrude Goldschmidt) (Venezuelan, born Germany. 1912–1994). *Reticulárea* (Reticularea). 1997. Site-specific environment at Galeria de Arte Nacional, Caracas. Iron and steel wires, dimensions unknown. Colección Fundación de Museos Nacionales–Museo de Bellas Artes, Caracas

ABSTRACTION, ORGANISM, APPARATUS: NOTES ON THE PENETRABLE STRUCTURE IN THE WORK OF LYGIA CLARK, GEGO, AND MIRA SCHENDEL

/ LUIS PÉREZ-ORAMAS

It is possible to trace between 1963 and 1969 in Latin America the lineage and development of works conceived to be entered by the spectator, or to resist—in spite of potentially penetrable dimensions and structure—being entered.[1] The quantity and importance of these works and their ambition to be passable, either materially, literally, or potentially, suggests the existence of a movement aimed at transforming nonobjective abstraction, conceived within the framework of pure visibility, into a repertoire of site-forms that are besieged, situated, habitable, penetrable.[2]

A brief account of some exemplary cases sheds light on this repertoire's importance, as well as on certain transformative creations by women artists that constitute both its ultimate conclusion and its historical exhaustion: on Lygia Clark's *A casa é o corpo: Penetração, ovulação, germinação, expulsão* (The house is the body: penetration, ovulation, germination, expulsion), first made for the Venice Biennale in 1968; on the first materialization, in 1969, of *Reticulárea* (Reticularea) (no. 1) by Gego (Gertrude Goldschmidt), a typology that would become central to her work; and on Mira Schendel's only work of an environmental nature, *Ondas paradas de probabilidade—Antigo Testamento, Livro dos Reis, I, 19* (Still waves of probability—Old Testament, I Kings 19), created for the 1969 Bienal de São Paulo, which formed the conclusion and symbolic closure of the "penetrables."

The object of this essay is to analyze the conclusive function of these sculptures by Clark, Gego, and Schendel within this Latin American typology of site-specific works. In order to do so it is necessary to give a brief description of the works that precede them—and, without a doubt, constitute important chapters in the development of the typology—without exhausting the repertoire in an endless list, to which one would also have to add an important series of works produced during the 1970s.[3]

In addition to Hélio Oiticica's *Penetráveis* (Penetrables), made from 1960 to the beginning of the 1970s, it's worth mentioning Carlos Cruz-Diez's *Cámeras de cromosaturación* (Chromosaturation chambers) from 1965; Jesús Rafael Soto's own *Penetrables* (Penetrables), beginning in 1967; and, among other late iterations of penetrable-like works, the first version of Cildo Meireles's *Desvio para o vermelho 1: Impregnação* (Red shift: impregnation) from 1967.

Oiticica founded this typology with the unfolding abstract forms in his series *Metaesquemas* (Metaschemes) (no. 2) at the end of the 1950s. We should keep in mind what the term "scheme" connotes when it is applied to the visual arts: "It's worth underlining," wrote Louis Marin on the renowned pictorial cycles of Piero della Francesca in Arezzo,

> the value of the term *scheme*. We know that scheme signifies a figure of style in the lexicon of ancient rhetoric. Here we attribute to it . . . the meaning of a matrix of possible representations constructed in the imagination through regulated operations that obey a set principle. The scheme is then both a matter of the shape of space and a matter of understanding as a category. As a mediating operator, the scheme executes the projection of this one in the shape of that one, determining itself in that same operation. It then possesses the value of an epistemological instrument of description.[4]

Oiticica's *Metaesquemas* paintings represent a return or, strictly speaking, a regression to a practice of symmetry that the Neo-Plasticists had disavowed, and thus they can be understood as historically functioning against Piet Mondrian. The vast majority of them are specular images, specifically questioning the gap or border, no matter how

disguised or erased, in the unfolding of a symmetrical figure, as one can see in the works belonging to the *Série branca* (White series) (no. 3)—white monochromatic gouaches depicting irregular geometric shapes as well as three-dimensional white monochromatic shaped canvases—a direct result of the *Metaesquemas*.

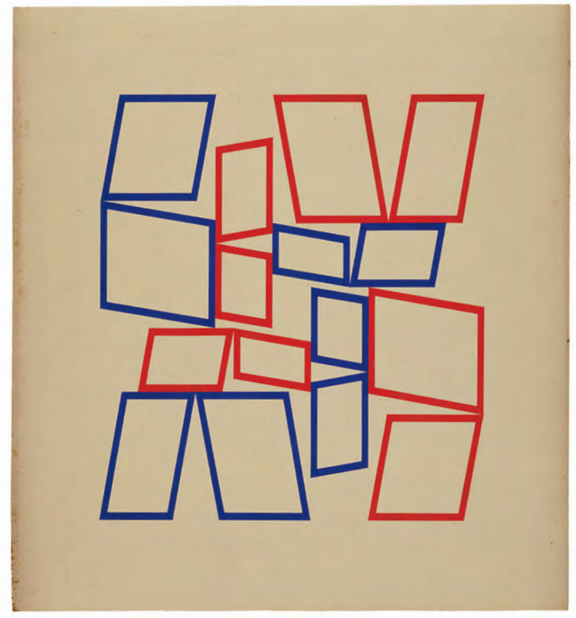
The *Metaesquemas* carry out literally the theoretical project contained in their title: they function as figures of understanding—as conceptual images—of space and of the shape of space; the operative mediation that Marin attributes to the notion of scheme finds a new materialization in the unfolding process of the *Metaesquemas* being projected in "the shape of space," transforming them in the various repertoires of three-dimensional objects produced by Oiticica between 1959 and 1963, known as the *Bilaterais* (Bilaterals), the *Bolides* (Fireballs), and the *Núcleos* (Nuclei).

It's important to point out the ideal character of these volumetric experiences, the artist's first, which is emphasized by the mirror underneath *NC1 Pequeno núcleo no. 01* (NC1 small nucleus no. 01) (1960, no. 4), onto which the sculpture's reflection is projected, giving it the shape of a *Metaesquema*. Our observation of the sculpture is limited to our own point of view outside of the work, a utopian or perhaps atopian point of view relative to the three-dimensional and potentially penetrable *Núcleo*, a penetrability which its own limitations and structure stand in the way of. In the *Metaesquemas'* first stage, the works imply two things: they are a representation of space from the perspective of a deus ex machina, and as a result of this they annihilate the notion of place with a vision of space produced from an absolute nonplace. This nonplace responds to the intellectual dimension that a scheme's function satisfies in its depiction of a virtual space: a place, by definition, can't be an idea, and an idea of a place isn't exactly a place. The *Metaesquemas* are at most an ideation of place, schemes of potential places, and as such they herald, in Oiticica's work yet to come, the transformation of formal categories of abstraction into experiences of place. Schendel's *Ondas paradas de probabilidade* would revisit this possibility of nonplace at the end of the decade, implying an atopian point of view that cancels or perhaps transcends these possibilities to become a situated coordinate.

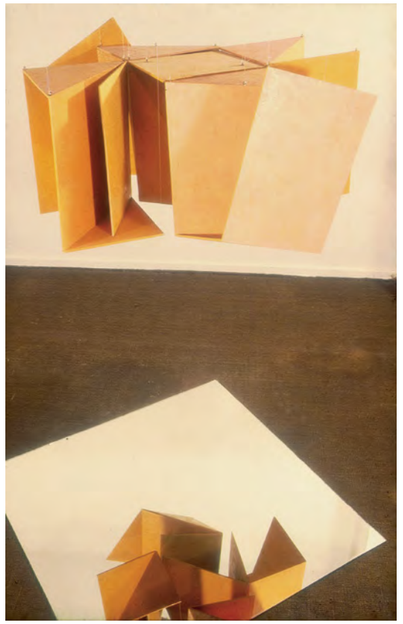
Such experiences were launched with the series of *Penetráveis* that came directly from the *Núcleos*, and they achieve their paramount conclusion with the creation of *Grande núcleo* (Grand nucleus) in 1960: a three-dimensional apparatus with several *Núcleo*-like elements hanging from the ceiling, which spectators can surround and could potentially penetrate, were the piece not enclosed by a *lisière* of white stones, like a monumental *Metaesquema* covering the floor. Despite this transformation, the artist, in his own writings on the *Penetráveis*, has emphasized the work's occurrence "in free, open space" even more than its penetrability, thus underlining the need for it to function as an idea.[5] In the later works *Tropicália* (1968) and *Edén* (Eden, 1969), works directly related to Oiticica's long dialogue with Clark on existential and aesthetic questions, the viewer's experience would prevail over the work's form—action over observation—making the works milestones among the *Penetráveis*.

Oiticica's *Núcleos* were the result of a primarily formal investigation, which the artist described as "painting in space."[6] So that works in this category, in which flat pictorial convention unfolds, fractures, or multiplies when projected into actual space (the paintings becoming objects and then elements of architecture), could be designated, within the penetrables, "formal," and could be set against a category designated "existential": what prevails in the first category is the sensory ascertainment of the form's conversion from pictorial to spatial; in the second, the body, using its experience as the tactile receptor of its own physical reality and limitations, identifies the work as a habitable, penetrable form or space. Cruz-Diez's *Cámeras de cromosaturación*, Soto's *Penetrables*, and, perhaps, Gego's *Reticulárea* belong in the first group; Oiticica's last *Penetráveis*, beginning with *Tropicália* and *Edén*, and

2. **Hélio Oiticica** (Brazilian, 1937–1980). *Metaesquema No. 4066* (Metascheme no. 4066). 1958. Gouache on board, 22 7/8 x 21" (58.1 x 53.3 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of the Oiticica Family



3. **Hélio Oiticica** (Brazilian, 1937–1980). *Relevo neoconcreto* (Neoconcrete relief). 1960. Oil on wood, 37 7/8 x 51 1/4" (96 x 130 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Patricia Phelps de Cisneros in honor of Gary Garrels



4. **Hélio Oiticica** (Brazilian, 1937–1980). *NC1 Pequeno núcleo no. 01* (NC1 small nucleus no. 01). 1960. Synthetic resin on wood fiberboard, and mirror, wood structure 43 1/4 x 43 1/4 x 7/8" (110 x 110 x 5 cm), mirror 47 1/4 x 47 1/4" (120 x 120 cm). César and Claudio Oiticica Collection, Rio de Janeiro

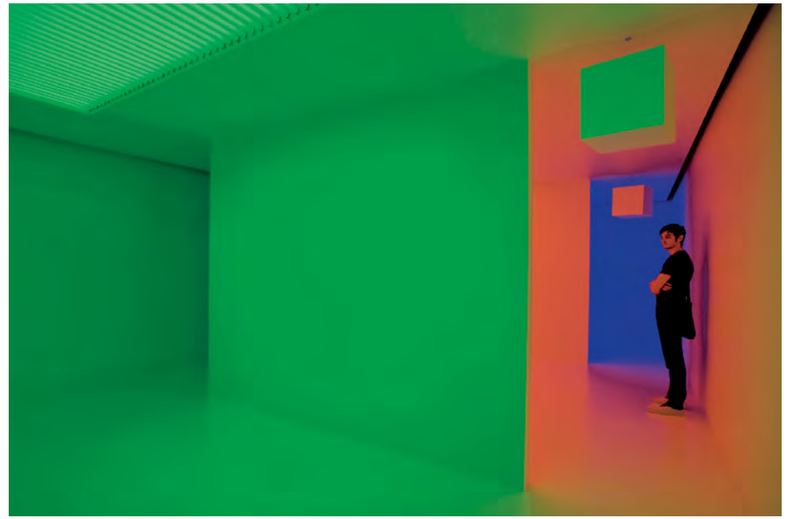
Clark's *A casa é o corpo* belong in the second. Schendel's *Ondas paradas de probabilidade* only answers to the formal category in appearance—its similarity to one of Soto's *Penetrables* is significant—although it functions within the penetrables as the series' true conclusion, as its closure, as a dialectical synthesis of both categories, if in fact those categories can be conceived as a binary opposition.

Cruz-Diez's *Cámeras de cromosaturación* (no. 5) and Soto's *Penetrables* (nos. 6 and 7) are works that provide an experience of crossing thresholds. In the former, three impeccably white areas are illuminated by three different tonalities of neon light, and this total optical immersion creates, for the viewer crossing between one space and another, an effect of retinal saturation and the appearance of a third, nonexistent color: the retinal synthesis of chromatic values, which cannot actually be identified on the installation's surfaces. In the latter, the viewer enters a geometrical volume made up of a multitude of nylon threads hanging from a metallic structure, resulting in total tactile immersion; in this case the process of boundary crossing is even more decisive and clear-cut than in the *Cámeras de cromosaturación*, functioning as a dense and transitory threshold from edge to edge, with a tactile distinction between the ordinary space from which we observe the work and the relatively opaque, materially saturated space that constitutes its interior. In spite of this fundamentally tactile experience, which is one of the attractions of this popular set of works, Soto's intention seems to have been mainly optical: the artist was interested, beyond the possibility of an enveloping work, in suggesting an experience of absolute dematerialization.[7] Spectators watching the work from the outside see bodies disappear

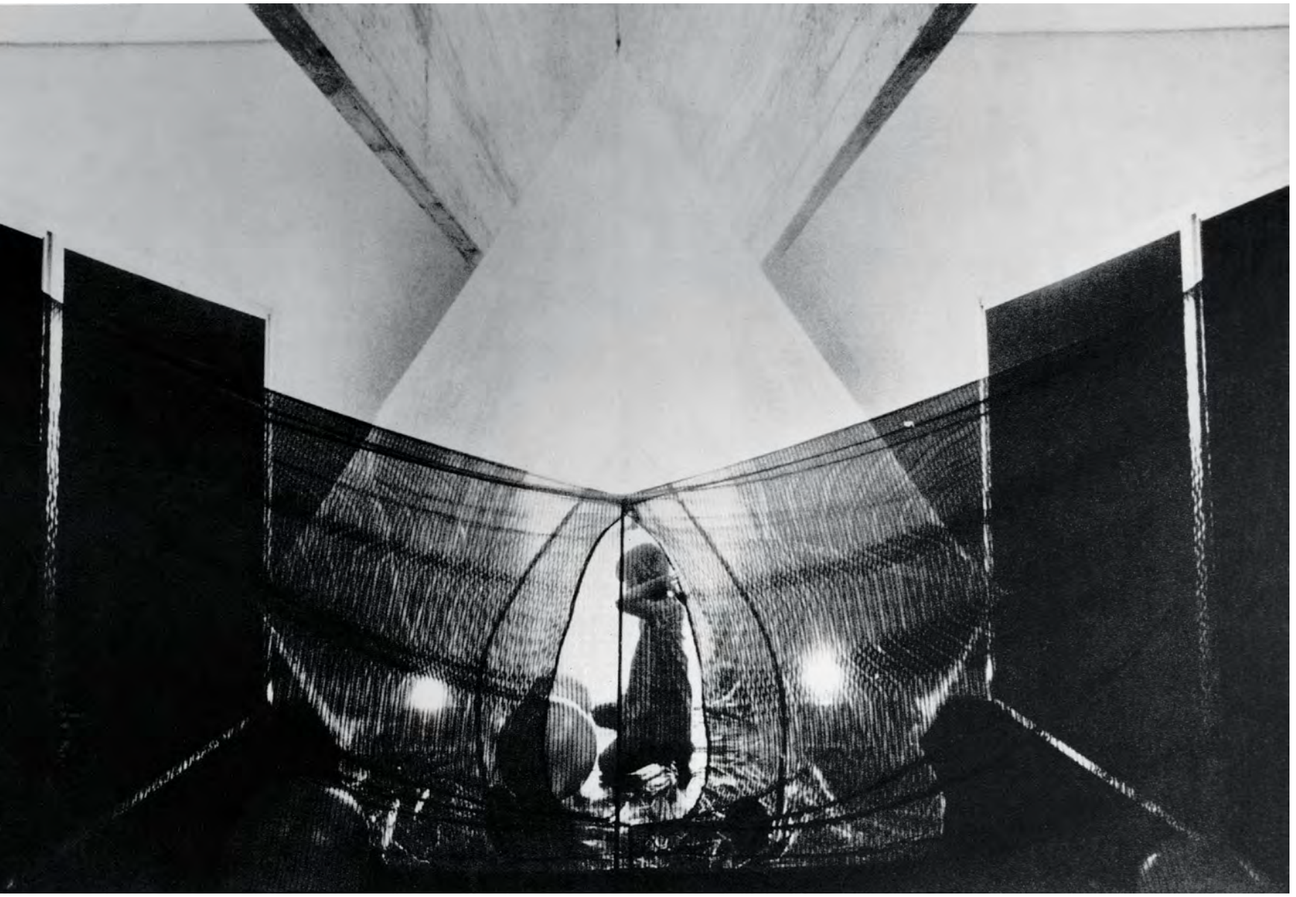
5. **Carlos Cruz-Diez** (Venezuelan, born 1923). *Cromosaturación Americas Society* (Americas Society chromosaturation). 2008. Site-specific environment at the Americas Society, New York. Three chromo-cubicles (fluorescent lights with blue, red, and green filters), dimensions unknown. Courtesy Americas Society

6. **Jesús Rafael Soto** (Venezuelan, 1923–2005). *Penetrable (Penetrable de Pampatar)* (Penetrable [Pampatar penetrable]). 1971. 9' 10 1/8" x 32' 9 11/16" x 13' 1 1/2" (300 cm x 10 m x 400 cm). Private collection, Caracas

Opposite, right:
7. **Jesús Rafael Soto** (Venezuelan, 1923–2005). *Penetrable de Lyon* (Lyon penetrable). 1988. 19' 8 3/16" x 32' 9 11/16" x 26' 3"(6 x 10 x 8 m). Musée d'art contemporain de Lyon



8 and 9. Lygia Clark (Brazilian, 1920–1988). *A casa é o corpo: Penetração, ovulação, germinação, expulsão* (The house is the body: penetration, ovulation, germination, expulsion) (details). 1968. 26' 2 $^{15}/_{16}$" x 13' 1 $^{1}/_{2}$" x 7' 2 $^{5}/_{8}$" (8 m x 400 cm x 220 cm)



as they penetrate the work as if absorbed; those penetrating the work see the world around them disappear as if it were an autonomous entity or absolute space, in an optical experience that suddenly becomes, without transition, an experience of friction, of density, of touch.

In both cases the penetrable experience is an experience of density: purely optical in one, optical-haptic in the other. It is obviously a key concept in this repertoire, but the penetrable works by Clark, Gego, and Schendel also displace density, transforming it and using it to transcend purely sensory perception, thereby suggesting new, specific content and unknown allegorical dimensions. It is thus possible that the important contribution made by Clark's *A casa é o corpo* or Gego's *Reticulárea* to the penetrable typology lies in their organic references: both works bring to the notion of optical or optical-haptic apparatus a symbolic addition of form and concept, which materializes in their environmental, architectural, or enveloping ambitions. To tackle these specific contributions it is necessary to dwell on both organism and apparatus.

A casa é o corpo (nos. 8 and 9) is a complex performative experience, a more than twenty-six-foot-tall work composed of several tunnel-shaped structures joined by a middle compartment made of transparent plastic, which spectators penetrate and pass through in order to experience a series of fundamentally tactile sensations, with darkness emphasized as much as encounters with morbid materials: rubber bands that have to be separated like diaphragms in order to move through them, floors that seem to give way, colored balloons that have to be pushed aside, surfaces covered entirely with hair. The participatory aspect is key; the work must be physically penetrated, experienced as an environmental unity, albeit one contained within the limits of a gallery. It was a work, according to Clark, that should give the spectator an experience, at once "spectral and symbolic," of the body's inner life.[8] *A casa é o corpo* brutally literalizes the apparatus of the penetrable, not only presenting itself as homologous with the biological processes of procreation designated by its threshold crossings, of penetration, ovulation, germination, expulsion, but also identifying with the idea, the concept of the body: unable to mimic the body with its form, it identifies with its functions—specifically its generative functions.

That Clark called her installation a labyrinth suggests that the spectator's experience of disorientation was one of its main objectives.[9] This description may also reveal the work's identity as architecture of origin, and not only because the labyrinth was the first figure of architecture—conceived by Daedalus, who thus became the field's inventor, and comparable to the tomb in Arcadia that Adolf Loos evoked in his definition of it.[10] We must also consider the allegorical potential of *A casa é o corpo*: a penetrable, a specific space in the sense of Michel de Certeau's definition of a "practiced place," a labyrinth that also connotes an association between being born and falling.[11] Daedalus's son, Icarus, was condemned to fall into the ocean, an ultimate nonarchitecture place, one of the desert's figures that might also be the world that we discover after leaving the architecture—the enclosed garden, the *hortus conclusus*—of the womb. This labyrinth proposed by Clark is therefore an architecture of origin because its different phases, the transitions that constitute our experience of it, bear the very precise denominations of the organic processes that create human beings, but also because it stands as a coordinate we can't inhabit again but from the perspective of the desert, from the experience of loss and mourning.

In this way *A casa é o corpo* proposes a total identification between the apparatus of the work and the spectators' bodies—one's own body—and of transit of the spectators' bodies with the originating process of the human body, every body. Thus it clearly evokes an anamnestic project (identifiable in several of Clark's late works, most notably in those that followed *A casa é o corpo*, which she called "biological architectures" and "nostalgic of the body"), proposing a return to the inner life of the body;[12] Clark described *A casa é o corpo* as a homology between the work's structure and those biological processes that give rise to us, as well as to the disorienting memory of our origination, thus encompassing an ambition both ontogenetic and phylogenetic.[13] How far does a spectator's experience of this work translate into awareness of the homology between art and body? Failing that, does the homology work itself out through analogical or allegorical experience, between the work's dimensions and the inner life and generation of the body? How much does the distance between the work's apparatus and its reference disturb the organicism implied in Clark's work? Here, the artist makes a radical and impossible bid for a kind of utopia of representation set in motion, a bid dependent on the viewer's total identification between an artistic apparatus, in this case an apparatus of representation (in spite of its performative dimension and the post-Mondrian lineage of Clark's work) and an absolute figure of subjectivity: *I, Lygia Clark*, and *I, all of us who penetrate her work*.

The female identity of this absolute "I" experiences a no-less-radical act of universalization, because the structure of a work of art—never truly becoming a living organism—is sexless and can only aspire to that dimension through oblique means: homology, analogy, metaphor, simile, figure, acting. But all works of art, as semantic devices or as apparatuses made of significant elements, aspire to a certain form of universality, to a universal consent about meaning, beyond the diversity of languages and the inevitable historicization of interpretation. This is true for *A casa é o corpo*, through which, except for the projection onto its architectural structure of specifically feminine biological functions—*mater certissima, pater semper incertus*—Clark universalizes the feminine condition of the work. The awareness of the body it creates is necessarily an awareness of our universal femininity.

An attentive look at the meaning of *A casa é o corpo* and then the meaning of penetrable works made by Gego and Schendel at the end of the 1960s clearly indicates a critical contribution to the conversion of the abstract form into a specific place: for all three artists the notion of an apparatus clearly identified with the structure of an organism is emphasized. This return of organicism—no longer simply graphic and pictorial statements but now performative operations that demand participation from spectators—speaks in the cases of Clark, Gego, and Schendel of three narratives of origin, referring to three fundamental concepts at the cores of their artistic strategies: the body, nature, and God.

At the time of Gego's first retrospective exhibition in Caracas, in 1977, kinetic and Constructivist art were being widely used in Venezuela in monumental and civic works, making manifest the promise—or illusion—of modernity and democratic development. Both Gego and her companion, the artist and designer Gerd Leufert, were no strangers to this process of modernization symbolically embodied in Neo-Constructivist forms, and they produced important public artworks in this style; Gego's teachings in art schools and universities also fell under the rubric of modern optimism and redemption. Her work, however, differed radically from the heroic ambition displayed by her Neo-Constructivist equals—most of them male—characterizing itself by the stasis (rather than the dynamism) of its structures, by its self-imposed poverty of resources (rather than its pristine appearance), and by the precarious, disillusioning literalness of its material presence (rather than the artistic prowess of its optical illusions).[14] Perhaps that's what the eminent critic Marta Traba meant when she wrote in her significant essay for Gego's retrospective that the artist's work was a "lacuna-site" in Venezuelan art.[15]

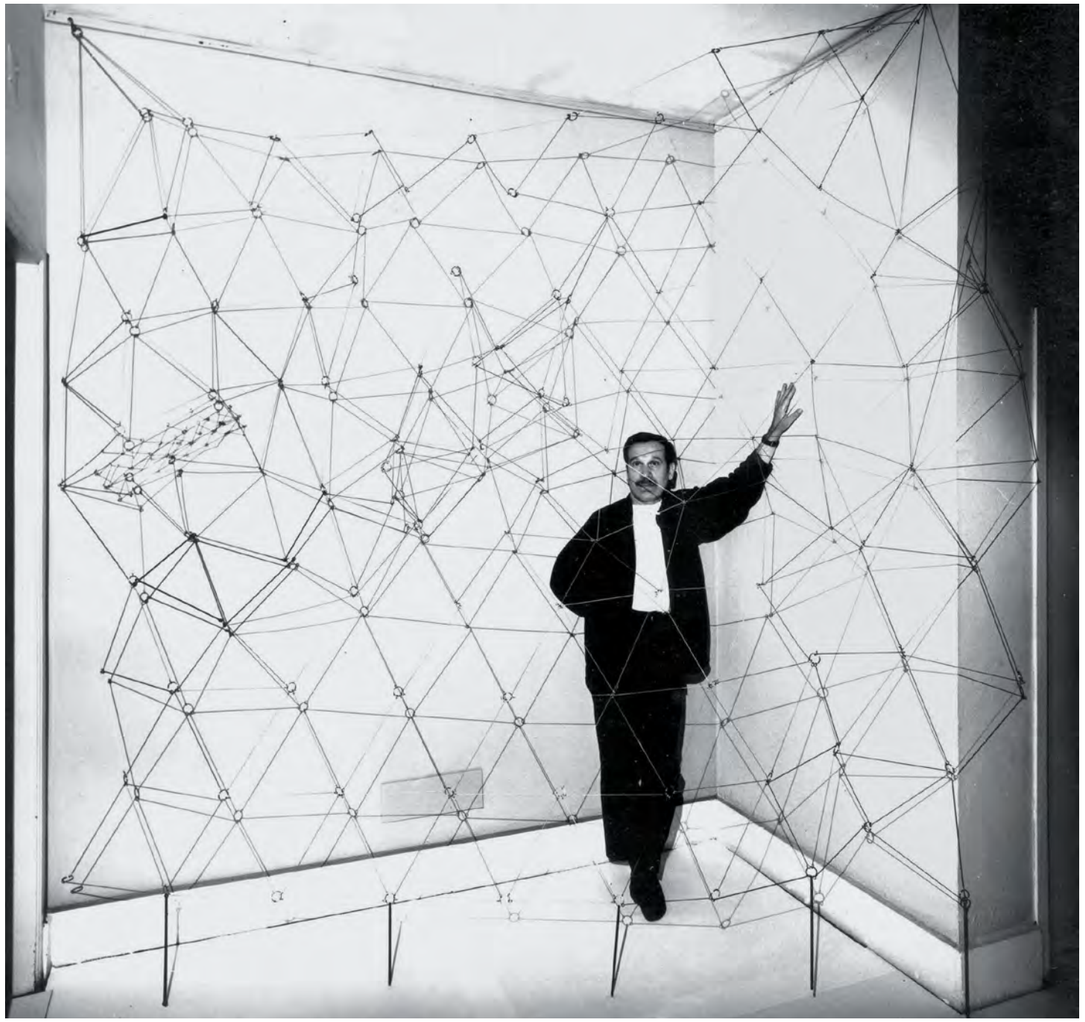
This lacuna-site was first constituted in 1969, when Gego installed the first version—the first fragment—of her most important work, *Reticulárea* (nos. 1 and 10), at the Museo de Bellas Artes, in Caracas. In this work all the axioms on which Venezuelan kineticism was erected are systematically dismantled.[16] In the form of an overgrown metallic tissue made up of countless knots, it does away with the idea of a center, of a regulated plan; the work is held up by the structural function of the knots, playing down the conceptual primacy of the line and the point, while its generative axes structurally and incessantly move toward the edges, toward the margins, so that each time Gego installed *Reticulárea*, she would start from this subtle act of deferment from the center. Here the orthogonality of classic Constructivism is replaced by an organic, rhizomatic structure, so that one of *Reticulárea*'s most eloquent effects is the imperceptible transformation of its own spatial codes into experiences of place, with the work appropriating the space that contains it until the work contains the space, generates it as a "practiced place," marks it as a shadow marks the presence of the body that projects it. In this way, aprogrammatically and perhaps involuntarily, *Reticulárea* became the first abstract structure in situ, unmistakably linked to a specific site—the first site-specific sculpture in modern Venezuelan art.

Giving primacy to the knot and the tie—or literalizing the point and the line as dense presences, with every point a knot, every line a tie—*Reticulárea* appeared to Traba as the great organicistic manifesto, standing in subtle, silent opposition to the aesthetic of the kinetic machines. The subtlety of the operation, which Traba herself came short of fully understanding in her text, was that Gego did not create *Reticulárea* to be the antithesis of anything—did not erect it as a trench against anything—but transformed concrete and constructive abstraction from its geometric and conceptual roots into the form of an organism. An organism before which it is impossible not to evoke, as Traba did, the gratuitous presences of nature, the *muqarnas* of roots and branches, the lushness of a tree.

Reticulárea's organicism implies a twofold notion of the oblivion of origins, working to redeem two losses: the loss of a truth formulated long ago, that art imitates nature in its operations rather than in its forms, and the loss of a sense of German childhood from the artist's work.[17] *Reticulárea*, having emerged at the historical culmination of kinetic abstraction, favors a structural, spatial stillness over speed and thus works as an exercise in recalling the modern project that began with Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's structural distinction between arts that exist in the durative flow of time and those that exist in the synchronous stasis of space[18]—which he deemed irreconcilably opposed species—and which Venezuelan kinetic art opposed with its abstract muralism of durative wonders.[19]

To the modern legacy of Lessing's arguments, which are contemporary with a German Romantic reinvention of antiquity—from Johann Joachim Winckelmann to Arthur Schopenhauer, passing through Lessing and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe—*Reticulárea* adds the recall of another displaced Germanic tradition, one that Gego brought to her adopted country when she left Germany for the Venezuelan tropics as if involuntarily following Alexander von Humboldt's steps. Alongside this reimagination of ancient Greece in the late eighteenth century, a German reimagination of a new Middle Age took place. Within that tradition, beginning with Romanticism represented by Goethe but mostly by Friedrich von Schlegel and Johann Gottfried von Herder, the structural dimension of visual arts can be linked to a mythology of origins.

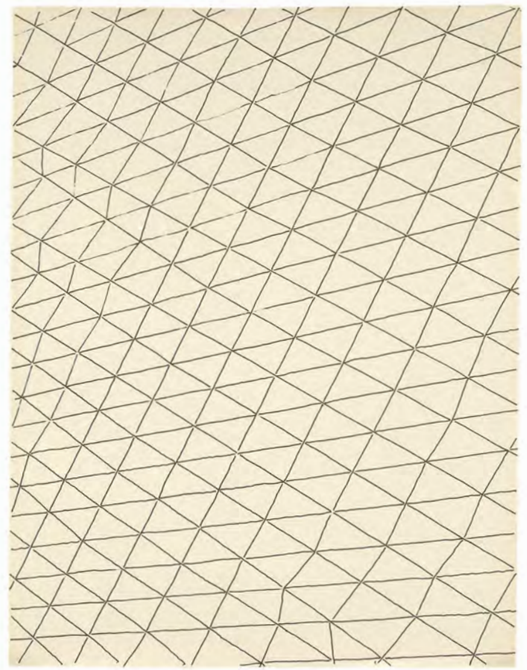
Germanic "woodland ethnicity" is an expression coined by Simon Schama in his landmark work *Landscape and Memory*.[20] The native German people, Shama argued, resisted Roman domination from the bastion of their impenetrable and invincible forest. Arminius of Cherusci (or Hermann the German) is the man of this forest—"Nullas Germanorum populis urbes habitari (None of the German tribes live in [walled] cities)," wrote Tacitus in *Germania*—which had become Rome's final frontier.[21]



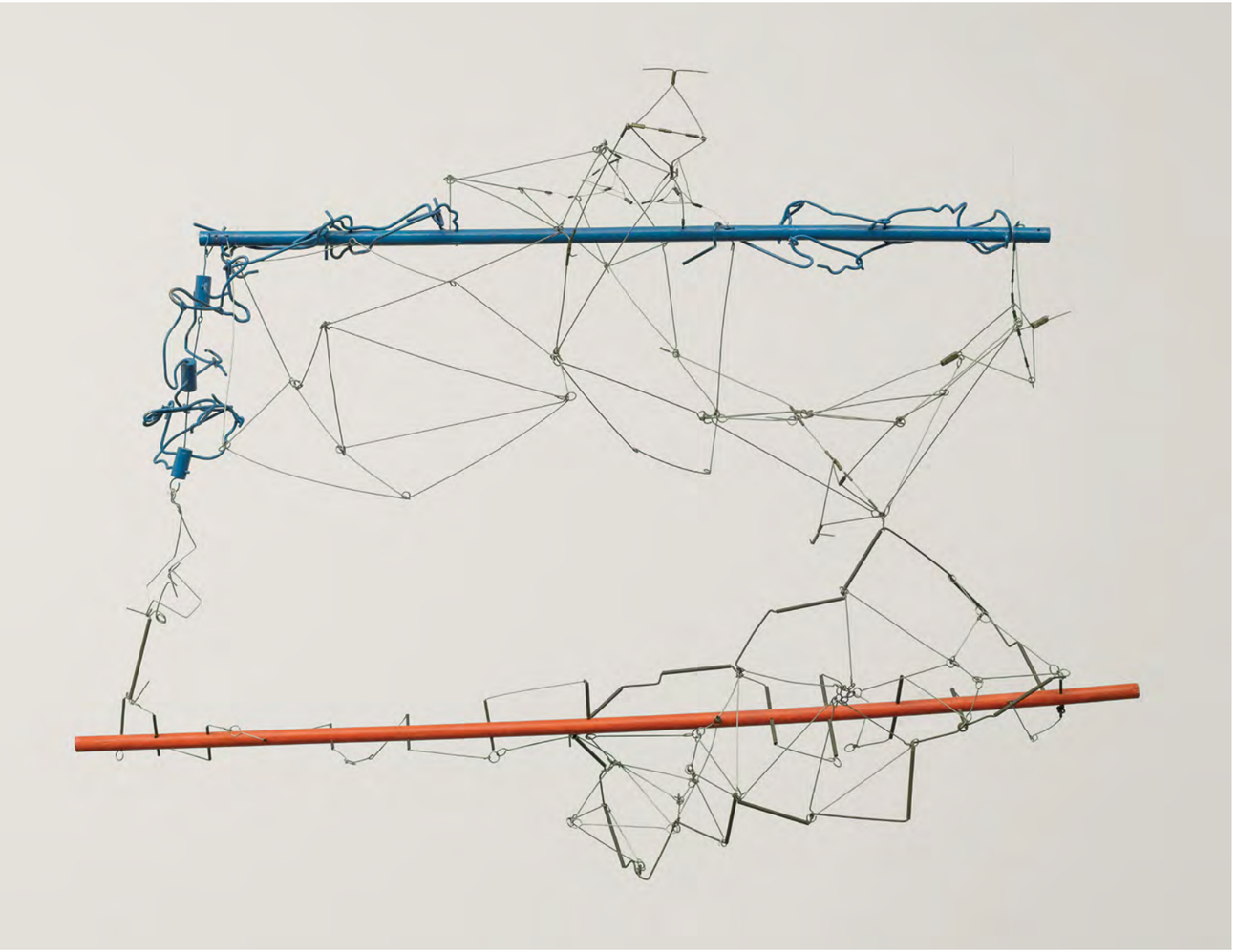
Opposite:
10. **Gerd Leufert** in front of the first fragment of **Gego**'s *Reticulárea*, at the Museo de Bellas Artes, Caracas, 1969

Therefore there is a connection between this forest myth, this native naturalism of German culture, and the ardent defense of medieval styles, especially of Gothic naturalism, by some of the greatest intellectual figures of German Romanticism. This falls directly in line with Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl's *Land und Leute* (*Land and People* [1861], the second volume of his *Die Naturgeschichte des Volkes als Grundlage einer deutschen Sozial-Politik* [*The Natural History of the German People*]), in which the forest is recognized as the nation's true original landscape, "the heartland of [German] folk culture."[22] While Dante—again, according to Schama—was perpetuating the Roman conception of the forest as a place of perdition in the first stanzas of the *Inferno*, "the architects and decorators of Gothic churches in the north were busy creating a woodland version of heaven."[23] Herder, and later Goethe, would become ardent defenders of the Gothic truth—as a German truth—of this myth of origins.[24] In opposition to English or French historians, who saw in the complexity of Gothic architecture a functionalist interpretation of primeval forest structure, Herder focused on sublimation and on the metaphysical and theological exaltation of the paradisiacal (that is, sylvan) origins of humanity.[25]

In the beginning of the twentieth century, many years after this episode of Western invention of landscape, Germanic naturalism played an important role in constituting the modern way of thinking about the visual and applied arts. Isn't there a displaced echo of it in Karl Blossfeldt's obsessive search for structural enigmas and wonders in vegetable forms, in an oeuvre critical to the history of the Bauhaus? Isn't it by evoking the true ugliness of subterranean roots, as opposed to the illusory fragrance of superficial flowers, that Aby Warburg approached the challenges of his *Bilderatlas Mnemosyne*, therefore conceiving the history of visual arts as an endless "iconology of intervals"?[26] Wouldn't *Reticulárea* also reflect both the relocation and deformation (or distortion) of this Germanic legacy in Latin America, a kind of Gothic intuition at the heart of geometrical abstraction?[27] Within the framework of this theory—a neo-Gothic Gego—it is no small thing that the artist was born in Hamburg to a learned family, and that her paternal uncle, Adolph Goldschmidt, was one of the greatest medievalists of his time, in fact, the privileged recipient of Warburg's first outline of his interpretation of the history of art, which completed a cycle begun by Winckelmann.[28]



11. **Gego (Gertrude Goldschmidt)** (Venezuelan, born Germany. 1912–1994). *Untitled*. 1969. Ink and pencil on paper, 25 3/4 x 19 3/4" (65.4 x 50.2 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchase



12. **Gego (Gertrude Goldschmidt)** (Venezuelan, born Germany. 1912–1994). *Dibujo sin papel* (Drawing without paper). 1988. Enamel on wood and stainless steel wire, 23 5/8 x 34 5/8 x 16 3/4" (60 x 88 x 40 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Patricia Phelps de Cisneros in honor of Susan and Glenn Lowry

As in the structure of a Gothic rosette, *Reticulárea* tries out unprecedented structural solutions, which, as Henri Focillon argued about Gothic forms, work as symbolic castoffs, as inventions without any historical continuity but their own presence in the work.[29] Gego had set a silent classical stasis against kinetic speed, following Lessing's paradigm, but she also set a new naturalism against that paradigm's radical antinaturalist and anti-atmospheric stance, a naturalism at once neo-Gothic (in a sense that would require from us further investigation) and neomimetic (in its rhizomatic structure) and in which, beneath the unrecognizable abstract and nonobjective patterns, "the vast trees of God" that Goethe believed he had seen in the stone skies of the Strasbourg cathedral would once again shine.[30]

In that same year, despite a decisive political controversy, Schendel decided to participate in the Bienal de São Paulo. Most of the country's intellectuals had called for a boycott of the show in protest of Brazil's dictatorship, but a few high-ranking personalities identified with the Communist party, among them Mario Schemberg, Schendel's mentor and close friend, opposed the boycott. Schendel, perhaps because of her experience as a refugee in Croatia during World War II, decided to present her work at the contested event.

The work that Schendel presented at the Bienal, *Ondas paradas de probabilidade—Antigo Testamento, Livro dos Reis, I, 19* (no. 13), echoes themes that came up frequently throughout her career; it is fundamentally a work about voice—in other words, about words—in its inaudible dimension and about authority—about the absolute figure of authority, God—becoming confused and drowned out by the sounds of the earth. The work, a volume of nylon threads suspended from the ceiling, is surprisingly similar to one of Soto's *Penetrables*, except for the transparent threads being noticeably finer and colorless. The most significant difference is its inaccessibility: spectators weren't permitted to enter this volume, which was nevertheless potentially penetrable. It is an object of contemplation: an abstract form embodied in space, meant only to be seen—or read; in large type on the wall next to it Schendel placed a well-known fragment from the Bible's Book of Kings:

> And a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake:
>
> And after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice.[31]

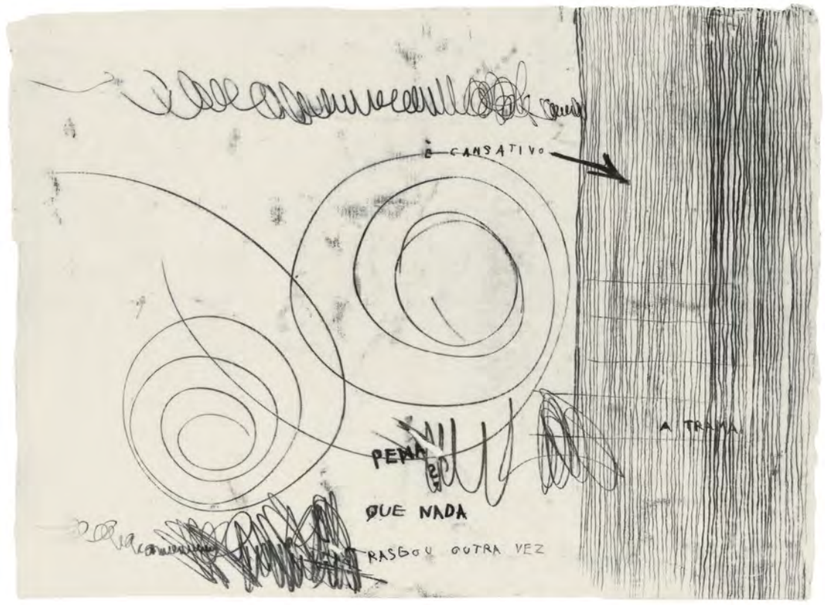
How does this work, perfectly contemporary with *A casa é o corpo* and *Reticulárea*, relate to them in terms of a certain kind of naturalism? How does *Ondas paradas de probabilidade* contribute, like them, to the notion of apparatus? How does this radically metaphysical work echo the physics that underlie Clark's and Gego's works and evoke, like theirs, a figure of origin?

We should begin by recalling the theological etymology of the term *dispositivo* (apparatus) as elucidated by Giorgio Agamben in order to understand this return of the organism to Latin American post-geometric abstraction and to the heart of this specific lineage of penetrable works. *Dispositivo*, according to Agamben, comes from the Latin term *dispositio*, which the founders of the Catholic Church used to translate *oikonomía*, a Greek word fundamental to the theology of the Judeo-Christian triune Godhead. In Greek this word literally refers to the way in which a home or house is managed; theologically it explains the inexplicable division of God into three persons: in terms of his being, God would be one, but in terms of his *oikonomía*, or his projection in the human realm, he would be triune. "The term *oikonomía* is used in particular to signify the incarnation of the Son," Agamben wrote, "as well as the economy of redemption and salvation . . . and Christ ends up being called *ho anthropos tès oikonomias* [the man of the economy]". He added, "The Latin term *dispositio*, from which our term *dispositivo* derives, ends up taking on all the semantic complications of the theological *oikonomía*."[32]

In light of this, we can understand *Ondas paradas de probabilidade*'s complex theological connotation: an inaccessible apparatus where the voice of God is inaudible, his home impenetrable, unfounded in him. That roaring silence of the absolute was at the source of Schendel's oeuvre, perhaps why the artist searched over the course of her career for transcendence in the present moment. As in Clark's and Gego's works, which propose an impossible return, *Ondas paradas de probabilidade* suggests that there is a fundamental house to which access cannot be gained and which destines us to build all the houses in the simple span of our lives.

The repertoire of Latin American penetrables began with Oiticica's ideations of place—schemes for potential representations of space intertwined with the possibility of a nonplace or an atopian coordinate—and it achieved an ultimate conclusion with *Ondas paradas de probabilidade*. Schendel's installation may also offer, as a supplementary legacy, a theological foundation for Oiticica's impossible space, for the unreachable limit in the experience of place: the ungraspable voice of God symbolically taking the shape of a coordinate, deferring itself to an unresolved interval between the form and the formless.

And in what sense can it be said that *Ondas paradas de probabilidade* falls into the same naturalist lineage of *A casa é o corpo* and *Reticulárea*? Perhaps in the most radical sense of all: the voice that is hidden in the sounds of the earth, according to the text from the Bible, is none other than the most ancient form of *physis*: nature in its dialectics of emergence and hiding. Heraclitus established



Opposite:
13. View of the exhibition *Tangled Alphabets: León Ferrari and Mira Schendel*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, April 5–June 15, 2009. Foreground and middle ground: Mira Schendel (Brazilian, born Switzerland. 1919–1988). *Ondas paradas de probabilidade—Antigo Testamento, Livro dos Reis, I, 19* (Still waves of probability—Old Testament, I Kings 19). 1969 (re-created 2009). Nylon thread and wall text on acrylic sheet, installation dimensions variable. Collection Ada Schendel

14. Mira Schendel (Brazilian, born Switzerland. 1919–1988). *A trama* (A fabric net). c. 1960s. Oil transfer drawing on thin Japanese paper, 17 3/4 x 24 1/2" (45.1 x 62.2 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Ada Schendel and the Latin American and Caribbean Fund

this a long time ago in his famous motto to which all artistic naturalism of the West has returned, "Physis kruptesthai philei" (The being that inhabits life, nature, the emergence that loves to hide).[33]

There is meaning, then, to the categorical impenetrability of *Ondas paradas de probabilidade*: in spite of our being physically able to penetrate its solid interior—how could we be prevented from doing so?—in truth the work is also about the impossibility of a return, about the inaccessibility of origin, about the definitive closure of a home, an apparatus, of origin. This is perhaps the common thread that runs through these three works: the return to the place, the house, the home, or the instance whence we came—the fertilizing coitus, the forest and mineral origin of our being, *physis*, God—and from which we are categorically excluded; this is the reason we are limited to life as our destiny, this life, in which there are only, in the ancient and beautiful words of Lucretius, "bodies and void."[34]

1. The major works by Lygia Clark, Gego, and Mira Schendel discussed in this essay do not belong to the collection of The Museum of Modern Art. Gego's *Reticulárea* is a permanent installation at the Galería de Arte Nacional in Caracas, and therefore a site-specific creation; the other two works exist as concepts, safeguarded by the estates of the artists, and have been seldom reinstalled. We can argue, therefore, that the three works conceptually defy both the notion and practice of ownership and the conventional conditions of art-collecting. Schendel's work was last reinstalled at MoMA in 2009, as a central presence in the exhibition *Tangled Alphabets: León Ferrari and Mira Schendel*. MoMA owns a consistent core of works by these three important artists, some of them illustrated in this essay, such as Gego's drawings addressing the structural challenges of reticular fields (nos. 11 and 12) and Schendel's works dealing with the opposition of voice and silence, theology and existential unsettlement (no. 14), notions implied in their major installations discussed in this essay.
2. Obviously we don't ignore the existence in classic modernism of precedents of these types of works, which would perhaps point toward a similar process: among them El Lissitzky's three-dimensional *Proun* (1923) and Kurt Schwitters's *Merzbau* (1923) clearly stand out. In both cases, however, the forms of abstraction are totally recognizable as contained forms and do not dilute themselves functionally in adjusting themselves to real space.
3. For a total understanding of this repertoire in the 1970s, we would have to include such works of cardinal importance as Eugenio Espinoza's *Impenetrable* (Impenetrable) (1972), Antonio Dias's *Flesh Room with Anima* (1978), and Anna Maria Maiolino's *Arroz e feijão* (1979), among others.
4. Louis Marin, *Opacité de la peinture: Essais sur la représentation au Quattrocento* (Paris: Usher, 1989), p. 121; translation by the author.
5. Hélio Oiticica, "Aspiro ao Grande labirinto," in *Hélio Oiticica* (Barcelona: Fundació Antoni Tàpies, 1992), p. 60. translation by the author.
6. Ibid., p. 55; translation by the author.
7. On Jesús Rafael Soto's *Penetrables*, see Ariel Jiménez, *Soto* (Caracas: Fundación Jesús Soto, 2007), pp. 82–88.
8. Clark, quoted in *Lygia Clark* (Barcelona: Fundació Antoni Tàpies, 1998), p. 228.
9. Clark, quoted in Maria Alice Milliet, *Lygia Clark: Obra-trajeto* (São Paulo: Editora da Universidade de São Paulo, 1992), p. 118.
10. Hubert Damisch recalled that "if the labyrinth indeed existed, it would correspond less to the building itself than to an endless net without assignable endings to the itineraries that could be inscribed there." Damisch, "Le Labyrinthe d'Egypte," in *Skyline: La Ville Narcisse* (Paris: Seuil, 1996), pp. 38–57; translation by the author. Aldo Rossi quoted Loos's famous line: "When in a forest we find ourselves before a tomb six feet long and three feet wide, in the shape of a pyramid, made with spades, suddenly we are saddened while something murmurs within us: somebody is buried here. That is architecture." Rossi, *Autobiographie Scientifique* (Paris: Parenthèses, 1988), p. 81.
11. See Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988), p. 117.
12. Clark, quoted in *Lygia Clark: Obra-trajeto*, p. 123.
13. Clark, ibid., p. 232.
14. It is worth noting that Gego was not the only major female figure within the constellation of Venezuelan Neo-Constructivism. Other important women artists, such as Lya Bermúdez, Aimée Battistini, Mercedes Pardo, and Elsa Gramcko, contributed to its complexity. Only Gego, however, seemed to have purposefully deconstructed its structural underpinnings.
15. Marta Traba, *Gego* (Caracas: Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, 1977), p. 11.
16. On the critical role of Gego in Venezuelan kineticism, see Luis Pérez-Oramas, "Gego: Laocoön, Nets and the Irresolutions of Things," in *Gego: Obra completa, 1955–1990* (Caracas: Fundación Cisneros, 2003), pp. 395–401; and Pérez-Oramas, "Gego y la escena analítica del cinetismo," in Héctor Olea and Mari-Carmen Ramírez, *Heterotopias: Medio siglo sin lugar, 1918–1968* (Madrid: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, 2000), p. 245.
17. On art imitating nature, see Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1265–73, vol. 15 (Ia, 110–119), *The World Order*, trans. M. J. Charlesworth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), q. 117, a. 1, p. 132.
18. Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Laocoön: An Essay on the Limits of Painting and Poetry*, 1766, trans. Edward Allen McCormick (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1962).
19. Venezuelan kineticism was characterized by works meant to reconcile the spatial underpinnings of modern geometric abstraction with the possibility of time-based visual effects that give the impression that the works move in front of the beholder's eyes. The most accomplished and impressive of these works took the form of murallike monumental friezes that one looks at as if reading a text, moving in front of them from left to right. This element suggests that Venezuelan kineticism gave continuity, albeit in abstract, nonnarrative terms, to a larger history of Latin American muralism. See Pérez-Oramas, "Caracas: A Constructive Stage," in Gabriel Perez Barreiro, ed., *The Geometry of Hope: Latin American Abstract Art from the Patricia Phelps de Cisneros Collection* (Austin: The Blanton Museum of Art/University of Texas at Austin, 2007), p. 82.
20. Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995), p. 116.
21. Tacitus, *Germania*, 98 A.D., trans. M. Hutton (Cambridge, Mass.: Loeb Classical Library, 1980), ch. 16, pp. 154–55; quoted in Schama, *Landscape and Memory*, p. 84.
22. Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl, *Land und Leute* (Stuttgart: Cotta'scher Verlag, 1861), p. 63; quoted in Schama, *Landscape and Memory*, p. 114.
23. Schama, *Landscape and Memory*, pp. 227–28.
24. Ibid., pp. 236–37.
25. Ibid., pp. 102–3.
26. See Philippe-Alain Michaud, *Aby Warburg and the Image in Motion*, trans. Sophie Hawkes (New York: Zone Books, 2004), p. 251; and Georges Didi-Huberman, *L'Image survivante: Histoire de l'art et temps de fantômes selon Aby Warburg* (Paris: Minuit, 2002).
27. By using the word "deformation" I want to stress that a form can be a hiding and sheltering device for a distorted iteration of another form, which plays a role in its own genealogy. This notion has found a successful theoretical fortune in the twentieth century, following Sigmund Freud's notion of *Zerrbild*—the tearing of an image within the dreaming process—and ending with Aby Warburg's intuition that images can exist in a status of afterlife (*Nachleben*), through which they survive to their own dissolution, taking a different shape. See Georges Didi-Huberman, *La Ressemblance informe, ou le gai savoir visuel selon Georges Bataille* (Paris: Macula, 1995), p. 251 n. 1.
28. Gego's biography began in Hamburg, a city known for its intellectual significance: it was in Hamburg that Warburg established his famous library, which played a conclusive role in the modern history of the discipline of art history, founded by Johann Joachim Winckelmann in the late eighteenth century. It was in Hamburg, and particularly in Warburg's library, that intellectuals such as Warburg and Goldschmidt, Cassirer and Saxl, Panofsky and Salomon, Ritter and Pauli embodied the last chapter of that history, contributing to a critical questioning of its own foundations. On Warburg's letter to Goldschmidt, containing his outline, see E. H. Gombrich, *Aby Warburg: An Intellectual Biography,* 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), p. 141. On Warburg's library, see Saxl, "The History of Warburg's Library (1886–1944)," in ibid., p. 325.
29. Henri Focillon, *La Vie des formes* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1943), p. 15.
30. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Gedenkausgabe der Werke, Briefe und Gespräche*, vol. 13, *Schriften zur Kunst*, ed. Ernst Beutler (Zurich: Artemis-Verlag, 1954), pp. 19–20; quoted in Schama, *Landscape and Memory*, p. 237.
31. I Kings 19: 11–12.
32. Giorgio Agamben, *Qu'est-ce qu'un dispositif?*, trans. Martin Rueff (Paris: Payot-Rivages, 2007), pp. 21–27.
33. On the "hiding nature" or *physis*, see Leopoldo Iribarren, "La Nature aime à se cacher: Le Replis du voile," *Critique*, no. 695 (April 2005): 273; and Jackie Pigeaud, *L'Art et le vivant* (Paris: Gallimard, 1995).
34. Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, 50 B.C., Spanish trans. Abate Marchena (Madrid: Cátedra, 1983), I, 420, p. 108; English translation by the author.

PERFORMATIVITY IN THE WORK OF FEMALE JAPANESE ARTISTS IN THE 1950s–1960s AND 1990s

/ YUKO HASEGAWA

This essay considers the work of certain female Japanese artists from the standpoint of its performative elements. The term "performativity" can refer to a quality inherent to artistic actions, happenings, or staged performances, as well as to the temporal or improvised components of larger works or to elements that give rise to the active involvement of others, such as instructions, choreography, and direction.[1] The artists I will discuss can be divided into two groups: the first group, which emerged in the 1950s and '60s and can be described as the first wave of avant-garde Japanese artists, includes Atsuko Tanaka, Yayoi Kusama, Yoko Ono, Mieko Shiomi, Shigeko Kubota, and Mako Idemitsu, most of whom lived in the United States at some stage in their careers; the second group, which emerged during or after the late 1990s, consists of Mariko Mori, Rei Naito, and Tomoko Sawada.[2]

Asian artists tend to excel in temporal arts (film, photography, and performance) rather than in spatial arts (painting and sculpture); generally speaking, in Asia the temporal arts developed ahead of the spatial arts, and venues devoted to the former were built in advance of and are far more numerous than art museums. However, the very division of art into spatial and temporal works is unfamiliar for Asians, because embedded in our culture is the notion that change is the essence of all existence.[3] For this reason artworks tend not to be viewed as things but as phenomenological events.

How did existing Eastern embodied knowledge—the experience whereby knowledge and wisdom fuse with the body through contemplative practice—come into contact with the expressive language of contemporary art and urge an awakening of human consciousness? Could it be that, at least for the artists discussed here, the use of performance represented an entry point to expression, providing them with a means of shattering the art world's glass ceiling?

It is interesting to compare how the artists of the first generation reached this threshold of expression through performance. Of all of them it was probably Atsuko Tanaka who maintained the closest metaphorical relationship between performance and nonperformance work. Tanaka was affiliated with the Kansai-based avant-garde art group Gutai, in whose manifesto Jiro Yoshihara, the group's leader, spoke of building a new relationship between artistic material and the human spirit: "In Gutai art, the human spirit, and the material reach out their hands to each other, even though they are otherwise opposed to each other. The material is not absorbed by the spirit. The spirit does not force the material into submission. If one leaves the material as it is, presenting it just as material, then it starts to tell us something and speaks with a mighty voice."[4] As part of their search for such a relationship the group staged performances such as Saburo Murakami's *Laceration of Paper* (1955), in which the artist passed through a series of papered wooden frames, ripping through the paper as he went, and then exhibited the results as sculpture, and Kazuo Shiraga's *Challenging Mud* (1955), in which the artist plunged into mud, wrestled with it, and pronounced the resulting forms and shapes sculpture and painting. These works were confrontational and expressionistic, many of them dealing directly with matter in one form or another.

Two of Tanaka's pieces, *Work (Bell)* (1955) and *Electric Dress* (1956, no. 2), deal with intangible elements—electricity and sound. *Work (Bell)* consists of twenty bells attached to a long cord that can be wound throughout a venue; any spectator can activate the installation, causing the bells to ring automatically in sequence and creating a

1. **Atsuko Tanaka** (Japanese, 1932–2005). *Untitled.* 1964. Synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 10' 11 1/4" x 7' 4 3/4" (333.4 x 225.4 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. John G. Powers Fund

2. **Atsuko Tanaka** (Japanese, 1932–2005). Reproduction of *Electric Dress*. 1986 (original 1956). Enamel paint on lightbulbs, electric cords, and control console, approx. 65 x 31 1/2 x 31 1/2" (165 x 80 x 80 cm). Takamatsu City Museum, Japan

chain of sound that recedes and then grows nearer, moving like a living creature. *Electric Dress* took the form of a bodysuit enveloped in cords hung with tubular lamps and lightbulbs variously coated in enamel paint. The bulbs were programmed to flash randomly, as if autonomous, bringing them, like the bells, into a different symbolic and imaginary realm. Art historian Françoise Levaillant has contrasted this effect with the paper, mud, and other everyday objects used by the male Gutai artists in their performances, which retained their original symbolism:

> In contrast to the approach of Tanaka's male artist associates, who, when using their bodies in their artistic activities, did so in essentially energetic ways, often directly, expressionistically, or aggressively, Tanaka used the energy of the materials themselves to give the materials as much sculptural richness as possible. Paradoxically, by putting restrictions on the female body, [Tanaka] liberated the female body from the terribly pumped up gestures that were a characteristic of the work of the group's male artists when they used their bodies. All she did was pretend to exhibit/expose herself. The strength of her own body becomes the support mechanism for a kind of industrial energy that appears in the form of light of various colors. She does not turn this industrial energy as a signal, but transforms it into a complex sign for stimulating and invigorating the imaginary.[5]

In *Stage Clothes* (1957), a performance contemporary with *Electric Dress*, Tanaka would remove her clothing piece by piece, revealing different-colored garments, like the rapid costume changes in Kabuki theater. Her final layer was a black bodysuit covered in blinking lightbulbs, signaling the transition from female striptease to electric muse. In footage of this performance, the randomly flashing bulbs appear on the darkened stage simply as flickering light. One imagines that for audiences of that era, when there was still very little neon in Osaka, the twinkling of that colored light would have been a real visual delight, and the flickering would have been enlivening and exhilarating, creating a real sense of physical stimulation. When Tanaka wore *Electric Dress*, she emphasized this connection between electricity and the body by waving her arms up and down to emphasize the presence of a person inside. When *Electric Dress* was dismantled and hung on a wall like a painting, its essence of light and energy was translated into space.

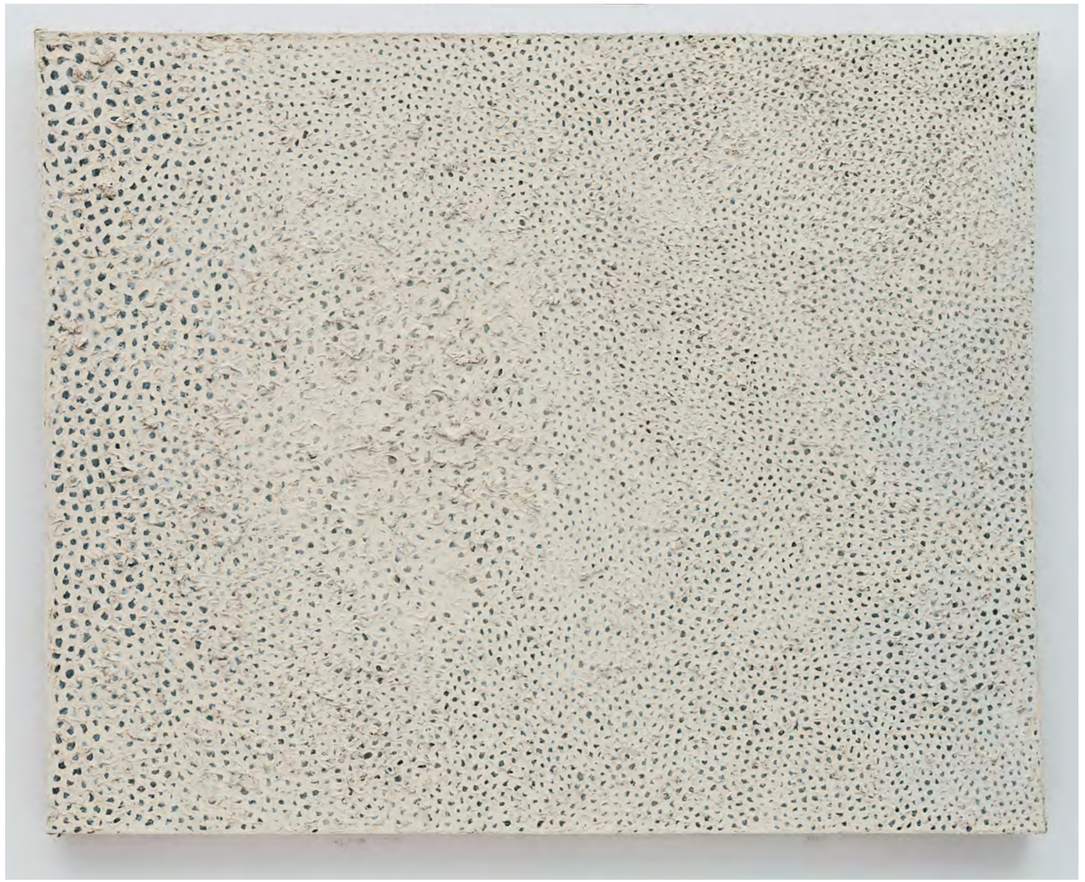
Akira Kanayama, an artist Tanaka met in 1950 at the Art Academy of the Osaka Municipal Museum of Art and later married, made kinetic, conceptual artwork that relied on mechanical devices. He awakened her sensitivity to automatism and to systems inspired by mechanical workings. The transformation in *Electric Dress* from wiring diagram into painting—Tanaka had designed the wiring for the bulbs and cords herself—has echoes in her nonperformance work, in dates arranged on a canvas and borders drawn around each number on a calendar, and she continued to explore these ideas after *Electric Dress*. *Untitled* (1964, no. 1), from a series of paintings begun in 1957, was created on an unstretched piece of canvas, which she worked on the floor, without the benefit of an underdrawing, in a process that employed a number of automatist elements. It features two partially overlapping sets of concentric circles to which the artist added multiple lines, so that one appears to trigger the next in a kind of chain effect that conveys a sense of transformation and movement. Many automatist elements can be detected in this process. Next she dripped synthetic polymer paint onto the circles to create powerful skeins of bright, contrasting colors reminiscent of the cords in *Electric Dress*, which crisscross the circles and appear entangled in them. The glossy pigment produces a luminosity that appears to emanate from below the work's surface, contrasting with the superficial space and stimulating the observer's reflexes and tactile senses. *Untitled* conveys a chaotic energy that explodes from the circles' centers, like cells that have been hurtling toward each other from a distance and are now trying to conjugate. The result is an implosion of symbolism and centripetal force, a mandala that gives rise to a diverse and almost frightening changeability.

Although the paintings in this series all have the same formal motifs, each one is different, full of movement and freshness, as if producing them re-created in the artist the movement of *Electric Dress*'s flickering light, a kind of internal mechanism that gave her access to other, latent emotions. Tanaka continued this series of paintings even after leaving Gutai in 1965, due to conflict with Yoshihara.

Kusama's net painting *No. F* (1959, no. 4) seems rational and Minimalist next to Tanaka's automatist circle and line works, but it is actually overflowing with all manner of sensibilities and emotions. The meeting on canvas of complex and tactile thick white paint and a thin veil of gray paint constitutes a violent collision between presence and loss in a space that rejects pictorial depth. The drawings *Untitled* (1952) and *Infinity Nets* (1951) are completely covered with net patterns and polka dots, which, rather than evincing a Minimalist aesthetic, reflect the influence of the hallucinations with which Kusama has been afflicted since her childhood, in the form of polka dots and nets that cover the world like curtains. By giving material form to these repetitive patterns she has been able to maintain her psychological balance and her connection with the world, as well as to create a form of resistance to her depersonalization disorder—the loss of a sense of reality, with the world growing increasingly distant. This sensory overload, according to curator Robert Storr, "is the flip-side of sensory and emotional deprivation. This psychological symmetry is clear in her art."[6] Kusama's obsession with infinity stems from the urge to repeat these markings, the source of her monotonous surface treatments and environmental elements.

The performances in which Kusama covered the world in polka dots and phalluses were aimed at creating a kind of nirvana; in her self-obliteration performances she donned long, flowing robes and waded through water, becoming one with the surrounding environment, disappearing as a result of her actions. The deep connection of her motifs to her distinctive sensory state was sensationally dramatized in performances in which she exposed her body alongside her work, such as *Aggregation: One Thousand Boats Show* (1963, a work similar to *Violet Obsession* [1994, no. 3], in the collection of The Museum of Modern Art), in which a boat covered in phalluses, which appeared to have sprung up like mushrooms, was set in a space surrounded by photographs of the boat's surface and behind which the artist sat naked, with her

3. **Yayoi Kusama** (Japanese, born 1929). *Violet Obsession*. 1994. Sewn and stuffed fabric over rowboat and oars, 43 1/4" x 12' 6 3/8" x 70 7/8" (109.8 x 381.9 x 180 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Duke



4. **Yayoi Kusama** (Japanese, born 1929). *No. F.* 1959. Oil on canvas, 41 1/2 x 52" (105.4 x 132.1 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Sid R. Bass Fund

back to the audience. Kusama used theater-style spotlights in this work to emphasize her inner obsessions and anxieties.

As voids or holes, Kusama's shadows and polka dots had not by themselves proved powerful enough a virus to contaminate the male-dominated art scene in New York, where she lived and worked from 1958 to 1968; this required the use of what curator Lynn Zelevansky has called "protrusions," like those found on the boats in *Aggregation* and *Violet Obsession*, possessed of more powerful symbolism.[7] According to religious scholar Shinichi Nakazawa, Kusama's use of such forms is not simply meant to exorcise her fear of male genitalia but to create a captivating space amid sexual disparity by juxtaposing male symbols and female sexuality and exposing something hidden. The resulting sculptural forms—"emotional plants," as Nakazawa calls them, a kind of form with spirit—occupy the space like pollen or spores.[8] For *Narcissus Garden* (1966) Kusama lay among 1,500 mirrored plastic balls, looking at the reflections of her body like so many alter egos; she then sold the mirror balls to passersby. For Kusama's *Peep Show*, an installation that same year, she once again used mirrors to create an infinite number of reflections, this time of the audience, producing a space filled with "emotional plants" and offering a vicarious experience of her hallucinations.

Although her nude performances were sometimes perceived as publicity stunts (and there may have been a strategic element involved), their aim was a kind of invisibility, a becoming one with the environment. Her symbolic materials (mirrors, phalluses, food in the form of macaroni), together with polka dots, all form a part of the great performance that is Kusama's life, helping Kusama, whose physiological condition threatens to reduce her to a pure receptor of external sensation, to continue to affirm her position in the world.

Kusama's unique art practice formed a bridge between the Abstract Expressionist/Minimalist movements on the one hand and what might be called "wet Pop" on the other—art with all the hallmarks of Pop but in which a childish, immature perspective replaces dry distance—which took hold in Japan in the 1990s and after. In the twenty-first century her work addresses many issues facing contemporary society: information overload in an IT-centric world, viral infections, pollution, and the challenge of uniting a self torn between the real and the virtual.

THE WOMEN OF FLUXUS

The Fluxus movement, characterized by a brand of indeterminacy and randomness that its participants offered in opposition to Western rationalism, was in many respects a successor to Dada, but Fluxus transcended Dada's nonsense by incorporating elements of Eastern philosophy; the word *fluxus* is Latin for "flow" or "change." It did not regard ordinariness and artistic expression as antagonistic but saw the everyday as sustenance for such expression, attempting to reveal the richness of life and spontaneous nuances through the improvised reconstruction of commonplace actions such as eating and going out. Shiomi, one of four women included in the original Fluxus group, with Ono, Kubota, and Takako Saito, has pointed out that Fluxus "hated expressionism and self-expression and sought to be simple and objective. . . . It was an attempt to dismantle the walls between artists and people in general through things like audience participation and collaborative work. . . . One can also see the influence of Zen in the emphasis on gamelike qualities, jokes, and humor."[9]

The overwhelming majority of artists involved in the avant-garde in Japan were male, and it was striking that four female Japanese artists were suddenly involved on the international stage, gaining recognition in their own way. Ono came to Fluxus through her involvement with John Cage, Toshi Ichiyanagi, and others. She regarded Conceptual art as the making conscious of the everyday, and she became a pioneer of a gentle conceptualism that invited involvement on the part of the audience through dematerialization, through art created from intangible elements such as text or instructions. Ono's work focused on philosophical contemplation and meaning at the everyday level and on casually repeated actions, an idea considerably influenced by Zen (which regards ordinary life as a succession of opportunities for the philosophical practice of existence) and its koans (which entrust disciples to find the answers to their own questions). In performance she saw the possibility of encouraging viewers to direct their gaze inward and think critically, creating an accumulation of small changes in consciousness that she felt would bring about revolutionary social change. In *Cut Piece* (1964) Ono posed personal and existential questions by literally exposing her own body to the audience: sitting quietly onstage with a pair of scissors next to her, she invited the audience to cut into her clothes, all the while sitting as calmly as she could, doing her best to avoid theatrics.

The performance is a metaphor for the way women are looked at, and it encourages the audience to criticize both the inherent aggressiveness of the act of looking and their own desire to participate in it. Ono also addressed the problem of the invasiveness of looking in films such as *Fly* (1970), in which a fly crawls over the flesh of an immobile woman, closing in on existence in an even more visceral and vivid fashion. Her performances constituted a self-disciplinary practice: the artist's ontological questioning of herself, principally in the form of instructions for the creation of artworks, which she began using in 1961. The instructions for *Smoke Painting* (1962), for example, are "Light canvas or any finished painting with a cigarette at any time for any length of time. See the smoke movement." The works created on the basis of detailed instructions would be displayed along with the instructions themselves. By staying vague about details, Ono relied heavily on the power of the participant's imagination; *Blue Room Event* (1966/2003) was meant to stimulate this power, instructing the audience inside a white room to imagine the room bright blue or moving at the speed of clouds. *Mend Piece* (1966/1968), in which adhesive and pieces of a broken teacup were placed together in a room, was based on the concepts of restoration and healing in a deeper psychological sense. Ono's instructions are a form of visual metaphysics that could be called Duchampian: an imaginable vision on a game board. They restrict the recipient, calling his or her attention to a certain set of aesthetic manners—and the resulting philosophical meaning—that lie within a simple set of actions.

Shiomi, too, used instructions in her experimental music, using instruments and various objects in a form that she called "action music." A student of music theory, she sent to George Maciunas, a founding member of Fluxus, event scores with instructions in Japanese and English; at Maciunas's instigation she traveled to the United States in 1964 and stayed there for a year. *Water Music* (1964) includes the instructions "1. Give the water still form. 2. Let the water lose its still form"; *Event for the Late Afternoon* (1963) includes the instructions "Suspend a violin with a long rope from the roof of a building until it nearly touches the ground"; and *Disappearing Music for Face* (1964) includes the instructions "Change gradually from a smile to no smile." *Events and Games* (1963, no. 5) contains instructions for twenty-two such events printed on different-sized cards in Japanese and English.

Shiomi's works eschew aggressiveness and emotional conflict, drawing instead on intellectual, poetic flights of inspiration. Photographs of *Event for the Late Afternoon* make clear how delicately and carefully she chose the circumstances and actions and engineered the work to produce a feeling of *jamais vu*. In a number of objects these flights of inspiration gave physical expression to the duration of time as experienced in music, such as in *Endless Box* (1963), in which a musical diminuendo is rendered in a series of progressively smaller white origami boxes nested together; for the artist, the act of lifting each box to reveal the smaller box inside represents the same qualities of focus and activity as listening to music.

Shiomi later considered the possibilities of "action poems with more personal connotations, set in the natural environment from which we came, which take the form of an intimate dialogue with a part of that environment," an idea deeply rooted in her memories of growing up surrounded by nature.[10] The instructions for *Mirror* (1963), the first work in which this desire found expression—"Stand on a sandy beach with your back to the sea. Hold a mirror in front of your face and look into it. Step back to the sea and enter the water"—simply ask that the participant take particular steps, as in a science experiment or a sport; participants who follow the instructions experience something unpredictable and unprecedented in their relationship with nature, something not controlled by the artist.

Both Ono and Shiomi criticized the limitations of the New York contemporary-art world, and their work represents a break with that scene. Ono's criticism of contemporary art methods is implicit in her work, and her skepticism of the increasingly bourgeois status of Fluxus—leading, for example, to the deification of Cage—evolved into political messages aimed at a larger audience; the message "War is over! If you want it," a collaboration with John Lennon, was widely disseminated via newspapers and billboards in 1969 (no. 6). Shiomi, after returning to Japan, undertook the first of her *Spatial Poems (Word Event)* (1965–75), a mail-based project carried out in nine series over ten years, in which the artist sent letters to around a hundred people, asking each of them to carry out a simple event at a specific time and to send her a record of its performance, creating a network of events occurring simultaneously around the world. In this sense she was a pioneer of the global network age, involving people around the world in projects that allowed the artist to expand beyond the New York art world.

Opposite:
5. Mieko Shiomi (Japanese, born 1938). *Events and Games.* 1963. Plastic box with offset label containing twenty-two offset cards, box 7 1/8 x 5 1/8 x 7/16" (18.1 x 13.1 x 1.1 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Ken Friedman

6. John Lennon (British, 1940–1980). Yoko Ono (Japanese, born 1933). *1969/95* from *Museum in Progress.* 1995. Lithograph, offset printed on newsprint, sheet 18 1/2 x 12 3/8" (47 x 31.5 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Linda Barth Goldstein Fund

Unable to adapt to the cool, nonexpressionist style of Shiomi, Ono, and Saito, Kubota searched for a style of her own. This ultimately led to her *Vagina Painting* (no. 7) in 1965, at the Perpetual Fluxfest at Cinematheque, New York, for which she inserted a brush between her legs and painted on paper on the floor, using red paint suggestive of menstrual blood. Painting performances using parts of the body other than the hands were common around this time—Nam June Paik's dragging his black-inked head across paper in *Zen for Head* (1962), Shiraga's foot paintings from a decade before—but by focusing on female sexuality, Kubota's work achieved great impact. Her performance was both vernacular and expressionist, and brings to mind the *hanadensha* (flower train) performances of low-level geishas, in which they drew calligraphy with a brush in their vagina.

Using video, with its ability to encompass movement, sound, and form, Kubota transformed her emotions into a visual language, as she did in *My Father* (1973–75), which alternates between shots of the artist's late father, a music show on television, and footage of Kubota weeping. She began to create video sculptures using TV monitors, such as the Duchampiana series begun in 1967 and inspired by her meeting Marcel Duchamp on an airplane bound for Buffalo. In *Duchampiana: Nude Descending a Staircase* (1976, no. 8), video monitors showing footage of a naked woman going up and down stairs are embedded in a three-dimensional staircase, an obvious appropriation of Duchamp's *Nude Descending a Staircase No. 2* (1912), but in the place of the erotic figure of the descending female who passively receives the gaze of the viewer, Kubota inserted an ascending and descending figure with her back to the

7. **Shigeko Kubota** (Japanese, born 1937). *Vagina Painting*. Performance at the Perpetual Fluxus Festival, New York. 1965. Gelatin silver print, 14 x 13 3/4" (35.5 x 35 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection Gift

Opposite:
8. **Shigeko Kubota** (Japanese, born 1937). *Duchampiana: Nude Descending a Staircase.* 1976. Super 8mm film transferred to video and color-synthesized video (color, silent), four monitors, and plywood, overall 66 1/4 x 30 15/16 x 67" (168.3 x 78.6 x 170.2 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Margot and John Ernst, Agnes Gund, and Barbara Pine

viewer. The production of an homage to Duchamp using video, a medium that he himself did not utilize, contains clear Oedipal elements; Duchamp—like Maciunas, Paik, and Kubota's own father—figures among the fathers who are the subjects of much of her video work, and her Freudian craving for these fathers is addressed through the equation of paintbrush as a phallus in *Vagina Painting*.

Kubota generally shoots her videos with a single fixed camera and is more interested in altering colors and distorting images than in depicting the passage of time; this gives rise to dissonant forms and occasionally to a schizophrenic or emotional dismantling of the body represented by the assembled monitors, a "body without organs."[11] Strong human emotions flow through her mechanical works, which include three-dimensional forms in the shape of crude robots, such as in *Jogging Lady* (1993), *Pissing Boy* (1993), and *Nam June Paik 1, 2* (2007). It is fascinating that this work, conceived in New York's phallocentric art world, does not simply criticize or resist male-dominated society; Kubota seemed to yearn for this world and sought to identify with the object of yearning in a different form.

Idemitsu, who also used video and monitors to create her narratives, took a less metaphorical approach, reconciling her roles as mother, wife, and artist using a kind of allegorical horror. A video monitor appears in many of her works, a monitor within a monitor representing a deep psyche or alternate self; the acting is mechanical and amateurish, based on archetypal characters and clearly meant to be symbolic. The works thus take the form of

what might be called a "horror/home drama," a Jungian analysis of repressed Japanese housewives and the various complexes and conflicts they experience with their homes, husbands, and children (no. 9). Idemitsu's housewives are domestic prisoners who snatch normalcy from the household through their strange and obsessive day-to-day activities. Idemitsu's distinctiveness lies in the way she keeps one foot in the reality from which many female artists have fled and turns it into popular yet critical works.

SHAMANS AND THE SEARCH FOR IDENTITY

Shamanism—belief in ritual figures with healing powers and access to different worlds—has its Japanese origins in the sixth century in the sun goddess Amaterasu-omikami, and survives today in the form of *miko*, the shrine maidens who perform dances at Shinto shrines, and *itako,* female shamans said to be capable of communicating with the dead.[12] In the post-1980s bubble economy and the IT-centric society of the 1990s, when people were on the verge of losing their cultural roots as well as a sense of corporal reality, Mori and Naito appeared on the scene with performative works that suggest the possibilities of shamanic healing.

Mori, who began by studying fashion, launched her career as an artist in 1993. In staged photographs documenting fictional performances, she appears as a wide variety of characters, from a young girl dressed in anime-style costume to an alien from the future (no. 10), from a heavenly maiden to a shaman. Through these transformations, Mori steps out of the Japanese present and becomes an alien or a mythical outsider, and by playing the role of an other—immersed in cultural spaces but never completely belonging—she offers a prototype for understanding Japanese culture. *Star Doll (for Parkett No. 54)* (1998), for example, a small, editioned sculpture based on a figure modeled on the artist, is a kind of Barbie doll for the cyber age that both affirms the power of icons and makes a critique of their emptiness.

But in later works the artist began to withdraw her presence from her work, and she began to focus on the creation of sacred spaces. *Dream Temple* (1999, no. 11) is a futuristic version of a traditional place bestowed with ancient mystical, supernatural powers; the artist's body is absent from the installation, so that the people who enter the temple become the performers in a space where meditation or a contemporary spiritual experience might take place. In works such as *Kumano* (1998–99) and *Transcircle* (2004) she has continued her search for places that purify the spirit, using meticulous fabrications based on exhaustive research, including the work of religious scholars and archaeologists, to create sacred spaces for a science-fiction age. Mori's postcapitalist, high-tech exoticism and air of Eastern fantasy have captivated curators and audiences outside of Japan, who look on her works as healing—as sacred places filled with spiritual power, places and situations in which modern city-dwellers tired of rationality, competition, and information overload might be soothed—but to many Japanese viewers, accustomed to the rich visual images of their own subcultures, they come across as banal. Thus Mori's proposal for various reactions to images or spaces associated with the transcendental or the spiritual is thrown into relief by the differences in the understanding and interpretation of other cultures.

Naito's objectives are similar to Mori's in these later works, but Naito's approach is more internal and fetishistic. From the very beginning she has eschewed any personal presence in her work, directing her focus instead toward the creation of sacred spaces through delicate and painstaking work. Her best-known installation, *One Place on the Earth* (1991, no. 12), is a large, tentlike structure with soft flannel fabric covering the floor, inside of which she has arranged objects made of bamboo sticks, glass, clay, and thread into tiny shrines or offerings, which are delicate enough that the action of people walking by causes them to tremble. The result is a rigorous constellation that heightens a viewer's awareness of space, with the disparity of sizes and faintest movements of the objects inside. Only one person is allowed to enter at a time, and the delicacy of the work and the tense atmosphere of the space often cause viewers to hold their breath as they pass between and view the objects; after each viewer has left, Naito makes sure that none of the objects have been disturbed and returns any that have to their original position.

Her drawings, such as *namenlos/Licht* (Anonymous/light) (1999), mostly take the form of faint traces of things, with surfaces resembling what one imagines a photograph of a spirit might look like: a mysterious surface tension derived from a balance of evanescence and strength of will, together forming a backdrop for meticulous repetition. The artist's painstaking effort and introspective nature create works of an ascetic, monklike character, which can be more meaningfully interpreted in the context of natural settings that are treated as sacred ground. Viewers entering one of her works are asked to follow the same etiquette required for a shrine, and Naito's role becomes that of a presiding *miko* in disparate spaces

9. **Mako Idemitsu** (Japanese, born 1940). *Another Day of a Housewife.* 1977–78. Video (color, sound), 18 min. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of the artist

10. Mariko Mori (Japanese, born 1967). *Last Departure*. 1996. Color photograph mounted on aluminum, 7 x 12' (213.4 x 365.8 cm)

Opposite:
11. Mariko Mori (Japanese, born 1967). *Dream Temple*. 1997–99. Metal, glass, salt, plastic, audio, and VisionDome (3-D hemispherical display), 16' 6" (5 m) x 32' 9 9/16" (10 m) diam. Edition: 2 plus 1 artist's proof. Courtesy Fondazione Prada

12. Rei Naito (Japanese, born 1961). *One Place on the Earth* (installation view). 1991. Mixed media installation, 49' 2 5/8" x 18' 1/2" x 8' 6 3/8" (15 x 5.5 x 2.6 m). Collection the artist

that both frustrate and conceal visual desire, functioning phenomenologically to engender a heightened state of appreciation or contemplation in the gap between such desire and the installation's modesty—a typically Japanese state of embodied knowledge.[13]

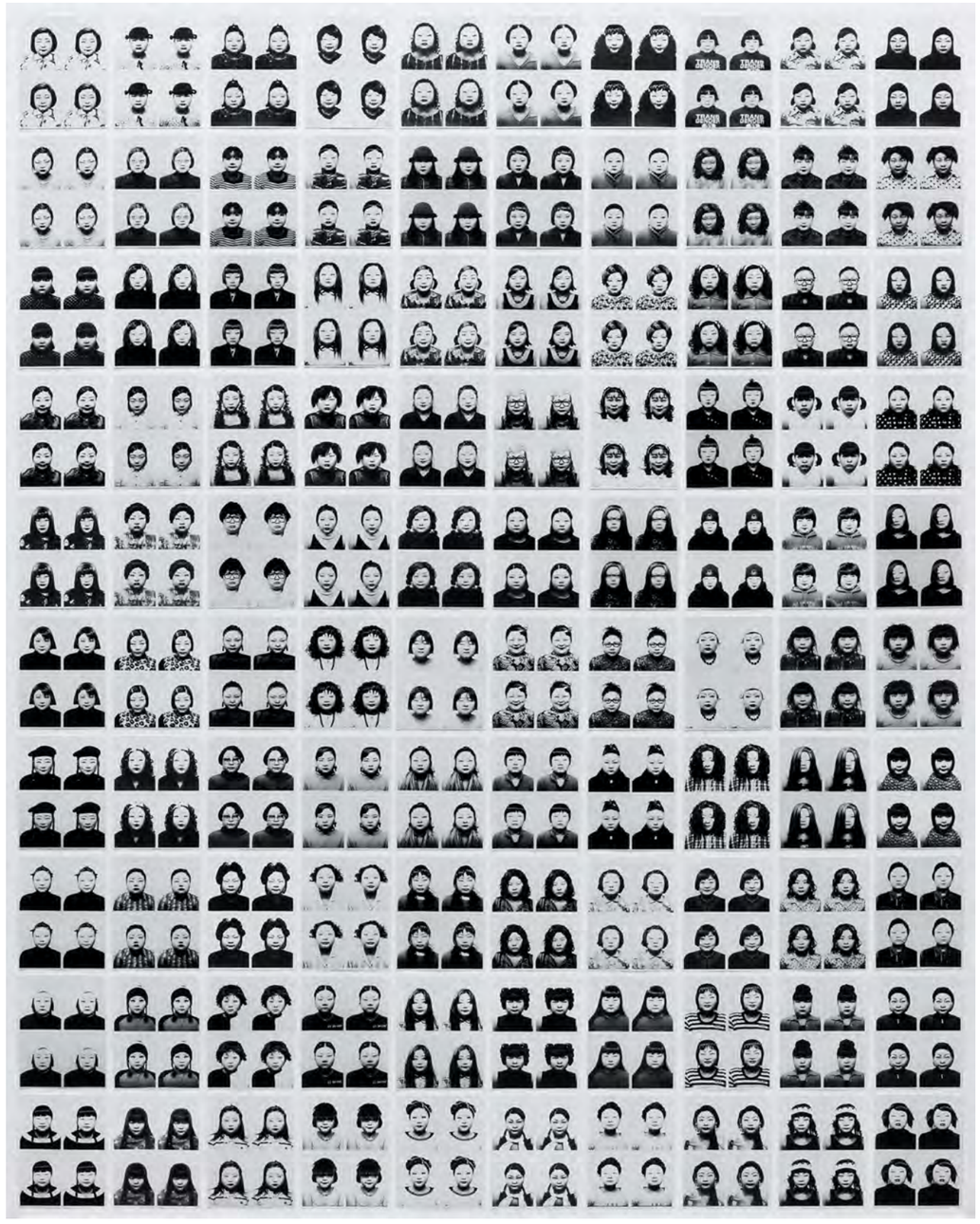
In Sawada's photographic self-portraits the artist is transformed into various types of Japanese woman; to change her body she not only uses everyday cosmetics and costumes but also changes her body by dieting or overeating. The desire to change one's appearance usually arises from some form of psychological complex, but in Sawada's works the changes are merely role-playing. The artist's facial features remain the same from work to work, since she does not use prosthetic makeup or computers, yet the results are all so individual it is hard to believe the photographs depict the same person. She does not play these roles like an actress but rather absorbs visual information about them, looking at different kinds of images (ID photos, storefront photos for hostess bars, commemorative photos, and formal photos such as those designed to be shown to prospective marriage partners); making a semiological study of the gestures, gazes, and formats typical of each, according to their social function and purpose; and then in her own version, as in *ID400 #101-200* (1998–2001, no. 13), imposing her own presence on the photo's surface. The source photos are different from everyday snapshots; they are functional, designed for a social role or activity, and are symptomatic of the anxiety, pervasive in twenty-first-century Japan, associated with not being connected by mobile phone or other technology. This anxiety, together with new technologies and such phenomena as an increase in cases of multiple-personality disorder, indicates the widespread nature of the search for the self and concomitant fear of self-obliteration. Within this frantic search Sawada exists everywhere and nowhere. Kusama, in a similar vein, seeks to obliterate herself—to dissipate and exist everywhere, but in Sawada's approach there is no yearning for totality, only an awareness of and desire for a fragmentary existence.

In the 1960s performance art was a means of shocking audiences into reconsidering the relationship between art and life. Today, as a result of advances in photography and video, almost everything can be performed—everyday actions, appearance, mannerisms, and dress have all acquired performative value. Our bodies can be thought of as constantly performing, and this performance is constantly subjected to social, symbolic, and figurative interpretation. And, paradoxically, the greatest possible

sense of corporeality may be achieved by avoiding any manifestation of the body whatsoever; by controlling or avoiding the body's powers of expression we may be able to communicate more effectively the expression inside us that cannot be symbolized.

The artists discussed in this essay represent only a small proportion of Japanese female artists. In the 1950s and '60s these artists included others who, like Tanaka and Kusama, turned their bodies into icons or substitutes for manifestos, or moved into painting by way of their performance work. They also included some who, like the Fluxus artists, sought to gently control others through the use of instructions, or who crossed artistic mediums with a complex mixture of text, sound, actions, and visuals. In the 1990s they included artists who groped for symbolic identity and a phenomenological place of one's own through performances, often accompanied by mysterious others in the form of shamans or aliens who seduce, provoke, and heal audiences.

All these works depend upon the relationship between intuition and action; the presence of iconic corporeality; indirect involvement with and control of others; seduction into myth and narrative through the symbolic and phenomenological potential of the body; and self-dissolution into social symbols. The body appears, then disappears. At times the self-effacing communication style approaches a quiet, invisible form of control; at others it is the backdrop for subcultural transformation. The work of the artists discussed here shares a strong relationship between performativity and the desire for communication; it evinces the diversity of the expressive powers, both symbolic and nonsymbolic, of bodily performance, clearly demonstrated in the concept of embodied knowledge: the marriage of the body and the intellect, the body as a pathway to the spiritual, and the linking of traditional aesthetics to Minimalist methods and brief instructions to others. Their fertile bodily language, complex symbolic potential, and richly interpretive works all combine to give the artists a sure footing in the art world.



13. Tomoko Sawada (Japanese, born 1977). *ID400 #101–200.* 1998–2001. One hundred gelatin silver prints, overall 46 3/4 x 36 3/4" (118.7 x 93.3 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired through the generosity of Marian and James Cohen, in memory of their son Michael Harrison Cohen

1. A thorough book about the performance work of Yayoi Kusama, Yoko Ono, Mieko Shiomi, and Shigeko Kubota, especially during their sojourns in the United States, is Midori Yoshimoto, *Into Performance: Japanese Women Artists in New York* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2005). On Atsuko Tanaka, see Mizuho Kato and Ming Tiampo, *Electrifying Art: Atsuko Tanaka, 1954–1968* (Vancouver: Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery; New York: Gray Art Gallery, 2004).
2. On performativity, see Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990).
3. This notion is based on the Buddhist idea of impermanence, one of the three essential doctrines of Buddhism, meaning that all formations are impermanent and exist only through karma. See Bernard Faure, *Unmasking Buddhism* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009); and Patrul Rinpoche, *Words of My Perfect Teacher*, rev. ed. (Boston: Shambhala, 1998).
4. Jiro Yoshihara, "Gutai bijutsu sengen (The Gutai manifesto)," *Geijutsu shincho* 7, no. 12 (1956): 202–4.
5. Françoise Levaillant, "Au Japon dans les années 50: Les Costumes électriques de Tanaka Atsuko," in *Atsuko Tanaka: Search for an Unknown Aesthetic, 1954–2000*, trans. Kazuko Togo and Mizuho Kato (Ashiya: Ashiya City Museum of Art & History; Shizuoka: Shizuoka Prefectural Museum of Art, 2001), p. 31.
6. Robert Storr, "Dizzy Spells," in *De-genderism: Détruire dit-elle/il* (Tokyo: Setagaya Art Museum, 1997), p. 9. Storr goes on to say, "The myriad phalluses and dot fields that Kusama afterwards devoted herself may seem antic or cheerful by contrast but the terrible emptiness they attempt to fill wins out in the end."
7. Lynn Zelevansky, "Driving Image: Yayoi Kusama in New York," in *Love Forever: Yayoi Kusama 1958–1968* (Kyoto: Tankosha, 1999), p. 24.
8. Shinichi Nakazawa, "Jōdō no shokubutsu (Les Végétaux affectives)," in *Kusama Yayoi* (Kitakyushu: Kitakyushu Municipal Museum of Art, 1987), pp. 14–15.
9. Mieko Shiomi, *Furukusasu towa nanika: Nichijō to ōto o musubitsuketa hitobito* (Tokyo: Firumuátosha, 2005), pp. 18–20.
10. Ibid., p. 75.
11. See Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *L'Anti-Oedipe* (Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1972); translated in Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), and *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987).
12. Shamanism is touched on in Japan's oldest chronicle, the *Kojiki*, which was written sometime before the early sixth century.
13. In Japan there is an aesthetic known as *hisureba hana* (hidden flower), which refers to something that makes the viewer aware of a definite presence but that is not presented this clearly or actively steers viewers away from it, thus putting the viewer in a heightened state of appreciation or contemplation. "Hisureba hana, hisezuba hana naru bekarazau" (If it is hidden, it is the flower; if it is not hidden, it is not the flower) is a quote from *Fushi kaden*, the major theoretical work by Zeami Motokiyo, the actor and playwright credited with perfecting Noh. If a performer unintentionally gives rise to something unexpected, the audience is moved. The flower is a metaphor for something delightful that stirs the emotions. On Noh theater, see Kunio Komparu, *Noh Theater: Principles and Perspectives*, trans. Jane Corddry and Stephen B. Comee (Warren, Conn.: Floating World Editions, 2006).

1. Laurie Anderson (American, born 1947). *O Superman*. 1983. Video (color, sound), 8 min. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Warner Bros. Records

During the late 1960s, in the spirit of counterculture and revolution, artists took up the new portable video camera, with its grainy black-and-white images and crudest of editing systems. The medium had previously been the domain of commercial television, with hefty cameras locked onto enormous tripods in broadcast studios, but now women artists flocked to this wide-open field, attracted to its clean slate and lack of old-boys network. Merging a strong sense of independence with this recently accessible medium, they experimented with time-based (and therefore intangible and difficult to collect) art, in a seat-of-the-pants style well suited to the artist-run, rough-and-ready venues sprouting up everywhere.

Viewers became participants, engaging in a more active relationship with image and sound. Video offered a more immediate form of expression, with inexpensive distribution possibilities that echoed the "spreading the word" also essential to feminism's forward momentum. With these new tools, women artists investigated their identities, defying the romantic notions of beauty disseminated by advertising and the consort roles offered by movies and soap operas, in interdisciplinary projects, characterized by vitality and candor, that formed alternatives to and a critique of male-dominated modes of art production. As the categories of Miss and Mrs. were torn apart, so were those of traditional art practice, reception, and circulation.

The first exhibition at The Museum of Modern Art to feature the era's new electronic mediums was *The Machine as Seen at the End of the Mechanical Age* in 1968, organized by Pontus Hultén.[1] The show opened with drawings of Leonardo da Vinci's flying machines and included works up through the present. Hultén invited the group Experiments in Art and Technology (EAT), which had been launched the previous year by engineers Billy Klüver and Fred Waldhauer and artists Robert Rauschenberg and Robert Whitman with the mandate of establishing better relationships among interdisciplinary artists with a scientific bent, to help select contemporary works. EAT arranged a competition, and out of two hundred submissions Hultén selected nine computer experiments, including a kinetic sculpture by Lillian Schwartz, a computer artist who also made short experimental films and videos. *Proxima Centauri* (1968), Schwartz's collaboration with Bell Laboratories engineer Per Biorn, was a highly polished black box that opened to reveal a translucent glass dome emitting an astrophysical glow, activated by viewers standing on pressure-sensitive pads installed under a carpet.

Video gained a forum in 1971, when the Museum launched its Projects series in order to adapt to the expanding practice of site-specific installations. One of the first, Eleanor Antin's mail-art narrative *100 Boots* (1971–73) chronicled an army of galoshes marching across the United States, storming New York, and finally invading the Projects galleries.[2]

My own work with video and intermedia—a concept developed in the mid-1960s by Fluxus artist Dick Higgins and Hans Breder to describe the often confusing activities that occur between genres—began in the early 1970s, when as a young curator in the Department of Prints and Illustrated Books I became absorbed in how artists stretched and manipulated time, that most elusive of materials.[3] In 1971, for example, to inaugurate Ileana Sonnabend's SoHo gallery, the living sculptures Gilbert & George—dressed in tweed suits, their skin covered with gold powder—stood for weeks on a table and sang "Underneath the Arches," in a nonstop looped action that managed to emulate both robotic mechanization and over-the-top grandeur.

My interests settled on cutting-edge mediums, and on how artists harnessed new technology in a world where that technology was perpetually shifting. I sought out independent voices, looking for work that expanded boundaries. In nosing around makeshift venues (such as the Kitchen and 112 Greene Street) and talking with artists (such as Antin, Beryl Korot, and Hermine Freed), I discovered a dynamic counterculture, the offspring of the Beats and Woodstock, flourishing in Manhattan's desolate SoHo neighborhood and in rural communes in upstate New York (such as Lanesville TV, in Lanesville, and Experimental Television Center, in Owego), operating on the fringes of the art world, with its prevailing modes of Conceptual and Minimal art. With other like-minded souls I climbed dank staircases and congregated in dusty lofts for impromptu screenings of black-and-white videos and for interdisciplinary performative experiments that stretched into the night. Process took precedence over saleable product, and information from the hardcore reached out-of-the-way artists through publications such as *Radical Software* (founded by Korot, Phyllis Gershuny, Ira Schneider, and Frank Gillette), a theory and grassroots how-to magazine; and *Avalanche* (founded by Liza Bear and Willoughby Sharp), an in-depth interview magazine that captured the grit of downtown New York.

At MoMA's Open Circuits conference in 1974, I observed practitioners of expanded cinema from around the world argue about the distinctions between video and film, with the former represented by such upstarts as Nam June Paik, Shigeko Kubota, and Woody and Steina Vasulka, and the latter including the veterans Shirley Clarke and Jonas Mekas, who had bucked the Hollywood system in the 1950s, along with Maya Deren and John Cassavetes. Clarke went on to found the Filmmakers Cooperative with Mekas in 1962, joined by Stan VanDerBeek, Robert Breer, Michael Snow, and others.[4] These moving image practitioners spoke different languages: video's nascent critical discourse was rooted in the visual arts, with essays in *Studio International* and *Arts Magazine*, and experimental film's in the more established film theory exemplified by such journals as *Cahiers du cinéma*, founded in 1951. The fundamentals of expanded cinema (an expedient generic term for radical experimentation with the moving image) included intermedia techniques, participation from the audience, and the destruction and abstraction of imagery and film projection, all used toward decoding reality as it was manipulated in commercial film and toward breaking out of film's two-dimensionality by transporting the cinematographic apparatus into an installation of time and space. This, it was thought, would lead to the opening of our usual patterns of perception and representation; otherwise we were limited in our ability to tell the difference between natural and artificial images, as well as in our conception of truth and reality.[5]

These fundamentals were manifest in the work of the audaciously spirited Clarke, a modern dancer long before she became passionate about video, which she felt shared the spontaneity of dance; her early videos explored the process of their own making, and were about instantaneous image and live, two-way communication among participants. In 1974 I visited the Video Teepee, her rooftop studio at the Hotel Chelsea, where she taught workshops, setting up multiple cameras and monitors on the roof and in stairwells, and where other Hotel Chelsea dwellers, including Viva and Agnès Varda, would drift by. I met Clarke's lively followers, including a socially engaged collective, the Videofreeks, who explored public-access cable, using live phone-ins to create two-way, interactive cablecasting and transmit whatever was on their minds at the time.

Several months later I made my first curatorial research trip abroad. At *Projekt '74*, an exhibition of video installations organized by the Kölnischer Kunstverein, I witnessed VALIE EXPORT, who had been the only woman to participate in the visceral events staged by the Vienna Actionists, create a new work, *Space Seeing—Space Hearing* (1973–74, no. 2), on the eve of the opening. Although she worked very much in the make-it-on-the-spot spirit that was the norm, she carried out her project with extreme precision, standing motionless in an empty gallery, resolutely facing four video cameras set at different distances. The live images were cycled onto an adjacent monitor using carefully scripted switching and split-screen effects, all synchronized with audio composed from four synthesizer tones, so that her impassive body made a sharp contrast with her aggressively in-motion, on-screen self.

Space Seeing—Space Hearing, with its paradox of physical stasis and electronically generated motion, can be seen as part of EXPORT's uncompromising investigation into the social position and physical being of women—like her pseudonym, adopted in 1967 in light of her refusal to cater to a "system that is defined by the masculine"—an aesthetic, social, and political act.[6] She began her experiments with film in 1969, mixing different colored liquids on a mirror and projecting the reflections as abstract swirls. These erratic, "live" projected shapes, rather than recorded (and thus mediated) celluloid images, formed her reality. In the early 1970s she carried out a series of hard-hitting performances that tested her physical limits and questioned physical and mental identity in a feminist critique that she called Media Aktionism, as in *Hyperbulie* (1973, no. 3), in which she navigated, nude for the most part and often crawling on her hands and knees, the narrow passage of an electrified metal fence, receiving a formidable jolt every time she inadvertently brushed against the edge. One of her goals in performance

2. VALIE EXPORT (Austrian, born 1940). *Space Seeing—Space Hearing*. 1973–74. Video (black and white, sound), 6:19 min. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchase

was to separate the female body from eroticism: "I felt it was important to use the female body to create art. I knew that if I did it naked, I would really change how the (mostly male) audience would look at me. There would be no pornographic or erotic/sexual desire involved—so there would be a contradiction."[7] EXPORT directed video documents of her early actions, which were performed live several times for an audience and then never again. The videos captured the durational aspects of her actions more accurately than photography could.

In 1974 I helped launch MoMA's ongoing video-exhibition program under the umbrella of the Projects series, and among the first works I featured were several early black-and-white videos documenting actions by Rebecca Horn, Friederike Pezold, and Gilbert & George. These early exhibitions shared a gallery with an old technological favorite, Thomas Wilfred's *Lumia Suite, Opus 158* (1963)—with one work showing in the morning and the other in the afternoon. Together with MoMA's projectionists, I learned how to open playback decks and unstick jammed cassettes.

By then playback equipment had become relatively simple to use; three-quarter-inch cassettes were easy to distribute; and in due course portable video cameras, although still hefty, were able to record in color. Emerging video artists, wanting their work to reach the widest possible audience, sold their tapes to universities, libraries, and museums in unlimited editions at modest prices. MoMA began acquiring artists' videos in 1975, after seriously considering the responsibilities entailed in video preservation.[8] Our original video advisory committee members included the innately inquisitive and supportive trustee Blanchette Rockefeller; I remember her at a reception, sitting on a bench next to Bill Viola, thoughtfully asking him to please explain his video work, which he eloquently did. Video was the first new medium to be added to MoMA's collection program in more than forty years; among the first works acquired were *Now* (1973), by Lynda Benglis, and *Vertical Roll* (1973), by Joan Jonas.

Originally associated with Minimalist artists, Jonas began by making sculpture before moving on to dance and video. What attracted her to performance was the possibility of mixing sound, movement, and image into a complex composition; she felt she wasn't good at making a single, simple statement, like a sculpture:

> I brought to performance my experience of looking at the illusionistic space of painting and of walking around sculptures and architectural spaces. I was barely *in* my early performance pieces; I was in them like a piece of material or an object that moved very stiffly, like a puppet or a figure in a medieval painting. I didn't exist as Joan Jonas, as an individual "I," only as a presence, part of the picture. I moved rather mechanically. In the mirror costumes in *Wind* [her first film, of 1968] and *Oad Lau* [her first "action"], we walked very softly with our arms at our sides as in a ritual. We moved across the space, in the background, from side to side. When I was in other "Mirror Pieces" a little later, I just lay on the floor and I was carried around like a piece of glass.[9]

3. VALIE EXPORT (Austrian, born 1940). *Hyperbulie.* 1973. Video (black and white, sound), 6:31 min. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchase

Jonas was greatly influenced by Jack Smith's midnight events in his SoHo loft, at which he would mill around, pass out joints, and assemble a costume from heaps of clothes piled up on the floor, vamping in different personas. No one could quite distinguish, during those protracted evenings, between his life and art, where one ended and the other began; the time-based works by Smith, and by others, were excruciatingly long, and it was not uncommon for viewers to doze off, or go out for a short walk and then return. This elongated sense of time reinforced an impression that Noh theater had made on Jonas on a trip to Japan in 1970, and she subsequently developed for her own performances an alter ego called Organic Honey (from a label in her kitchen), whom she imagined as an electronic sorceress, a conjuror of images (no. 4).

These images began as reflections in mirrors, with Jonas studying her own face or parts of her body in a detached manner. When she added video to the performance, a live camera linked to monitors provided greater control and revealed hidden details, with a continuous series of shots explicitly choreographed for the camera and close-up details of the live action fed to monitors arrayed on stage. *Vertical Roll* was a performance that later became a single-channel videotape, but both versions take advantage of early video's specific qualities: the granular black-and-white image; the flat, shallow depth of field; the moving bar of the vertical roll (a flaw that vanished with digital TV sets); and video's live, simultaneous image. In the video version, the vertically rolling close-ups of Jonas's face and sensual satin dress move in counterpoint to the brash clang of a spoon hitting wood, creating a feeling of discontinuity that remains a key preoccupation in her work to this day.

In her next performance, *Twilight* (1975), Jonas gradually and impassively removed her clothes and, holding a small mirror, slowly scrutinized her body—a boldly transgressive act. At the work's first performance, at the Anthology Film Archives, Jonas varied her use of the theater's projection screen, rhythmically playing it the way percussionists play drums: as a conventional screen, depicting images of erupting volcanoes; as a scrim, with shadows cast from the action behind it; as an opaque wall, bathed in white light; as a vertical, rather than horizontal, field.

Twilight evolved into *Mirage* (1976/2003, no. 5), the last in a series of performances that deal with simultaneity, featuring multiples of the artist—the real version, on stage; the live video version, shown on one monitor; and different prerecorded actions, shown on another monitor and also projected on the screen. One prerecorded video, made as a kind of diary, showed a sleepy and disheveled Jonas facing a camera to say "good night" and "good morning" every day for a year; onstage the artist quickly drew sketches of the sun and moon, depicting a constant flow of night into morning into night. *Mirage* later became a fixed installation in MoMA's collection; viewers walk around the gallery, discovering connections between six videos and a series of props (a Mexican mask, ten-foot-long aluminum cones), which are dramatically lit and placed to evoke the original stage.

In 1975 I met Anna Bella Geiger, who arrived from Rio de Janeiro with a series of new etchings and videos. Geiger belonged to the postwar generation that came of age as Brazil exploded with political and economic ambitions. She was barely twenty at the time of the first São Paulo Bienal, concurrent with the founding of Rio

4. **Joan Jonas** (American, born 1936). *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy.* 1972. Video (black and white, sound), 23 min. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of The Florsheim Foundation, Joanne Stern and Barbara Pine

5. **Joan Jonas** (American, born 1936). *Mirage.* 1976/2003. Six videos (black and white, sound and silent), props, stages, photographs, duration variable. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Richard J. Massey, Clarissa Alcock Bronfman, Agnes Gund, and Committee on Media Funds

de Janeiro's Museu de Arte Moderna in 1954, and as the 1950s advanced, so did the bold enterprises of a small group of Brazilian artists and intellectuals. Critic Mário Pedrosa spotted Geiger, along with Lygia Clark and Hélio Oiticica, who were laying out new ideas about art.[10] They all endured considerable hardship, in particular after the military coup in 1964, which sharpened their resistance to conventional forms in what Paulo Herkenhoff has called a language of "refined politicization."[11] Between 1970 and 1973, together with the critic Frederico Morais, she taught a series of classes at the Museu de Arte Moderna, and it was in this environment that Cildo Meireles and other artists of his generation began their work with intermedia.

MoMA exhibited and acquired two of Geiger's videos, *Passagens #1* (Passages #1) (1974) and *Mapas elementares 3* (Elementary maps 3) (1976, no. 6). *Passagens #1* shows a woman's legs, with her skirt's hem swishing above high heels, as she slowly and despondently climbs a series of staircases. She begins indoors in a three-story Art Deco–style building, gradually ascending, her tired steps moving in real time. Next she climbs a crumbling outdoor staircase on a building in Rio close to the small house where the artist's parents lived after they arrived from Poland in the 1920s. The woman's tense and labored moves bear the heaviness of life during the 1960s and '70s.[12] In *Mapas elementares 3*, to the accompaniment of a version of the Argentinean bolero *La virgen negra* (The black virgin) that Geiger found in a junk shop, a woman quickly draws four maps and writes a word or phrase beneath each: *amuleto* (amulet or good luck charm), *a mulata* (mulatto or biracial woman), *a muleta* (crutch), and *America Latina*. The four maps are anamorphic impressions of the phonetically similar words, as well as allusions to Latin American stereotypes of race, class, and culture.[13] Geiger's warily incriminating videos parallel the suppressed ferocity in the work of Chilean artists such as Lotty Rosenfeld, the CAZA group, and Catalina Parra, all of whom made performative video work later shown at and collected by MoMA.

6. **Anna Bella Geiger** (Brazilian, born 1933). *Mapas elementares 3* (Elementary maps 3) 1976. Video (black and white, sound), 12 min. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchase

Art tourism around this time was flourishing, with video-art festivals springing up all over the world, in Los Angeles, Tokyo, Locarno, Montbéliard, and eventually São Paulo. I made regular stops at these lively video festivals, and looking back I realize that these were early hints of the globalization of contemporary art.

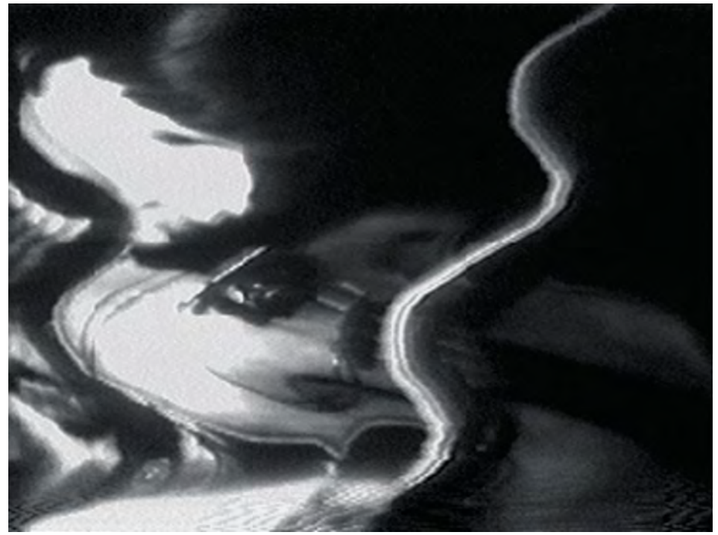
Toward the end of the 1970s early video's revolutionary newness was petering out, and the equipment and technology were changing. Graininess gave way to clarity, and editing became more precise. At MoMA we were trying to document the medium's early steps, and to do so we needed the direct participation of the artists. A grant from the Rockefeller Foundation facilitated the launch in 1978 of Video Viewpoints, a forum for artists to talk about and show their work. It quickly became a regular Monday-evening forum with an audience of about fifty, including artists, MoMA members, and other interested souls.

It was initially held in the Founders Room, the trustees' cathedrallike meeting space on the Museum's sixth floor. Working without the aesthetics of abundance, we would unplug our unwieldy three-quarter-inch cassette playback deck and two monitors in the video gallery and drag the equipment upstairs, where we would set up seats. Each artist had his or her way of arranging the room, from a basic setup for the straightforward display of tapes and slides to the re-creation of an installation. We were aware that we were inventing a new tradition, and every effort was made to be catholic in our selection of artists. Artists, for their part, were conscious of now being inside the institution, and took their presentations seriously.

Steina Vasulka—an artist, musician, programmer, and technical innovator—was our first Video Viewpoints speaker.[14] For her MoMA presentation we lugged battered sculpture pedestals up to the Founders Room and set extra monitors around to re-create the anarchic spirit of the original Kitchen, the late-1960s video hub in the basement of the Mercer Art Center. The program attracted a hands-on, technical art crowd, who eagerly gathered around Vasulka and a pile of monitors showing how she experimented with the camera as an autonomous imaging instrument, layering multiple real-time images of herself bowing a violin (no. 7).

Other artists in the series discussed their different ways of using the same tools. Mary Lucier had worked with lasers, aiming her camera at the intense light, deliberately burning thin lines into her camera's light-sensitive picture tube. At MoMA in 1979 she re-created her seven-monitor installation *Dawn Burn* (1975), which depicts seven successive sunrises across New York's East River. With each sunrise the light exceeded her camera's maximum allowed intensity, and each day a new scar was added to the previous ones. In 1980 Kubota joined us at Video Viewpoints to discuss her sculptural practice. Surrounded by images of her video sculptures, including *Duchampiana: Nude Descending a Staircase* (1976), with its brash electronic color on monitor screens embedded in its plywood risers, she talked about the harmonious coexistence of the natural and the synthetic.

In 1984 Laurie Anderson came to speak about how her art practice unfolded in tandem with technology. A classically trained violinist, she developed a series of performance films in which she played the violin at the beginning and end of each screening.[15] By the mid-1970s her media-enhanced performance had become more polished, incorporating slides, film, violin-playing, and prerecorded and live stories.



7. **Steina Vasulka** (Icelandic, born 1940). *Violin Power*. 1970–78. Video (black and white, sound), 10:04 min. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired through the generosity of Barbara Sahlman

8. Laurie Anderson (American, born 1947). *Self-Playing Violin*. 1974. Modified violin with built-in speaker and amplifier (sound), 23 x 10 x 4 1/2" (58.4 x 25.4 x 11.4 cm), 31 min. loop. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Agnes Gund & Daniel Shapiro and the Rockefeller Foundation

Anderson made use of readily available and modifiable technology to facilitate the process of storytelling and activate different levels of creativity. Her *Self-Playing Violin* (1974, no. 8), for example, with a tiny speaker concealed inside, makes its own autonomous sounds. In the late 1970s she used the Harmonizer, a device that lowers or raises the pitch of the voice, to create characters for her stories, including an authoritarian male and a two-hundred-pound baby. In 1978 I organized a Projects exhibition with Anderson, which contained *Handphone Table* (1978), an ordinary-looking plywood table and pair of stools accompanied by a blurred photograph of two people seated with their heads in their hands, a posture that viewers found themselves instinctively imitating. When they did so, the artist's voice—saying, "Now I in you without a body move," a line from George Herbert, a seventeenth-century metaphysical poet—came through their hands as if entering their consciousness.[16] This was accomplished by a speaker and driver, concealed in the table, that transmitted sound vibrations through solid material, in this case through bones rather than air.

As synthesizers and electronic keyboards became routine in the art and music worlds, Anderson followed her interests and made the logical next step. Armed with a Warner Records contract, she made her first music video, *O Superman* (1983, no. 1), with multimedia artist and animator Perry Hoberman as the video's artistic director. Made for the small scale of the television screen, the video concentrates on close-up shots of Anderson and exaggerated versions of her onstage activities—silhouettes of her shadow-puppet hands, her glowing face illuminated by a tiny pillow speaker placed inside her mouth and emanating a prerecorded violin solo that she modulated with her lips.

Early video artists had little to do with television—although a few, such as Emily Armstrong and Pat Ivers, took advantage of the laissez-faire attitude of public-access television and hosted late-night programs—until the arrival of MTV in 1981. The generation of artists that came of age in that decade considered television one of the roots of video art, and some put broadcast programs under the microscope for formal analysis. In *Technology/Transformation: Wonder Woman* (1978–79, no. 9), Dara Birnbaum pointed her camera at the television and deconstructed the popular show *Wonder Woman*, revealing it as a male invention, with a businesslike heroine becoming a scantily clad superhero as a chorus sings, "Shake thy wonder maker." Birnbaum designed her 1981 Video Viewpoints program notes with stills and pull quotes that echoed her work's critique of the power of mass media images, and the result, with its slogans and bold style, had an affinity with the work of Barbara Kruger and Jenny Holzer.

Mako Idemitsu came from Japan in 1986 to discuss her Great Mother series, which scrutinizes the emotional interactions of mothers and children, revealing the underlying volatility of seemingly placid households. The videos take place in claustrophobic rooms of ordinary urban homes, each one with a prominently placed television set; its screen, displaying close-up shots of various family members, is a window into the characters' minds. In *HIDEO, It's Me Mama* (1983, no. 10) a son away at college is shown only on the television set on his mother's kitchen table. Both go about their daily lives: he studies, listens to music on earphones; she putters in the kitchen, makes dinner for her husband. The mother puts the son's meals in front of the television, and he consumes them on screen. Idemitsu provides troubling observations—never solutions—about family discord, exposing the constraints of social conventions and the conflicts caused by living in a hybrid of Japanese and Western cultures.

I first met Idemitsu in 1978, when, with a grant from electronics manufacturer Matsushita (now Panasonic), I went to Japan. On that trip I encountered a disparate group of lively artists who had all turned to video from other mediums—experimental film, music, sculpture,

9. Dara Birnbaum (American, born 1946). *Technology/ Transformation: Wonder Woman.* 1978–79. Video (color, sound), 5:50 min. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Committee on Media Funds

10. Mako Idemitsu (Japanese, born 1940). *HIDEO, It's Me Mama.* 1983. Video (color, sound), 26:49 min. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired through the generosity of Margot and John Ernst

printmaking, and computer graphics—and were finding their own way, experimenting on the fringes of a staunchly entrenched hierarchical society. The trip turned into the exhibition *Video from Tokyo to Fukui and Kyoto* in 1979, and included one of Idemitsu's early videos. In her Video Viewpoints talk she elaborated on the way Japanese media artists approached video, according the medium a certain respect, which gave their work a certain formality and self-consciousness. She herself was interested in observation, using video to record the daily routines of women, "to deal with the daily life of women, which also included non-routines. In this way video became a medium I used to explore women's conscious and unconscious behavior."[17]

In 1984 I went to Amsterdam to see *Het lumineuze Beeld/The Luminous Image* at Amsterdam's Stedelijk Museum, an exhibition featuring twenty-two new installations by artists engaged with media. While there I talked extensively with Marina Abramović, and as a result she came to speak at Video Viewpoints in 1985. She spoke about her practice as a performance artist, both working alone and in her twelve-year collaboration with Ulay; her exploration of the limits of the body, ego, and artistic identity; and the limitations of early portable video cameras:

> In the early '70s we really hated video. It was the worst thing that could happen to you. The bad image, the bad sound, everything was bad about it. It was limited to one hour and it was boring. So the video in those days we used only as a documentation record of our performance. We mostly asked the cameraman to put the camera on in one spot. . . . These videos are just like this . . . one image hardly using a zoom and never using a cut. . . . [After 1980] we didn't make any more videotapes, any more documentation of performance. We tried to document it, if we could on film, because the quality is much better and you can project the image from the floor up and you see the life-size body in the space.[18]

In 1983 Video Viewpoints moved into the comfortable 220-seat Titus Theater 2.[19] Here, with new equipment and a regular technical crew, we were poised to evolve with the medium. Younger artists attended the lectures; the artists presenting their work got to see their tapes on a big screen, shown by a state-of-the-art video projector that enlarged the image and made it frameless, like a landscape, but did not provide the same saturated color as a monitor. The theater's Dolby surround-sound—the best video sound system in town—mollified some of the more dubious presenters.

With the advances in home-computer technology, including advanced and readily accessible graphic and sound capabilities, the shift from analog to digital video took root. Most filmmakers still had no interest in abandoning film resolution and tactile editing processes until later in the 1990s, when video editing became more precise and portable at the same time that film-lab work became frightfully expensive. A crossover slowly took place. Leslie Thornton, in her 1990 Video Viewpoints presentation, discussed her approach to bridging cinema and video even as she embraced their complementary attributes. In *Peggy and Fred in Hell: The Prologue* (1985) she collaborated with two children, setting her video camera on a tripod in her basement, aiming the lens at the children, and leaving the room while they devised a make-believe narrative.

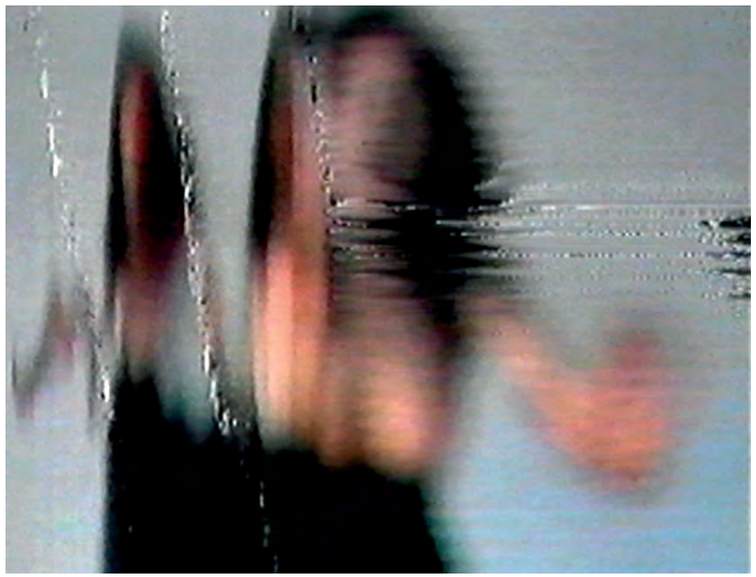
By the late 1980s computerized video-editing allowed artists to edit works frame by frame, as accurately as film, taking the medium into a controlled and polished realm far removed from the old rough-and-ready, shoot-from-the-hip aesthetic of the early days. The surge of program and advertising slots available on cable television resulted in a proliferation of commercial postproduction video studios in New York, many of them accessible to artists at reduced rates when they weren't being used by professionals. Other artists used completion funds from public television and foundation grants for postproduction, a critical and difficult-to-fund project phase. For some artists, such as Max Almy, high-end production values

were a way of making the transition into television and Hollywood.

This new high-tech ethos produced a backlash from younger artists, who saw rawness as an act of creative resistance. Many of these younger artists upheld a performative spirit reminiscent of video's beginnings; one such artist was Sadie Benning, Video Viewpoints' youngest speaker: a persistent loner who started making videos at age fifteen, using a toy black-and-white camcorder that recorded onto an audiocassette. In her 1991 lecture, delivered when she was eighteen, she discussed her tell-all autobiographical narratives, which had a refreshing feeling of moxie and candor.

I had met Pipilotti Rist in 1986, while I was on the jury for Bonn's Videonale festival, which awarded her first prize for *I'm Not the Girl Who Misses Much* (1986, no. 11). Rist, a member of the postpunk girl band and performance group Les Reines Prochaines, was inspired by Paik's hyperkinetic aesthetic; in her work she subverts the music-video format to explore the unruly female voice and body in popular cultural representations, merging rock music, electronic manipulation, and performance. She evokes the fiction of childhood with bold, contemporary colors—the vivid synthetic hues of photocopiers, tie-dyed T-shirts, and kitschy plastic jewelry—and distortions that play with scale to create a feeling of surprise, sensuality, and celebration. Rist is both serious and spirited, and honestly wants her work to make viewers feel good; her 1996 Video Viewpoints presentation captivated the audience with exuberant images.

Artists of Rist's generation, who came of age watching MTV, were very comfortable sampling art and popular culture and did not feel constrained by the usual categories of art and commerce. In the late 1990s this mix was visible in ad hoc screenings and installations in new galleries and spaces in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, and the Lower East Side, in work by artists such as Alix Pearlstein and Cheryl Donegan. In 1997, together with Sally Berger and Stephen Vitiello, I organized the exhibition *Young and Restless*, which gathered twenty-one witty and insightful



11. Pipilotti Rist (Swiss, born 1962). *I'm Not the Girl Who Misses Much*. 1986. Video (color, sound), 7:46 min. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired through the generosity of Kathryn R. O'Donnell

12. Kristin Lucas (American, born 1968). *Host*. 1997. Video (color, sound), 7:36 min. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Margot Ernst and Susan Jacoby

works that took a playful look at feminine social and sexual behavior. Concurrent with the exhibition, Kristin Lucas staged an action for Video Viewpoints in which, wearing a tiny camera attached to a pith helmet, she revealed the computer processor within her (a similar action unfolds in her video *Host* [1997, no. 12]).

Around this time the dot-com industry was growing very quickly, and some artists turned to the creation of Internet hubs. In 1997 I met with the nonprofit research and development group äda'web, which paired nonmedia artists with dot-com specialists and producers to experiment with and reflect on the Web; among the results was Holzer's *please change beliefs* (1995), a work that inhabited the landscape of the Internet in the same spirit as her public art projects. I had long been meaning to put my research on the Internet, and this informal conversation turned into Stir-Fry, a Web journal about my subsequent trip to China and the thirty-five artists I met there.[20]

Artists outside of North America and Europe had also been harnessing new technologies as they appeared, in what Mumbai-based artist Nalini Malani describes as a committed cross-national artists community.[21] Born in Pakistan in 1947, Malani grew up in India, where independent media activity began with the arrival of satellite and cable television in the 1980s. Against India's complex and turbulent backdrop, and with a sense of political urgency, Malani creates her distinctive installations. These weave together traditional and contemporary materials and storytelling methods in a dynamically layered, immersive environment. Violence—its presence and universality—is a constant factor. *Game Pieces* (2003/2009, no. 13) features enormous, rotating, translucent Lexan drums, on the interior of which are painted angelic figures and animals, familiar creatures from ancient stories and miniatures, whose purpose is to restore harmony in an embattled world, here floating on an ironic pretext of delicacy. Through these drums Malani projects video; its light illuminates the painted images and casts their shadows on the gallery walls, but its images—projected nuclear bomb explosions in vivid reds and yellows—also obliterate the painted creatures. As a result, the past collides within an ever-shifting present.

New technologies evolve at an accelerating pace. The latest tools trigger excitement and innovative experiments, but as artists gain control they move on to a dialogue with content rather than hardware or software. The Museum of Modern Art's media collection begins with a fertile moment in the late 1960s, with video classics

by distinguished artists whose pioneering work paved the way for subsequent boundary-breaking practices. The latest generation of media artists is poised to reinvent the avant-garde. Today artists use the latest gear as readily as they sip water. Hackers, programmers, and tinkerer-revisionists draw on local culture and international sources. Women are at the forefront of this new frontier, forging new ways of working in a setting that combines art, social causes, technology, and social networks. Breakthroughs appear out of the blue, changing everything in the uncontrollable, loosely defined field of media art, which crosses boundaries of every kind. As a custodian of this dynamic field, The Museum of Modern Art takes its stewardship seriously.

1. The exhibition had a catalogue with an embossed metal cover depicting MoMA's facade and dynamic street life. K. G. Pontus Hultén, *The Machine as Seen at the End of the Mechanical Age* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1968).
2. Projects came about after prolonged efforts by several curators in the Department of Painting and Sculpture, namely Kynaston McShine and Jennifer Licht. In early 1970 Licht organized two exhibitions that were early models for the series: *Robert Breer: The Osaka Sculpture* and Robert Irwin's *Room Work*. Licht's exhibition *Spaces*, with installations by Michael Asher, Larry Bell, Dan Flavin, Robert Morris, Pulsa, and Franz Erhard Walther, took place in early 1970. Licht and I together selected videos to accompany the 1973 loan exhibition *Some Recent American Art*, which traveled to Australia. This video selection recurred as *Projects: Video I* in 1974.
3. Dick Higgins, "Intermedia," *Something Else Newsletter*, 1966. In 1968 Hans Breder founded the first university program in the United States to offer a Master of Fine Arts in intermedia, at the University of Iowa, Iowa City.
4. The term "expanded cinema" was popularized by media theorist Gene Youngblood in his book *Expanded Cinema* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1970). This, the first book to consider video as an art form, was influential in establishing the field of media arts as a scholarly discipline. Youngblood argued that a new, expanded cinema is required for a new consciousness and described various types of filmmaking that utilized new technology, including special effects, computer art, video art, multimedia environments, and holography.
5. My thoughts on expanded cinema are indebted to VALIE EXPORT, "Expanded Cinema as Expanded Reality," lecture in "The Essential Frame: Austrian Independent Film, 1955–2003," London, May 31–June 1, 2003, archive.sensesofcinema.com/contents/03/28/expanded_cinema.html.
6. EXPORT, quoted in Sophie Delpeux, "VALIE EXPORT: Semper et Ubique/De-Defining Women," *Art Press*, September 2003, p. 36. On EXPORT's use of her body in video works, see Kristine Stiles, "CORPORA VILIA: VALIE EXPORT's Body," in Else Longhauser et al., *VALIE EXPORT: Ob/De+Con(Struction)* (Philadelphia: Moore College of Art and Design, 2000), p. 26.
7. EXPORT, in "Interview with Andrea Juno," in Juno and V. Vale, eds., *Angry Women* (San Francisco: Re/Search Publications, 1991), p. 187.
8. Many of the earliest master tapes sat in their moldy basements or hot attics, and as a result were gumming up, corroding, and flaking. From an archival standpoint it was clear that unless cultural institutions placed the work in climate-controlled storage facilities, this part of art history would slowly disintegrate and fade away. The Museum's registrar, the official keeper of records and storage locations, gave the newly acquired video sub-masters acquisition numbers, and the tapes were placed under archival conditions. A media acquisition can be thought of as a subscription: a long-term commitment to preserve the artwork in as close to the original form as possible, with eventual upgrading from its obsolete format to the next archival standard.
9. Joan Jonas, quoted in Joan Simon, "Scenes and Variations: An Interview with Joan Jonas," *Art in America* 83, no. 7 (July 1995): 75.
10. On Anna Bella Geiger's coming of age in Brazil, see Dore Ashton, "Anna Bella Geiger," *Review: Latin American Literature and Arts*, no. 48 (Spring 1994): 55; reprinted in *Anna Bella Geiger: Constelações* (Rio de Janeiro: Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro, 1996), p. 81.
11. Paulo Herkenhoff, quoted in Ashton, "Anna Bella Geiger," p. 81.
12. On *Passagens*, see Tadeu Chiarelli, "Fax para Anna Bella Geiger," in *O mundo talvez, olam ulay* (The world, perhaps) (Ipanema: Joel Edelstein Arte Contemporanea, 1995), pp. 6–7; excerpts reprinted in *Anna Bella Geiger: Constelações*, pp. 39–40, "Fax to Anna Bella Geiger," trans. Stephen Berg, p. 79.
13. On *Mapas elementares 3*, see Karin Stempel, "Anna Bella Geiger," in *Anna Bella Geiger: Arbeiten, 1975 bis 1995* (Herausgeber, Germany: Galerie Bernd Slutzky, 1996); excerpts reprinted in *Anna Bella Geiger: Constelações*, pp. 47–48, trans. Sylvia Frota, pp. 80–81.
14. Together with her partner, Woody Vasulka, Steina Vasulka made technological investigations into analog and digital processes; their development of electronic imaging tools place them as major architects of an expressive electronic vocabulary of image-making.
15. On the development of Laurie Anderson's style, see RoseLee Goldberg, *Laurie Anderson* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2000), p. 47.
16. For Anderson's description of *Handphone Table*, see Laurie Anderson, "Control Room and Other Stories: Confessions of a Content Provider," *Parkett*, no. 49 (May 1977): 132.
17. Mako Idemitsu, statement in Barbara London, ed., *Video from Tokyo to Fukui and Kyoto* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1979), p. 14.
18. Marina Abramović, untitled lecture, Video Viewpoints, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, January 7, 1985.
19. By this time video had become part of the Department of Film. As time-based mediums, film and video have similar storage and preservation issues.
20. "Stir-Fry: A Video Curator's Dispatches from China," adaweb.walkerart.org/context/stir-fry/.
21. Nalini Malani, quoted in London, "New Forms," in Gayarti Sinha and Paul Sternberger, *India: Public Places, Private Spaces: Contemporary Photography and Video Art* (Newark, N.J.: Newark Museum; Mumbai: Marg Publications, 2007), pp. 10–11.

13. **Nalini Malani**. (Indian, born Pakistan 1946). *Gamepieces*. 2003/2009. Four-channel video (color, sound), six rotating acrylic reverse-painted Lexan cylinders, 12 min. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of the Richard J. Massey Foundation for Arts and Sciences

CONTEMPORARY

"I repeat it, reexperience it, examine and analyze it, infuse myself with it until I have wrung it of personal meaning and significance."

At once rigorously conceptual and emotionally revealing, Adrian Piper's varied practice actively denies the distinction between thinking and feeling that has historically been used to separate men, who do the former, and women, who do the latter. Her earliest works are seemingly neutral explorations of form, but racism became her central, and most powerful, subject matter as the artist was increasingly motivated by her experience as a light-skinned African American woman. Although such material was emotionally and critically loaded, Piper treated it in the same manner as her earlier objects of study, subjecting sometimes painful experiences to rational analyses to reveal the thought structures and assumptions behind them.

Piper entered the School of Visual Arts in New York in 1966, and her subsequent exposure to contemporary art led her to radically reconsider her perspective: "I felt freed, not only from the technical and formal constraints of figurative art, but also from my preconceptions about what art had to be."[1] By 1967 Piper was creating her Drawings about Paper—highly complex compositions that bring together careful pencil shading and common materials like plastic sheet protectors and graph paper. The visual range of these works, despite their relatively limited means, is surprising, as is their focus on the physicality of the object, given the artist's reprioritizing of ideas over their real-space manifestations. In *Drawings about Paper #46* (1967, no. 1) a sheet of white notebook paper serves as support for a piece of brown paper and areas of graphite. The meticulous work is spatially ambiguous—we alternately discern three layered pieces of paper, their edges visible, or a single sheet curling upward. We are forced to consider two realities: that of the physical sheet of paper, flat and sheathed in plastic, and that of the three-dimensional realm we are led to perceive. Even in this early work, Piper analyzes one artistic method using another, employing a contemporary approach that is "purely conceptual in nature" to question a central characteristic of Western art since the Renaissance: perspectival space.[2]

In the late 1960s Piper began using her own body as material for her work. The photographic series *Food for the Spirit* (1971, page 489, nos. 10 and 11) comprises fourteen black-and-white self-portraits, shot in a mirror over the course of a summer spent studying Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781). While posing for the photographs, she repeated selected passages from the text and recorded herself doing so. "The sight and sound of me, the physically embodied Adrian Piper," she has explained, "reminded me of the material conditions of my mental state, that the *Critique* was a book with good ideas in it that I had chosen to study, and not . . . the entrance into a transcendent reality of disembodied self-consciousness."[3] Piper captures her struggle to retain her personal identity through strict formal documentation—in all the photographs she appears in the same position, variously clothed or unclothed, holding the camera at the center of her body, regarding herself in a seemingly neutral manner. The regularity of the images would seem to deny the inner turmoil Piper described as driving the project, but it also reflects her insistence on applying reason to emotional, even traumatic, experiences in an attempt to gain understanding.

Piper's interest in the apparent contrast between interior and exterior, between affecting subject matter and analytical presentation, extended into one of her best-known projects from this time, *The Mythic Being* (nos. 2 and 3). A young black man created by the artist (and portrayed by her in drag), the Mythic Being appeared monthly, from 1973 to 1975, in the gallery section of the *Village Voice* newspaper. Each advertisement featured his picture and a thought bubble containing text taken from Piper's own journals—everything from childhood musings to crises of artistic consciousness. Piper, in turn, treated the text as her personal mantra for the month: "I repeat it, reexperience it, examine and analyze it, infuse myself with it until I have wrung it of personal meaning and significance."[4] Like *Food for the Spirit*, the Mythic Being project, which expanded into several other mediums, was not only a highly personal endeavor by the artist but also a public revelation, an exploration of her own identity and experience as well as a transferring of them to another. The advertisements were identical in design—the only changes occurred with the texts, which had been selected from the journals according to a numerical formula—and were ultimately realized by others following the artist's instructions, like so many other Conceptual artworks. Here the artist again successfully

1. *Drawings about Paper #46*. 1967. Cut-and-pasted colored paper and pencil on notebook paper in synthetic polymer sleeve, 11 x 8 1/2" (27.9 x 21.6 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. The Judith Rothschild Foundation Contemporary Drawings Collection Gift (Purchase, and gift, in part, of The Eileen and Michael Cohen Collection)

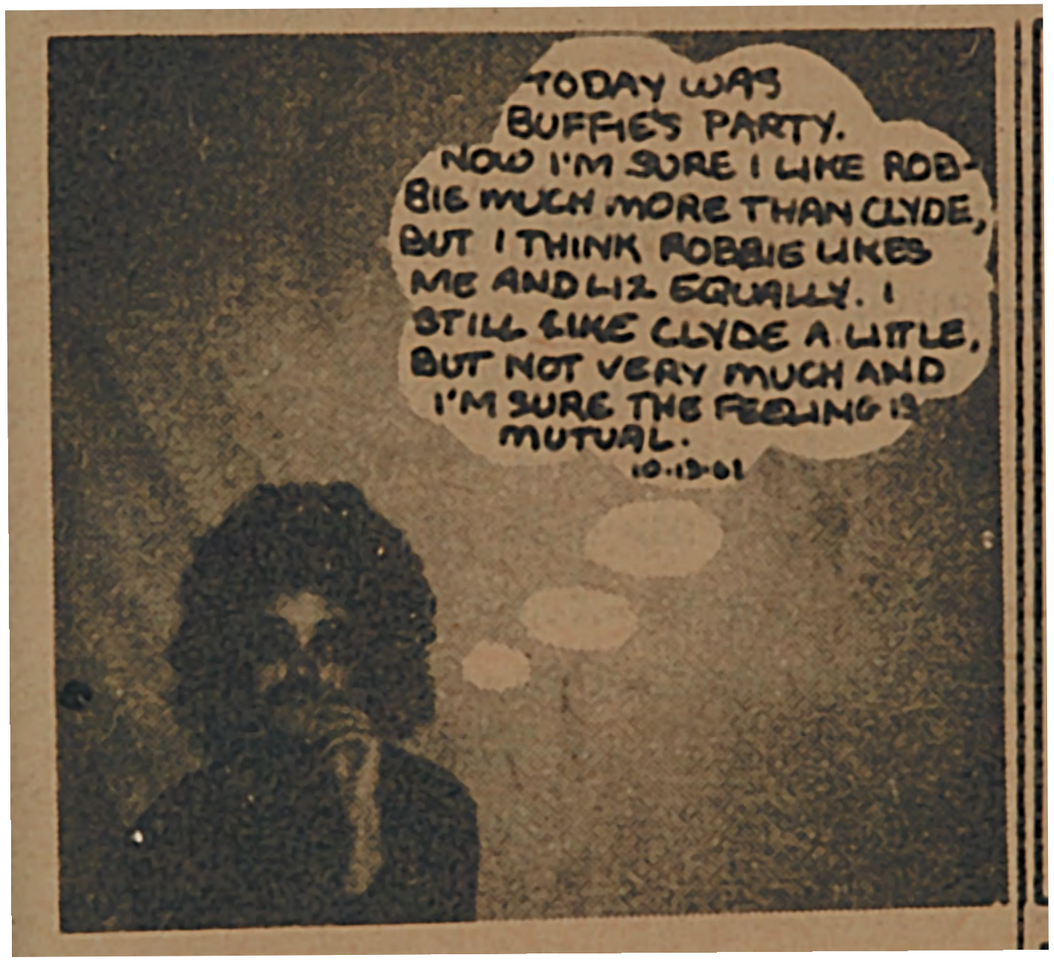
2. *The Mythic Being, Cycle II: 10/61*. 1974. *Village Voice* advertisement, October 31, 1974 (no. 14 of 17), page 14 7/8 x 11 1/2" (37.7 x 29.2 cm). From The Mythic Being *Village Voice* Series. 1973–75. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchased with funds provided by Donald L. Bryant, Jr., Agnes Gund, Marlene Hess and James D. Zirin, Marie-Josée and Henry R. Kravis, Donald B. Marron, The Edward John Noble Foundation, Jerry I. Speyer and Katherine Farley, and Committee on Drawings Funds in honor of Kathy Fuld

endows Conceptualism, which is often seen as "emotionally dry,"with the messy reality of experience, while also retaining rationality and control.[5]

Other projects by Piper more directly engage the viewer with issues of racism, and her treating of this issue as a viable topic for a serious, intellectual art practice has been highly influential for subsequent generations of artists exploring personal and cultural identity through their work. Piper's use of her own body and the emotional experience as subject matter has made it easy for viewers and critics to dismiss her work's conceptual underpinnings and to characterize her art as simply a complaint about prejudice, but it is her willingness to subject the deeply personal to intense critical analysis that has made hers a singular voice in contemporary art.

1. Adrian Piper, *Talking to Myself: The Ongoing Autobiography of an Art Object* (Hamburg: Hossman, 1974), p. 5.
2. Piper, "My Art Education," *Out of Order, Out of Sight: Selected Writings in Meta-Art, 1968–1992*, vol. 1 (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1996), p. 5. Here Piper also explains that in pursuing the conceptual, she did not wholly reject the value of the object, though it was not her main focus: "This does not mean that material doesn't matter at all, but merely that it remains a tool for giving physical existence. The material form provides a public perceptual language that can more adequately convey the artistic intuition than any other medium, rather than dictating or generating the intuition conveyed."
3. Piper, "Food for the Spirit," *Out of Order, Out of Sight*, vol. 1, p. 55.
4. Piper, "Notes on the Mythic Being I–III," *Out of Order, Out of Sight*, vol. 1, p. 117.
5. As Sol LeWitt claimed, "It is the objective of the artist who is concerned with conceptual art to make his work mentally interesting to the spectator, and therefore usually he would want it to become emotionally dry." LeWitt, "Paragraphs on Conceptual Art," *Artforum* 5, no. 10 (Summer 1967): 79–83; reprinted in Alicia Legg, ed., *Sol LeWitt* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1978), pp. 166–67. Piper has credited LeWitt as a major influence; see, for example, "My Art Education," *Out of Order, Out of Sight*, vol. 1, p. 4.

3. *The Mythic Being, Cycle II: 10/61* (detail). 1974



LYNDA BENGLIS (American, born 1941) / NORA LAWRENCE

Lynda Benglis's public image as an artist developed quickly: only a year after her first solo show in New York, at the Bykert Gallery, she was featured in an article in *Life* magazine that juxtaposed photographs of her at work with already iconic images of Jackson Pollock creating his drip paintings.[1] Hers was a respected voice in the burgeoning feminist movement; in 1971 she was one of eight artists invited to respond to Linda Nochlin's groundbreaking *Art News* article, "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?"[2] She has acknowledged the role that the feminist movement played in her success, in creating an awareness of female artists at a time when the organic shapes of her own art fulfilled a preconceived notion of what women's art should look like.[3]

But Benglis's ambivalent relationship to rank-and-file feminism was evidenced in her now-notorious advertisement in the November 1974 issue of *Artforum*, in which she appeared greased up and nude, wearing sunglasses and shamelessly cradling a dildo. This event threw feminism, and the art historians sympathetic with its cause, into a state of confusion. Five members of the magazine's editorial board, belatedly deciding that the advertisement was nothing more than a thinly disguised pornographic pinup, cosigned a letter in the December issue, apologizing to their readers for exposing them to "an object of extreme vulgarity."[4] The *Feminist Art Journal* called the ad "a frantic bid for male attention," and suggested that a "bewildered chorus of women's voices" was asking, "'Why is she doing it?'"[5] But some feminists saw the ad as a declaration of female liberation from both male-dominated society and aspects of the overly proscriptive women's movement. As critic Lucy R. Lippard remarked soon afterward, "The uproar that this . . . image created proved conclusively that there are still things women may not do."[6] The advertisement does not seem to have much to do with Benglis's largely abstract oeuvre, but its defiant refusal to lay bare its motivation (prompting the chorus of "Why is she doing it?"), along with its dependence on a disconcertingly intimate relationship with the human body for meaning, relate it to her larger practice.

According to Benglis, the attenuated length of *Embryo II* (1967, no. 1), a beeswax painting from a series begun in 1967, was directly inspired by Barnett Newman's thin "zips" of color.[7] The work's support is long and elliptical, and over it Benglis brushed many layers of hot, colored wax in long, slow strokes. The layers, at first unbroken, were naturally transformed as the work dried: "As they cooled they began to rumple. And then as they began to rumple I became interested in the formations that occurred."[8] The work's cratered surface of striated color is thickest and messiest at its center, where Benglis began each stroke.

Benglis scaled *Embryo II* to her own body: at thirty-six inches high, the sculpture approximates her arm's length. Installed, it occupies the space of an adult head and torso, and its bright tentacles reach out to engage its viewers directly. The title alludes to birth, and Benglis has related her sculpture to "the notion of the germ or the egg or the cell."[9] However, it is ultimately ambiguous in its bodily reference, and Benglis has also provided provocative interpretations unrelated to the work's title, such as, "The wax painting [*sic*] were like masturbating in my studio. . . . They are both oral and genital."[10] Even in its physical form *Embryo II* is unfamiliar and unknowable. The hollows between its cliffs of color are deep enough to make parts of the work inaccessible to the eye and do not reveal the way they were made.

Victor (1974, no. 2), one from a series of knots that Benglis began in 1972, is also created from layers of textured materials and also has an uncanny human presence. Its height and width approximate that of a figure, and the knot widens where a person's shoulders might, before tapering into two thin legs; its surface is flexed and bent where it presses against itself, just as human skin, muscle, and fat might flex and bend. Benglis found it appropriate to give the knots human names, because they then "began to be these individual people that breathed."[11] *Victor* takes its name from the phonetic *v* in the nautical alphabet.

Although viewers can easily follow the thin tangle that forms *Victor* from beginning to end, the nature of the work's material is far less obvious, with its rigid metal surface that seems to contradict its organic curves. The sculpture in fact is structured of several layered surfaces, beginning with an aluminum screen that Benglis rolled into a cylindrical form, overlaid with bunting cloth, and then covered with plaster, which was still wet when she tied the resulting cylinder into *Victor*'s loose knot. She worked with airplane technicians in Los Angeles to metalize these knots, first spraying on a layer of zinc, and then a layer of tin. (When the workers "weren't working in space technology," Benglis reported, "they were making art with me.")[12] Benglis found appealing the idea that the knots capture something inaccessible and

1. *Embryo II*. 1967. Purified and pigmented beeswax and dammar resin and gesso on Masonite, 36 1/8 x 6 x 5 1/8" (91.8 x 15.2 x 13 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Agnes Gund

unknowable within them, that these works, so simple in form, nonetheless enclose something inaccessible: "When I began making these images . . . I thought of them embracing a kind of air or form inside."[13]

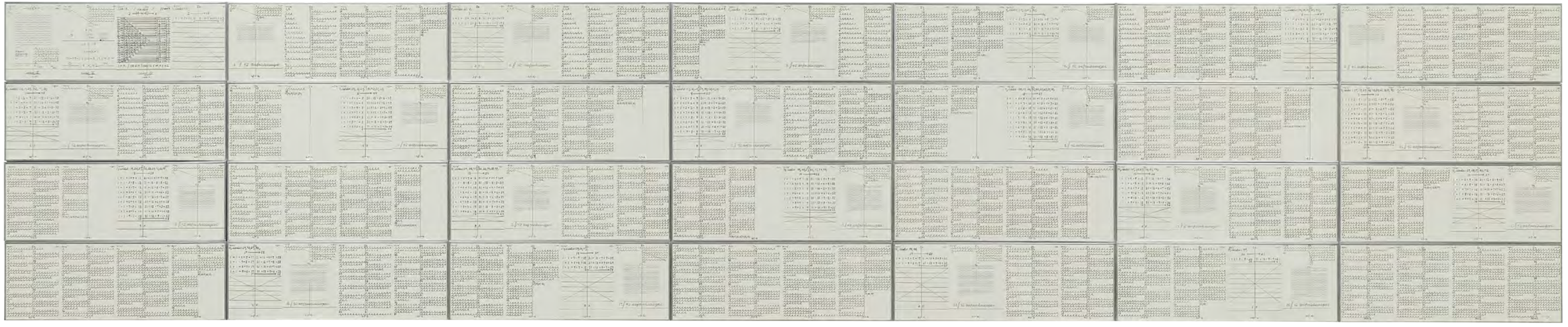
Victor was included in her first New York exhibition in the wake of the *Artforum* ad, at Paula Cooper Gallery in late 1975. The Museum of Modern Art purchased it directly from the exhibition, making it the first of Benglis's works to enter the Museum's collection. (Other major museums, including the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, and the Philadelphia Museum of Art, had begun to acquire her sculptures a few years earlier.) Although there is no documentation of the reaction within the walls of the Museum to the *Artforum* incident, it is certainly likely that it brought Benglis to MoMA's attention as an artist of historical importance. Despite the radical and sexualized use of her body that the advertisement involved, Benglis—who crossed out "one-man shows" on MoMA's standard artist's questionnaire and scribbled in "one-person shows"—had created a work that concealed sexual reference within the indirect language of abstraction, perhaps thus making it palatable to the Museum's habitually apolitical tastes.

In 1971 Benglis began to work in video, using it to explore issues that she felt sculpture could not address, such as "the duplicity and contradictions of life," adding, "I can't always do that with an icon. An individual art work doesn't always cover all these psychological complexities."[14] Video's engagement with the human body can indeed be more direct than that of amorphously human sculptures like *Victor* or *Embryo II*, but in such videos as *Mumble* (1972, no. 3) Benglis continued to mine a confounding vein, distancing the viewer from the on-screen figures with a narrative that only appears to be continuous.[15] Although multiple figures are shown together, the shots containing them are made up of different reels of film layered over one another—characters appear next to other characters who may have been filmed in entirely different places at entirely different times. Thus the artist was able to "experiment with the dimensionality—or lack of it—in video," with the realities produced by layers of film in *Mumble* creating a formal ambiguity similar to the multiple concealed materials of *Victor* or the puzzling, organic layers of *Embryo II*.[16] Benglis relates *Mumble* to sculpture, to "the idea of the surface, the form, the gesture, the mystery of what is inside and outside, but also the movement in space."[17] The form of her artwork may vary across sculpture, film, and advertising, but her interests have proved consistently confounding, consistently rich.

1. David Bourdon, "Fling, Dribble and Drip," *Life* 68 (February 27, 1970): 62–66.
2. The original article was published in *Art News* 69, no. 9 (January 1971): 22–39; and Lynda Benglis responded in Benglis, "Social Conditions Can Change," in ibid., p. 3. Other respondents included Eleanor Antin, Elaine de Kooning, and Louise Nevelson.
3. For example: "I felt that in the beginning, my work was chosen because of the early rising feminist movement." "Interview: Lynda Benglis," *Ocular* 4, no. 2 (Summer 1979): 33.
4. Lawrence Alloway, Max Kozloff, Rosalind Krauss, Joseph Masheck, Annette Michelson, "Letters," *Artforum* 13, no. 4 (December 1974): 9.
5. Cindy Nemser, "Lynda Benglis—A Case of Sexual Nostalgia," *Feminist Art Journal* 3, no. 4 (Winter 1974–75): 7.
6. Lucy R. Lippard, *From the Center: Feminist Essays on Women's Art* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1976), p. 127.
7. "Interview," *Ocular*, p. 35.
8. Benglis, interview with the author, November 11, 2008.
9. Benglis, quoted in Erica-Lynn Huberty, "Intensity of Form and Surface: An Interview with Lynda Benglis," *Sculpture* 19, no. 6 (July–August 2000): 35.
10. Benglis, quoted in Robert Pincus-Witten, "Lynda Benglis: The Frozen Gesture," *Artforum* 13, no. 3 (November 1974): 55. This article was published in the same issue of *Artforum* as Benglis's notorious advertisement.
11. Benglis, author interview.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. "Interview," *Ocular*, pp. 30–31.
15. Benglis made this film with the artist Robert Morris, with whom she was working closely at the time: "Robert Morris was interested in doing a recording. . . . I had the video equipment. After I had done the recording, I had asked him if I could use this image and this recording for a work." Benglis, author interview.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.

Opposite:
2. *Victor*. 1974. Aluminum screen, cotton bunting, and plaster with sprayed zinc, steel, and tin, 66 7/8 x 20 1/2 x 13 1/8" (169.8 x 52 x 33.3 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchased with the aid of funds from the National Endowment for the Arts and an anonymous donor

3. *Mumble*. 1972. Video (black and white, sound), 29 min. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Jerry I. Speyer and Katherine G. Farley, Anna Marie and Robert F. Shapiro, and Marie-Josée and Henry R. Kravis



1. *II-b*. 1970–73. Ink and typewriting on twenty-eight pieces of paper, each 11 1/2 x 33" (29.3 x 83.8 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Ileana Sonnabend

Hanne Darboven was one of the few women artists to play a major role in the nascent New York Conceptual art scene in the late 1960s. Her first years in the visual arts, following an early career as a pianist and studies at the Hochschule für bildende Künste in Hamburg (1963 to 1965), were spent in relative isolation. Art critic Lucy R. Lippard vividly remembers that at first, in New York, where Darboven moved in 1966 from Germany, the artist "knew no one and met no one."[1] Over time, however, Darboven befriended a number of artists closely associated with Minimal and Conceptual art, including Vito Acconci, Carl Andre, On Kawara, Joseph Kosuth, and Sol LeWitt. In 1967 her work was presented for the first time in New York, at the Museum of Normal Art, a storefront space founded by Kosuth and Christine Kozlov, and in *Art in Series,* a prototypical Conceptual art exhibition organized by Elayne Varian and Mel Bochner at the Finch College Museum of Art, New York.

Darboven's time in the United States was pivotal for her artistic development. It was a period marked by her renunciation of painting—her early work in this medium shows the influence of the artists' group Zero, whose goal it was to make objects in direct correlation with reality, devoid of the expressionism that characterizes much of the art of the 1950s—and her decision to work mainly on paper. She began to cover sheets with typewritten or hand-drawn notations, often composed of numbers organized according to a calendar structure (no. 1). The artist explained, "I only use numbers because it's a way of writing without describing [*Schreiben, nicht beschreiben*]. It has nothing to do with mathematics. Nothing! I choose numbers because they are so steady, limited, artificial. The only thing that has ever been created is the number. A number of something (two chairs, or whatever) is something else. It's not pure number and has other meanings. If I were making it up I couldn't possibly write all that. It has to be totally simple to be the *real* writing."[2] A few years later in Hamburg, Darboven adopted a standardized form of cursive script (no. 2) that is reminiscent of her early correspondence, in which she often repeated the letter *n* in her first name over and over.

In 1968, just after she had returned to Hamburg, Darboven was included in several highly influential international exhibitions, among them *Live in Your Head: When Attitudes Become Form: Works, Concepts, Processes, Situations, Information,* organized by Harald Szeemann at the Kunsthalle Bern, Lippard's

557,087 show at the Seattle Art Museum, and *Konzeption/Conception*, organized by Rolf Wedewer and Konrad Fischer at the Städtisches Museum Schloss Morsbroich, Leverkusen, Germany. Her work was first shown at The Museum of Modern Art in 1970, on the occasion of Kynaston McShine's milestone group exhibition *Information*, which called for a redefinition of art: "The activity of these artists is to think of concepts that are broader and more cerebral than the expected 'product' of the studio," McShine wrote in the catalogue.[3] Darboven's work expanded the definition of sculpture by visualizing time, not exploring space, through very simple acts—writing, counting, or browsing a book—not bound to any particular medium. In 1973 she began borrowing texts from various writers, such as Heinrich Heine and Jean-Paul Sartre, and in 1974 in *Eight Contemporary Artists* (described at the time by critic Max Kozloff as MoMA's "largest exhibition of new art since 1970")[4] curator Jennifer Licht acknowledged the rapid obsolescence of medium specificity by presenting two remarkable sets of writing by Darboven, *Four Seasons* and *Ia/Ib* (both 1973), alongside documentation of performances by Acconci, drawings by Alighiero e Boetti, striped paper by Daniel Buren, photographs by Jan Dibbets, wall stencils by Robert Hunter, and paintings by Brice Marden and Dorothea Rockburne. In 1978 and 1979, found photographs and musical notations, respectively, made their way into her work.

Through the final years of her life, Darboven's projects continued to grow in scale, intensity, and complexity. In 1996 she presented *Kulturgeschichte 1880–1983* (Cultural history 1880–1983), an installation realized over a three-year period (1980 to 1983), composed of 1,590 panels covering the walls of an entire full-floor gallery at the Dia Center for the Arts in New York. In this project her "writings" are combined and juxtaposed with myriad images, including reproductions of earlier works, fabric patterns, sheets of music, old postcards, photographs of New York, and pages from various periodicals and art books. "*Kulturgeschichte 1880–1983* contains the date as part of its title; the time of the making of the work is included in the time of 'cultural history'; and it might as easily be said that the century 1880–1980 is incorporated within the period of the making of the work," Michael Newman has written. "What we see here—to use a spatial metaphor for a temporal concept—is a double enfolding: the work incorporates its outside in which the work is included."[5]

Shortly after her death, in 2009, Darboven's work shared a room at MoMA with that of fellow German sculptor Charlotte Posenenske, with whom she had been paired in an exhibition at the beginning of her career, at Konrad Fischer Gallery, in Cologne, in 1967. *In & Out of Amsterdam: Travels in Conceptual Art, 1960–1976*, a group show focusing on ten artists associated with the city of Amsterdam and the gallery Art & Project, included prefabricated, galvanized steel elements conceived by Posenenske in 1967 together with a 1970 installation by Darboven entitled *100 Books 00–99* (no. 3): one hundred mechanically printed books whose page count—365 or 366—varies according to the number of days in each year of the twentieth century.[6] In both cases, the works are made of parts for the curator or the collector to interact with—to decide the final shape of the sculpture in one case and to randomly open the books on tables in the other—demonstrating that sculpture is not bound to a specific physical form. Darboven produced some of the most influential works in her generation by favoring from the start, as she explained in 1968, "the least pretentious and most humble means, for my ideas depend on themselves and not upon material."[7]

Opposite:
2. *Untitled*. c. 1972. Ink on ten pieces of transparentized paper, each 11 5/8 x 16 1/2" (29.5 x 41.9 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Art & Project/Depot VBVR Gift

3. *100 Books 00–99*. 1970. One hundred books, 365 or 366 pages each, offset printed, each 8 7/16 x 10 15/16 x 1 7/16" (21.5 x 27.8 x 3.7 cm). Collection the artist. View of the exhibition *In & Out of Amsterdam: Travels in Conceptual Art, 1960–1976*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, July 19–October 5, 2009

1. Lucy R. Lippard, "Hanne Darboven: Deep in Numbers," *Artforum* 8, no. 7 (October 1973): 37.
2. Hanne Darboven, quoted in ibid., pp. 35–36.
3. Kynaston L. McShine, "Essay," in *Information* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1970), p. 139.
4. Max Kozloff, "Traversing the Field . . . 'Eight Contemporary Artists' at MoMA," *Artforum* 13, no. 4 (December 1974): 44.
5. Michael Newman, "Remembering and Repeating: Hanne Darboven's Work," in Lynne Cooke, Karen Kelly, and Bettina Funcke, eds., *Robert Lehman Lectures on Contemporary Art*, vol. 2 (New York: Dia Art Foundation, 2004), pp. 134–35.
6. Artists included in the exhibition were Bas Jan Ader, Stanley Brouwn, Darboven, Jan Dibbets, Ger van Elk, Gilbert & George, Sol LeWitt, Charlotte Posenenske, Allen Ruppersberg, and Lawrence Weiner.
7. Darboven, "Artists on Their Art," *Art International* 12, no. 4 (April 20, 1968): 55.

1. *Trixie on the Cot, New York City*. 1979. Silver dye bleach print (printed 2008), 15 1/2 x 23 1/8" (39.4 x 58.7 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired through the generosity of Marian and James Cohen, in memory of their son Michael Harrison Cohen

And what costume shall the poor girl
wear to all tomorrow's parties?
For Thursday's child is Sunday's clown
for whom none will go mourning.
A blackened shroud, a hand-me-down gown
of rags and silks, a costume fit for one who
sits and cries for all tomorrow's parties.
—"All Tomorrow's Parties," Lou Reed, 1966

Nan Goldin's photographs of New York's downtown scene in the 1970s and 1980s are projected as slides, each for a few fleeting seconds, as Nico's distinctive Teutonic voice sings "All Tomorrow's Parties." Like the song, Goldin's images capture the transient highs and lows of the night. They include icons—Andy Warhol, Keith Haring, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Debbie Harry, and Fab 5 Freddy—but more important are the individuals whom viewers have come to know intimately through Goldin's work: Cookie, Sharon, Suzanne, Brian, David, and, of course, Nan herself. These musicians, artists, writers, punks, New Wavers, b-boys, and hangers-on smoke, drink, hustle, have sex, masturbate, and shoot up in the hundreds of images that compose *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency*, Goldin's arresting slide show that has the power to move audiences to laughter and tears.

Taking its title from a song in *The Threepenny Opera* (1928), by Kurt Weill and Bertolt Brecht, *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency*—some seven hundred color slides set to a forty-five-minute soundtrack—takes as its theme the intensity of amorous relationships. It chronicles the personal lives of Goldin's friends and lovers—a young, gorgeous, tragic, and hedonistic group. In her pictures, desire and ecstasy are punctuated by depression, addiction, illness, and death brought on by dysfunctional relationships, emotional and physical abuse, drug addiction, and AIDS. "*The Ballad of Sexual Dependency* is the diary I let people read," she has said. "I photograph directly from my life. These pictures come out of relationships, not observation."[1]

Goldin's work has been shaped by her personal circumstances. She first presented her photographs in slide form because she did not have access to a darkroom in which to make prints. She had her first slide shows for friends at bars in Provincetown, Massachusetts, where she worked as a bartender, and in 1979 she performed for the first time in New York at Frank Zappa's birthday party at the Mudd Club. While the slide shows were initially a practical solution to a lack of funds and limited darkroom access, Goldin quickly saw the potential for creating larger narratives by editing and sequencing linked still images, molding a familiar living-room exhibition format to reflect her own lifestyle, attitude, and experiences. Early performances were spontaneous and improvised—the artist hand-loaded slides into the projector while keeping count in her head. They had no titles (*The Ballad* got its name in 1981), but the subject was always the same—coupling and intimate relationships. Throughout the early 1980s Goldin showed slides at lofts, clubs, and bars such as Rafik's OP Screening Room, Rock Lounge, and the Times Square dive bar Tin Pan Alley. With each performance the selection changed, and the audience, primarily the subjects of her photographs, came to see who was in and who was out.

"It's not about the quality of the photograph, it's about the narrative thread," Goldin has said of her work.[2] As she adjusted and readjusted the slide sequences and soundtrack of *The Ballad*, adding and removing images and songs, Goldin honed the narrative and emotional impact of the show. Early musical accompaniments to the images were the band The Del-Byzanteens (whose members included Jim Jarmusch and James Nares) playing live and, more frequently, a taped soundtrack of commercially released songs that brought a clearer and more pointed meaning to the images. The established soundtrack is a mix of rock, blues, and opera (the music of passion and pathos), but it shares much in attitude and aesthetic with punk: homemade and rough around the edges, it takes a rebellious stance against the Establishment. Its music, in its eclectic mix of high and low, from Maria Callas to Yoko Ono, mimics a mixed tape or DJ set. The soundtrack cannot be divorced from the images, and together they are more than the sum of their parts.

By 1986 *The Ballad* had been included in the Whitney Biennial, screened at the Berlin Film Festival, and published as a book by Aperture, and its distinct identity had been firmly cemented. In its final form, the slide show opens with portraits of couples, including a picture of Goldin's parents, accompanied by the title song, "The Ballad of Sexual Dependency," performed by The Velvet Underground. The show is structured into groups of pictures by gender, beginning with women, and each section and subsection is introduced by its own leitmotif. Accompanied by such songs as Dionne Warwick's "Don't Make Me Over" and an aria from *Norma* sung by Callas, women are pictured empathetically, alone (no. 1) and with friends, gazing into mirrors and relaxing in bed, contemplative and teary or ecstatic and shrieking with laughter. The mood changes with the song "Miss the Girl," and the images show women battered, abused, and subjected to the violence of men. A 1984 self-portrait of the

artist after being brutally beaten by her boyfriend, Brian (no. 2), is the emotional apex of the slide show. Goldin gazes directly into the camera with two black eyes while Siouxsie Sioux sings, "You didn't miss the girl/You hit the girl/You hit her with a force of steel."

James Brown singing "It's a Man's Man's Man's World" initiates a sequence of images of men—an assorted bunch of cowboys, bodybuilders, skinheads, and junkies. The music ranges from the theme song of the film *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* to Bronski Beat's "Smalltown Boy," as men are pictured sitting in cars and trolling bars, showing off tattoos and masturbating. With Petula Clark's 1965 song "Downtown"—its inclusion here is ironic—the images turn to the grit and glamour of Manhattan's downtown scene and the inevitable ravages of the party lifestyle. Couples return with Screamin' Jay Hawkins singing "I Put a Spell on You"—they have sex and endure the aftermath of intimacy (no. 3)—followed by images of empty beds, vacated rooms, and, finally, graves. The final slide, of a graffito of two skeletons coupling, is accompanied by Dean Martin crooning "Memories Are Made of This," revealing Goldin's view that men and women are, in her own words, "irrevocably unsuited."[3] Gender difference is at the heart of the work. Ultimately, the slide show is a narrative driven by the experiences and points of view of women.[4]

Goldin continues to insert new images and rediscover old ones. She has remarked that photographing has enabled her to remember, and *The Ballad*'s changing contents underscore that memory is a continually shifting entity. In *The Ballad* there is no hierarchy of images; rather, the work is a constantly shifting accumulation that reflects the mess of real life. Marvin Heiferman, an early champion of Goldin's work and a former producer of *The Ballad*, has stressed that the artist focused on the making of images rather than the making of prints.[5] This was a rebellion against the rarefied and male-dominated world of fine art photography best exemplified, even in the 1980s, by photographers such as Ansel Adams and Edward Weston. A departure from the establishment and a distinct undermining of the photographic image as art object, Goldin's *Ballad* champions a democracy of ever-changing, ephemeral images. In *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency*, Goldin pioneered a remarkable and persuasive format, somewhere between cinema and still photography, to reconstitute her own lived experiences.

1. Nan Goldin, *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency* (New York: Aperture, 1986), p. 6.
2. Nan Goldin, interview by J. Hoberman, in Goldin, David Armstrong, and Hans Werner Holzwarth, eds., *I'll Be Your Mirror*, (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1995), p. 141.
3. Goldin, quoted in Mark Holborn, "Nan Goldin's Ballad of Sexual Dependency," *Aperture* 103 (Summer 1986): 42.
4. For more on the role of gender in Goldin's work, see Catherine Lord, "This Is Not a Fairy Tale: A Middle-aged Female Pervert (White) in the Era of Multiculturalism," in Diane Neumaier, ed., *Reframings: New American Feminist Photographies* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995); and Catherine Lampert, "Family of Own Gender," in *The Devil's Playground* (London: Phaidon, 2003). For further reading on queer identity in Goldin's work, see Goldin, "The Other Side," in Liz Heron and Val Williams, eds., *Illuminations: Women Writing on Photography from the 1850s to the Present* (Durham. N.C.: Duke University Press, 1996).
5. Marvin Heiferman, interview with the author, December 19, 2008.

Opposite:
2. *Nan One Month After Being Battered*. 1984. Silver dye bleach print (printed 2008), 15 1/2 x 23 1/8" (39.4 x 58.7 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchase

3. *Nan and Brian in Bed, New York City*. 1983. Silver dye bleach print (printed 2006), 15 1/2 x 23 3/16" (39.4 x 59.9 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired through the generosity of Jon L. Stryker

1. *Untitled*. 1984. Incised leaf, 6 x 3 1/2" (15.2 x 8.9 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchased with funds provided by Agnes Gund and Daniel Shapiro

Best known for her works executed in the wild, in the 1980s Mendieta turned to more traditional art forms—to sculpture and drawing—but chose materials that maintained a connection with the natural world.

Ana Mendieta's work reflects a constant negotiation of physical and political boundaries—those of the outdoor, natural world versus the interior of her studio, and those of the feminist movement versus the mainstream art world.[1]

Best known for her works executed in the wild, in the 1980s Mendieta turned to more traditional forms—to sculpture and drawing—but chose materials that maintained a connection with the natural world. Her political alliances also shifted over the course of her career: she actively pursued a role in the New York feminist community, joining the women's cooperative gallery Artists in Residence (AIR) in 1978, but by 1980 she had concluded that "American Feminism as it stands is basically a white middle class movement" and was therefore too limited a lens through which to consider her work.[2] Nonetheless, her work continued to make references, through her use of ancient goddess forms, to the female body and its historical spiritual significance. Mendieta's reshaping of both her artistic practice and the context in which she presented it reflected an acute awareness of artificial divisions between formal categories—between earthworks and traditional sculpture and drawing, feminist art and politically neutral works—and her struggle against the limited readings such divisions encouraged.

In 1973 Mendieta began marking the natural landscape with the shape of her own petite body and documenting these interventions in photographs and film. These works, the *Siluetas* (1973–80), were carved, sculpted, and outlined in the earth using flowers, fire, and an extraordinary range of organic materials, all but ensuring an ephemeral existence and ultimate disappearance. These earth-body works (as the artist referred to them) are often grouped with avant-garde practices popular during the 1960s and '70s, including performance and earthworks, but Mendieta resisted these and other categories; Olga Viso, who organized a retrospective of Mendieta's work in 2004, noted that the artist "ultimately saw her work as separate and distinct from the tradition of performance and more akin to a notion of 'living sculpture.'"[3] Although documentation allowed the artist's *Siluetas* to reach an audience, she encouraged an open reading of the work's genre, suggesting it was ultimately both "body earthwork *and* photo."[4]

This refusal to segregate the *Siluetas* into neat art-historical categories reflects a fluidity of thinking and perhaps indicates connections between the earth-body works and her more traditional pieces of the 1980s. Searching for a way to make her work more permanent, but without losing the natural and universal quality of her ephemeral *Siluetas*, Mendieta began making flat floor sculptures, which were combinations of various organic matter and binders shaped into female forms, many of them iconic goddess symbols employed by ancient cultures. Made of sand, earth, and other natural materials, works like *Nile Born* (1984, no. 3) can be read as indoor *Siluetas*, albeit more lasting (and more marketable) versions suitable for traditional gallery environments.[5] Many of the floor sculptures may contain earth from locations of personal or historical significance to the artist; the abstract female form of *Nile Born* probably contains grains of sand from the famed river in Egypt, while other works may include earth from Cuba, Mendieta's birthplace.[6]

In tandem with the floor sculptures, Mendieta also began making formal drawings that were distinct from the sketches and notes she habitually made as plans for and documentation of her other work. Images of the studio she occupied during a one-year residency at the American Academy in Rome in 1983–84 show the walls covered with drawings, many echoing the female forms of her floor sculptures.[7] The fluid lines and smeared ink of some of these drawings suggest that Mendieta extended to her work on paper the combination of careful planning and acceptance of chance and accident that characterized her work in nature. In 1981 she began a series of drawings on amate paper, which she called Amategrams (no. 2). Traditionally made from the bark of fig trees by the Otomí, an indigenous people of Mexico, amate paper has been made since pre-Columbian times; Otomí shamans cut various shapes and figures—often, like Mendieta's *Siluetas*, with their arms upraised in an iconic goddess pose—from amate paper for use in religious rituals, with different-colored papers used toward different ends.[8] Mendieta also drew on fresh leaves (no. 1), using various tools to scrape, puncture, outline, and burn her signature female figure into the surface, using the veins of the leaf as other artists might use the lines on graph paper.[9] As the leaves dried and yellowed, the marks changed as well, in an intimate but surprisingly durable version of her earth-body works. Mendieta saw her choice of

2. *Untitled (Amategram)*. c. 1982–83. Synthetic polymer paint on amate paper, 15 7/8 x 11 7/8" (40.3 x 30.2 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Committee on Drawings Funds

3. *Nile Born*. 1984. Sand and binder on wood, 2 3/4 x 61 1/2 x 19 1/4" (7 x 156.2 x 48.9 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Agnes Gund

natural and historically significant materials as a continuation of the "obsessive act of reasserting my ties with the earth," even if this act was not performed directly in nature.[10]

Mendieta's shift to a more traditional studio practice in the 1980s should not be read as a break with her earlier work in the landscape; on the contrary, her efforts to maintain a link with nature, reflected in her choice of medium, suggest an intentional blurring of boundaries between art forms and a resistance to dividing up a cohesive body of work. Nor did her increasing resistance to formalized feminism during this same period indicate a change in artistic themes or goals: her use of the female body, personal experience, and ancient female archetypes as subjects remained the same. In distancing herself from a feminist context, she was reacting to an increasingly simplified reading of her work. Feminist thought today, having evolved to embrace a broader and more complex range of cultural practices and experiences, is a field that Mendieta would have perhaps found more accommodating.

1. On the way Ana Mendieta's work destabilizes physical and political borders, see Irit Rogoff, "Borders," in *Terra Infirma: Geography's Visual Culture* (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 112–43.
2. Mendieta, quoted in Olga Viso, *Ana Mendieta: Earth Body: Sculpture and Performance, 1972–1985* (Washington D.C.: Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden; Ostfildern-Ruit, Germany: Hatje Cantz, 2004), p. 73. Mendieta resigned from AIR in 1982.
3. Ibid., p. 69. See also Viso on situating Mendieta's work in the art movements of her time, including feminism, in ibid., pp. 68–76.
4. Mendieta, quoted in ibid, p. 70.
5. Ibid., pp. 104–12.
6. Mendieta's addition of materials from specific locations is suggested by statements she made at the time and by her titling of the works but cannot be absolutely confirmed. See ibid., p. 118 n. 307.
7. See the photograph of Mendieta's Rome studio, in Laura Roulet, "Ana Mendieta: A Life in Context," in ibid., p. 238.
8. On the history and use of amate paper, see Bodil Christensen and Samuel Marti, *Witchcraft and Pre-Columbian Paper* (Mexico City: Ediciones Euroamericanas, 1971), n.p.; and Lilian A. Bell, *Papyrus, Tapa, Amate and Rice Paper: Papermaking in Africa, The Pacific, Latin America and Southeast Asia* (McMinnville, Ore.: Liliaceae Press, 1985), n.p.
9. On Mendieta's leaf-drawing technique, see Viso, *Ana Mendieta*, pp. 108–9.
10. Mendieta, unpublished statement, 1981; quoted in John Perreault, "Earth and Fire: Mendieta's Body of Work," in Perreault and Petra Barreras del Rio, *Ana Mendieta: A Retrospective* (New York: The New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1987), p. 10. Mendieta's interest in primitive cultures was greatly enhanced by her experiences in Mexico; on these experiences and their influence on her work, see Viso, *Ana Mendieta*, pp. 45–61.

1. The Peak Project, Kowloon, Hong Kong, exterior perspective. 1991. Synthetic polymer paint on paper mounted on canvas, 51 x 72" (129.5 x 182.9 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. David Rockefeller, Jr., Fund

Zaha Hadid, winner of the 2004 Pritzker Prize (the first woman to receive it), is recognized as much for her project designs as for her realized buildings. She began her training as an architect in 1972, at the Architectural Association (AA) School of Architecture, London, where she studied under Elia Zhengelis, Rem Koolhaas, and Bernard Tschumi, among others. For her graduate project in 1977—a bridge over the Thames—she reached back to the Suprematist idiom stamped by Kazimir Malevich.[1] The Russian avant-garde and its utopian ideals were a major influence on the development of modernism in Europe—on the Bauhaus and de Stijl, for example—and her reference to them was a turn away from the flourishing postmodernism of her own era.

After graduating, Hadid worked alongside Elia and Zoe Zhengelis and Madelon Vriesendorp in the Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA), established by Koolhaas (Vriesendorp's husband) in 1975. Vriesendorp and Zoe Zhengelis were largely reponsible for the formulation and presentation of project designs for OMA, and the delicate illustrations they used in place of the typical models and drawings—visually appealing, large-scale gouaches and paintings in muted colors, showing the architecture in isometry—had a lasting influence on Hadid.[2]

Hadid left OMA after three years, and in 1980 she set up her own office. When her design for a mountaintop building in Hong Kong—The Peak Club—beat six hundred others in an international competition in 1982, she became the focus of worldwide attention. "The architecture is like a knife cutting through butter," Hadid wrote of the project, "devastating traditional principles and establishing new ones, defying nature but not destroying it."[3] Her design (no. 1) is distinguished by four horizontal structures stacked one atop the other, slightly offset. Thanks to their vertical overlappings and conjunctions, the layers are tied into a highly complex and expressive whole. The bottom section burrows into the mountain, and excavated material is integrated into the remainder of the structure.

The lowest level contains fifteen double-height studio apartments, the one above it twenty apartments. The club's sports and leisure areas, including library and bar, occupy an open space some forty-two feet high, between the roof of the second level and the underside of the penthouse level above it. The architecture and the landscape are tied together at various points, with spectacular projecting and cantilevered elements befitting a landmark structure. In contrast to the extreme density of the city below, with its cramped, vertical high-rises, Hadid's design is an energetic and expansive architectural sculpture. By flouting expectations of an elegant, stately clubhouse, she positioned herself as an architect of exceptional stature and daring. Her drawings, suggestive but difficult to read, are virtually visual manifestos, espousing an architecture in permanent explosive movement, and they contributed in no small part to the project's provocativeness. This was, of course, intended; Hadid had shrewdly assimilated lessons from her time at OMA. However, despite the international attention and the full assurance of the engineering firm Ove Arup & Partners that her plan could be realized, the design was deemed impossible to build by the jury who had selected it, and the project was shelved.

Another important project from Hadid's early years as an architect is her competition entry for the Parc de la Villette in Paris, a commission won by Tschumi, Hadid's former teacher at the AA School of Architecture. The assignment, as formulated in the announcement of the competition by the city of Paris in 1982, was to transform a former slaughterhouse site in the 19th arrondissement into a new multipurpose urban space. Its 125 acres were to include walking paths, sports facilities, picnic areas, and various cultural institutions.

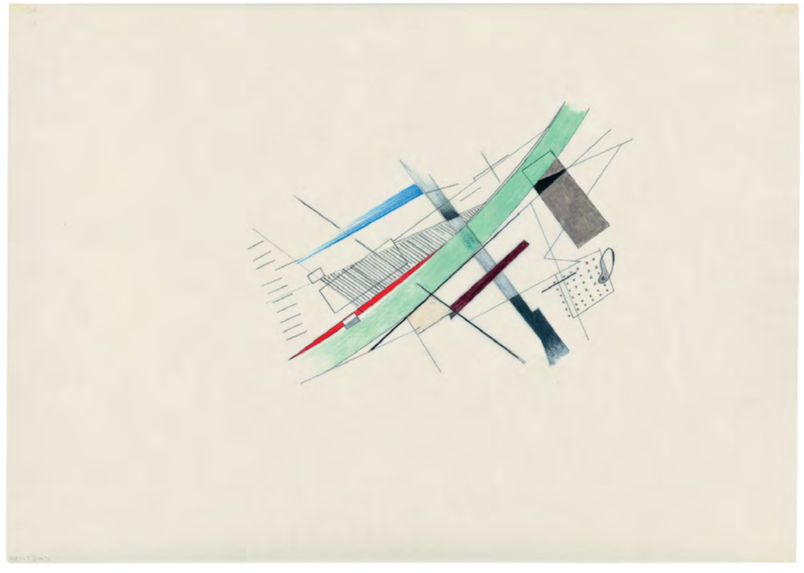
Hadid's entry consists of a portfolio of drawings. Twelve in colored pencil on tracing paper (no. 2, for example) represent the separate features of the project—Car Park, Green Strip, Flower Fields, Planetary/Water Strip, and Jogging Strip, in addition to unnamed cultural elements (the park now houses a museum, the Cité des sciences et de l'industrie). In the design these features are elaborated as elongated fields, and they overlap and penetrate each other at various levels, in most cases intersecting and overlying each other at sharp angles—there are few rounded or circular shapes. Only the central Green Strip crosses the Canal de l'Ourcq. A culminating set of drawings (including no. 3) comprises ten photoelectrostatic prints of the basic elements of the design on transparent film, bound together. Despite the overall view created by the superimposition and the explanatory text on three of the drawings, it is difficult to form a three-dimensional image of the project. The eight additional ink drawings are supplementary; in slightly different form they show the project's different levels as collated in the bound series.

Hadid structured her presentation in so complex a manner that its realization, the spatial form, can be imagined only with difficulty. However, the programmatic structure that can be discerned behind her design makes it clear that this project, like The Peak

Club, is a kind of visual formulation of a theory: they are both imagined spaces in which the usual laws of gravity and stability appear to be transcended. Her approach in these early projects is akin to Analytical Cubism—relationships between objects and viewers in space, their representation and perception, are completely redefined.[4] Her architecture does not reassure a user with a sense of stability and solidity; it is a medium through which dynamic forces may be perceived and that reflects and magnifies the dynamic perception of visitors as they move through the space.

Hadid's design for The Peak Club was exhibited at The Museum of Modern Art in the 1988 show *Deconstructivist Architecture*, organized by Philip Johnson and Mark Wigley, along with work by Coop Himmelb(l)au, Peter Eisenman, Frank O. Gehry, Koolhaas, Daniel Libeskind, and Tschumi. Hadid came to be thought of as a representative of a stylistic movement—Deconstructivism—that, despite Johnson and Wigley's positioning of the architects, did not exist as such, for the individual positions were too various. But because of this and other such exhibitions, Hadid became better known, and increasing discussion of her ideas led to her first concrete commissions. In 1993 she realized her first projects: Vitra Fire Station, for the Vitra Design Museum in Weil am Rhein, Germany, and a residential building on Stresemannstrasse, Berlin, for that city's International Building Exposition. Thanks to her extremely complex building projects for the auto industry—a BMW factory in Leipzig (2005)—and the world of culture—the Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati (2003), and Phæno museum, Wolfsburg, Germany (2005), for example—she has long since refuted the assertions of early critics that her designs, though visionary, are ultimately impossible to build.

After her somewhat fragmented structures and projects of the 1980s, with their acute angles and sharp edges, in the last few years Hadid has developed a more organic architecture, in which the major volumes encounter each other with rounded edges and the spatial relationships are defined not so much by abrupt breaks as by a fluid continuum. Hadid has positioned herself in the first rank of architects known to a larger public, a field dominated by men. Yet she has never set out to be popular: "As a woman, I'm expected to want everything to be nice, and to be nice myself," she has said. "A very English thing. I don't design nice buildings—I don't like them. I like architecture to have some raw, vital, earthy quality."[5] This search for the elemental is perceptible in Hadid's realized designs. Moreover, she has given to her architecture—necessarily immobile structures—the additional aspect of dynamism.



2. Parc de la Villette Project, Paris. 1982–83. Plot breakdown: colored pencil on tracing paper, 11 3/4 x 16 1/2" (29.8 x 41.9 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of the architect in honor of Philip Johnson

Opposite:
3. Parc de la Villette Project, Paris. 1982–83. Plan: ten photoelectrostatic prints on polymer sheets between synthetic polymer sheets with metal screws and supports, each 16 3/4 x 11 3/4" (42.5 x 29.8 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of the architect in honor of Philip Johnson

1. On Hadid's relationship with Suprematism, see Detlef Mertins, "The Modernity of Zaha Hadid," in *Zaha Hadid* (New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 2006), pp. 33–38.
2. On Madelon Vriesendorp and Zoe Zhenghelis's influence, see Zaha Hadid, Zhengelis, and Hans Ulrich Obrist, "Nano Questions and Nano Answers," in Shumon Basar and Stephan Trueby, eds., *The World of Madelon Vriesendorp* (London: AA Publications, 2008), pp. 68–73.
3. Hadid, "The Peak, Hong Kong," *AA Files*, July 1983, p. 84.
4. In 2008 Lebbeus Woods wrote of Hadid's 1980s work, "Its obvious mission was to reform the world through architecture. Such an all-encompassing vision had not been seen since the 1920s." Woods, "Drawn into Space: Zaha Hadid," *Architectural Design* 78, no. 4 (July–August 2008): 31.
5. Hadid, quoted in Jonathan Glancey, "I Don't Do Nice," *The Guardian*, October 9, 2006.

1. *The American Trip*. 1988. Wire racks, steel pipes, chrome cuffs, American flag, pirate flag, leather straps, white cane, and metal parts, 45" x 8' 8" x 57" (114.3 x 264.2 x 144.8 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchase

"There is a method in my work which has taken a pathological trend. From the point at which I was making work out of objects I became interested in how, actually, under which circumstances people treat other people like objects."

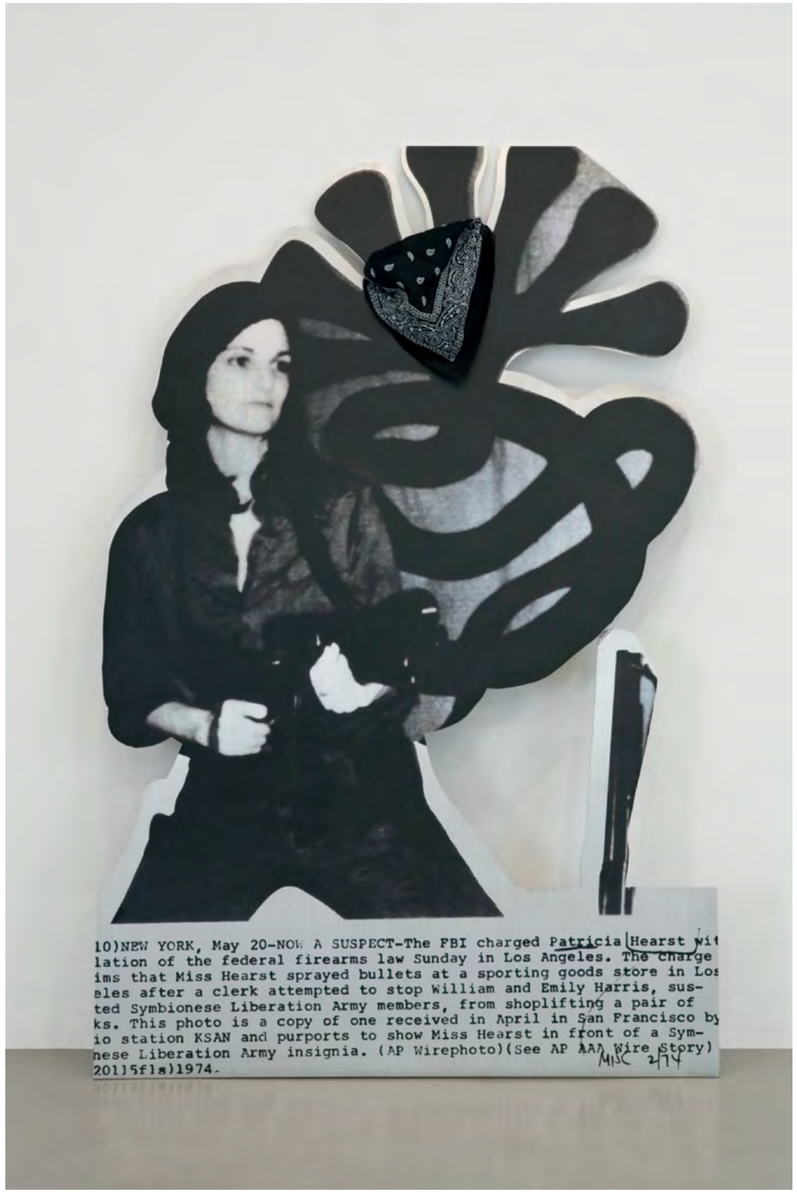
American artist Cady Noland produced some of the most influential contemporary sculpture in the decade between the mid-1980s and the mid-1990s. She retreated from the art world in the late 1990s, out of increasing frustration over careless installation of her work, and on several occasions since then she has attempted to remove her work from exhibitions. As a consequence, many of Noland's major installations and sculptures are known incompletely, or only through illustrations. Nonetheless, her work has significantly influenced a younger generation of artists in its willfully ambiguous investigations into the darker reaches of the American psyche, and it has gained particular resonance in the last few years, as violence and fear have reentered the public psyche.

In her sculptures, installations, drawings, and texts, Noland creates panoramas of the American Nightmare, evoking disturbing tropes of the American collective unconscious and events in United States history both recent and centuries old, in which the promise of democracy and freedom has given way to violence, resistance, and disorder. In her photo and text essay "Towards a Metalanguage of Evil," published in English and Spanish in the magazine *Balcon* in 1989, Noland speculated about the ways in which social climbing, glamour, celebrity, violence, and death fit into a social construct she called "the game": "There is a meta-game available for use in the United States. . . . The game is a synthesis of tactics, played out in the social arena, in which advantage can be gained in an oblique way."[1] She identified an "action death" as its ideal outcome, citing James Dean's car accident as an example, and introduced the psychopath as the quintessential protagonist, with the crucial distinction that he replaces his own sacrifice with the death of others: "The psychopath may court death, but it is someone else's. The psychopath leaves behind a trail littered with the broken, discarded bodies and lives of others, he trashes them leaving them as rotten matter as he proceeds to his next site."[2]

In an interview conducted around the same time, Noland related the psychopathic operation to her own sculptural production. "There is a method in my work which has taken a pathological trend," she said. "From the point at which I was making work out of objects I became interested in how, actually, under which circumstances people treat other people like objects. I became interested in psychopaths in particular, because they objectify people in order to manipulate them. By extension they represent the extreme embodiment of a culture's proclivities; so psychopathic behavior provides useful highlighted models to use in search of cultural norms."[3] In many of her installations Noland takes this objectification to a literal conclusion, by attaching discarded or fragmented objects onto aluminum cutout effigies of notorious personas such as Lee Harvey Oswald and Patricia Hearst.

Her method of composition is based on the combination of ubiquitous and evocative objects and images culled from American mass culture. She often uses metallic structures that have a direct and visceral relationship to the body and evoke the acts of joining or separating—crowd barriers, scaffolding joinery, handcuffs. For Noland metal is a deeply symbolic element; metal stands for permanence in society, its structures of power and authority, something to rebel against. Destruction of metal is transgression. For example, Noland has discussed joyriding in terms of its inherent danger to the life of the driver—an action death—but also as an unacceptable risk of metallic expenditure: "Metal is a major thing, and a major thing to waste. The joy in joyriding is the danger of damaging major metal."[4]

For her installation *The American Trip* (1988, no. 1) Noland organized several objects along the horizontal extension of a galvanized steel pipe that is propped up on galvanized steel stanchions to form a railing of sorts. Suspended from the pipe are leather straps, a white cane, a chrome cuff for waste pipes, two wire animal traps, and two flags—a pirate skull and crossbones attached by two of its corners and an American flag hung adjacent to it in such a way that if the pirate flag were raised correctly the Stars and Stripes would fly inverted, an orientation used as a sign of distress. One of the three stanchions stands inside a rectangular chrome-plated steel frame on the floor that suggests a former application as a retail support structure. The installation displays



2. *Tanya as Bandit*. 1989. Silkscreen ink on aluminum, with bandana, 6' x 52" (182.9 x 132.1 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Kathy and Richard S. Fuld, Jr.

Opposite:
3. *Study for "Oozewald."* 1989/2005. Printed paper, 11 x 8 1/2" (27.9 x 21.6 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of the artist

all the elements of Noland's vernacular: prefabricated and industrial metal parts, seemingly discarded and useless; evocations of American goods and services; and a message of discomfort, distress, and threat. The title evokes the sense of movement that is inextricably linked with the culture of the American landscape, from pioneerism to the road trip, but also suggests a more sinister, drug-induced state.

Other signature works by Noland incorporate appropriated news images of heroes and outlaws of recent American history, including Wilbur Mills, Betty Ford, Oswald, and Lynette "Squeaky" Fromme. For her sculpture *Tanya as Bandit* (1989, no. 2), acquired by MoMA in 2007, Noland silkscreened an iconic news image of Hearst in the Symbionese Liberation Army—complete with an automatic assault rifle in hand and the seven-headed Cobra logo of the SLA in the background—onto a shaped aluminum board, creating a near life-size stand-in for the rebel, with newswire text beneath.

Tanya as Bandit is in many ways the companion work to another iconic aluminum cutout sculpture from the same period. In *Oozewald* (1989, no. 3) the gun is pointed at a man: a revolver is visible in the foreground of the famous image of Oswald at the moment of his murder, and the aluminum panel that supports it is perforated by several big round openings, like oversized bullet holes, in the figure's face and torso. While the shooting of Oswald and the brandishing of a machine gun by Hearst occupy different moral planes for many Americans, it is the logic of the vigilante that ties both figures together.

Noland has said that she uses "objects in the original sense, letting objects be what they are."[5] By insisting on the potential of an object to act nihilistically, as an obstacle or a provocation, Noland points to the moments in American culture when the social contract ruptures but also liberates the pleasure inherent in gestures of destruction.

"Violence used to be part of life in America and had a positive reputation," Noland has said.[6] Taken together, these works illustrate Noland's particular interest in violence in the United States as a form of political dissent and public demonstration, one used in lieu of other forms of organized or spontaneous revolt.

1. Cady Noland, quoted in Michèle Cone, "Cady Noland," in Rhea Anastas and Michael Brenson, eds., *Witness to Her Art* (Annandale-on-Hudson, N.Y.: Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College, 2006), pp. 155–56.
2. Noland, "Towards a Metalanguage of Evil," *Balcon*, no. 4 (1989); reprinted in *Witness to Her Art*, p. 127.
3. Noland, "Towards a Metalanguage of Evil," p. 131.
4. Noland, quoted in Mark Kremer and Camiel van Winkel, "'Metal Is a Major Thing, and a Major Thing to Waste': Interview with Cady Noland," in *Witness to Her Art*, p. 157.
5. Noland, quoted in Cone, "Cady Noland," p. 156.
6. Noland, quoted in ibid., p. 155.

1. *SHV Think Book 1996–1896*, by SHV Holdings NV, Utrecht, The Netherlands. 1996. Photo offset lithography (white), 8 7/8 x 6 11/16 x 4 5/16" (22.5 x 17 x 11 cm); lithograph on adhesive paper (black), 8 7/8 x 6 11/16 x 4 5/16" (22.5 x 17 x 11 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of SHV Holdings NV, Utrecht

Irma Boom's singular and single-minded way of making books is the paradigm of what many contemporary-art curators seek: the moment in which the conventional labeling of artists and categorizing of objects—as graphics, product design, or art—feels radically unnecessary or even irrelevant. Boom is a prolific designer who works on commission, and since opening her own studio in 1991, in Amsterdam, she has conceived and realized more than two hundred books and won the Gutenberg Prize, in 2001, for her body of work, including books for the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam; the Austrian lighting company Zumtobel; the Swiss furniture manufacturer Vitra; the Spanish shoe company Camper; Netherlands Architecture Institute Publishers; the United Nations; OMA/Rem Koolhaas; Petra Blaisse and her architectural textiles studio, Inside Outside; and many others. Through bold experimentation she has introduced countless innovations; with her fierce demands for artistic autonomy she has led her commissioners (which is what she calls her clients, establishing the ground for a relationship that is far from subservient) on sometimes tough but always enriching intellectual rides. Opinionated and open-minded, forceful but never arrogant, she approaches every book as if it were her first, questioning her own process with the same depth and relentlessness with which she questions every established book archetype. For Boom the book is a sensory, tactile experience, an object to hold and discover, and thus a unique medium for delivering information.

We find ourselves at a crucial juncture, what the revered American editor Jason Epstein, among others, has called "the end of the Gutenberg era."[1] It seems as though the destiny of printed matter is sealed: more and more books exist in digital format, as big publishers shrink print runs, reserving the honor of paper for those books that can justify their physical presence, either because they are certain of an audience (academic texts, books by best-selling authors, cookbooks, self-help books, and coffee-table books) or because they are designed as objects built according to an aesthetic vision. Such books follow a storyboard that guides the reader's experience through precise steps, unlike a digital publication, which may leave many lateral doors open and the reader free to forsake the path and wander in search of footnotes or other, more engaging topics.

Boom's books clearly fall in the latter category, placing her among those designers who celebrate the book as an object, as a space for a unique narrative and visual experience that cannot be replicated on a Web site, in a video, or with an exhibition. Her designs always start with rigorous research of the content, but she is not satisfied with clarity and elegance. She takes inspiration from her subject and propels the book into overdrive, layering details, adding pages, switching types of paper, fraying edges to add drama and physicality—and, thus, experience—to what could have been mere communication. Each book is unique and stylistically independent, and considered as a group, they form a complex and diverse body of work unmatched by any other contemporary designer.

Could her work have happened anywhere else with the same boldness? Could she have emerged anywhere else with the same autonomy? The Dutch tradition in graphic design is unequaled in its excellence and ability to penetrate culture and politics, from currency design—those fifty-guilder banknotes of yore, with their bright sunflowers—and stamps to Web sites, public signage, and posters. Dutch design culture is among the most mature and refined in the world, due in part to generous subsidies for, among other expenses, housing and childcare, and the government will even purchase a designer's overstocked product—whatever is necessary to minimize mundane preoccupations so that he or she can concentrate on innovation and production. Because of the respect afforded them by their culture, Dutch designers have been responsible for much of the forward movement in the applied arts throughout the twentieth century and so far in the twenty-first. Designers who are exceptional, such as Boom, have been able not only to blossom but also to compose a body of work of uncompromising quality.

Boom's career indeed describes a peculiarly Dutch arc. After graduating from the AKI Art Academy, in Enschede, she worked in the Dutch government's printing office in The Hague, where she produced two catalogues for a special edition of postage stamps issued in 1987 and 1988, her first project as both editor and designer. These books display the beginning of her experimental approach, with gorgeous overlays of different translucent papers, text running across multiple sheets, and double-folded pages printed on the interior, all creating an effect of richly layered imagery and information.

During this time she met Paul Fentener van Vlissingen, the CEO of the Dutch conglomerate SHV, who would become her most important and supportive commissioner. He asked her to design a book for the company's centenary, in 1996, and his only requirement was that she make something unusual.[2] *SHV Think Book* (1996, no. 1) took five years to complete—three and a half of them spent researching the company, attending shareholder meetings, and digging through archives of records and images. It is a 2,136-page journey through the company's history, presented in a reverse chronology. To encourage readers to stray from the constraints of sequential movement through the book, Boom did not include page numbers; the edges of the pages display an image of a tulip field as you flip through the volume

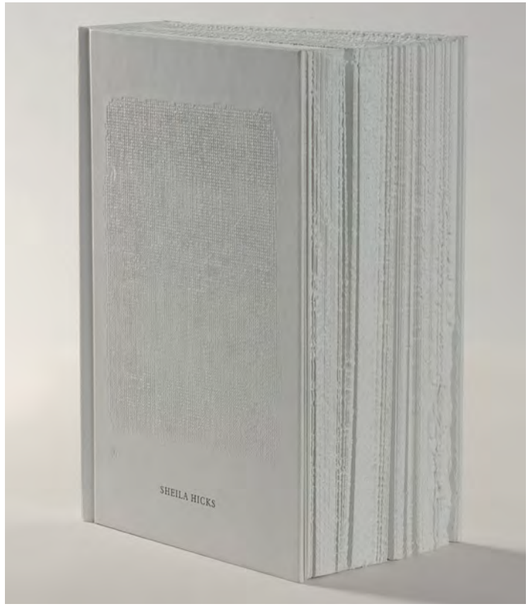
from left to right, and a Dutch poem in the opposite direction. The book broke from all previous notions of what a commemorative tome or a corporate publication should be, and for Boom proved to be an ideal laboratory for experimentation.

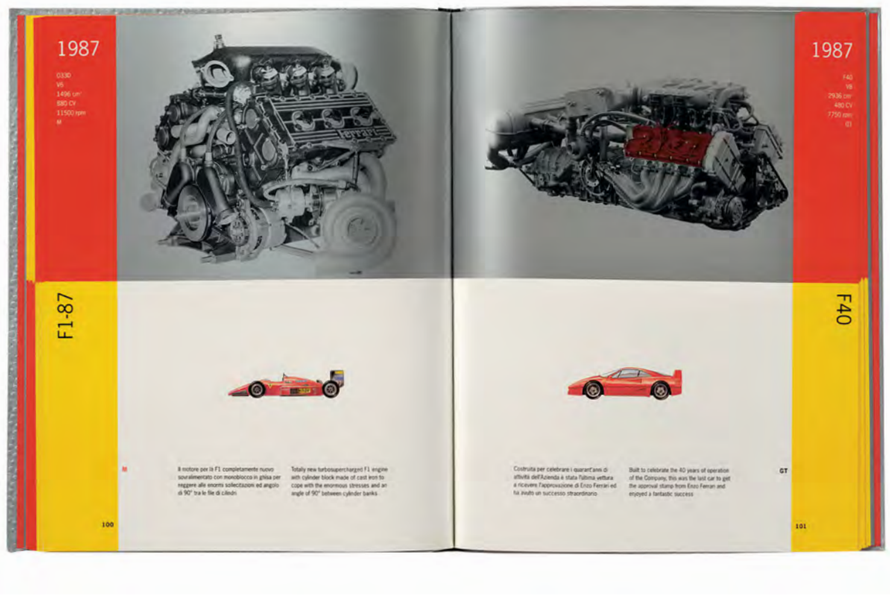
Since then she has designed several award-winning books. *Tutti i motori Ferrari/ All Ferrari Engines*, a catalogue designed for sports car manufacturer Ferrari (2002, no. 2), celebrates the irresistible beauty of the engine—the true power behind the car—with a brash and elegant juxtaposition of red, yellow, black, and metallic silver, instantly evoking not only the Ferrari brand but also, in an almost neo-Futurist strike, the boldness and audacity of a Formula 1 race. Linda Roodenburg's *Rotterdams Kookboek* (Rotterdam cookbook, 2004), which combines recipes from and culinary histories of Rotterdam's immigrant communities, does not display any food at all on its cover, but inside the book Boom has respected the book's anthropological slant—the highlighting through the lens of food of a new culture in formation—with photographs of ingredients and products and documentation of the immigrants' kitchens, homes, and ways of life. *Sheila Hicks: Weaving as Metaphor* (nos. 3 and 4), designed in 2006 for an exhibition of work by Hicks, a textile artist, was a tight, complex collaboration with the artist and the exhibition's curator, Nina Stritzler-Levine. For this volume, named "The Most Beautiful Book in the World" at the Leipzig Book Fair in 2007, Boom invented an industrial process in which a circular hacksaw gives a texture to page edges that evokes the selvages of the artist's textiles. Each of Hicks's works, beautifully and simply rendered, is centered and floating on its own page.

At The Museum of Modern Art, Boom designed the catalogue for the 2008 exhibition *Design and the Elastic Mind*, an investigation into the relationship between design and science. She incorporated into the book design one of the exhibition's main tenets: the perception of scale as a shift not through physical dimensions but through degrees of complexity. The result is a maze of lively contaminations among design, art, and science modulated by changing typeface size and accentuated by a sine-wave pattern running along the edge. Boom thus gave the book a lucid structure and a rigor that could comfortably accommodate diverse sources and iconographies, at the same time leaving room for her own interpretive freedom.

Boom is known for her uncompromising attitude, refusing prepared briefs and rejecting client control. She designs every book from scratch, working on several projects simultaneously, questioning every detail—one imagines her restless mind doubting paper itself. She insists on realizing her ideas no matter how unconventional, and through them she engages and surprises with both low and high technologies: exposed and scented spines; experimental binding and die-cuts; elaborate color-coding linking different parts of the book; vertical, horizontal, and perforated foldouts; unconventional paper stock, from the slick and glossy to the fuzzy and textural (as well as such unexpected sources as coffee filters); heat-sensitive paper; flocked covers; frayed and sculpted edges; a broad range of inks and printing techniques; and many others. "Reading" does not properly describe the experience of encountering one of Boom's books; a book, she says, is a voyage, and the means of transportation changes with each title, and with it the pace and focus of the journey.[3] One is led at the pace of a walk or an intimate conversation through *Weaving as Metaphor*, pausing at each spread for contemplation; one tears roaring through her Ferrari catalogue; one floats through *Design and the Elastic Mind* as if through outer space; and one mounts an attack on the massive SHV book. Whatever the particularities of the project, the trip is always a movement through a visual and intellectual space.

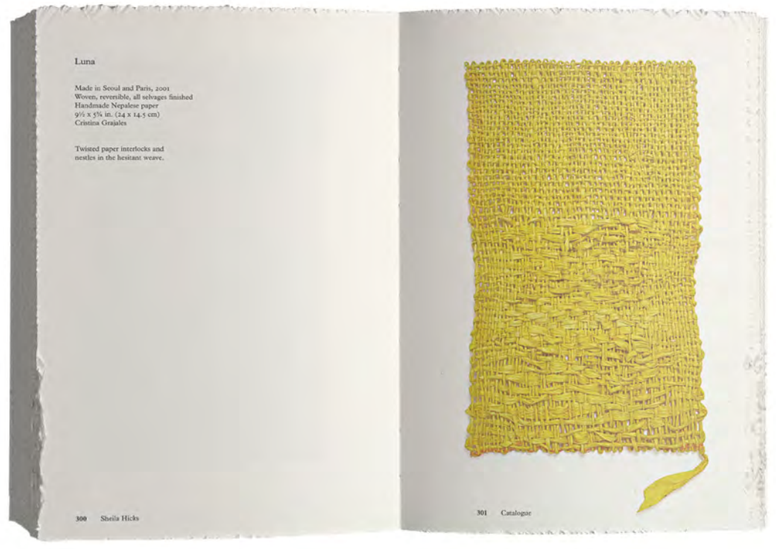
1. Jason Epstein, "The End of the Gutenberg Era," *Library Trends* 57, no. 1 (Summer 2008): 8–16.
2. Irma Boom discusses the project in Peter Bilak, "Interview with Irma Boom," www.peterbilak.com/readings/irma_boom.html; an edited version of the interview was published in *Abitare* 405 (April 2001).
3. "Irma Boom," unsigned essay published by the Design Museum, London, designmuseum.org/design/irma-boom.

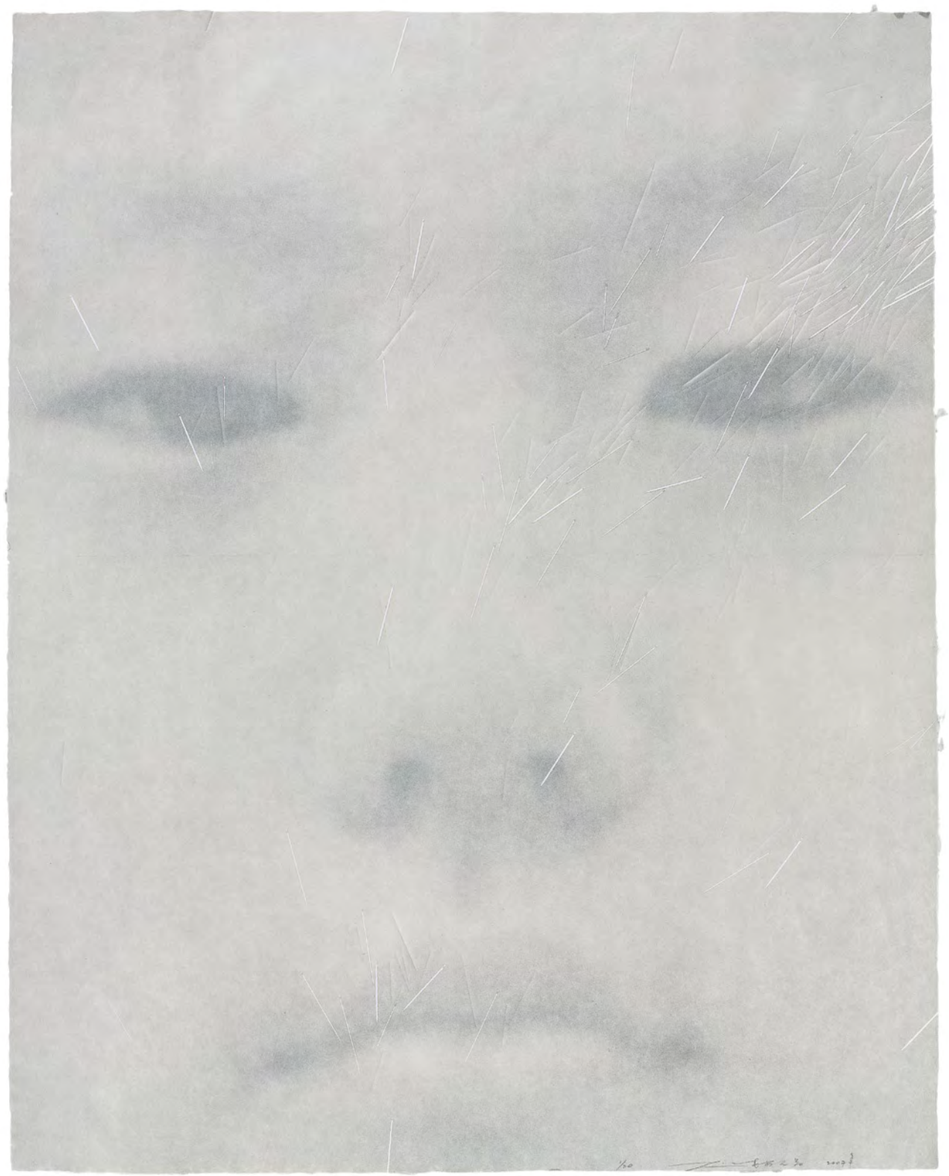




Opposite:
2. *Tutti i motori Ferrari / All Ferrari Engines,* by Gianni Rogliatti. 2002. Publisher: Ferrari SpA, Maranello, Italy. Photo offset lithography, 9 $^{11}/_{16}$ x 7 $^{3}/_{4}$ x $^{3}/_{8}$" (24.6 x 19.7 x 1 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of the designer

3 and 4. *Sheila Hicks: Weaving as Metaphor,* by Nina Stritzler-Levine. 2006. Publisher: Yale University Press, New Haven. Letterpress and photo offset lithography, 8 $^{11}/_{16}$ x 6 $^{1}/_{8}$ x 2 $^{3}/_{16}$" (22 x 15.5 x 5.6 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of the designer





LIN TIANMIAO (Chinese, born 1961) / SARAH SUZUKI

Lin Tianmiao has played a seminal role in the development and practice of contemporary art in China, remapping the boundaries for female artists there through her complex, often large-scale interdisciplinary work and her nurturing of China's burgeoning contemporary art scene in the mid-1990s. As a cofounder of Loft New Media Art Center in 2001, China's first venue dedicated to media art, she has blazed a trail for many younger artists working in nontraditional mediums.

Art was part of Lin's early family life: her mother studied traditional dance and her father was an ink painter. Lin studied art at university, in Beijing, in the 1980s, but the subject was dealt with primarily in terms of pedagogy—she received instruction on how to teach art to young people. Her turn to art practice came later in life, after she had already established herself as a successful textile designer in one of the first licensed sole proprietorships in Beijing.

From 1986 to 1994 Lin lived in Brooklyn with her husband, media artist Wang Gongxin, while pursuing her career in textiles. With Wang she immersed herself in New York's artistic community, visiting galleries and museums and meeting artists. "Our experience in New York taught me a great lesson: what being an artist meant, how real artists in the US live," she has said. "I realized that to be an artist you must first find your own character, form your own opinions, and way of living. Truly, being an artist is a state of mind as much as a way of life."[1] When Lin returned permanently to Beijing, in the fall of 1995, she transitioned from design to art, and in her new practice provided an essential link between contemporary art communities in New York and China. She converted her traditional courtyard home into one of Beijing's first open studios, creating a new space for dialogue and providing an important venue for Apartment Art, an underground movement in which Chinese artists, turning inward in response to the crackdown on personal expression after the events of June 1989, showed their work in private settings.

Many such artists working and exhibiting in the private sphere, Lin included, made art centered on personal themes, and numerous critics have connected Lin's work to the strain of Western feminist art that focuses on the objects, sites, techniques, and materials of domesticity. After looking "in many books and catalogues of female artists to see if that was true," Lin concluded that the designation didn't fit: "I had never thought I judged life . . . from the perspective of being a woman, it was always from my own experience as a person who just happened to be a woman."[2]

In the mid-1990s Lin began making work that displays her predilection for quotidian materials of contrasting textures; *The Temptation of St. Theresa* (1995) features cold cream and rough-hewn carpenter's boxes. She also began using what would become her signature medium: undyed cotton thread. This material, familiar in her former work in the textile industry, reminds her of her childhood chore of winding thread into balls for household sewing. It also has symbolic value: "Thread can change the value of things, turning the useful into the futile, and futile into useful. Thread can both collect and break up power. Thread can represent gender and change identity. Thread is both real and imaginary. Thread is sensitive and sharp. Thread is a process, something you go through."[3]

The Proliferation of Thread Winding (1995, no. 3) consists of approximately twenty thousand balls of thread about the size of Ping-Pong balls. Each ball is attached to a needle, and the needles are plunged into a piece of rice paper covering a mattress on an iron bed. This work demonstrates Lin's almost alchemical touch with materials: the thin paper has been transformed into pierced flesh. Lin also uses thread to wrap quotidian objects, in a kind of Zen-like, meditative action, turning them into monochromatic, ghostly still lifes. The objects in many of these wrapped works—"old-fashioned woks, large iron pans, coal stoves, sewing machines, thimbles, ladles, backscratchers, knitting needles, pickling bottles, pots for decocting medicine"—signify for Lin a traditional way of life that is being supplanted by modernity.[4]

In a 2006 residency at Singapore Tyler Print Institute, Lin explored printmaking and new paper mediums. Collaborating there with master print- and papermakers, she experimented freely, layering mediums, embedding materials in wet paper pulp, embossing and debossing, and improvising new techniques to achieve desired effects. The Museum of Modern Art acquired pieces from the resulting body of editioned and unique works on paper, including *Seeing Shadows VIII A* (no. 2) and *Focus XV A* (no. 1).

Like Lin's wrapped still lifes, *Seeing Shadows VIII A* addresses the growing and visible tension between traditional and modern China. It is an image of one of Beijing's numerous *hutongs*—historic alleyways in

1. *Focus XV A*. 2006. Lithograph and screenprint with embossing, sheet 50 x 39 3/4" (127 x 101 cm). Publisher and printer: Singapore Tyler Print Institute, Singapore. Edition: 20. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Fund for the Twenty-First Century

which people live, work, socialize, shop, and hang their washing out to dry. Blocks of *hutongs* are being razed to make way for new development and construction, and many remain inhabited in a state of extreme neglect and disrepair. The picture is faint, but the eye grabs certain details: an abandoned truck tire, a bit of graffiti on a crumbling brick wall, piles of refuse. The work draws on Sung Dynasty landscape painting (A.D. 960–1280) but upends the tradition both literally and figuratively—moving from a vertical to a horizontal orientation, from a scenic natural view to urban detritus. Thread embedded in the paper holds together the fractured composition (printed on four separate sheets of paper) in a symbolic effort to mend or rebind a disappearing way of life. In both its calligraphic nature and its position, cascading down the paper, the thread suggests the lines of text that appear on traditional landscapes, a kind of poetic eulogizing of a site that is disappearing before our eyes.

A similar kind of perceptual questioning—straining at a wisp of an image—is at work in *Focus XV A,* part of an ongoing series Lin began in 2001 and continued in her Singapore residency. For each iteration Lin digitally alters a photograph of a friend, family member, or herself, then often supplements the image with thread, wire, or small clusters of fabric balls. Printed in the palest grays on wet paper, the images resist the eye's attempts to bring them into focus, and they become even more elusive the nearer you are to them. But close viewing of *Focus XV A* does reveal something new: hundreds of embossed impressions of needles, conjuring visions of an acupuncture session gone awry, an attack of tiny projectiles, or the artist's alchemical sewing of fabric made flesh.

In the pioneering body of work Lin made in Singapore, each piece marks a different experimental moment as the artist and her collaborators forged new techniques and processes, layering content through the manipulation of materials. In these works on paper, Lin continues to explore tradition and modernization, memory and reality, self and identity, concepts that are at the core of her practice. The evocative images demonstrate the conceptual complexity and nuance, exceptional workmanship, and ghosted beauty that have made her among the most acclaimed contemporary artists in China.

1. Lin Tianmiao, quoted in Karen Smith, "Lin Tianmiao," in *Non Zero* (Beijing: Timezone 8, 2004), p. 14.
2. Ibid., p. 17.
3. Lin, *Seeing Shadows* (Beijing: Timezone 8, 2007), n.p.
4. Smith, "Lin Tianmiao," p. 15.

2. *Seeing Shadows VIII A*. 2006. Lithograph and screenprint with thread additions on four sheets, overall 43 1/8" x 9' 11" (109.5 x 302.3 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Fund for the Twenty-First Century

Opposite:
3. *The Proliferation of Thread Winding*. 1995. White cotton thread, needles, monitor, video, bed, and rice paper, dimensions variable. Collection the artist

1. **Janet Cardiff**. *The Forty Part Motet*. 2001. Reworking of *Spem in Alium Nunquam habui* (1575), by Thomas Tallis. Forty-track sound recording, forty speakers, dimensions variable, approx. 14 min. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Jo Carole and Ronald S. Lauder in memory of Rolf Hoffmann

JANET CARDIFF (Canadian, born 1957) and GEORGE BURES MILLER (Canadian, born 1960)

/ PAULINA POBOCHA

"It's that aspect of experiencing art where you're taken out of yourself as a viewer. Where you let go of yourself. . . . It's very pleasurable to give up your power, to enter into something which you know is safe."

The medium of installation engages artists whose aesthetics, means, and interests are broad and varied, yet it is fundamentally a sculptural endeavor, generating meaning through the relationship that emerges between the piece and the person who moves within its parameters. Although Janet Cardiff eschews the physical manipulation of space with surprising frequency, her work fits easily in this category.

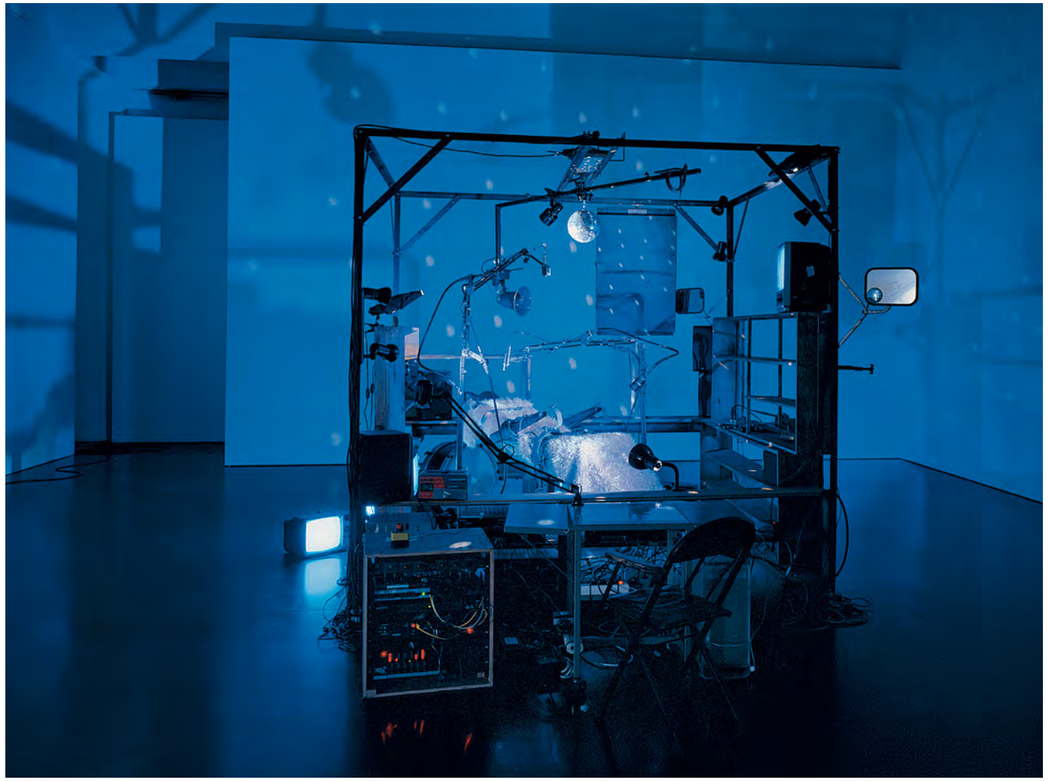
Born in 1957 in Brussels, Ontario, and educated at Queen's University and the University of Alberta, Cardiff began her career as a printmaker and photographer. Since the early 1990s, however, she has been bringing together audio, video, and sculpture in complex, multilayered installations, often made with her husband, George Bures Miller, whose involvement began with technical assistance and eventually bloomed into full collaboration.

The audio-walks—her best-known works—have no material presence except the cassette, CD, or MP3 player and headphones that one is instructed to wear. The work is the audio recording, a fragmented narrative whispered into one's ear by Cardiff, who offers a story and set of instructions. The artist has said that her work is not informed by gender issues, but it is crucial that the voice streaming through the headphones is a woman's voice—her voice. At times soft and alluring, at others curt and direct, the woman's voice, in Cardiff's assessment, enables a more intimate kind of listening than would a man's.[1] The voice becomes a vehicle of seduction, luring the viewer to take a journey through city streets and museum interiors, and to be caught up in the imagined narrative, with its suggestions of where to look and what to look for. Cardiff's aural situations transform the existing environment into the artwork and the participant into a co-conspirator, creating a profoundly vivid parallel reality that unfolds against the mundane, lived landscape of the everyday.

Her site-based projects effect a similar transformation. *The Forty Part Motet* (2001, no. 1) consists of forty speakers mounted on metal stands, arranged in an oval, and facing inward. Visually the work is minimal and unspectacular; the sound is the focus. A fourteen-minute reworking of the sixteenth-century composer Thomas Tallis's *Spem in Alium Nunquam habui*, *The Forty Part Motet* was recorded, like most of Cardiff's audio pieces, using binaural sound technology, which simulates with great precision the way a body perceives sound spatially. Standing in the center of the oval, one hears murmuring voices coming from all directions, a single voice emanating from each speaker. When the voices join in chorus, the sound is all-encompassing, yet each performer's voice remains distinct. The singers' absent bodies almost assume a tangible presence, a sensation that is heightened by the anthropomorphic quality of the speakers themselves, which register as erect mechano-human forms.

Disembodied voices are ever-present in Cardiff and Miller's oeuvre, surrounding viewers and directing their actions, creating a complicated relationship between the viewer and the work. This relationship is most extreme in the audio-walks—in which to ignore the recorded instructions is to risk losing one's place both in the fictional narrative and in actual space—but in nearly all of Cardiff and Miller's works it is an operational component, evidenced in the movements of the person experiencing it: a subtle or startled turn of the head, a walk from one speaker to the next. Here "theatricality" is as crucial as it is pervasive. The art historian Michael Fried used the term in his 1967 essay "Art and Objecthood" to describe "the special complicity that the work extorts on the beholder," and continued, "Something is said to have presence when it demands that the beholder take it into account, that he take it seriously—and when the fulfillment of that demand consists simply in being aware of the work and, so to speak, in acting accordingly."[2] These conditions are precisely those within which Cardiff operates. Of course "acting accordingly" has many manifestations. In the audio-walks it involves following Cardiff's narrative as well as her instructions. In *The Forty Part Motet* it involves tracking voices individually and as they join in chorus. In both it means becoming so entranced by aural simulacra that one mistakes them for reality.

"It's that aspect of experiencing art where you're taken out of yourself as a viewer," Cardiff has said of her work. "Where you let go of yourself. . . . It's very pleasurable to give up your power, to enter into something which you know is safe."[3] She has equated the experience of her installations to that of the cinema: "When you go to a movie, you know it's a safe environment. We can go to a scary



movie and while we wouldn't want to see anybody killed, or to see real guns, we do go wanting to be scared. It's like rides. We're providing a relatively safe environment in which we can scare people."[4] Creating this safe environment for viewers allows them to engage with the unfolding action without consequence.

The Killing Machine (2007, nos. 2 and 3), a collaboration between Cardiff and Miller, tests this premise. The work is overwhelmingly sculptural: within a metal armature sits an old dentist's chair covered with pink furry fabric; a mirrored disco ball and megaphone hang overhead; and two spindly metal arms reach in from the sides. Inspired in part by Franz Kafka's short story "In the Penal Colony" (1914), this contraption appears to be some sort of torture device recovered from our past or brought here from a dystopian future. The work is silent at first, but this is only temporary. One is invited by a sign to press a big red button, which jolts the machine into action. Wailing like a siren, the motorized megaphone begins circling the work, and soon the robotic arms start examining and then drilling into a body that is absent but nonetheless suggested by the form of the chair. Unlike *The Forty Part Motet*, which plays on loop and so begins and ends automatically, *The Killing Machine* is not complete until the button is pushed. In shifting this burden of responsibility from themselves and onto the participant—who is made to play the role of Kafka's executioner—Cardiff and Miller bring the safely fictional space they have created into collision with the real world.

Another interpretation of theatricality may prove useful here. In the *Dictionnaire encyclopédique du théâtre*, Michel Corvin writes that "theatricality is both a value which one must aspire to and a pitfall of which one must beware. Indeed, this word encompasses equally loaded positive and negative connotations. The positive use of this notion becomes manifest each time theater is threatened to be confused with 'life.'"[5] Confusing the boundaries between the spaces of representation and life is Cardiff and Miller's specialty. The participant is constantly jostled between the two, falling into the artwork like Alice through the looking glass, not knowing which way is up.

Opposite:
2. **Janet Cardiff** and **George Bures Miller**. *The Killing Machine*. 2007. Sound, pneumatics, and robotics, 9' 10" x 13' 1" x 8' 2" (118 x 157 x 98 cm), 5 min. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Julia Stoschek

3. **Janet Cardiff** and **George Bures Miller**. *The Killing Machine* (detail). 2007

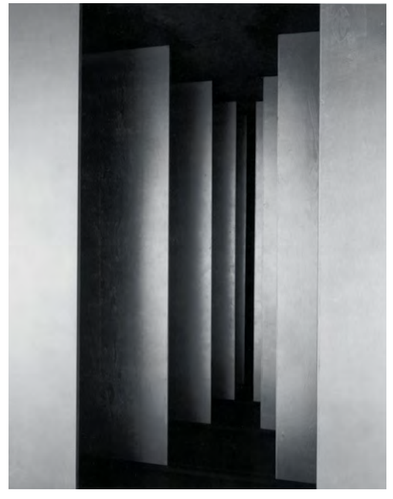
1. Janet Cardiff, e-mails to the author, April 17 and April 23, 2009.
2. Michael Fried, "Art and Objecthood," in *Art and Objecthood: Essays and Reviews* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), p. 155.
3. Cardiff, quoted in Meeka Walsh, "Pleasure Principals: The Art of Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller," *Border Crossings* 20, no. 2 (May 2001).
4. Ibid.
5. Michel Corvin, *Dictionnaire encyclopédique du théâtre* (Paris: Bordas, 1991), p. 820; quoted in Virginie Magnat, "Theatricality from the Performative Perspective," *SubStance* 31, nos. 2–3 (2002): 148.

MIND, BODY, SCULPTURE: ALICE AYCOCK, MARY MISS, JACKIE WINSOR IN THE 1970s / ALEXANDRA SCHWARTZ

1. Alice Aycock (American, born 1946). *Project Entitled "Studies for a Town."* 1977. Wood, 9' 11 1/2" x 11' 7 3/4" x 12' 1" (3 x 3.5 x 3.7 m). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of the Louis and Bessie Adler Foundation, Inc., Seymour M. Klein, President

Three sculptures, by three different artists, made within two years of one another in the 1970s, share a number of commonalities, some obvious and factual, others implied and ineffable.[1] The first is an untitled 1976 work by Mary Miss (nos. 2 and 3), created for an exhibition in The Museum of Modern Art's Projects series. The structure is large, made of plywood, unpainted on the exterior and painted black inside, elevated slightly off the floor. A viewer peering inside encounters a series of plywood screens, each painted silver on the front and black on the back and edges, which are set at a ninety-degree angle from either side of the interior and increase progressively in width, thus creating a narrowing passageway toward the back of the work. No one can enter the sculpture's interior; nonetheless it has a disorienting and claustrophobic effect, with the layers and contrasting metallic and black paint obscuring the end of the passageway and creating the sensation of contracting space and the illusion of walls closing in.

The second work, made for a Projects show the following year, is *Project Entitled "Studies for a Town,"* by Alice Aycock (no. 1). It is an enormous round structure, also constructed of plywood and "cut on a skew," as the artist described it, "to provide a bird's eye view to reveal its interior components."[2] A double flight of stairs curves around a cramped interior space, inside which a ladder is propped, and a triangular slit at the front would allow a relatively small person to enter sideways. Inspired by Roman amphitheaters and the eighteenth-century Jantar Mantar observatory in Delhi, this work resembles an



2 and 3. Views of the exhibition *Projects: Charles Simonds and Mary Miss*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, October 14–December 2, 1976, showing *Untitled* (1976) by Mary Miss

4. **Jackie Winsor** (American, born Canada 1941). *Burnt Piece*. 1977–78. Cement, burnt wood, and wire mesh, 33 7/8 x 34 x 34" (86.1 x 86.4 x 86.4 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Agnes Gund

inhabitable place but is not actually one; like Miss's untitled work, it tempts its viewers with intimacy and the possibility of entry while essentially blocking both.

The third, Jackie Winsor's *Burnt Piece* (1977–78, no. 4), is a cube made of wood and concrete, which—as the title suggests—has been burned so completely as to render the interior gutted and the remaining elements charred, a mere shell of what was once a pristine structure. Although it is not nearly as large as Miss's and Aycock's sculptures, in its form (a cube with a windowlike opening centered in each side) and heft (about 1,700 pounds) it resembles a destroyed house. Its ruined appearance and scorched odor, still strong after thirty-plus years, evoke burned-out buildings and urban blight, while its geometric form calls on the long history of abstract sculpture.

Since the early 1970s, when Aycock, Miss, and Winsor all began their careers, they have often been grouped together under a number of broad and often homogenizing rubrics, including Post-Minimalism, land art, architectural art, Neo-Constructivism, site-specific art, and sculpture in the expanded field, as well as, in certain instances, Minimalism, Conceptualism, public art, and feminist art.[3] Such terms apply to these artists unequally at best, and some don't apply at all. To categorize their work as feminist is particularly problematic; even today it remains unclear what the term "feminist art" means. (Art made by self-proclaimed feminists? Art that deals directly with femininity, gender, or sexuality? Art made during the historical height of the feminist movement, in the 1970s? Art made by women, period?)[4]

Aycock, Miss, and Winsor have maintained particularly complicated relationships with feminism as a political or artistic imperative. Coming of age during the late 1960s and 1970s, they identified strongly with the contemporary counterculture and were politically active, particularly in the burgeoning women's movement. But all three hesitate to label their work feminist, arguing that it does not address issues of gender and should be judged without regard to their sex. This stance, though irrefutable, has left these artists in a difficult ideological position, for from the earliest days of their careers they have regularly (and willingly) been included in exhibitions, books, and articles devoted exclusively to women artists, an organizing principle that one could argue is inherently feminist. The question of whether such gender-based categorizations are helpful (granting them exposure that they might not otherwise have had) or hurtful (ghettoizing them based on their sex) is perennial and irresolvable, but it is an issue that resonates powerfully in their work.

For this reason, their sculpture provides compelling material for a case study on how women artists of the so-called feminist generation—the late 1960s and early 1970s, when the women's movement was at its peak—have navigated issues of gender in relation to their work. Although Aycock's, Miss's, and Winsor's careers have been distinguished and their art was especially well received, exhibited, and publicized during the 1970s and 1980s—as MoMA's support with its Projects series during this time demonstrates—they are rarely incorporated into histories of 1970s art.[5] (Still, because their work fit within the modernist tradition of abstraction, it may have been more palatable to mainstream art institutions, such as MoMA, than explicity feminist art of the 1970s, which until recently such institutions rarely exhibitied or collected.) Their renown has never approached that of many of their male contemporaries, whose objectives defined the discourse around contemporary art and on whose work most of the aforementioned categories are based. Nevertheless the early sculpture by these three women represents an important moment in the art of that period, distinguished by a set of circumstances and objectives quite distinct from those of, for example, Donald Judd, Robert Morris, and Robert Smithson. It mined new territory in the relationship between the body, space, and sculptural form, exploring the physical and the psychological impact upon viewers and raising the difficult question of whether this work—the result of intense physical labor by the artists, and thus reflections of the scale and

strength of the artists' own, specific bodies—might also be considered in some way gendered, like those bodies themselves.

Although women artists of that generation are frequently grouped together arbitrarily, with few unifying threads apart from the fact of their gender, Aycock's, Miss's, and Winsor's sculpture of this period supports the conventional wisdom about its similarities. It tends to be constructed—made with physical labor and industrial materials—usually of wood and nails, as well as concrete, rope, twine, and mesh, and is likewise architectural in nature, with forms echoing those of buildings and sometimes allowing entry to viewers. All three artists make work both for the gallery and the landscape, probing the relationship between inside and outside, and frequently between indoors and outdoors. Each artist makes sculpture that depends on a series of physical relationships, first between the work and the artist who constructed it and then between the work and the viewer who experiences it.

The circumstantial connections between them are also strong. They have known each other for most of their working lives; Aycock and Winsor first met at Rutgers University, in New Brunswick, New Jersey, where the former was an undergraduate and the latter a graduate student in the late 1960s, and then became better acquainted while moving in overlapping social circles in the downtown New York art scene of the early 1970s. All three were involved in transforming Manhattan's formerly industrial downtown into the artistic enclaves that came to be known as SoHo and TriBeCa, and their interest and proficiency in constructed sculpture owed much to their experience in converting former factories into live/work lofts; Aycock recalled that "we all had to build our own spaces. . . . You just did it because you didn't have a choice. Otherwise you wouldn't have walls around your bathroom."[6] The do-it-yourself spirit of the downtown scene also influenced their view of making art. According to Aycock, "For a young woman, it was a very invigorating time. You felt like you could probably do anything you wanted. Very liberating. The guys were still guys, but they were losing some of their sheen. Women were out there, they just picked up the hammer and they did it. There was something going on."[7]

The era's sociopolitical shifts had a profound effect on their artistic philosophies. Miss and Winsor were especially active in political causes, regularly attending the women's consciousness-raising meetings that developed out of the Art Workers' Coalition. These gatherings, initially organized in various lofts by critic and activist Lucy R. Lippard, gave rise to such projects as the 1970 march on the Whitney Museum of American Art (and other key art-world protests, including at MoMA), the Women's Slide Registry, the Heresies Collective and journal (both cofounded by Miss), and plans for a number of all-women exhibitions. Several of these exhibitions were organized by Lippard, the first of which was her landmark *Twenty-Six Contemporary Women Artists*, at The Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Ridgefield, Connecticut, in 1971. Dedicated to emerging artists who had not yet had solo exhibitions in New York, this show helped launch Aycock's, Miss's, and Winsor's careers.

This community of women artists constituted for Aycock, Miss, and Winsor a source of support and comfort that each of them had previously lacked, particularly in art school. The community was not without its internal politics, particularly evident in the promotion, by some members, of essential feminine imagery in art by women. The interests of these three artists, however, tended more toward the abstract than the representational; none wished explicitly to address issues of gender or sexuality and resisted the call to do so. Miss reflected, "There were so many of us who were feminists and who were artists but who didn't accept a particular imagery. At the time, there were people around saying, 'If you are a feminist artist, you need to be using a particular kind of imagery. You need to be using a particular kind of material.' I already had men telling me what to do, so I certainly wasn't going to have anybody tell me what the restrictions were going to be."[8]

There can be little doubt that gender played a significant role in the development of their careers. Their professional successes would not have been possible without the progress achieved by the women's movement and its reverberations within the art world. These changes brought new opportunities for women artists to exhibit and had an effect on art education as well: Aycock, Miss, and Winsor were among the few women in their undergraduate and graduate art programs, and they and their contemporaries were among the first women to be actively recruited to teach in art schools in the early 1970s; prior to this period, there were very few female art professors.[9] But despite the historical moment, they wished to be judged as artists rather than as women artists; "First and foremost, I'm an artist," Aycock said, "regardless of the bias and the prejudice. . . . It's not that my work isn't informed by my experience as a woman, and by my being a woman and by living in a woman's body. I'm sure it is. But when people look at my work, they see the work, they don't say, 'Oh, she's a woman *and* she does this.'"[10] But sexism within the art world was rampant and insidious during this era. There was a great deal of overt discrimination, and all three artists faced bias and condescension in the reception of their work. Even attempts by some critics to theorize their work from what was presented as a feminist perspective ultimately did it a disservice, such as April Kingsley's 1978 article, "Six Women at Work in the Landscape," in which she made the essentialist observation that "male 'earthworks' are public objects that externalize the values of society in the traditional ways art has always done, whereas the women's works are private places made for interiorizing values and universal experiences."[11] The degree to which sexism may have curtailed the professional success of Aycock, Miss, and Winsor is impossible to assess; all three artists feel that their work never achieved the same prominence—or prices—as that of some (though not all) of their male counterparts, but they also acknowledge other possible factors, including the difficulty of collecting large-scale sculpture.

This leaves open the more difficult question of whether gender issues are evident in their work. The very choice of creating monumentally scaled, laboriously constructed sculpture could be considered feminist, since most middle-class women of their generation had been raised to eschew both professional careers and demanding physical labor. But the work of Aycock, Miss, and Winsor explores a relationship to issues of gender that is far more sophisticated and complex, and its crux lies in the dynamic between sculpture and the human body.

By the time they completed art school, the importance of the body in Minimalist sculpture had already been established, thanks primarily to Morris's "Notes on Sculpture" articles, which he published from 1966 to 1969 and in which he argued for a new form of large-scale sculpture. Traditional sculptures, he asserted, were "useless three-dimensional objects" with sizes "[on] a continuum between the monument and the ornament," provoking emotional responses from the viewer: monuments, at larger than human scale, overwhelm, while ornaments, smaller, create intimacy. Morris thought such emotionalism anathema to advanced art, and he believed that sculpture must be perceived with the physical body rather than the psychological mind, with the body "[entering] into the total continuum of sizes and [establishing] itself as a constant on that scale." Minimalist work, "[falling] between the extremes of this size continuum" with its approximately human scale, demanded a new perceptual model, one in which the body and the sculpture were roughly the same size and scale. Although Morris conceded that certain variables could affect a viewer's bodily perception—"he himself is establishing relationships as he apprehends the object from various positions and under varying conditions of light and spatial context"—he assumed the viewer ("himself") a constant: a universal human body of a uniform size and shape.[12]

Morris's theories owed an immense debt to French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty's principles of phenomenology, which hold that perception occurs

6. Trisha Brown (American, born 1936). *Roof Piece*. July 1, 1973. 53 Wooster Street to 381 Lafayette Street, New York. Photograph by Babette Mangolte

5. Yvonne Rainer (American, born 1934). *Trio A*. 1966, filmed 1978. 16mm film (black and white, silent), 10:12 min. The Museum of Modern Art, New York

through the body as well as the mind, but there is also a less-explored source: they also developed out of his work as a dancer and choreographer alongside his then-partner, Yvonne Rainer. Rainer was a founder of the Judson Dance Theater, which was active intermittently throughout the 1960s; she and her cohorts, including Trisha Brown, Deborah Hay, and Steve Paxton, were among the first dancers and choreographers to emphasize task-oriented movement, often employing as props everyday objects such as brooms, mattresses, and sawhorses. Rainer was especially compelled by the connections between movement and objects and between dance and sculpture, and she outlined these parallels in her 1966 manifesto, "A Quasi-Survey of Some 'Minimalist' Tendencies in the Quantitatively Minimal Dance Activity Midst the Plethora, or an Analysis of *Trio A*" (no. 5).[13] After the dissolution of the company in the late 1960s, its dancers continued to probe the relationship between the everyday and the human body, often staging performances on the city streets and in other unconventional locations, such as Brown's *Roof Piece* (1973, no. 6), in which dancers performed atop downtown roofs, and performing a series of gravity-defying works in which dancers scaled indoor and outdoor walls and other surfaces, inserting their bodies directly into the urban landscape.

Aycock, Miss, and Winsor all cite Morris as one of their primary influences—Aycock studied with him at Hunter College, New York; Miss and Winsor first encountered him as a visiting critic at their respective graduate programs—but contemporary dance, particularly that of Rainer and Brown, also had a profound impact on their work.[14] All three artists knew members of the Judson group and its later incarnation, The Grand Union, and faithfully attended their performances. Rainer ranked especially high in their admiration; she was several years older, and they seem to have regarded her as a female innovator and leader.

Both Rainer's and Brown's work encapsulated the innovative spirit of the era in which Aycock, Miss, and Winsor came of age, inspiring them as they forged their own artistic identities. Miss recalled that she and her artistic colleagues "were watching all kinds of things," and that "that crossover between dance and sculpture that [Rainer] and Morris had was in the air." Brown was an equally important influence for Miss, who attended the famous *Roof Piece* performance, of which she said, "I thought it was so fabulous to see these dancers across the roofs, each doing a movement that was then copied until you couldn't see it any further." For Miss the psychological or physical engagement with and integration of common movements into dance was "really an important thing, and was a strong impetus to this crossing of boundaries" between disciplines, disrupting notions of what art can or should be. These ideas soon made their way into Miss's

7 and 8. Mary Miss (American, born 1944). *Perimeters/Pavilions/Decoys*. 1977–78. Wood, earth, and steel-wire mesh, dimensions variable. View of installation at Nassau County Museum of Art, Roslyn, New York, 1978

sculpture: "You start using the references from the built world around you—that means architectural references—and then you're dealing with issues of landscape."[15]

This physicality—the body moving through space and through built and natural environments—surfaces in Miss's indoor works, such as the untitled piece described at the beginning of this essay, and Miss furthered this marriage between sculpture and the kinetic body in *Perimeters/Pavilions/Decoys* (1977–78, nos. 7 and 8), a suite of outdoor works that included an underground cubic structure, three wooden towers, and various embankments. In order to view the work in its entirety, viewers had to walk around it to investigate each of its parts, experiencing multiple visual and physical perspectives accompanied by various physical and psychological sensations, from the pleasure of hiking through a landscape to the anxiety of peering into a deep hole in the ground. Miss further explored the body's movement through landscape in several films, most notably *Blind* (1977), which shows a vast circular structure embedded in a rural landscape and explored by a camera traveling in a spiral motion, beginning in the structure's belowground portion and then moving aboveground, finally cutting to an aerial view. Here the camera performs the traditional role of the viewer—albeit providing perspectives that a viewer would not be likely to attain—passing through the structure in a kind of performance. Miss built the structure specifically for the purpose of filming it, privileging this performance of interacting with the object over the object itself—an interesting twist on her previous sculptural practice. A number of her subsequent sculptures are similarly performative, including *Arrivals and Departures: 100 Doors* (1986, no. 9), a screen designed to fit inside a gallery's wide entranceway and consisting of one hundred doors of varying sizes. These doors open from different sides, some of them onto mirrors, some onto empty spaces, in seemingly infinite permutations, challenging and disorienting viewers repeatedly confronting their own bodies and reflections as they circle around the sculpture.

Winsor, too, admired the contemporary dance scene, and translated the physicality of dance into sculpture. She was not formally trained in sculpture, but she credits exposure to Rainer's dancing with helping her make the transition from painting, which she had studied in graduate school. She has been very athletic since childhood and found Rainer's physicality resonant at a time when she was struggling to find her artistic voice:

9. Mary Miss (American, born 1944). *Arrivals and Departures: 100 Doors*. 1986. Hinged painted wood and mirrors, one hundred parts, 9' x 23' 2 1/2" x 64" (274.3 cm x 7.1 m x 152.4 cm) (depth variable). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Blanchette Hooker Rockefeller Fund, Anna Marie and Robert F. Shapiro Fund, and purchase

10. **Jackie Winsor** (American, born Canada 1941). *Laminated Plywood*. 1973. Plywood, 7 1/2 x 48 x 48" (19.1 x 121.9 x 121.9 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of the Gilman Foundation in memory of J. Frederic Byers III

11. **Jackie Winsor** (American, born Canada 1941). *Bound Square*. 1972. Wood and twine, 6' 3 1/2" x 6' 4" x 14 1/2" (191.8 x 193 x 36.8 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Joseph G. Mayer Foundation, Inc., in honor of James Thrall Soby and Grace M. Mayer Fund in honor of Alfred H. Barr, Jr.

> The principle is that you're ready to move on, and you don't quite know what to do with it. . . . I just began to get on the other side of that in the middle of graduate school, and I felt very much on my own. The first thing that I recall that really interested me outside . . . my own studio was Yvonne Rainer. . . . I saw . . . her perform, and I thought it was fabulous. I remember it was *The Mind Is a Muscle*, but that might not have been the case. . . . It really appealed to me because I always felt I had a muscular memory; I understood things by going through the motions. . . . Yvonne resonated because [of her own] body language, which came through dancing.[16]

Winsor finds making a sculpture "somewhat like performing," and has linked her own, physically demanding art-making to her long-standing interest in "gymnastic things" and intuitive knowledge of how to harness her body's strength to create large-scale works out of challenging materials: "I know shape and size and I know how to do it."[17] Indeed, much of her work was made using the same kind of laborious, repetitive, task-oriented methods embraced by Rainer and her colleagues. For *Laminated Plywood* (1973, no. 10) she bound together sheets of plywood and then used a fireman's hatchet to gradually chop out a hollow space, so that the physical effort required to make the work was manifest in it. This physicality is evident in *Bound Square* (1972, no. 11), which comprises four sections of sapling trees wrapped at the corners with twine; in this case moving and manipulating the trees demanded great physical strength and athleticism, and wrapping the twine required precise, meticulous, repeated actions. Winsor most directly addressed the relationship between her body and her sculpture in *Cement Sphere* (1971, no. 12), which weighs approximately what she did at the time. Like a human body, the work is mobile, and when it was first exhibited, at the SoHo gallery 112 Greene Street, it was moved around repeatedly, "a little bit like a performance."[18] That same year she mounted her only true performance work, *Up and/or Down*, at the same location. In it, a man slowly fed an enormous rope through a hole in the floor, coiling it around a woman stationed below, until it formed a dome that covered her completely. The performance was based on a nightmare Winsor had while making her rope sculptures, from 1967 to 1971, in which she found herself smothered by rope, a dream not terribly far from the reality she faced of being physically overwhelmed by the thick, heavy rope she used for those works. This close connection between the physical and psychological runs through Winsor's art; by articulating this connection, *Up and/or Down* highlighted how much of her sculpture suggests elements of performance. *Burnt Piece*, too—burned publicly on a New York street—might be considered the end result of a performance; Winsor filmed the fire, and as a result it became a performance in a very literal sense, complete with an audience and documentation.[19]

For Aycock, Rainer's work—both her task-oriented dances and later narrative films (she made her first feature-length film in 1972)—represented a way out of Minimalism into a more psychologically inflected model of making art, and a way of thinking about movement and the body: "When Yvonne got involved in narrative in her films, I was right there for that change, which was a break with Minimalism, saying, I'm going to bring in the psychological aspects of things. There were these little moves on the chessboard which, at the time, were very important to us."[20] Brown's pieces, particularly those in which her dancers walked on the walls, were also influential because of their examination of the body in space. Many of Aycock's early sculptures demand such interaction on a physical level; while *Project Entitled "Studies for a Town"* tempts the viewer with access to its interior without actually allowing it, other works explicitly invite the viewer to walk on, in, and around them, to interact with them in a kind of performance that echoes that of Miss's work. This encouragement is evinced in *Stairs (These Stairs Can Be Climbed)* (1974, no. 13), one of her earliest large-scale sculptures, a set of plywood stairs that can be adjusted to reach the ceiling of any space in which it is shown, so that a viewer mounting them must duck to avoid hitting the

12. View of the exhibition *Jackie Winsor*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, January 12–March 6, 1979, showing *Cement Sphere* (1971), left foreground; *Laminated Plywood* (1973), middle ground; and *Burnt Piece* (1977–78), right foreground

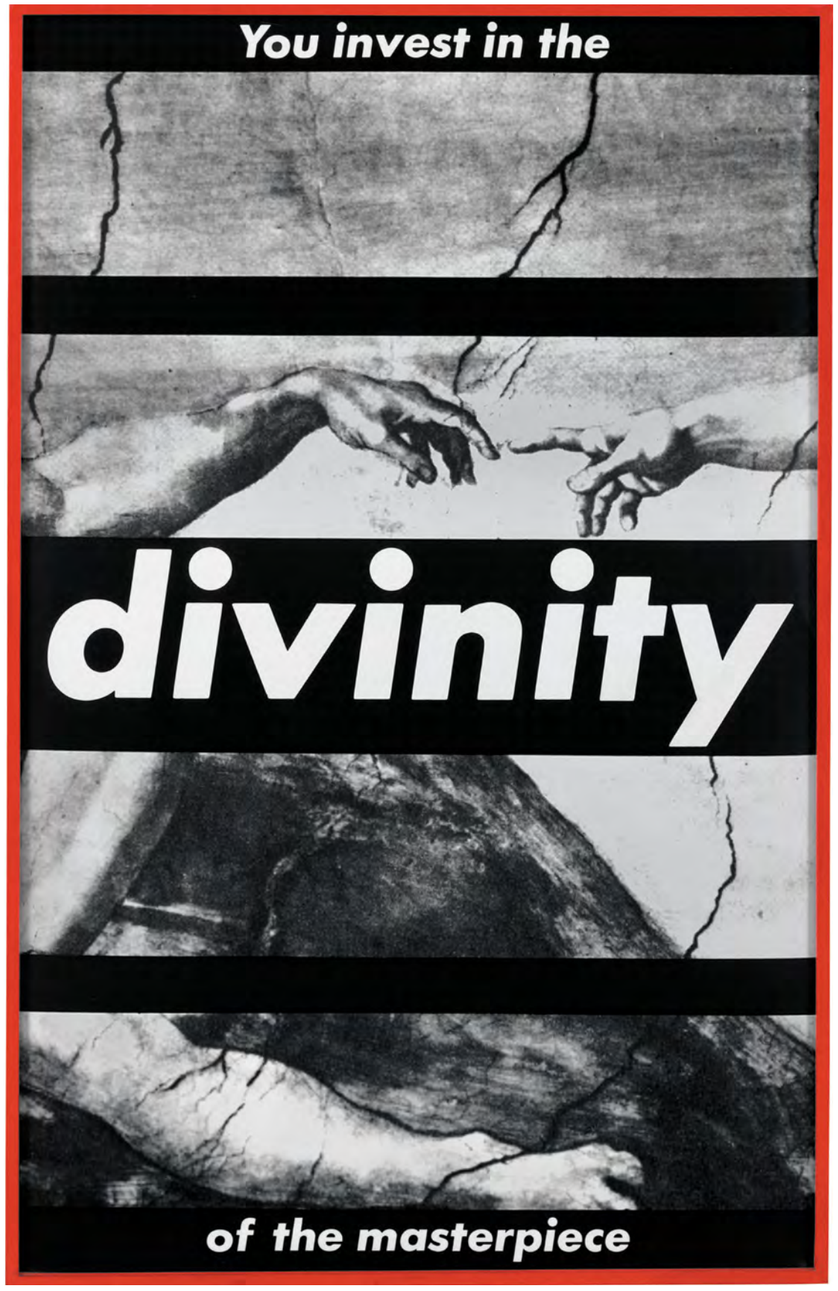
13. Alice Aycock (American, born 1946). *Stairs (These Stairs Can Be Climbed)*. 1974. Wood, 13' 4" x 10' x 14' 2" (406.4 x 304.8 x 431.8 x cm). View of installation at 112 Greene Street, New York, 1974

ceiling once he or she reaches the top. While climbing, a viewer might feel vertiginous or fearful and then, on nearing the top, cramped, claustrophobic, and disconcertingly tall; a viewer's psychological experience of this piece hinges upon physical size: how well one's feet fit the relatively narrow treads, how much stooping is required upon reaching the last step, how tall one feels at the summit. Aycock is small in stature, and *Stairs*, like all of her work, was measured against and built around her own body: "The body was important, and my size was important, because that's all I had to gauge by."[21]

Her comment makes a key point not only about her own work, but about Miss's and Winsor's as well: their sculpture is scaled to a specifically *female* body, and for this reason may be considered quite concretely gendered. By acknowledging that all bodies are different and that different bodies traveling through space evoke distinct psychological experiences, these artists made a marked departure from Morris's generalized and nongendered kinetic body and universal, emotionally disengaged model of spectatorship; this new brand of sculpture was based on specificity and difference rather than generality and unilateralism. Taking a cue from Rainer's and Brown's explorations of actual bodies, often female, moving through the built environment, Aycock, Miss, and Winsor adapted their task-oriented methods into sculpture that demands interactive viewing and is physically demanding and psychologically resonant for both maker and viewer. With their attention to the psychological effects of their work upon the viewers, they made an equally decisive break with Minimalism; the list of sensations their work conjures—claustrophobia, acrophobia, vertigo, suffocation, and burning, as well as euphoria, equilibrium, release—is long and potent. Although it has been argued that such emotional content might be attributed to the gender of its makers, these claims do not carefully consider the impact of the work on any viewer, regardless of gender, or acknowledge that each viewer's physical and psychological experience of the work will be unique.[22]

These unique experiences may provide the best argument for the artists' relationship to feminism. Rather than assuming, as Morris did, that all bodies are the same and relate to sculpture in the same way, Aycock, Miss, and Winsor drew attention to the differences between bodies, a difference that certainly hinges on gender. Their conflicted relationship to feminism makes their work richer and more complex, bringing to the fore the issues faced by all women artists—or even all women—of their generation: the questions of how to position themselves historically, politically, personally, and professionally with the women's movement and the issues that surrounded it. Their distaste for dogmatism—of feminism, of Minimalism—pushed them to move in creative directions more orthodox artists would not have taken, and to forge a path away from polemical, one-size-fits-all sculpture and toward an experience of art marked by real bodies in real space.

1. I am indebted to Alice Aycock, Mary Miss, and Jackie Winsor for their generosity in speaking with me about their work.
2. Aycock, wall text for *Projects: Alice Aycock*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, December 19, 1977–February 5, 1978.
3. Their work has most frequently been grouped with land art, by, for example, April Kingsley ("Six Women at Work in the Landscape," *Arts Magazine* 52 [April 1978]: 108–12), in an article that considered work by Cecile Abish, Aycock, Nancy Holt, Mary Shaffer, and Michelle Stuart; and in Lucy R. Lippard's response to that article ("Complexes: Architectural Sculpture in Nature," *Art in America* 67 [January–February 1979]: 86–97), which considered work by Aycock, Jody Pinto, Suzanne Harris, Susana Torre, Keiko Prince, Alan Saret, Audrey Hemenway, Holt, Richard Fleischner, Harriet Feigenbaum, and Charles Simonds. Various subsequent exhibitions of and a few textbooks on land art have included them. A major show at SculptureCenter, in Long Island City, New York, *Decoys, Complexes, and Triggers: Feminism and Land Art in the 1970s* (May 4–July 28, 2008, featuring work by Alice Adams, Aycock, Lynda Benglis, Agnes Denes, Jackie Ferrara, Harris, Holt, Miss, Stuart, and Winsor), achieved the important tasks of showcasing often-neglected artists and providing a thoughtful overview of this slice of 1970s artistic production. But it did not delve into the more detailed connections—or lack thereof—between the artists and the works' concerns, such as the artists' individual relationships both to the women's movement and to land art, a genre largely defined by such artists as Robert Smithson, Michael Heizer, Walter De Maria, and Dennis Oppenheim, and which has little in common with the work of many of the artists in question. Rosalind Krauss opens her influential article "Sculpture in the Expanded Field" with a discussion of Miss's *Perimeters/Pavilions/Decoys*, which she identifies as an earthwork that transcends the traditional boundaries between artistic and architectural genres. Krauss, "Sculpture in the Expanded Field," *October* 8 (Spring 1979): 30–44. Aycock and Miss both began to make public art around the early 1980s.
4. Cornelia Butler offers an insightful discussion of the problem of defining feminist art in "Art and Feminism: An Ideology of Shifting Criteria," in Butler and Lisa Gabrielle Mark, eds., *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution* (Los Angeles: The Museum of Contemporary Art; Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2007), pp. 14–23.
5. They received support from curators across the Museum: *Projects: Charles Simonds and Mary Miss* (October 14–December 2, 1976) was organized by the artist Howardena Pindell, then a curator in the Department of Prints and Illustrated Books; *Projects: Alice Aycock* was organized by Cora Rosevear in the Department of Painting and Sculpture; *Jackie Winsor* (January 12–March 6, 1979) was organized by Kynaston McShine, also in the Department of Painting and Sculpture. When William S. Rubin was chief curator in the Department of Painting and Sculpture, his department acquired, in 1978, Aycock's *Project Entitled "Studies for a Town"* and collected Winsor's work in some depth from very early in her career, including *Bound Square*, acquired in 1974, and *Laminated Plywood*, acquired in 1978. Rubin vigorously defended Winsor's work to a donor who refused to allow his funds to be used for the purchase of *Bound Square* because of what he perceived as the artist's radical feminist politics. Winsor's *Burnt Piece* entered the collection some years later, in 1991; the Museum did not acquire Miss's untitled 1976 work, which remains in the artist's collection, but did acquire *Arrivals and Departures: 100 Doors*, in 1988.
6. Aycock, interview with the author, December 5, 2008.
7. Aycock, interview with the author, November 7, 2008.
8. Miss, interview with the author, January 7, 2009.
9. Winsor reports that, around 1974, about twenty women art professors were hired by Hunter College, she among them, apparently in order to qualify for an allocation of funds tied to an affirmative action imperative. The women were all fired soon after they were hired. (Winsor, interview with the author, December 11, 2008.) Eventually, however, Winsor, Aycock, and Miss all attained long-term teaching positions.
10. Aycock, December 5 author interview.
11. Kingsley, "Six Women at Work in the Landscape," p. 108.
12. Robert Morris, "Notes on Sculpture, Part 2," *Artforum* 5, no. 2 (October 1966): 20–23; reprinted in Morris, *Continuous Project Altered Daily: The Writings of Robert Morris* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993), p. 11.
13. Yvonne Rainer, "A Quasi-Survey of Some 'Minimalist' Tendencies in the Quantitatively Minimal Dance Activity Midst the Plethora, or an Analysis of *Trio A*," 1966; reprinted in Gregory Battcock, ed., *Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology* rev. ed. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995), pp. 263–73.
14. Miss, author interview.
15. Ibid.
16. Winsor, author interview.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. Winsor had not originally planned on making a film of the fire, but because she needed a license to burn the work in a public place and the only sort of license available was a film license, she ended up doing so. Winsor, author interview.
20. Aycock, November 7 author interview.
21. Ibid.
22. Kingsley makes this argument in "Six Women at Work in the Landscape," to which Lippard's "Complexes: Architectural Sculpture in Nature" served as a kind of rebuttal (see n. 3). Although I disagree with Kingsley's interpretation, I can imagine an argument whereby these artists' frequent exploration of interior spaces could be related to gender and femininity, raising the question of whether, despite their rejection of such concepts as "core imagery," these ideas may have had a subtle impact. One might also speculate whether these works' frequent engagement with liminal spaces, with viewers crossing between structures, through openings, for example, could have something to do with their marginalized or shifting status as women in the art world. Such connections are, however, nearly impossible to quantify or confirm.



1. **Barbara Kruger** (American, born 1945). *Untitled (You Invest in the Divinity of the Masterpiece).* 1982. Photostat, 71 3/4 x 45 5/8" (182.2 x 115.8 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired through an Anonymous Fund

FUNDAMENTAL TO THE IMAGE: FEMINISM AND ART IN THE 1980s

/ JOHANNA BURTON

In a 1992 article appearing in the *New York Times* on the occasion of his first retrospective—held at the Whitney Museum of American Art and organized by Lisa Phillips—Richard Prince complains about women on a number of counts.[1] For one thing, he claims, his peer group from the late 1970s onward (predominantly female artists), as well as their supporters (predominantly female critics), came to have little tolerance for what they saw as his willfully ambiguous, purposefully shocking, and politically ambivalent work. "I got kicked out of the women's club," Prince says, referring to the negative reaction he garnered in 1983 from writer Kate Linker, along with other previous advocates, when he infamously exhibited an appropriated image, originally taken by Gary Gross, of a naked, oiled, and made-up prepubescent Brooke Shields. (Prince titled the work *Spiritual America* and hung it briefly the following year in his short-lived fake gallery on Rivington Street on New York's Lower East Side.)[2] But perhaps more startling than this stark admission that both his career and, it seems, his *feelings* were so affected by these art-world women—whom he obviously considered more successful and outspoken than he—is another story he tells here, taking aim specifically at Sherrie Levine. The article, by Paul Taylor, a committed commentator on contemporary art who died of AIDS-related illness later that year, recounts Prince's grievance:

> After seeing his work in an exhibition in 1979, according to Mr. Prince, the intense young artist Sherrie Levine called him and asked how he had done his photographs and whether she could use the idea. Nonchalantly, he said he wouldn't mind. Years later, after Ms. Levine had stolen the appropriation spotlight and amassed greater critical acclaim, he is less cool about her call.
>
> "People associate artists with doing things original," he says. "Here's someone who calls you up and says, 'I want to do your work.' I thought 'Jeez, I haven't heard that one before.'" Ms. Levine, for her part, says, "I know that Richard thinks I get all my ideas from him."

Unlikely as it might seem, I begin my essay with this quick look back at Prince in the early 1990s—just as he was ascending to a newfound level of fame—in order to consider a triangulation among feminism, artistic practice, and theoretical discourse as they manifested during the late 1970s and 1980s. For even if the story in question seems totally in keeping with what we now know of Prince's coy persona and penchant for crafting malleable narratives, we are nonetheless also provided here with an exceptional clue to the rapidly morphing vicissitudes of meaning around those visual tactics linked in the early days of postmodernism to "criticality"—appropriation, repetition, and intertextuality primary among them. Indeed, if Prince in this interview was so ready to display a personal drive to be seen as the progenitor of appropriative procedures (a seeming oxymoron), it was not because he felt any kinship to what had been argued up to that point by many to be appropriation's most valuable faculty: that of undoing any pretense to (and in fact laying bare fictions of) mastery. Rather, and quite to the contrary, Prince's sentiments reveal that heretofore "critical" tactics such as appropriation were by the early 1990s already understood in terms of style—and so much so that he felt no compunction (or embarrassment) about picking a bone with Levine about "originality" when it came to the two artists' respective associations with appropriation as such. In this sense, it seems to me that Levine's response to Prince's accusation is tellingly pointed. *She stole stealing*

from me, says the male artist. *Why, of course he could see things no other way*, replies the female artist. If Prince's work, that is, had once been understood to participate in a kind of larger shared project, whereby a group of young artists could be seen as subverting notions of authorship, ownership, and access, it might be the case that—for Prince at least—the death of the author simply enumerated a counterintuitive reinscription of authority.

Such internal tensions at the heart of advanced art of the period were considered and debated almost from its inception. For instance, in one pivotal essay, "Living with Contradictions: Critical Practices in the Age of Supply-Side Aesthetics" (1987), Abigail Solomon-Godeau highlights the urgency of constantly reassessing the changing context in which images and discourses are positioned.[3] It is not enough for an artist or critic, she warns, to turn time and again to those aesthetic or theoretical operations that have in the past supported oppositional work; in fact, such unflagging allegiances risk blind conservatism and might only—and unwittingly—render effects once radical into comfortable, consumable things and ideologies. To demonstrate her point, Solomon-Godeau's overtly political, avowedly feminist tract takes up the evolution of postmodernist photography, outlining the ways in which different artists' work registered delicately within paradigms (art world, medium-specific, gallery, museum, mass-cultural, academic) that they initially troubled but eventually transformed, rendering their contours more *accommodating* in every sense of the word. Indeed, she suggests, a number of important, left-leaning practitioners insisting on a certain conception of "political art"—the critic singles out a text by Martha Rosler—were at risk of rendering themselves incapable of experiencing new forms and aspects of critical art (perhaps as yet difficult to make sense of or quantify) that would respond to the local, evolving terms of their own time and place.[4] Solomon-Godeau is not only concerned here about the ways in which artistic counterstrategies were ultimately ushered into institutions but is also acutely aware of how even her own critical interventions (advocacy and critique alike) could be usurped to market ends and tastemaking codas.

Solomon-Godeau was, of course, responding directly to a context that feels to us now at once historical and yet eerily near at hand: the final years of the Reagan era, defined as they were by a level of "extreme political reaction" (as the author puts it) coupled with media saturation unlike anything America had experienced before.[5] That she goes so far as to borrow for her essay's subtitle The Great Communicator's brand of economic rhetoric shows a kind of commitment to seeing the logic of the art world as inextricably linked with that of the time's politics. Near the end of her piece, Solomon-Godeau makes her stakes clear: "For if we accept the importance of specificity as a condition of critical practice, we are thrown into the specifics of our *own* conditions and circumstances in the sphere of culture."[6] The gist, then, is deceptively simple and ruefully hard to perform: how to stay ever-alert to the ways in which seemingly static images (and histories) are perpetually retooled by the new situations that receive them, into which they are literally *handed down*?

The question is relevant not only to our understanding of individual artworks but also to our approach to and construction of art history—and it would seem all the more pertinent to this particular subject of art and feminist discourse during the 1980s, since there is, after all, a kind of self-reflexivity at stake here. For I was struck, when approaching what my author's contract for this essay describes as "the general topic of art and feminism in the 1980s," by the degree to which there has been a rush of late to fully ensconce various sets of received ideas about this topic and less evidence than one might expect of alternative, or at least competing, narratives. Perhaps better said, at just the moment when ideas of both "the eighties" and "second-wave feminism" have seemingly come to fruition as plausible historical periods (or at least topics for historical study), their contours feel already strikingly established. In other words, to look back at this particular subject is to also look closely at the ways in which that subject—or those subjects—are being taken up today, how they are being motivated to perform (to represent themselves) *historically in the present*.

This I mean quite literally. Writing this essay in late 2009 means that the widely discussed exhibitions (*WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution* and *Global Feminisms*, at The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, and the Brooklyn Museum of Art, respectively) and events ("The Feminist Future" symposium at The Museum of Modern Art) of 2007, the "year of feminism," as it has been called by some, have settled into a kind of near past (or just passed)—still an area of discussion but no longer quite so pressingly immediate. In addition, Prince (once the self-professed underdog) had a major career retrospective at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York in 2007, for which his work from the last three decades coiled up the building's rotunda and culminated in recent, large paintings that took their cue equally from Willem de Kooning and porn magazines. (One had the feeling that the artist was less interested in showing his oeuvre's progression than in arguing for a totally new historical routing for it.) And, finally, in 2009, there was a large-scale, eagerly awaited exhibition, curator Douglas Eklund's *The Pictures Generation, 1974–1984* at The Metropolitan Museum of Art (the least likely venue, one might argue)—the first attempt to plot historically the early works and operations of a group of artists whose entry into the canon came swiftly during the early 1980s via critics like Hal Foster, Douglas Crimp, and Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, but whose impact over time has, arguably, yet to be evaluated. That these—and other—surveys and evaluations of what might seem merely overlapping terrain are happening in close proximity is of no small interest, since just how variations of "feminism" register and are recognized both in histories of "art of the eighties" and within feminist history itself is the crucial question at hand. Indeed, I am not the first to point out that what tended to fall out between *WACK!* (whose parameters were the late 1960s through the '70s) and *Global Feminisms* (which took up "contemporary" practices, which is to say the 1990s to the present) was precisely what we might call "the eighties." Conversely, although there is some mention of feminism in *The Pictures Generation*—and certainly visual evidence of it in the works compiled—the real impact and driving force of feminist discourse (and of theory overall) is itself vastly underplayed.[7] In fact, the exhibition locates the temporal end point of its inquiry, 1984, at precisely the moment when such a topic would be too forceful to ignore: *Difference: On Representation and Sexuality*, the groundbreaking exhibition at The New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, which took up precisely the questions one feels lurking everywhere in Eklund's show, opened late that year.[8] That show—whose limber focus was neither "appropriation" nor "feminism" per se—claimed its terrain to be "triangulated by the terms sexuality, meaning, and language" and included a number of works (and many more artists) now in MoMA's collection, Dara Birnbaum's 1978–79 *Technology/Transformation: Wonder Woman* (page 364, no. 9) and Rosler's 1977 *Vital Statistics of a Citizen, Simply Obtained* (no. 2) among them.[9]

When considering the implications of what might be seen as omissions (but are perhaps more accurately characterized as framing decisions), it is important, I think, to follow the feminist art historian and urban theorist Rosalyn Deutsche's disavowal of viewing periods such as "the eighties" via temporal modalities. Discussing, among other things, *WACK!* and *Global Feminisms* in an important roundtable published in spring 2008 in the journal *Grey Room* (titled "Feminist Time: A Conversation"), Deutsche proposes that we consider the 1980s "not as a literal decade but as a formation of ideas and practices that transgresses chronological boundaries."[10] In proposing such a distinction, Deutsche argues against the common oversimplification that "the eighties" ushered in an all-encompassing turn away from the ostensibly more immediate, corporeal, and instinctual work of the 1960s and '70s and a turn toward the "academic," the theoretical and

2. **Martha Rosler** (American, born 1943). *Vital Statistics of a Citizen, Simply Obtained.* 1977. Video (color, sound), 39:20 min. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchase

3. **Mary Kelly** (American, born 1941). *Post-Partum Document: Introduction*. 1973. One from a group of four, Perspex and cardboard and pencil and ink on wool vests, 7 7/8 x 10 1/16" (20 x 25.5 cm). Collection Eileen and Peter Norton

the cerebral. Her demand that we rethink such totalizing, periodizing logic is helpful since it highlights what has long been a point of consternation for many who discuss the 1980s with regard to feminism's impact.[11] Indeed, as early as 1983 no less a figure than Craig Owens was pointing, if somewhat differently, to the crux of this issue, as he attempted to plot an "apparent crossing of the feminist critique of patriarchy and the postmodernist critique of representation" in his famous essay "The Discourse of Others."[12] Where there should be an implicitly shared territory, there is, instead, a kind of cleaving: for while postmodernist thought would conceivably privilege—even treat as primary—notions of *difference*, as Owens points out, *sexual difference* is accorded no special status (and in fact is rarely acknowledged overtly at all), treated rather as simply one difference among many (ironically, then, as the *same*). An interest, but also an interrogative desire, to plumb postmodernist theories ranged, as Owens saw it, from artistic practices as varied as those of Mary Kelly (no. 3), Levine (no. 4), Rosler, Cindy Sherman, and Birnbaum. But lest it seem that he was arguing that these artists in any way *applied* theoretical constructs to their work, he made clear that, for many, this was no easy fit. Using Kelly as a prime example, Owens pointed to the way she used "multiple representational systems" throughout her work, a complex formal operation that made clear that "no one narrative can possibly account for all aspects of human experience."[13] That Kelly necessarily deviated from what would seem to be any holistic strand of "postmodernist discourse," in Owens's view, however, enacted precisely the kind of corrective necessary to challenge postmodernism's blind spots. In fact, for Owens it was precisely feminism's insistence that no position (no matter how seemingly neutralized, indeterminate, or interchangeable) is free of gendered ideology that both called tenets of postmodernism into question *and* newly invigorated its underlying potential.

The ambivalence (or antagonism, to borrow an apt and productive term from Chantal Mouffe) between feminist

4. **Sherrie Levine** (American, born 1947). *Fashion Collage: 10.* 1979. Cut-and-pasted printed paper and pencil on paper, 24 x 18" (61 x 45.7 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. The Judith Rothschild Foundation Contemporary Drawings Collection Gift

and postmodernist theories during the 1980s therefore provides a useful nexus with which to consider a number of cultural effects. As Linda Nochlin observes, the topic continues to generate anxiety; in a recent essay reflecting on the events of some three decades since she wrote "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?" she comments briefly on "the impact of theory on art discourse and especially feminist and/or gender-based discourse"[14]: "It, of course, has changed our way of thinking about art—and gender and sexuality themselves. What effect it has had on a feminist politics of art is, perhaps, more ambiguous, and needs consideration."[15] Much of this perceived ambiguity, I think, derives from the continuing, and somewhat accurate, assumption that work by artists including Kelly, Louise Lawler, Levine, Sherman, Birnbaum, Rosler, Sarah Charlesworth, Gretchen Bender, Jenny Holzer, and Barbara Kruger was done along an analytic—and therefore "distanced"—axis.[16] Although Owens, for instance, argues for the complexity of the practices of such artists (even pointing out the way in which Kelly's reworking of Jacques Lacan provides a model for female fetishism that had previously been thought impossible) and convincingly claims that their work can't simply be described as embodying a "deconstructive impulse," he nonetheless also characterizes much of the work as operating on a level of withholding or refusal. If Owens argues with critics who make of their work so many illustrations of poststructuralism (merely "translating their work into French," he jokes), he still posits over and again the ways in which these are artists who variously "substitute," "deny," and "point negatively." That is to say, while insisting on the different strategies and effects of these artists, Owens offers no *picture* of what any of them do but rather describes instead sets of tactics and the objects upon which they are enacted. (Presciently, in a 1983 review of an exhibition of Levine's work in Los Angeles, Howard Singerman pointed somewhat differently to this problem, writing that the artist's work was rarely discussed in its material particularities and instead "made an example. It is embedded in articles on 'allegorical procedure, appropriation, and montage' . . . or, and unfortunately more often, it is used as evidence in articles decrying the 'small-scale skepticism' of recent art.")[17] Birnbaum's pirated stereotypes, stuttering their social norms into monstrous hyperbole in a work like *General Hospital/ Olympic Women Speed Skating* (1980, no. 5); Kruger's recourse to the aggressive normative compulsion of cultural institutions in *Untitled (You Invest in the Divinity of the Masterpiece)* (1982, no. 1); Sherman's famous Untitled Film Stills (1977–80), at once specific and scarily generic (such as no. 6); Laurie Simmons's miniature stagings of gendered lives in her Interiors series of the late 1970s;

5. **Dara Birnbaum** (American, born 1946). *General Hospital/ Olympic Women Speed Skating.* 1980. Video (color, sound), 6 min. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchase

6. **Cindy Sherman** (American, born 1954). *Untitled Film Still #38.* 1979. Gelatin silver print, 9 7/16 x 7 3/16" (24 x 18.3 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Grace M. Mayer Fund

Lawler's accounting for frames and frameworks in works like her 1981 photograph *(Allan McCollum and Other Artists) Chartreuse* (no. 7); Holzer's weirdly personal impersonal speech, as in *Living: More than once I've awakened with tears . . .* (1980–82, no. 8): these are, despite the powerful analysis afforded them, usually understood to be primarily, and inherently, destabilizing—not images in and of themselves but images *undone*.[18]

It is by beginning to grasp Owens's—and others'—particular emphasis on (and stakes in) deconstruction with regard to art informed by feminism that we might better understand the kinds of concepts still largely called upon to describe those practices today. And in the spirit of this essay's desire to, as Solomon-Godeau emphasized, consider the conditions under which we might newly approach them in our current situation, I want to return to an even earlier moment (and thus, right to the moment of that other case study I've been holding parallel) in order to offer, today, a structure less familiar, if no less immediately canonical: 1977, and Crimp's famous *Pictures* show at Artists Space. Indeed, like much of the work we now associate with postmodern artistic practice and/or artwork informed by feminism during the 1980s, Crimp's show is largely understood by default to have showcased cool, concept-driven work of images de- and then recontextualized, "made strange," to use language borrowed from Russian structuralism.

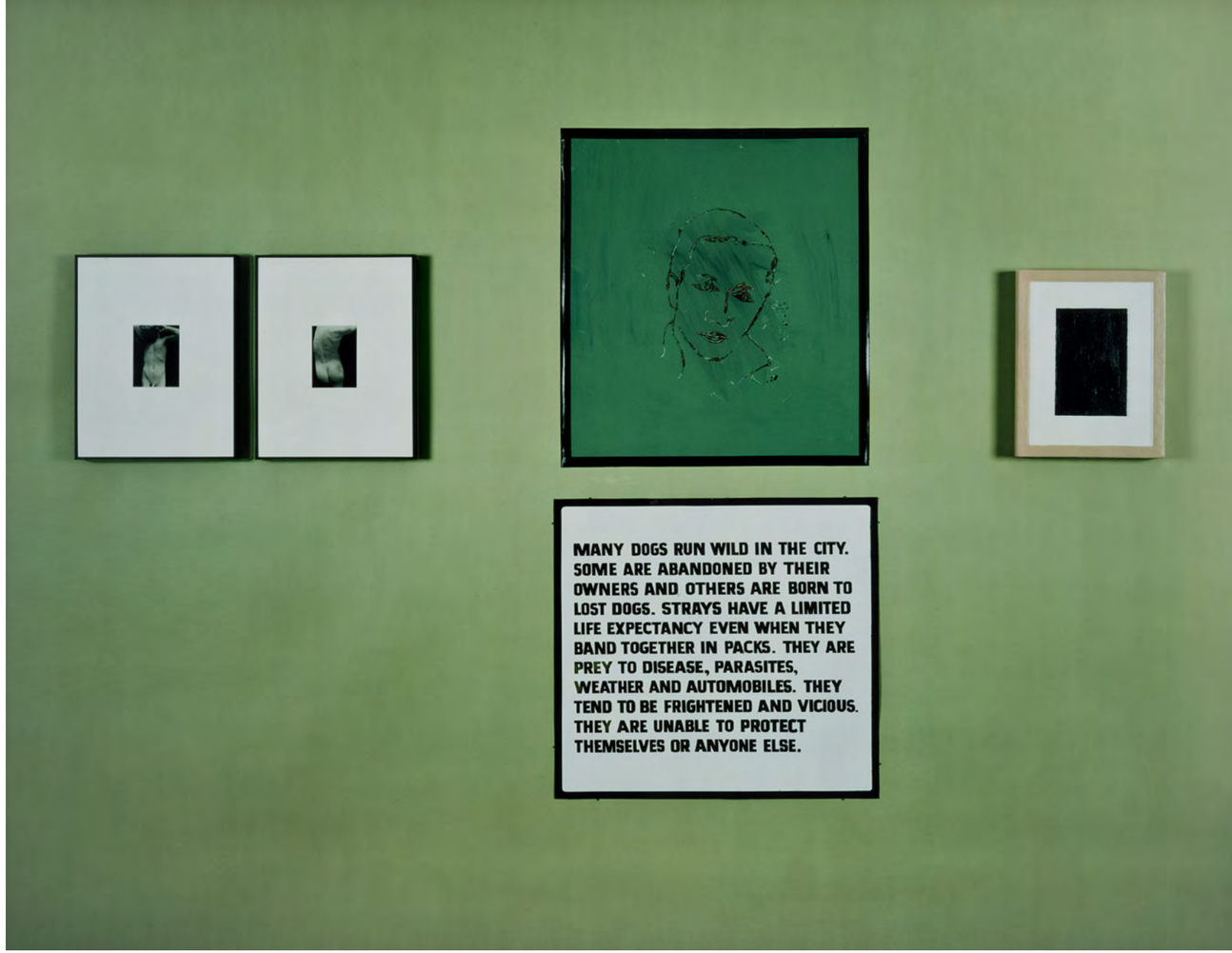
The show is often generalized by authors who quote from Crimp's small catalogue written for the occasion, and in particular a few sentences in the second paragraph:

> To an ever greater extent our experience is governed by pictures, pictures in newspapers and magazines, on television and in the cinema. Next to these pictures firsthand experience begins to retreat, to seem more and more trivial. While it once seemed that pictures had the function of interpreting reality, it now seems that they have usurped it. It therefore becomes imperative to understand the picture itself, not in order to uncover a lost reality, but to determine how a picture becomes a signifying structure of its own accord.

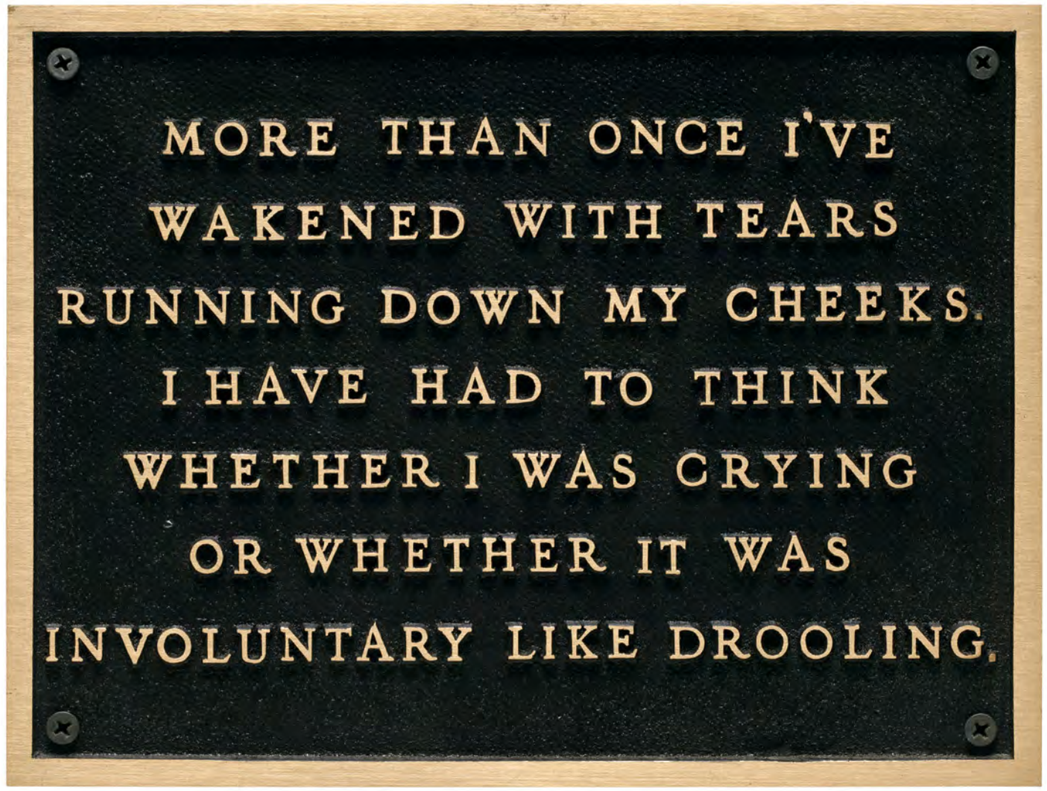
This is the bit most often reiterated, but sometimes only a partial sentence from the first paragraph suffices to gloss what is seen as the key point: "We only experience reality through the pictures we make of it."[19]

However crucial these words are, they are too often taken to embody the impulse of Crimp's entire essay, which has sometimes been aligned with Baudrillardian notions of the simulacrum, on the one hand, and with a Debordian society of the spectacle on the other. Yet, in this first version of the essay at least, Crimp's depiction of increasingly mediated experience is neither symptomatic of that experience nor especially focused on outlining what could be seen as formal strategies for critical resistance against it.[20] Even while he recognizes a paradigm shift in the way artists are here locating meaning as contiguous or shifting in relationship to the images they invoke, Crimp instead, I would argue, comes to offer what might be seen as an unexpected site for agency or, at the very least, affectual structure (all too little commented on in discussions of *Pictures*). Faced with images that are both present (they are pictures) and yet curiously absent (they are not fettered by or gifted with a singular, stable meaning), he says, we "psychologize" the image, bringing to it our own associations, memories, *content*. This, he implies, is the nature of desire, to find oneself, frustrated, in front of an image in which one has to partially insert oneself; to find oneself, frustrated, in front of an image in which one cannot help but be reflected.

There are, of course, linguistic models associated with poststructuralism to which this kind of frustration and desire pertain, namely Lacanian and Saussurean, and Crimp alludes to the ways in which some of the pictorial objects he describes—most of which in some way rely on sequence for their meaning—might be read in terms of semiotics. But near the end of the essay, he is explicit



7. **Louise Lawler** (American, born 1947). *(Allan McCollum and Other Artists) Chartreuse.* 1981. Silver dye bleach print (Cibachrome), 28 3/8 x 36 15/16" (72 x 93.8 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of the Ruth Stanton Family Foundation



8. Jenny Holzer (American, born 1950). *Living: More than once I've awakened with tears . . .* 1980–82. Bronze, 7 5/8 x 10 1/8" (19.4 x 25.7 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchase

about the ways in which the various distantiation or dissociation techniques employed by artists elicit not only a kind of analytic dissembling of their objects but also a kind of productive yearning in their *viewers*. Discussing Philip Smith's work in particular, Crimp, making clear that we are not to read the artist's actual images before us *as* fantasies or dreams or memories, nonetheless asks that we think of them as "[taking] as their model the imagination's mode of representation."[21] Citing Sigmund Freud's thinking on memory and dreams, Crimp reminds us that "Representation is not born in the imagination; it is a *function* of the imagination. It is by way of representation that reality comes to us. Pictures of things do not signify those things, but like ideograms, signify only what is suggested by those things."[22]

Perhaps when it comes to parsing the dynamics of identity, deconstruction, and viewing subject—particularly with regard to notions of desire—it bears mentioning that there was, in fact, yet another, less remarked-upon *Pictures* exhibition that took place in 1977, or, to be more accurate, there was one show in two parts that came to pass just a few months before Crimp's. Robert Mapplethorpe, who had come on the scene in New York a few years earlier, was now having his first major showing, splitting his time and his work between two venues: the high-profile, uptown Holly Solomon Gallery and the downtown performance space The Kitchen. Art historian Richard Meyer, in a chapter devoted to Mapplethorpe in his book *Outlaw Representation*, describes Mapplethorpe's dual announcement card—in which the artist's hand is pictured twice writing the word "pictures," in one instance wearing a crisp striped shirt cuff and Cartier watch, in the second a studded leather bracelet and fingerless leather glove—as staging a "compare and contrast" that operates on several levels.[23] "The implication," Meyer states, "is that the same man alternates between these two 'hands,' between his roles as businessman (by day) and leatherman (by night). Mapplethorpe stages the difference between dominant culture and leather subculture as merely a stylistic one, a simple exchange of one costume for another."[24] Such "compare and contrast," the implications of which Meyer goes on to plumb at length, were at the heart of Mapplethorpe's practice. The famous (and for many still unresolved) question around the artist's work continues to be that of the stakes of formalism.[25] If Mapplethorpe once famously said, "I don't think there's that much difference between a photograph of a fist up someone's ass and a photograph of carnations in a bowl," he nonetheless felt inclined to show us both, and for however interchangeable they ostensibly were, they were, of course, stubbornly singular as well.

That two shows both bore the name *Pictures* in 1977 would hardly be enough to warrant comparison between them; indeed, it is not until we are afforded a kind of historical view that we can more vividly see some of their unexpected tandem enterprises. We learn, in fact, something about the trials of our own perspective on the 1980s and feminism by looking closely at how Crimp would negotiate the terms of his own *Pictures* exhibition and those of the artist, Mapplethorpe, who would be responsible for the other one. For it is fair to say, I think, that in 1977 Crimp would have been no fan of Mapplethorpe, going so far in 1982, in an essay called "Appropriating Appropriation," to use Mapplethorpe as his bad object in order to distinguish between radical and conservative modes of appropriation.[26] Modernist appropriation, he explained there, operated by means of style, where postmodernist appropriation operated by means of material. For Crimp, this meant that an artist like Mapplethorpe had been getting by formally, by aligning his look with traditions of "aesthetic mastery." On the other hand, he argued, an artist like Levine, in her re-presentations, undid such pretenses by revealing them as repeatable and infinitely repeating devices.

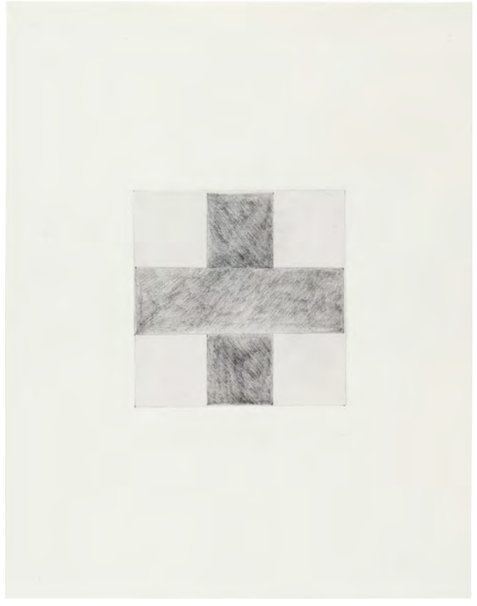
Yet in the introduction to his 1993 book, *On the Museum's Ruins*, a collection of essays (including "Appropriating Appropriation"), Crimp again revised his thoughts on this matter, reevaluating Mapplethorpe's work in the context of the fervor it ignited in the early

1990s. That Mapplethorpe should appear much more disruptive a force to Crimp after the arrival of Jesse Helms and the AIDS crisis is perhaps not surprising to us now, but it is the nature of Crimp's own awakening that is so fruitful here. For not only did Crimp realize that Mapplethorpe's appropriation of classicism and fashion was much more complicated than he had initially thought (in utilizing such old tropes against themselves, they caused immense friction); he also realized that what Mapplethorpe was able to do, more so than Levine, in his estimation, was to gesture outside the frame, to, as he put it, "momentarily render the male spectator a homosexual subject," thus mobilizing the active, political, desiring viewing subject.[27]

And here is where I would not exactly part ways with Crimp, but place in question the terms of the viewing subject. For in recognizing that Mapplethorpe's pictures activate a discursive subject, one that can articulate itself in relationship to an image, Crimp also finds Levine less sufficient. If, as Crimp argues, Mapplethorpe alludes to the world outside of art and hints at his own contamination of representational tactics, Levine cannot help but recycle the same terms of her confinement (in and of *art*, that is to say). Yet what would it mean to rethink Levine's work and the terms in which it finds itself argued: to afford it, that is, the kind of "body" it is so regularly argued not to have?[28] Rather than seeing Levine's images as *undone*, as only recycling the terms of their own art-historical confinement, perhaps it is possible to think of these as *also* objects of desire, before which, pace Crimp, viewing subjects are themselves constituted and represented. Levine, who has often enough flatly admitted that she re-produces those images that she is attracted to, that she *loves*, cannot be (or ought not to be) explained as conquering images but, rather, as conjuring them as screens capable of reinvestment in different situations. Early commentators such as Valentin Tatransky highlighted this fact. Responding to Levine's collage work, which comprised Fashion Collages (such as no. 4) and President Collages, among others, at the end of the 1970s, he wrote explicitly that "collage is the means by which Levine retrieves images from the artistic indifference of their culture. Unlike the pop artist, she is not embarrassed by the emotional load of her images."[29]

The idea of an "emotional load" within each and every one of Levine's works (and I think this can be thought through with so many of the women artists associated with "the eighties" to whom I've referred throughout this essay) counters (or at least complicates) the purely deconstructive one, asking that we look again at the *pictures* that are before us. Indeed, writing (surprisingly, to some) in defense of David Salle in 1981, Levine herself asks that we reconsider the male artist's paintings, suggesting that it is too easy to dismiss them as nothing more than misogynist images. "In this culture which publicly denies our most primary desire and dread, the most important function is to mediate between our public and private selves," she writes.[30] I think, reading these words, of Levine's extensive project produced for her 1984 exhibition at Nature Morte Gallery, in New York City (nos. 9–12). Titled *1917*, Levine's show offered forty pencil and watercolor renditions of works by two early twentieth-century masters who would ostensibly have nothing in common except their temporal proximity. With intimate, overdetermined, repellent yet touching images by Egon Schiele hanging alongside Kazimir Malevich's characteristically austere yet strangely delicate geometric abstractions, Levine's *1917* refocused the eye, which couldn't decide quite how or where to land.

The surprising lushness of these works—like so many of Levine's in all manner of mediums, including those executed photographically—proves false the assumption that they enact nothing beyond cool analysis. There is, however hard to describe, something added here or something taken away, which is to say a new picture has been made. And one, I think, can approach anew so many of the artists whose works have been perhaps too quickly (if with



9–12. Sherrie Levine (American, born 1947). *Untitled (After Malevich and Schiele), from the 1917 exhibition, Nature Morte Gallery, New York.* 1984. Four from a group of forty works, pencil and watercolor on paper, each 14 x 11" (35.6 x 27.9 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Constance B. Cartwright, Roger S. and Brook Berlind, Marshall S. Cogan and purchase

13. Dara Birnbaum (American, born 1946). *Kiss the Girls: Make Them Cry.* 1979. Video (color, sound), 6:50 min. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchase

the best of intentions) claimed for the side of deconstructive critique without accounting for the possibility that a more complicated scopic pleasure may also be in evidence. That Levine's practice must be critically rethought with such a caveat in mind is, I believe, crucial. So too with works by Sherman—whose Untitled Film Stills have, in this vein, been compellingly recast by Kaja Silverman as opening up the possibility in viewers for a more sympathetic, empathetic, even *loving* gaze.[31] Or, very differently, with Birnbaum, who—in a work like *Kiss the Girls: Make Them Cry* (1979, no. 13) and others—does much more than re-present images we think we know. Almost never discussed are the aural/oral elements of her video works, and particularly the sing-along karaoke segments, at once hilarious and suggestively open-ended in their implications. In all of these examples, questions of identification at both the individual and collective level arise—these not often enough asked of the artists under discussion here. However, one must remember that the artists themselves have never stopped asking: indeed, one thinks in particular of Kelly's long-standing, singular commitment to insisting that the "woman-as-spectator" can approach her objects with both criticality and pleasure (that these things need not be seen as counter to one another) and, indeed, that *desire* is not supplemental but rather fundamental to the image.[32]

1. Paul Taylor, "Richard Prince, Art's Bad Boy, Becomes (Partly) Respectable," *New York Times*, May 17, 1992, p. H31. All quotations in this paragraph are from this source.
2. According to Richard Prince, the picture was occasioned by a visit to The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Alfred Stieglitz's 1923 photograph *Spiritual America* understandably had an effect on Prince. The leather- and metal-bound cropped shot of a gelded workhorse was, for Stieglitz, a perfect metaphor for all he saw wrong with America, its repression and passionlessness increasing with a drive for capital. In a quote worthy of repeating, Stieglitz describes Paris as vividly alive and full of workhorses "throbbing, pulsating, their penises swaying held erect—swaying, shining. . . . In New York such a thing would not have been permitted, all the horses in the city being geldings." Dorothy Norman, *Alfred Stieglitz: An American Seer* (Millerton, N.Y.: Aperture, 1973), p. 240; quoted in Carol Squiers and Brian Wallis, "Is Richard Prince a Feminist?" *Art in America* 81, no. 11 (November 1993): 114–19.
3. Abigail Solomon-Godeau, "Living with Contradictions: Critical Practices in the Age of Supply-Side Aesthetics," in *Photography at the Dock: Essays on Photographic History, Institutions, and Practices* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), pp. 124–48.
4. Solomon-Godeau is referring to Martha Rosler's "Notes on Quotes," *Wedge* 2 (1982), an important text that itself responds to (though doesn't name directly) Benjamin H. D. Buchloh's 1982 "Allegorical Procedures: Appropriation and Montage in Contemporary Art," *Artforum* 21, no. 1 (September 1982): 43–56.
5. Solomon-Godeau, "Living with Contradictions," p. 148.
6. Ibid.
7. For a concise evaluation of *The Pictures Generation*, in particular of the show's lack of emphasis on feminism, see Howard Singerman, "Language Games," *Artforum* 48, no. 1 (September 2009): 256–61.
8. Not incidentally, *Difference* was co-organized by Kate Linker and Jane Weinstock, not so long after the Prince incident occurred. In her essay for *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution* ([Los Angeles: The Museum of Contemporary Art; Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2007], pp. 336–45), Solomon-Godeau highlights *Difference*; in addition, it is discussed interestingly in "Feminist Time," the *Grey Room* roundtable I refer to in n. 10.
9. Linker, foreword to Linker and Weinstock, eds., *Difference: On Representation and Sexuality* (New York: The New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1984), p. 5.
10. Rosalyn Deutsche, Aruna D'Souza, Miwon Kwon, Ulrike Müller, Mignon Nixon, and Senam Okudzeto, "Feminist Time: A Conversation," *Grey Room* 31 (Spring 2008): 34.
11. It also opens up the possibility for examining, as Rosalyn Deutsche points out, artists of various ages who are producing work—and exchanging ideas—at the same time, even if they are not ostensibly from the same "generation."
12. Craig Owens, "The Discourse of Others: Feminists and Postmodernism," in *Beyond Recognition: Representation, Power, and Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), pp. 168–69.
13. Ibid., pp. 173–74.
14. Linda Nochlin, "'Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?' Thirty Years After," in Carol Armstrong and Catherine de Zegher, eds., *Women Artists at the Millennium* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2006), p. 23.
15. Ibid. The author goes on to add, "It has certainly acted to cut the wider public off from a great deal of the hot issues discussed by in-the-know art historians and critics." This comment—one that dismays me but that I aim here to take very seriously—reinscribes a division between theory and art, between experts and laypeople, and lies at the heart, I think, of much of the discomfort with (and questions about what to do *with*) the intellectual content of art of "the eighties." I would argue that ideas are at the core of, and inseparable from, almost all advanced practices, but the particular discomfort that is enumerated time and again around this period—when postmodernism and feminism cross swords—is worth remarking on.
16. Although it is not the purview of this essay, which is focused on New York, the list of artists I offer here could be amended to include such European figures as Katharina Fritsch, whose work participated in a similar—and often the same—dialogue. Indeed, another feature of the expanding art world of this moment was an exchange of artists due to galleries in New York and Cologne, for example, opting to show one another's star artists. The moment when the number of visible women artists rose sharply also marked a time in which female gallerists—the owners of Metro Pictures Gallery, Paula Cooper, Mary Boone, and Monika Sprüth among them—were prominent and powerful in turn. For a discussion of the cross-Atlantic art scene during this time, see my essay "A Will to Representation: *Eau de Cologne*, 1985–1993," in Rhea Anastas and Michael Brenson, eds., *Witness to Her Art* (Annandale-on-Hudson, N.Y.: Bard Center for Curatorial Studies, 2006).
17. Singerman, "Sherrie Levine at Richard Kuhlenschmidt Gallery, Los Angeles," *Artforum* 22, no. 1 (September 1983): 80.
18. Owens's "The Discourse of Others" was itself a self-reflexive return to a blind spot. Indeed, it was the author's realization that he himself had, in his zeal to read the indeterminacy in one of Laurie Anderson's works, completely ignored gender that prompted him to write a corrective essay. Owens and Douglas Crimp both enacted such returns to their own work, discussing the ways in which one is always writing of one's own moment with certain blinders in place.
19. Crimp, *Pictures* (New York: Artists Space, 1977).
20. A substantially revised version of Crimp's essay appeared in *October* 8 (Spring 1979): 75–88, featuring a slightly different list of artists (Cindy Sherman is included, for instance) and a different analytic trajectory, one more focused on Michael Fried than Sigmund Freud.
21. Crimp, *Pictures*, p. 20.
22. Ibid., p. 24. There is not space here for an adequate discussion of Philip Smith (one of the five artists in Crimp's *Pictures* show and original essay), but his subsequent disappearance from this context does bear mentioning. (He does not appear in Crimp's second text and, perhaps more tellingly, he has been left out of Douglas Eklund's 2009 reprisal at the Met, which included some thirty artists—a broadening and elaboration of a generational and tactical group, according to the curator.)
23. Richard Meyer, *Outlaw Representation: Censorship and Homosexuality in Twentieth-Century American Art* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002), p. 183. I am grateful to Meyer for drawing my attention to Robert Mapplethorpe's *Pictures*.
24. Ibid.
25. Though it certainly deserves more than a footnote, I have only space to mention here the ongoing debates around "art photography" versus "photography." For a good overview of the terms, especially as they were evolving during the 1980s, see Solomon-Godeau's essay "Photography After Art Photography," in *Photography at the Dock*, pp. 103–23. There she relays the now-legendary story wherein gallerist Ronald Feldman and photography scholar Peter Bunnell discuss the merits of Sherman within the pages of *The Print Collector's Newsletter* in 1983. Bunnell says unequivocally that Sherman is "interesting as an artist but uninteresting as a photographer," not having made, to his mind, contributions to the medium. In this regard, work by most if not all of the women artists under consideration in my essay cannot, I would argue, be understood without some recourse to the postmodernist view of photography with regard to repetition, aura, etc. Yet traditional notions of the medium still apply, as evidenced by the very small amount of this work in The Museum of Modern Art's collection (except, ironically in the case of Sherman and perhaps even more ironically for this essay, the famous untitled double portrait "by" Prince picturing him and Sherman styled identically: Prince and Sherman, *Untitled* [1980]. MoMA owns close to a hundred pieces by Levine but not a single piece of her photographic work; rather, she is represented for the most part by drawings; paintings and sculpture; and prints and illustrated books—where, though she is still "copying" other works, she is doing so by hand.
26. Crimp, "Appropriating Appropriation," in Paula Marincola, *Image Scavengers: Photography* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, Institute of Contemporary Art), pp. 27–34; reprinted in Crimp, *On the Museum's Ruins* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993), pp. 126–37.
27. Crimp, "Photographs at the End of Modernism," in *On the Museum's Ruins*, p. 27.
28. In this respect, Singerman again points early to the problem. He writes, in the same 1983 *Artforum* review, that for so many who look at it, "Levine's work . . . seems to have no body. She provides no material impregnated by intention or by its own self-conscious materiality; there is no image that is Levine's for the critic to decipher."
29. Valentin Tatransky, "Collage and the Problem of Representation: Sherrie Levine's New Work," *Real Life Magazine*, March 1979, p. 9. He goes on to remark, "One could say that there is an apparently contradictory combination of desires in Levine's work: the desire to express significant emotion, and the reluctance, combined with a modernist awareness, to create with the hand."
30. Levine, "David Salle," *Flash Art*, no. 103 (Summer 1981): 34.
31. Kaja Silverman, "The Screen," in *The Threshold of the Visible World* (New York: Routledge, 1996); reprinted, with revisions, as "How to Face the Gaze," in Johanna Burton, ed., *Cindy Sherman* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2006), pp. 143–70.
32. See Mary Kelly's anthology of writings, *Imaging Desire* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1996).

1. Left to right:
a. Kathleen Hanna (American, born 1968). Billy Karren (American, born 1965). Tobi Vail (American, born 1969). Kathi Wilcox (American, born 1969). *Bikini Kill: Girl Power*, no. 2. 1991. Photocopy, page 8 1/2 x 5 1/2" (21.6 x 14 cm). Cover by Hanna. The Museum of Modern Art Library, New York

b. Kathleen Hanna (American, born 1968). Billy Karren (American, born 1965). Tobi Vail (American, born 1969). Kathi Wilcox (American, born 1969). *Bikini Kill: A Color and Activity Book*, no. 1. 1991. Photocopy, page 8 1/2 x 7" (21.6 x 17.8 cm). Cover by Hanna. The Museum of Modern Art Library, New York

c. Molly Neuman (American, born 1971). Allison Wolfe (American, born 1969). *Girl Germs*, no. 5. c. 1993–94. Photocopy, page 8 1/2 x 7" (21.6 x 17.8 cm). Cover by Miss Pussycat (American, born 1969). The Museum of Modern Art Library, New York

RIOT ON THE PAGE: THIRTY YEARS OF ZINES BY WOMEN / GRETCHEN L. WAGNER

During the summer of 1991 Kathleen Hanna, Molly Neuman, Tobi Vail, and Allison Wolfe, friends who knew each other from the underground college-music scenes of Olympia, Washington, and Eugene, Oregon, converged in Washington, D.C., and put down the bedrock of the Riot Grrrl revolution. Hungry to establish spaces and networks in which women could act, dress, and create as they pleased, these women and their many collaborators shaped a movement that would be highly influential in the landscape of late-twentieth-century American feminism. Unlike the protests of the 1960s and '70s, which largely squared off with sexual discrimination and economic inequality, the Riot Grrrl movement grew out of music and art circles and consequently focused on the creative expression of women-positive ideas.

Along with punk rock music, the self-published zine—a small booklet of collaged drawings, photographs, and texts photocopied for distribution—served as the primary form for the expression of the Riot Grrrls' dissonance, and *Bikini Kill*, *Girl Germs*, and *Jigsaw*, among many others, placed the visual arts at the heart of their raucous approach (no. 1). Since the 1990s the format has become an immensely popular outlet for an international community of radical women artists connected by a vast network.[1] Situating Riot Grrrl publications at the center of this scene, I will examine a selection of zines by women in the years preceding, including, and following the output of the Riot Grrrl movement, an era that spans thirty years of highly transgressive projects originating on those printed pages.

Zine—shortened from "magazine"—is an evolving moniker, but it has come to refer loosely to "noncommercial, nonprofessional, small-circulation magazines which their creators produce, publish, and distribute by themselves," usually with the aim of putting forward radical—and often personal—cultural and social production.[2] There has been a tremendous increase in such titles since the 1970s, and during this period women have played a considerable role in cultivating this platform and intensifying its usefulness in challenging the status quo. The material featured here, all from the collection of The Museum of Modern Art Library, touches on some of the defining issues of the postmodern era: heightened scrutiny of the art establishment, renewed emphasis on collective activity, questioning of fixed gender identities, and opposition to the social conditioning of the individual in an oppressive commercial environment. These works supply an opportunity to consider the many varied pathways of creative production not always foregrounded in the story of twentieth- and twenty-first-century art.

With a heritage that includes politics, journalism, literature, music, and visual arts, the zine became an apt setting for the convergence of dissenting creative and political assertions by women. During the French and American Revolutions, oppositional pamphlets and broadsides (single-sheet publications) were created by private individuals who owned movable-type presses, and the practice continued into the early twentieth century with socialist and anarchist interest groups hoping to sway international opinion.[3] The appearance of the self-produced and self-distributed booklet in visual-art practice during the last fifty years has brought with it an implicit interrogation of the status quo and established power structures; modest printed matter has not only circumvented an increasingly commercial and exclusionary art market but has also accommodated the shift from object to idea advanced through Conceptual and performance art.[4]

The content of zines, like that of the science fiction and rock 'n' roll fanzines from which they are descended, is largely provided by readers, but often the zine's aim is to dismantle the commercial system that begat the fan in

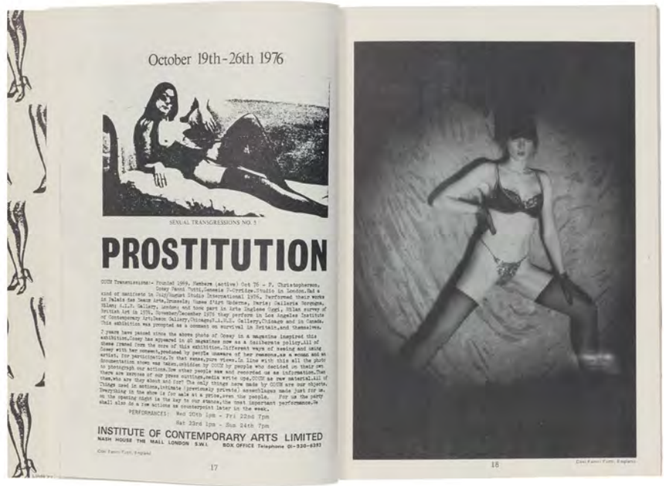
the first place.[5] Moreover, as Stephen Duncombe, who has made an in-depth study of zines, has observed of this collaborative function, "The medium of zines is not just a message to be received, but a model of participatory cultural production and organization to be acted upon"—that is, the network is essential to the zine's production, meaning, and distribution.[6] Such focus on interconnectivity has a precedent in the correspondence art, or mail art, of the 1960s and '70s, when artists sent each other works by post, all in the spirit of liberated transmission and reciprocal exchange.[7] Anyone with a stamp could enter the dialogue, so correspondence art certainly offered more points of entry for women, and its marginal position provided space to explore provocative themes that might not have been otherwise permissible.[8] The DIY (do-it-yourself) ethic, democratic and inclusive, would not have been possible without the advent of the affordable and accessible printing processes developed since the 1960s, especially mimeograph or ditto machines and photocopiers.[9]

Canadian artist Anna Banana, who founded *Vile* in 1974, was one woman who gravitated to these democratized technologies.[10] She has explained that "[*Vile*] began at Speedprint, a small instant-print shop in San Francisco where it became apparent to me that anyone could be a publisher."[11] *Vile*, distributed through the correspondence network, through which Banana had many ties, is a combination of art, poetry, fiction, letters, photos, and manipulated advertisements from *Life* magazine. It is a predominantly visual publication, engaging critically with the inundation of mediated pictures that come out of the organs of mass communication. "*Vile* came out of my wanting the magazine to reflect the negative, anti-social aspects of humanity," Banana has said, and her cover designs do just that, with the inaugural issue depicting artist and industrial musician Monte Cazazza bloodied from extracting his own heart (no. 2a).[12] Subsequent covers feature a naked man dangling in a noose, a face pierced with a pitchfork, and other grotesques. Banana maintained an inflammatory relationship with her readers, as evidenced in the introduction to the first issue, which blasts, "O.K. Here it is. I hope you're satisfied. As editor-in-chief of this project, all I can say is don't bother sending me any more of this shit."[13] All sorts of personal and social taboos are tested within *Vile*'s pages, which are sullied, thanks to readers and Banana's artist friends, with brazen dirty jokes, absurdist decrees, and surreal collages of drawing, photography, and print.

Banana claimed as influences Dada humor, theories of therapeutic madness, and the blissed-out bohemia afoot in the Bay Area during the 1960s and early '70s, but *Vile*'s nihilist tenor dovetailed with the hard-boiled punk attitude on the rise in Britain and the United States at the time.[14] The presence of the British art collective COUM Transmissions in the zine's pages offered one such bridge from the peacenik to the punk. This evolving enterprise, anchored by core members Genesis P-Orridge and Cosey Fanni Tutti, pursued "large, central, universal issues such as sexuality, death, life, decay, definitions of space, and the nature of authority in society," and explored them "through the adoption of the 'non-universal' behavior of the 'deviant.'"[15] P-Orridge, Tutti, and their collaborators used a visceral and unnerving immediacy and a taste for all things forbidden in order to "annihilate reality" and its imposed codes, scrambling received notions of self, life, and art by taking on pseudonyms, experimenting with appearance and behavior, and moving between music, performance, and the production of objects.[16]

Their unique collages, mailed to Banana as gifts of "not art," were reproduced in *Vile*, continuing this transgressive project; according to P-Orridge they felt *Vile* gave them "carte blanche to be more tasteless and provocative."[17] Two submissions, photo-collaged, rubber-stamped montages representing the activities of the fictitious L'Ecole de l'art infantile (no. 2b), the creation of COUM Transmissions and frequent collaborator Robin Klassnik,

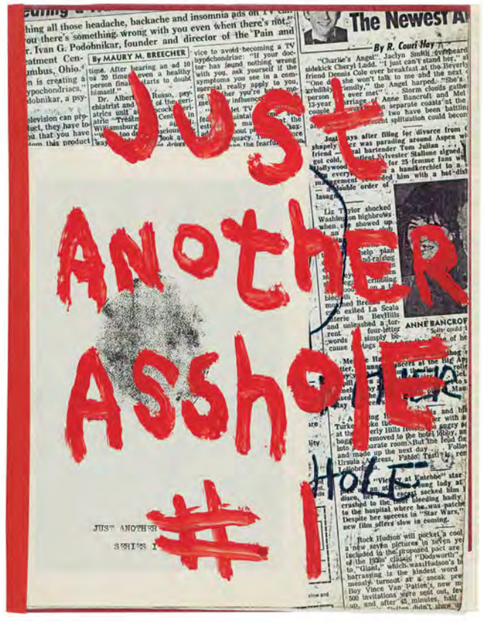
2.
a. Anna Banana (Canadian, born 1940). Bill Gaglione (American, born 1943). *Vile*, no. 1. 1974 (dated 1985). Offset with offset wrap cover, page 8 1/2 x 11" (21.6 x 27.9 cm). The Museum of Modern Art Library, New York
b. (left page) Genesis P-Orridge (British, born 1950). (right page) Robin Klassnik (British, born South Africa 1947). Spread from *Vile*, no. 1. 1974 (dated 1985). Offset, 11 x 16" (27.9 x 40.6 cm). The Museum of Modern Art Library, New York



3. Left to right:
a. **Anna Banana** (Canadian, born 1940). **Bill Gaglione** (American, born 1943). *Vile: Fe-Mail Art*, no. 6. 1978. Offset, page 10 x 7" (25.4 x 17.8 cm). The Museum of Modern Art Library, New York
b. (left page) **COUM Transmissions** (Britain, 1969–1976). (right page) **Cosey Fanni Tutti** (British, born 1951). Spread from *Vile: Fe-Mail Art*, no. 6. 1978. Offset, 10 x 13 1/2" (25.4 x 34.3 cm). The Museum of Modern Art Library, New York

were printed in the first issue of *Vile*; at this imagined school "everyone was the director/principal and there were no students," thereby abolishing academic formulas and promoting amateurism in the arts.[18] An issue devoted to "fe-mail art" includes the press release for COUM's infamous exhibition *Prostitution* alongside a portrait of Tutti (no. 3); in 1974 Tutti began to model for pinup magazines, and she subsequently incorporated explicit images of herself into COUM's work as part of a larger project, articulating instances of exploitation in the art world and in society in general. During *Prostitution*'s run, at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London, photographs by Tutti similar to those appearing in *Vile* were the center of a national controversy over public funding of "indecent" art and were consequently made available only upon request. By making the images visible in *Vile*, Banana reactivated COUM's interrogation of oppression and abuse, which had been muted by the British authorities; operating her zine on the fringes of the art world, she was able to reclaim this imagery for the artists and redeploy their radical intent.

The punk and postpunk milieu and its music fanzines provided fertile ground for photographer and musician Barbara Ess to establish *Just Another Asshole*, in 1978, amidst the buzz of New York's No Wave scene. Having returned to her hometown in 1976 after studying film abroad, Ess found herself in a surge of activity in the makeshift studios and alternative spaces and clubs of SoHo and the Lower East Side. It was a mutable web of collaborations, where inspired individuals jumped in and out of bands, organized fleeting exhibitions, and contributed to each other's compilations of poetry and prose, all in a frenetic drive to revolutionize the structures of art and life. Ess, like many others, juggled simultaneous projects, dabbling in sound, photography, film, writing, performance, and noisy amalgams of all four. Composer Glenn Branca joined Ess in the bands Daily Life and The Static, and together they coedited later issues of *Just Another Asshole*, which, like *Vile*, took its shape from open submissions. The third issue had solicited



4.
a. **Barbara Ess** (American). *Just Another Asshole*, no. 1. 1978. Photocopy with painted plastic cover, page 11 1/4 x 8 3/4" (28.6 x 22.2 cm). The Museum of Modern Art Library, New York
b. **Barbara Ess** (American). Spread from *Just Another Asshole*, no. 2. 1978. Photocopy with tape collage elements, 11 1/4 x 16 1/2" (26.6 x 41.9 cm). The Museum of Modern Art Library, New York

contributions via invitations posted throughout lower Manhattan; the result includes pages by Jenny Holzer, Barbara Kruger, Carla Liss, and nearly forty others.[19] Describing her zine project as "a *real* art forum" (as opposed to the magazine of the same name), Ess, with Branca, followed with other compilation issues, including an album of sound pieces representing the complex interpenetrations of art rock, punk, jazz, funk, and avant composition that were being fostered in the downtown circle.[20]

The first two issues of *Just Another Asshole* (no. 4), which Ess edited alone, are bold booklets of photocopied collage held together with electrical tape and marked with scarlet scrawl. The inside pages are occupied by images of military helicopters, celebrity head shots, tabloid reports of near-death experiences, and zealous warnings of apocalyptic falls from grace, all mixed on the page in high-contrast compositions. Ess's incongruous assemblings are expressions of what came to be a career-long investigation of perception, memory, and loss. The zine's title is taken from a distressing composition in the first issue: a tattered press photograph, of a deaf boy killed by an attacker he did not hear, defaced by Ess with the handwritten tag "just another asshole," creating a juxtaposition of objective reportage with subjective commentary, toward darkly humorous and bleakly cynical effect. Ess later observed, in a discussion of life and her work in general, "In the final analysis I think that one's perception of reality is subjective, that your own experience is all you've got."[21] This perception, tragically deficient and inevitably burdened by omission and misinterpretation, turns the deaf boy's story into a blunt tale about the shortcomings of human observation and judgment. Existential disconnection and broken truths were among the ideas that Ess and her fellow No Wave artists, inhabiting an economically stressed city, plagued by crime and decreasing in population, endeavored to address through projects such as *Just Another Asshole*.

Lisa Baumgardner also navigated the tangle of New York's downtown activities, gathering material for *Bikini Girl*, which she first printed in 1978 as a splashy pink photocopy (no. 5).[22] She had produced the short-lived zine *Modern Girlz* as a graphic design and illustration student in Kent, Ohio; unable to find magazines that suited her interests, "[I] never hesitated to write to artists, writers and others in the public eye . . . asking them to contribute to a little homemade magazine I wanted to do."[23] She moved to New York in 1977 and continued this practice, focusing her attention on the area below Fourteenth Street, the clubs she frequented, and the people she met. The zine's format, like those of *Vile* and *Just Another Asshole*, differs from issue to issue, at times including bound-in flexi discs and flip-book music films such as for the band Nervus Rex's single "Go Go Girl" (no. 5e); the tenth issue is a VHS cassette featuring short films by Baumgardner and her friends, along with footage from parties they attended. Unlike *Just Another Asshole*'s abstract and oblique content, *Bikini Girl* is marked by a more journalistic approach—more like the compilation of news and activities practiced by fanzines and correspondence artists—with photographs of the pop-punk bands that played at the Mudd Club and CBGB and interviews with local personalities such as Gerard Malanga, a regular at Andy Warhol's Factory. These features intermingle with snippets about 1950s and '60s television and movie culture and S&M and bondage pulp. Acknowledging her diverse source material and penchant for trashy things, Baumgardner made a sardonic editorial disclaimer:

> Because this is a book for everybody, we're going to leave nothing out. If, at any point, your intelligence is insulted, just remember that there are others perhaps not as knowledgeable as you, and that the more basic material is meant for them.[24]

The inaugural issue's cover (no. 5a) shows a very slick hero from the TV series *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.* simultaneously held hostage and embraced by his buxom, blonde costars. This tension between female aggression and

5. Top, left to right:
a. **Lisa Baumgardner** (American and French, born USA 1957). **Brian Spaeth** (American, born 1948). *Bikini Girl*, no. 1. 1978. Photocopy, page 8 1/2 x 5 1/2" (21.6 x 14 cm). The Museum of Modern Art Library, New York
b. **Lisa Baumgardner** (American and French, born USA 1957). *Bikini Girl*, no. 2. 1979. Offset, page 10 13/16 x 8 3/8" (27.5 x 21.3 cm). The Museum of Modern Art Library, New York
c. **Lisa Baumgardner** (American and French, born USA 1957). *Bikini Girl*, no. 7. 1980. Photocopy, page 8 1/2 x 5 1/2" (21.6 x 14 cm). The Museum of Modern Art Library, New York
Bottom, left to right:
d. **Lisa Baumgardner** (American and French, born USA 1957). Spread from *Bikini Girl*, no. 3. 1979. Offset, 8 1/2 x 11" (21.6 x 27.9 cm). The Museum of Modern Art Library, New York
e. **Lisa Baumgardner** (American and French, born USA 1957). Spread from *Bikini Girl*, no. 2. 1979. Offset, 10 13/16 x 16 5/8" (27.5 x 42.2 cm). The Museum of Modern Art Library, New York

photos by Angelo Pastormerlo, NYC

6. **Lisa Baumgardner**
(American and French, born USA 1957). Spread from *Bikini Girl*, no. 6. 1980. Offset, 8 1/8 x 16 1/8" (20.6 x 41 cm). The Museum of Modern Art Library, New York

attraction is a recurring theme for Baumgardner, who brings to the surface many of the sexual stereotypes put forth by the popular media, contrasting them with material that suggests a full range of sexual experiences and gender positions: images of a dominatrix inflicting pleasurable pain and of the B-52s' Fred Schneider in drag (no. 5d) backstage at the Mudd Club, and a written reminiscence by Malanga, about being tied up in Warhol's film *Vinyl* (1965). Robert Siegle, who has written extensively about lower Manhattan's creative scene, has noted that Baumgardner and her fellow "urban nomads," steeped as they were in downtown culture and polymorphous perversity, were adept at "[seeing] the sheer constructedness of even so deceptively 'basic' a category as sexuality."[25] Baumgardner described her own relationship with photographer Angelo Pastormerlo, who often contributed to *Bikini Girl*, as a reversal of traditional domestic roles, one in which "he was the person who cleaned for me, ran errands, did my secretarial work and laundry, for years and years. His servitude was his own idea."[26] For the sixth issue's centerfold, Pastormerlo took a photograph of a stiletto taped to his scrambled television screen (no. 6), a set of composited symbols—of hypersexualized femininity and mass communication—in a state of unresolved interference, encapsulating the tenor of *Bikini Girl* and the milieu in which it first circulated.

Vile, *Just Another Asshole*, and *Bikini Girl*, among other women-initiated projects, paved the way for the inexpensive self-published formats central to the Riot Grrrl movement. Pop culture and its loaded symbols played a very important role in the Riot Grrrl zines of the late 1980s and early '90s—those scruffy, homemade, photocopied booklets now most commonly associated with the word "zine." By this time the feminist thought of the 1960s and '70s had weathered a decade of conservative criticism, and new voices such as Susan Faludi (in *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women* [1991]) and Naomi Wolf (in *The Beauty Myth* [1991]) were appearing on bookshelves, prompting a young generation of women to reflect on their social and political circumstances. Commercial media, and particularly the unrealistic feminine ideals it peddled, came under scrutiny by women seeking to gain control of their own representation. In 1991 Hanna, Neuman, Vail, Wolfe, and Kathi Wilcox, all of them active in the hard-core punk-music scene of the Pacific Northwest, began to reflect on the imbalances they had experienced as girls: misogynist lyrics sung by macho all-male groups, increasingly dangerous mosh pits, female fans discouraged from assuming anything more than peripheral roles as girlfriends or groupies. Infuriated by this treatment, as well as by everyday sexism, they called for "Revolution Girl Style Now!"

To keep the revolution on their own terms, they followed the punk credo that any willing soul can pick up a guitar and take the stage, forming the bands Bikini Kill (Hanna, Wilcox, Vail, and Billy Karren), in 1990, and Bratmobile (Neuman, Wolfe, and, later, Erin Smith), in 1991 (no. 1).[27] They also initiated discussion groups on personal and political topics, organized all-girl gigs, released recordings on small, local labels, and published zines: Neuman and Wolfe released several issues of *Girl Germs* and were also responsible for *Riot Grrrl*, a weekly publication known for covers featuring female superheroes and prominent women from history. Hanna first assembled *Bikini Kill*'s gritty pages in 1991. These titles are united by their amateurish production values and intensely personal tone, with amped-up outbursts, painful confessions, and urgent manifestos covering topics such as breakups, punk rock, drug use, celebrity gossip, rape, self-mutilation, and eating disorders. The photocopied issues circulated through a grassroots network of authors and readers, who handed out copies at shows, mailed them to one another, left them in women's restrooms, and generally used any low-cost or free distribution method they could devise.

Julia Downes, who has looked closely at recent feminist activism, has observed that "[Riot Grrrl] proposed a different way of conceptualizing feminist activism, to move

7. Kathi Wilcox (American, born 1969). Spread from *Bikini Kill: Girl Power*, no. 2. 1991. Photocopy, 8 1/2 x 11" (21.6 x 27.9 cm). The Museum of Modern Art Library, New York

away from traditional protests like marches, rallies and petitions, towards an idea of cultural activism which incorporated everyday cultural subversion like creating art, film, zines, music and communities as part of feminist activism."[28] These cultural subversions employ a style of language divorced from the academic or political formalities that had dominated feminist discussion in previous generations, a colloquial manner that erupts on the page in a determinedly unruly collage of sweet and sinister schoolgirl doodles, depictions of adolescent entertainment icons, photos of friends, vernacular expletives, gross physical humor, and queercore pinups.[29] Wilcox's method for assembling spreads in *Bikini Kill* (no. 7) was

> a combo of photos, Polaroids, and 16mm/Super 8 stills from a movie that I made. I took the actual 16mm/Super 8 film and fed it into the microfiche copy machine at the Evergreen [State College] library. . . . I used to make hundreds (thousands??) of film still Xeroxes . . . some of those film Xeroxes got re-Xeroxed with photos, then got ripped up and taped back together again with red tape and/or star stickers. This collage is a mishmash of those elements.[30]

Wilcox's cut-and-paste arrangement in the second issue of *Bikini Kill*, grainy from many generations of duplication, includes a gawky drawing by Karren and skull-and-crossbones stickers bought at gas stations. Here, as in pages throughout the Riot Grrrl zines, there is an emphasis on private moments and underground resourcefulness infused with elements of defiance and danger, echoed by a declaration, from "The Riot Grrrl Manifesto," that "Riot Grrrl is . . . *because* viewing our work as being connected to our girlfriends-politics-real lives is essential if we are gonna figure out how what we are doing impacts, reflects, perpetuates, or *disrupts* the status quo."[31]

Collage, as one critic has pointed out, "runs counter to [the] desire to categorise, to separate, and sequester the things around us" and is thus fitting for the Riot Grrrl message.[32] In such countercultural practices as Dada, concrete poetry, and theories of *détournement*, collage assumes a similar oppositional message; Wilcox's ripped-up Xeroxes, like the screams and audio feedback in Riot Grrrl songs, disrupt convention with emotional and chaotic disturbance. "Girl" becomes "grrrl" when ecstatic anger clouds intellect, with a transformative effect, and in this confused moment, language and codes are scrambled. A photocopied Polaroid in Wilcox's collage is marked "what we do is secret," alluding perhaps to this screen of emotion and rage, behind which new possibilities are born.[33]

A vibrant exchange network, precipitated by the Riot Grrrl movement, erupted in the mid-1990s and carried the vitality of zine production by women into the twenty-first century. In recent years one center of activity has been in Providence, Rhode Island, where groups of artists, some recently graduated from the Rhode Island School of Design, have lived and worked in the abundant sprawling, abandoned factories in the Olneyville district. In these empty spaces, collaborative communities construct other-worldly, baroque interiors from cast-off and scavenged materials—using obsolete electronics, funky textiles, discarded toys, and other oddities to adorn a warren of apartments, art studios, and performance spaces—and organize elaborate multimedia presentations incorporating noise bands, music videos, and absurdist high jinks. Although many of the warehouses were demolished when the area was gentrified, some remain, including the Dirt Palace—a "feminist cupcake-encrusted netherworld," as one member called it, created in 2000, in a former library, by Rachel Berube, Jo Dery, Robin Nanney, Xander Marro, and Pippi Zornoza. Printmaking, textile, and film workshops, along with other production and exhibition spaces, "foster the growth of strong, thoughtful, independent women who use their creative awareness of the world to change it."[34]

Printmaking, specifically screenprinting, plays a central role in the Dirt Palace's activities, as it has done for other collectives, including Fort Thunder, founded by

8. Above, clockwise from top left:
a. Louise De Curtis (American, born 1979). *Shit Talker*. c. 2002. Photocopy with screenprint wrap cover (unfolded, irreg.), 12 5/8 x 20 7/8" (32.1 x 53 cm). The Museum of Modern Art Library, New York
b. Michaela Colette Zacchilli (American, born 1983). *Bullshit Frank and Gorilla Joe*, no. 1. 2008. Photocopy with screenprint cover, page 8 1/2 x 5 1/2" (21.6 x 14 cm). The Museum of Modern Art Library, New York
c. Jo Dery (American, born 1978). *Plant Life for Human Lesson*, no. 1. 2004. Photocopy with screenprint cover, page 8 1/2 x 5 3/8" (21.6 x 13.7 cm). The Museum of Modern Art Library, New York
d. Xander Marro (American, born 1975). *Little Pink Birds*, no. 1. 2004. Photocopy with screenprint on flocked cover, page 8 1/2 x 5 1/2" (21.6 x 14 cm). The Museum of Modern Art Library, New York
e. Xander Marro (American, born 1975). *Witch!* 2006. Photocopy, page 4 1/4 x 2 11/16" (10.8 x 6.8 cm). The Museum of Modern Art Library, New York

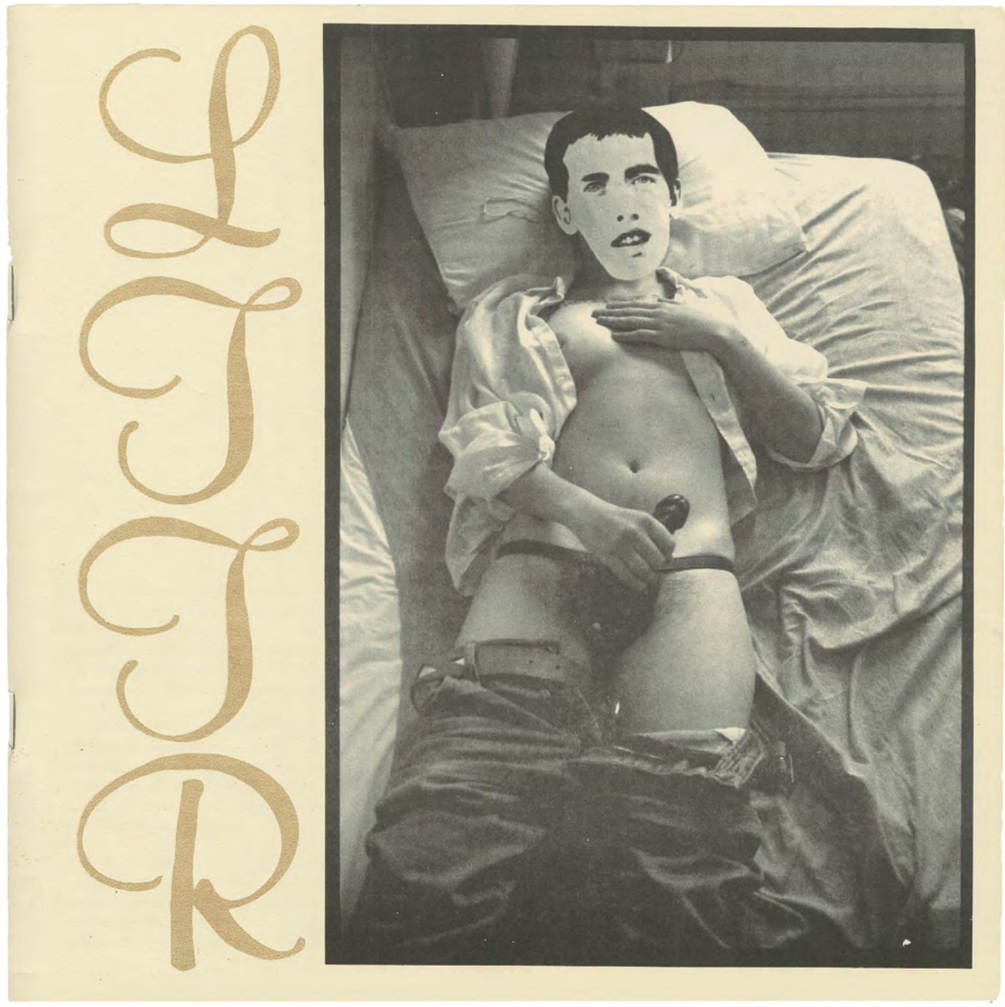
Right:
9. Natalja Kent (American and Czech, born USA 1981). Nicole Reinert (American, born 1976). *Tuesday Terrs*, various unnumbered issues. 2008. Photocopy, folded sheet 5 1/2 x 8 1/2" (14 x 21.6 cm), unfolded sheet 11 x 17" (27.9 x 43.2 cm). The Museum of Modern Art Library, New York

Mat Brinkman and Brian Chippendale in 1995. It quickly and easily generates saturated color, crisp shapes, and large fields of pattern, and was well suited to Dirt Palace projects, particularly dazzling installations, event posters, and zines: *Bullshit Frank and Gorilla Joe*, *Plant Life for Human Lesson*, *Little Pink Birds*, *Witch!*, *Tuesday Terrs*, and *Shit Talker* (nos. 8 and 9) are among the titles that individuals in the group have produced. These publications provided vehicles for acting out against and coping with the onslaught of manufactured media, and their idioms include vulgarities and pop-culture references similar to those deployed in Riot Grrrl zines and, before them, *Bikini Girl*. The pages of the Dirt Palace creations also reveal an interest in mystical and supernatural phenomena. In Marro's *Witch!* (no. 8e), radical politics mix with pagan magic, as in an assemblage of texts appropriated from the 1960s feminist guerilla theater group Women's International Terrorist Conspiracy from Hell (WITCH) interspersed with Marro's hand-drawn chimeras.[35] In Natalja Kent and Nicole Reinert's *Tuesday Terrs* (no. 9), a folded weekly art-and-poetry pamphlet, bird creatures resembling the goddess Isis, gun-wielding nuns, and tarot card diagrams are paired with verses about a toddler who aspires to dress in drag. The women of the Dirt Palace, like those of the Riot Grrrl movement, muster irrationality and emotion to communicate their resistance, but, unlike their predecessors, their assertions derive strength from visionary daydreams and tales of fancy.

In the first issue of *LTTR* (2002, no. 10), an art and theory publication founded by K8 Hardy, Emily Roysdon, and Ginger Brooks Takahashi, Roysdon described the project as a "space to question our development as artists, workers, and thinkers."[36] As a platform for query and research, specifically on queer, trans, and lesbian standpoints, the project came into being during a moment declared, in one issue, as a "new gender frontier," when a younger generation wielding new concepts of unpinned sexual and social selfhood entered the feminist discussion.[37] The editors of *LTTR*, attentive to such states of existential indeterminacy and their manifestations, took care to reset the publication for each issue, reassigning new meanings to the title's acronym and experimenting with different print formats (the content is selected, as it was for other zines, from an international pool of open submissions). Initially titled *Lesbians to the Rescue*, *LTTR* subsequently stood for *Listen Translate Translate Record* and, for the third issue, abandoned the initials completely for the apt phrase *Practice More Failure*. The publication's form vacillates between bound booklets and collections of editioned multiples in a plastic bag, envelope, or folder and including such items as posters, CDs, bookmarks, textiles, and—once—a tampon readymade (no. 11). This physical shape-shifting is a fitting embodiment of what Hardy has described as "an elusive playfulness that doesn't necessarily require a manifesto."[38] Such flexibility and reluctance to adhere to any one principle underlie this project as it has quickly moved beyond the printed format to include screenings, conferences, performances, and a number of other hybrid events that invite outside participation.

Performance assumed a primary role in *LTTR*'s first issue and furthers a long history of links between printed matter and the fleeting nature of time-based artwork. The cover of the first issue (no. 10) is a composite of performances across generations and genders. A photograph from Roysdon's *Untitled (David Wojnarowicz Project)* (2001–08), evokes David Wojnarowicz's series *Rimbaud in New York* (1977–79): a masked woman in repose, stroking her breast and grasping a strap-on dildo. The face on the mask is that of Wojnarowicz, who, nearly a quarter century earlier, concealed a model behind a mask of nineteenth-century French poet Arthur Rimbaud and photographed him in bed. Wojnarowicz's identification with the literary figure and Roysdon's subsequent citation of Wojnarowicz's project create a chain of tributes to past icons, using these cultural quotations as a means of coming to terms with history and memory in the context of the homosexual experience. But Roysdon complicates as much as she pays homage, representing a population largely ignored in the

10. K8 Hardy (American, born 1977). Emily Roysdon (American, born 1977). Ginger Brooks Takahashi (American, born 1977). *LTTR: Lesbians to the Rescue*, no. 1. 2002. Offset and digital print with screenprint collage elements and various multiples in offset envelope, page 8 1/2 x 8 1/2" (21.6 x 21.6 cm). Cover image by Roysdon. The Museum of Modern Art Library, New York



11. **K8 Hardy** (American, born 1977). **Emily Roysdon** (American, born 1977). **Ginger Brooks Takahashi** (American, born 1977). *LTTR: Practice More Failure*, no. 3. 2004. Offset with various multiples in offset envelope, spread 18 7/8 x 11 7/8" (47.9 x 30.2 cm), multiples various dimensions. Clockwise from left: Spread by **Lynne Chan** (American, born 1975); multiples by **Carrie Moyer** (American, born 1960), **Jesal Kapadia** (American and Indian, born India 1973), and **Michelle Marchese** (American, born 1974). The Museum of Modern Art Library, New York

queer activism of Wojnarowicz's time by inserting the female and transgendered body into this lineage. It is a work that is part reenactment, part playful provocation—the latter underscored by the frilly font used on *LTTR*'s cover—but on both counts an act of inscribing oneself into the historical continuum, what Roysdon has called an "opportunity to cull our history, and in our action we perform our future."[39]

This cover brings us full circle, back to the pages of *Vile*, where we began, with Cosey Fanni Tutti probing the alleged indecency of Édouard Manet's *Olympia*, like Roysdon, making free use of art's history to enact fresh possibilities. The zine's nimble format makes it an apt host for such subversive projects, providing space for individuals moved to ask questions, act defiantly, and repel interpretive closure. Craig J. Saper, who has studied artistic publications, has posited that "the 'finished' product of the periodical as an artwork is not merely a documentation of a closed collective art experiment; it is a provocation for further experimentation"; in deference to this unbound potentiality I have opened and now leave ajar the door to the infinite library of zines.[40]

1. Major collections of zines by women produced since 1990 have been established at Barnard College, New York; Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts; Duke University, Durham, North Carolina; Tulane University, New Orleans; University of California, Los Angeles; and London Metropolitan University.
2. Stephen Duncombe, *Notes from Underground: Zines and the Politics of Alternative Culture* (New York: Verso, 1997), p. 6. For this essay I have adopted the terminology of "zine" as posited by Duncombe and by Mike Gunderloy and Cari Goldberg Janice in *The World of Zines: A Guide to the Independent Magazine Revolution* (New York: Penguin Books, 1992), pp. 1–3. The latter authors employ the term as "an all-purpose contraction" that borrows traits from the underground press, alternative press, small press, and fanzines of the 1960s, '70s, and '80s, and I would also add assembling magazines and correspondence-art magazines. I have not included illustrated books or artist's books, as historically they tend to be distributed via commercial galleries and publishing houses rather than a network of personal exchange; however, some contemporary artists have begun to align their zine production with the marketplace. Philip Aarons and AA Bronson have observed, "The fashion world has adopted a fair number of what we would consider to be modern-day queer zines. They advertise in them, they provide some degree of support, and, if not setting the tone, they are obviously part of it." Aarons and Bronson, eds., *Queer Zines* (New York: Printed Matter, 2008), p. 13.
3. On the place of self-publishing in political and social movements, see Nico Ordway, "History of Zines," in V. Vale, ed., *Zines!* (San Francisco: V/Search, 1996), pp. 155–59.
4. On self-publishing in visual-art practice, see Stephen Perkins, "Alternative Art Publishing: Artists' Books, 1960–1980," www.zinebook.com/resource/perkins/perkins4.html; Perkins, "Alternative Art Publishing: Artists' Magazines, 1960–1980," www.zinebook.com/resource/perkins/perkins5.html; and Clive Phillpot, "Art Magazines and Magazine Art," *Artforum* 18, no. 6 (February 1980): 52–54.
5. Duncombe, *Notes from Underground*, pp. 107–30.
6. Ibid., p. 129.
7. On the correspondence-art tradition, see Michael Crane, "A Definition of Correspondence Art," in Crane and Mary Stofflet, eds., *Correspondence Art: Source Book for the Network of International Postal Art Activity* (San Francisco: Contemporary Arts Press, 1984), pp. 3–36. The concept of the eternal network, as put forth by artists Robert Filliou and George Brecht in 1968, proposed limitless interconnectivity between artists instead of competitive individualism and came to be one of the ideals underlying the correspondence-art practice. On this interconnectivity, see John Held, Jr., "Networking: The Origin of Terminology," in Chuck Welch, ed., *Eternal Network: A Mail Art Anthology* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1995), pp. 17–22.
8. Held has explained, "Mail Art publications were predominantly photocopied and stapled. . . . A channel of unedited communication, providing free spaces for the dissemination of open expression." Held, "The Mail Art Exhibition: Personal Worlds to Cultural Strategies," in Annmarie Chandler and Norie Neumark, eds., *At a Distance: Precursors to Art and Activism on the Internet* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2005), p. 98. Phillpot, however, former chief librarian at The Museum of Modern Art, New York, has tempered assertions of complete inclusion, explaining that, like commercial art magazines, mail-art publications "are often similarly dependent on networks of personal relationships, which therefore tend to circumscribe their content, and consequently present certain demarcated territories to the respective readers." Phillpot, "Art Magazines and Magazine Art," p. 54.
9. On printing technologies, see Gunderloy and Janice, *The World of Zines*, pp. 157–62. Offset lithography was also used by some publishers, but its involved machinery usually required a professional workshop and consequently allowed less autonomy to the artists and authors. Lisa Baumgardner recalls encountering printers who were hesitant to produce *Bikini Girl* in their shops due to the zine's content, and some even refused the job altogether. Baumgardner, e-mail to the author, June 30, 2009. An anti-copyright ethos also permeates zine culture, with artists liberally appropriating images and text from commercial sources. Fearing legal entanglement, some printers and, in the last decade, corporate copy shops, shy away from the projects. On copyright and zine production, see Duncombe, *Notes from Underground*, pp. 123–24; and Francesca Lia Block and Hillary Carlip, *Zine Scene* (Los Angeles: Girl Press, 1998), p. 92.
10. Anna Banana founded and published *Vile*, and Bill Gaglione, her husband and collaborator, contributed in varying degrees as coeditor during the publication's run.
11. Banana, *About Vile: Mail Art, News and Photos from the Eternal Network* 8 (1983): 2.
12. Ibid., p. 1.
13. Banana, *Vile* 1 (1974): n.p.
14. Banana, *About Vile*, p. 9.
15. The first quotation is Ted Little, quoted in Simon Ford, *Wreckers of Civilisation: The Story of COUM Transmissions and Throbbing Gristle* (London: Black Dog, 1999), ch. 6, p. 9; the second is Ford, ibid.
16. Peter Christopherson and Genesis P-Orridge, "Annihilating Reality," *Studio International* 192, no. 982 (1976): 44–48.
17. P-Orridge, e-mail to the author, July 27, 2009.
18. Ibid.
19. See Vince Aletti, "Shooting From the Hip," *Village Voice Literary Supplement* 32, no. 19 (1987): 14. Barbara Ess coedited the third issue with J. M. Sherry.
20. Ibid.
21. Ess, quoted in Mathilde Roskam, *Barbara Ess* (New York: Curt Marcus Gallery, 1990), n.p.
22. Artist and writer Brian Spaeth was the first issue's coeditor but was not involved thereafter. All issues except the first and seventh were offset printed.
23. Lisa Falour (formerly Lisa Baumgardner), "Notes from a Hospital Bed in France," *Going Postal!* 2 (2009): n.p.
24. Baumgardner, *Bikini Girl* 1 (1978): cover.
25. Robert Siegle, "Writing Downtown," in Marvin J. Taylor, ed., *The Downtown Book: The New York Art Scene, 1974–1984* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), p. 133.
26. Falour, e-mail to the author, July 14, 2009.
27. The Riot Grrrl movement also had a following at the time in Britain, thanks in large part to the presence of the band Huggy Bear.
28. Julia Downes, "Riot Grrrl: The Legacy and Contemporary Landscape of DIY Feminist Cultural Activism," in Nadine Käthe Monem, ed., *Riot Grrrl: Revolution Girl Style Now!* (London: Black Dog, 2007), p. 27.
29. Kathleen Hanna cites homocore zines as inspiration for *Bikini Kill*. Hanna, e-mail to the author, July 14, 2009.
30. Kathi Wilcox, e-mail to the author, July 30, 2009.
31. Hanna, Billy Karren, Tobi Vail, and Wilcox, *Bikini Kill* 2 (1991): 10. This is one of seventeen declarations on the purpose of and necessity for the Riot Grrrl movement.
32. Ian Monroe, "Where Does One Thing End and the Next Begin?" in Blanche Craig, ed., *Collage: Assembling Contemporary Art* (London: Black Dog, 2008), p. 45.
33. The text is a reference to a song by the Los Angeles punk band The Germs. Bandmate Vail is likely to have inscribed the phrase on the collage "because it was the theme of our lives at that point and seemed appropriate." Wilcox, e-mail.
34. "Dirt Palace," www.dirtpalace.org.
35. Xander Marro distributed most copies of this zine as gifts to Halloween trick-or-treaters. Marro, e-mail to the author, July 14, 2009.
36. K8 Hardy, Emily Roysdon, and Ginger Brooks Takahashi, *LTTR: Lesbians to the Rescue* 1 (2002): 1.
37. Matt Wolf, "New Queer Live Art," *LTTR: Practice More Failure* 3 (2004): 10.
38. "Opposition and Equivocation: K8 Hardy in Conversation with Michelle White," *Art Papers* 32, no. 3 (2008): 22.
39. Jean Carlomusto, "Radiant Spaces: An Introduction to Emily Roysdon's Photograph Series Untitled," *GLQ, A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 10, no. 4 (2004): 674.
40. Craig J. Saper, *Networked Art* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), p. 25.

Consider a portrait in which an amalgam of techniques—from old-fashioned photogravure to chine collé and engraving done by a tattoo machine, with additions of plasticine, pomade, glitter, toy "googly" eyeballs, and imitation ice cubes—reflects the role of ornamentation in African American culture. Or a funky Janus-style sculpture, assembled from ready-made and handmade parts, of an androgynous mannequin bearing the mask of a heroic leader on the back of its head. Or a collage, assembled from pizza-parlor advertisements, of a woman's alter ego rendered as a famous male soccer player. Or a photographic self-portrait in which the artist's adult eyes gaze out from behind a silicone mask modeled in her own adolescent image. However dissimilar in look, materials, and affect, these works—by the artists Ellen Gallagher, Rachel Harrison, Sarah Lucas, and Gillian Wearing, respectively—probe issues of selfhood, mimesis, minstrelsy, and the representation of oneself as another.

They also share an artistic strategy informed by collage, montage, and assemblage-type techniques that usurp, denaturalize, fragment, and reconstruct the subject. Each artist invites us to question whether the subject of portraiture, the "I" of the work, is singular or plural, thus addressing the lability of identity.[1] Many of these artists' contemporaries (such as Lucy McKenzie, Wangechi Mutu, Shahzia Sikander, Lin Tianmiao, and Kara Walker) have also queried societal definitions of femininity, beauty, and dress, as well as class, race, and ethnicity, but the work of these four effectively suggests that the enduring trope of woman as representation has gained new focus, one with intentions of its own: it bids farewell to chance and automatism, the concepts that informed collage and assemblage in Cubist and Surrealist practices during the first decades of the twentieth century, and it articulates a critical message about gender and race by redefining or reenacting identity through performance.

Collage and papier collé first emerged as fine-art strategies in 1912 Cubist works by Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque, as audacious forms of anti-painting or plausibly as tactics to invigorate painting. In the same year Picasso also began his three-dimensional assemblages of diverse found materials. His *Still Life with Chair Caning*—a rope framing a piece of oilcloth adorned with a photomechanically printed chair-caning pattern—engages the play between object and image. The Surrealists, in the following decade, extolled the properties of these new mediums: their aesthetic impurity, accidental mark-making, *écriture automatique*, and semantic plasticity. At the same time the authority of pure painting was being challenged by photography, which in the 1920s became synonymous with the anti-art connotations of photomontage (the term "montage" comes from the German *montieren*, meaning "to engineer").[2] This was a moment particularly propitious for the emergence of women photographers. As some critics suggest, photography offered access to a "new vision," along with a technical apparatus for image production that displaced male virtuosity and manual skill as the exclusive measures of artistic identity.[3]

The experimentation that took place at the fringes of modernism defined the period as much as the well-known activities taking place at its center. Yet if the early uses of collage, montage, and cut-paper assemblage expanded the notion of what art is by tapping non-art materials and creative free association, the outcome was still largely associated with male inventiveness at the expense of work by women artists. Conversely, the reemergence of collage and assemblage techniques in the twenty-first century has

1. Ellen Gallagher (American, born 1965). *Skinatural*. 1997. Oil, pencil, and plasticine on magazine page, 13 1/4 x 10" (33.7 x 25.4 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. James R. Hedges IV

had little to do with the vast array of foreign materials or with the random expressions of the unconscious mind. It is less the differences in materials that create differences in intention than the ways in which those materials are used, by whom, and in what context. The impetus to work with collage is now a kind of antithesis to heroic individualism and, quite often, the expression of a lost faith in the ideal unity, or synthesis of personality, that the traditional Cubist portrait—despite its overlaying, broken planes and unusual perspectives—intended to convey.

There were precedents for this new kind of work, starting in the years around 1918, when the Nineteenth Amendment was passed in the United States, granting women the right to vote. Given the changing status of women in society, it is hardly surprising that portraits of women, often conceived by women, took on added significance. Photography scholar Monika Faber has noted that "female photographers in particular used the portrait to try out ideas that had yet to become fully accepted in 'real life.'"[4] The mordant Dada photomontages of Hannah Höch and Claude Cahun (Lucy Schwob), two witty observers of the multifaceted, often conflicting sociopolitical conditions of the 1920s, made significant contributions to revising the representation of gender. Placing a protofeminist spin on the concept of the *neue Frau* or *femme nouvelle*—the emancipated New Woman of Weimar Germany and Third Republic France, crossing class, ethnic, and gender boundaries—Höch's and Cahun's practices deliberately overturned codified mannerisms to experiment with what Arthur Rimbaud called *Je est un autre* (I is another). Cahun cross-dressed, shaving her head and posing in male attire varying from that of a stylish dandy to a conventionally suited civil servant, but she also fashioned a feminine persona using the artifice of dress, makeup, and masks. Höch's politics, intertwined with race and ethnography, are well represented in her provocative photomontages from the 1920s and 1930s. With cutout pictures of Weimar women combined with those of tribal sculptures, Höch developed a critical language that challenged racist and colonialist ideas as well as European gender definitions.

The theatricality of these new forms of portraiture and self-portraiture would pave the way for the feminist performances of the early 1970s, when the women's liberation movement took center stage. Through performance the concept of "woman" could be debated, an idea complicated by class, ethnicity, sexual inclination, and other facets of identity, and this attitude was in turn adopted by artists working in other mediums. Cindy Sherman's self-transformations in her black-and-white Untitled Film Stills (1977–80) and her color photographs of mannequin body parts from the 1980s and 1990s paid scrupulous attention to the artifice of masquerade—that is, to the production of womanliness as a mask that can be worn, removed, or replaced.

Correspondences between interwar and contemporary artistic practices were also reflected in the psychoanalytic precursors of current gender theories. Writing in 1929, in response to Sigmund Freud's postulate that primary bisexuality complicates gender formation, psychoanalyst Joan Riviere noted that "womanliness could be assumed and worn as a mask, both to hide the possession of masculinity and to avert the reprisals expected if she was found to possess it—much as a thief will turn out his pockets and ask to be searched to prove that he has not stolen the goods. The reader may not ask how I define womanliness or where I draw the line between genuine womanliness and the 'masquerade.' My suggestion is not, however, that there is any such difference; whether radical or superficial, they are the same thing."[5] However different their approaches, Cahun, Höch, and Sherman understood womanliness to be a construct from start to finish. Their persistence in exploring the construction of identity through gender play—like Orlando, the titular character in Virginia Woolf's 1928 novel, they took on different roles and embodied both sexes—largely informed the contemporary practices of performance and role-playing that followed.

In the last two decades artists have expanded the notion of masquerade to encompass any gender and ethnic identity. Ellen Gallagher's elegant, labor-intensive paintings and collages pointedly refer to the myths of racist lore perpetuated through stereotypes.[6] Her interest in crossing language with performance began when she was studying at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, in the late 1980s and early 1990s. She became involved with the Dark Room Collective, an activist community of artists that began, in 1988, as a group of African American writers who wanted to create a place to read their poetry and stories. The writings of some of its authors, such as Kevin Young, Thomas Sayers Ellis, and Samuel R. Delany, illuminated Gallagher's own considerations of racial representation.[7]

In her collages, made on pages taken from black magazines published during the Civil Rights Movement, from the 1950s to the 1970s—including *Ebony*, *Our World*, *Sepia*, and *Black Stars*—Gallagher creates a sense of history and transformation. She masks the eyes or paints over the faces of black models and adds her signature caricatural marks, disrupting the signifiers that have naturalized black popular culture, fashion, and race (in this case, a lineup of wigs and cosmetics) and creating new models of African American portraiture.[8]

The image of shadowed or masked eyes was a common theme in portraits of the New Woman in the 1920s, with some of its earliest representations in pictures taken by Bauhaus photographer Umbo (Otto Umbehr) of the actress Ruth Landshoff (1927, no. 2). As an actress (she played the second female lead in F. W. Murnau's *Nosferatu* [1922]) Landshoff knew how to play on the artifice of expression to elicit a response. In Umbo's tightly framed shot of her masked face, undoubtedly inspired by close-ups in silent motion pictures, her sensual features are dramatized in starkly contrasting blacks and whites. Yet as art historian Herbert Molderings has noted, Landshoff's mask "sets the stage for a tender, erotic drama. . . . [Her] look is alert and full of spirit, mysterious and seductive, open and self-confident."[9] In contrast, the masks worn by the black models in Gallagher's *Skinatural* (1997, no. 1) are more farcical, completely effacing or even distorting the very terms of representation, a distortion accentuated by minuscule marks of racist caricature, such as popping eyeballs, that percolate along the full right side of the magazine page. These shorthand signs look abstract from a distance, but on closer scrutiny they are revealed to be stock derogatory emblems of black minstrelsy. Gallagher has noted that these "disembodied eyes . . . refer to performance, to bodies you cannot see, floating hostage in the electric black of the minstrel stage."[10]

2. Umbo (Otto Umbehr) (German, 1902–1980). *Ruth with Mask*. 1927. Gelatin silver print, 7 x 5 1/16" (17.8 x 12.9 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Gilman Collection, Alfred Stieglitz Society Gifts

In his 1952 novel *Invisible Man*, Ralph Ellison dramatized the social and intellectual issues that transformed African Americans into an "invisible" group, and found in them an overt declaration of racism. Art critic Mark




THE MAN
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HARLEM COOL

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Duke

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WIGS
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do you want LONGER HAIR


do you want lovelier, longer hair?


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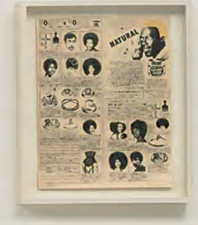
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So-y this is
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MOBY DICK



ADVICE FOR
BAD
SKIN

wrights

NURSES
DOUCHING
ZONITE

Previous pages:
3. **Ellen Gallagher** (American, born 1965). *DeLuxe*. 2004–05. Portfolio of sixty photogravure, etching, aquatint, and drypoints with lithography, screenprint, embossing, tattoo-machine engraving, laser cutting, and chine collé; and additions of plasticine, cut-and-pasted paper, enamel, varnish, gouache, pencil, oil, polymer, watercolor, pomade, velvet, glitter, crystals, foil paper, gold leaf, toy eyeballs, and imitation ice cubes, overall 7' x 13' 11" (213.4 x 424.2 cm), each 13 x 10 1/2" (33 x 26.7 cm). Publisher and printer: Two Palms Press, New York. Edition: 20. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired through the generosity of The Friends of Education of The Museum of Modern Art and The Speyer Family Foundation, Inc., with additional support from the General Print Fund

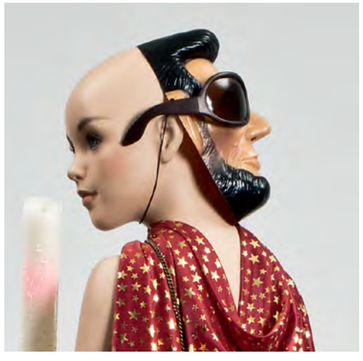
Stevens has written of Ellison's novel that "blackness was a kind of impenetrable mask" producing contrasting effects: some African Americans whitened their skin or straightened their hair to "improve" their appearance and abet anonymity, while others exalted their blackness, sporting enormous Afros to make a point about social distinctiveness as a group.[11] Gallagher investigates this desire to fashion a new identity in *DeLuxe* (2004–05, no. 3), a series of sixty collages, photomontages, and photogravures that feature characters based on 1950s advertisements targeting "Negro self-improvement."[12] The magazine pages carry advertisements for wigs and hairdos in different styles, from "freedom puffs" to "curly gypsy" and straight blonde hair, as well as pomades, acne treatments, and skin-bleaching creams. Gallagher appropriates the ads and then performs further cultural interventions, such as encasing a black head in a blonde helmetlike mask, creating what could be termed a "Caucasian Negro." By breaking apart long-held stereotypes, Gallagher both affirms the value of difference and disclaims its vilification. Feminist critic Tania Modleski has pointed out that the attempt "to restore the wholeness and unity threatened by the sight of difference . . . enters into the game of mimicry . . . condemned to keep alive the possibility that there may be 'no presence or identity behind the mask.'"[13] Racial sameness, a different kind of masquerade, can also be understood, when looked at from the other end of the lens, as similar to the minstrel's use of blackface.

Popularized in the nineteenth century, minstrelsy is a classic example of cultural domination, with white performers with blackened faces acting out a comedy of manners about what cultural theorist Scott Bukatman has called "blackness without blacks."[14] Rubbing burnt cork or shoe polish on their skin and sporting wooly wigs, gloves, and tailcoats, white comedians have relentlessly portrayed African Americans as a cast of buffoonish, lazy, and debilitated characters. In 1828 the actor Thomas Dartmouth "Daddy" Rice introduced his vaudeville act "Jump Jim Crow," in which, using wild upper-body movements and little motion below his waist, he poked fun at the song and dance of a crippled African American; by 1838 "Jim Crow" had become a racial slur, and from the end of the Reconstruction era, in 1877, until the beginning of the Civil Rights Movement, in the mid-1950s, the term was synonymous with segregation and discrimination in the American South. During the 1910s and 1920s Bert Williams and other black pioneers of the stage also performed in blackface, reclaiming the genre by creating scenarios with which any member of his African American audience could identify. Gallagher's portraits, with their deep engagement with notions of historical transformation, disrupt the idea that race and identity are predetermined or fully fixed. Drawing on both the masquerade of the New Woman and Williams's recitals, she reintroduces taboo aspects of history into the present in order to question whether or not core assumptions have changed.

Rachel Harrison's practice encompasses both pointed political parody and cultural analysis. With their carnival spirit, her Great Men portraits—a series of sculptural assemblages featuring well-known historical and contemporary figures, from Alexander the Great to Claude Lévi-Strauss—testify to the artist's mischievous wit and to the delight she takes in investing her work with the slipperiness of language. Using cross-dressing and masks, she devised a series of divided, multiplied selves to expose the idea that gender is a performance, as in *Alexander the Great* (2007, nos. 4 and 5), in which a naked department store mannequin with long eyelashes and feminine features wears an Abraham Lincoln mask and sunglasses on the back of her head. Draped in a festive red cloak with golden

4. **Rachel Harrison** (American, born 1966). *Alexander the Great*. 2007. Wood, chicken wire, polystyrene, cement, Parex, acrylic, mannequin, Jeff Gordon wastebasket, plastic Abraham Lincoln mask, sunglasses, fabric, necklace, and two unidentified items, 7' 7" x 7' 3" x 40" (231.1 x 221 x 101.6 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchase

5. **Rachel Harrison** (American, born 1966). *Alexander the Great* (detail). 2007 (see no. 4)



stars and holding a trash can advertising NASCAR, the mannequin assumes the pose of a conqueror atop a multicolored, amorphous mound, but the Lincoln mask attached to the back of her head parodies the classic statuary convention of the solitary hero, presenting a figure who is literally two-faced.

Alexander the Great, like the performances of Marcel Duchamp as Rrose Sélavy and Andy Warhol's self-portraits in drag, depends on the construction of identity through gender indeterminacy. In 1990 philosopher Judith Butler published *Gender Trouble*, an influential book that advanced the interpretation of identity beyond the traditional binary definitions of gender. Butler identified parody (such as the practice of dressing in drag) as a practice that destabilizes the social power systems that validate heterosexuality as coherent or natural, and in so doing make identity's variable constructions apparent. Emphasizing the inherent instability of gender categories, she noted that there is no "doer behind the deed," because the doer is constructed in and through the deed.[15] In other words, gender is an act; an impersonation; a set of codes, costumes, and masks rather than an essential aspect of identity. As such, Harrison's Great Men flirt with experimentation akin to theater, another arena in which the self is concocted as one among an aggregate of selves.

By using double-faced mannequins, Harrison taps the Surrealist fascination with the doppelgänger. *Alexander the Great* could be a distant cousin of Hans Bellmer's *The Doll* (1935–37, no. 6), an assembled and demountable doll inspired by Jacques Offenbach's fantasy opera *The Tales of Hoffmann* (1880) in which the hero, maddened by his love for an automaton with an uncanny resemblance to a living woman, ends up committing suicide. Bellmer's specially constructed doll, which he photographed in various provocative scenarios involving sadistic acts of dismemberment, dispensed with the idea of the unitary self.[16] If Bellmer's transformation of the doll's body into a series of selves offered an alternative to the unyielding image of the body and armored psyche idealized by proto-fascist Germany in the 1930s, Harrison's *Alexander the Great* suggests—in its array of masks, costumes, and props—that the

6. **Hans Bellmer** (German, 1902–1975). *The Doll*. 1935–37. Gelatin silver print, 9 1/2 x 9 5/16" (24.1 x 23.7 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Samuel J. Wagstaff, Jr. Fund

condition of selfhood, built on representation, is thoroughly alterable, thanks to the self's exposure to an inexhaustible array of myths. These include the myths of historical representation (the mannequin's valiant stance mimics that of General Washington in Emanuel Gottlieb Leutze's painting *George Washington Crossing the Delaware* [1851]), the myths of celebrity culture (the androgynous figure recalls Oliver Stone's controversial portrayal of Alexander the Great as bisexual in his movie *Alexander* [2004]), and the myths of masculinity (Harrison conceived ten sculptural portraits of Great Men, including this one, for *If I Did It*, a solo exhibition with a title derived from O. J. Simpson's unpublished, sensationalist memoir about the murders of his ex-wife and her friend, for which he was the prime suspect). Harrison redefines the performative nature of identity, presenting a collection of selves in disguise—Janus-faced, cross-dressed, engrossed in playful theatrics—and destabilizes the notion of "self" historically upheld by the genre of the portrait.

The provocative nature of visual puns, bawdy humor, social clichés, and tabloid low-life culture gives Sarah Lucas's work much of its critical character. In two of her largest portrait series, including a group of photographic self-portraits from the 1990s and a suite of collages dedicated to the legendary 1970s British soccer player Charlie George, she recombines masculine and feminine attributes to stretch and permeate the boundaries of gender definition. Lucas's critique of social stereotyping has been informed by feminist theory, especially by the writings of American radical feminist and activist Andrea Dworkin, which she read while studying at Goldsmiths, in London. Dworkin's best-known book, *Pornography: Men Possessing Women*, which stirred tremendous controversy when it was first published in 1981, criticized pornography with a unique sense of urgency as a form of violence against women.[17] A strong advocate of women's civil rights, Dworkin attributed the inequity between genders to misogynist societal power structures. When asked in an interview how she would like to be remembered, she said, "In a museum, when male supremacy is dead. I'd like my work to be an anthropological artifact from an extinct, primitive society."[18]

A touchstone in Lucas's exploration of identity is her relationship with George, the star soccer player of London's top club, Arsenal. Lucas grew up in Islington, a gritty, working-class community in North London, on the same block as George, who was a close friend of her brother. A tough childhood complicated her feelings about class-conscious British society, success, and the social places carved out by men. *Geezer* (2002, no. 7), one of a series of portraits dedicated to George, is a collage of fulgent Pop motifs and colors, made up largely of pizza-parlor flyers much like those stuffed in the mailboxes in Lucas's neighborhood. Although George is the subject of the portrait (identified by his team logo), he in fact bears an unsettling resemblance to Lucas's younger self, dressed in unfeminine Gunners T-shirt and sporting the same lank, side-parted hair. *Geezer* is in fact a self-portrait blending the artist's androgynous persona with that of the soccer star. Since George was the first famous person Lucas knew, she emblazoned the subject's forehead with the phrase "nanza," an allusion to the bonanza of success, but in composing the portrait out of collaged advertisements, the artist underscores the way success is linked to capitalism, a worldview sensitive to the history of photomontage as a socially engaged art form.[19]

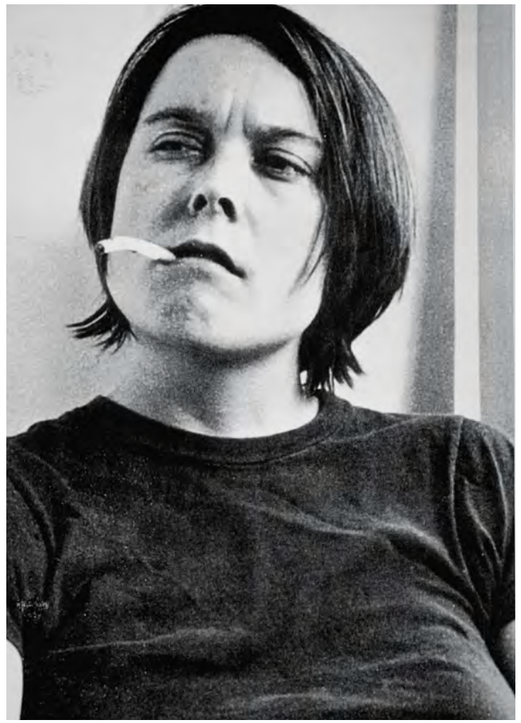
A point of historical comparison is offered by Höch, whose provocative montages from the late 1920s to the mid-1930s reshuffle the clichés of mass media representation to examine the equivocal status of women in post–World War I Germany. In her best-known photomontage, *Schnitt mit dem Küchenmesser Dada durch die letzte Weimarer Bierbauchkulturepoche Deutschlands* (Cut with the Dada kitchen knife through the last Weimar beer-belly cultural epoch in Germany) (1919–20), Höch likened the scissors of her métier with the domestic kitchen knife of a housewife, used in this case to cut through the traditionally masculine field of politics.[20] A prevailing theme in Höch's

472 FROM FACE TO MASK

Opposite:
7. Sarah Lucas (British, born 1962). *Geezer*. 2002. Oil, cut-and-pasted printed paper, and pencil on wood, 31 7/8 x 29 1/2" (81 x 74.9 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchased with funds provided by The Buddy Taub Foundation, Dennis A. Roach, Director

8. Hannah Höch (German, 1889–1978). *Indian Dancer: From an Ethnographic Museum*. 1930. Cut-and-pasted printed paper and metallic foil on paper, 10 1/8 x 8 7/8" (25.7 x 22.4 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Frances Keech Fund

9. Sarah Lucas (British, born 1962). *Fighting Fire with Fire* from Self-Portraits 1990–1998. 1996. Inkjet print, 28 3/4 x 20 1/16" (73 x 51 cm). Tate Collection. Purchase



work was the irreconcilable tension between the sexually liberated New Woman, whose androgynous look reflected the deliberate deconstruction of rigid masculine and feminine identities, and the image of idealized femininity. Among her most powerful photomontages are those collectively titled From an Ethnographic Museum (1930, no. 8), in which she conjoined female Caucasian body parts with so-called primitive masks from non-Western societies, thus offering a critique of the underlying racist, sanctimonious tone of the heterosexist patriarchy that equated women with the foreign and underdeveloped "other" during an epoch obsessed with eugenics.

Lucas's resistance to gender codification and her critique of representation are reflected in her photographic self-portraits. In *Self-Portrait with Skull* (1997) she confronts the viewer with sphinxlike emotional blankness, dressed in a masculine jacket and heavy boots, and holding between her legs a black skull. In *Self-Portrait with Fried Eggs* (1996) she lounges in an armchair, with fried eggs placed on her breasts and legs thrust out in a macho pose. In *Fighting Fire with Fire* (1996, no. 9) she poses in a "fuck you" attitude, with a cigarette stub hanging working-class style from the corner of her mouth. Lucas plays with gender-bending and role reversals, casually adopting male attributes to challenge the received notion that mannish body language is unnatural for a woman. These photographs function as more than simple portraits; constructing her poses to evince "gender trouble," Lucas uses the camera to enact androgyny and dandyism in the tradition of performance work. Her images are conceptually reminiscent of Cahun's cross-dressing pictures of the 1920s (no. 10), which reinforce the active construction of identity she had instituted two years earlier on the adoption of her pseudonym, the first name of which—Claude—can be either male or female. Cultural historian Susan Gubar has noted that "[this kind of cross-dressing] becomes a way of ad-dressing and re-dressing the inequities of culturally-defined categories of masculinity and femininity."[21]

Gillian Wearing complicates the genre of portraiture by staging affecting photographic and video scenarios that pay scrupulous attention to different kinds of masks, from prosthetic devices to voice dubbing, in order to expose the theatrical makeup of identity. Her scenarios often entail striking discrepancies in age, as in the video *2 Into 1* (1997), which features a woman and her ten-year-old twin boys lip-synching each other's words—an ingenious setup in which voices and images refuse to fit together. Others entail the performance of personal experience as expressive oration, as in *Confess all on video. Don't worry, you will be in disguise. Intrigued? Call Gillian* (1994), in which volunteers recruited through classified ads confess to prostitution, robbery, pornography, incest, and transvestitism while remaining concealed behind Halloween masks (of Labour Party leader Neil Kinnock and former president George H. W. Bush, among others). Wearing cites the influence of Diane Arbus's photographs of people in disguise and English fly-on-the-wall documentaries, such as Michael Apted's Up Series (1964–2011), in which the director—building on the Jesuit motto "Give me a child until he is seven and I will give you the man"—has interviewed the same group of subjects at seven-year intervals in order to explore the foundations of the British class system.

10. Claude Cahun (Lucy Schwob) (French, 1894–1954). *Untitled*. c. 1921. Gelatin silver print, 9 5/16 x 5 7/8" (23.7 x 15 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Thomas Walther Collection. Purchase

Drawing thus on documentary film as well as performance, Wearing probes the idea of difference and sameness among people who share the same heritage. In Album (2003, no. 11), a series of self-portraits, she re-creates snapshots from her family album, impersonating different members of her family. With the help of a group of assistants (some of whom worked for Madame Tussauds, the wax museum) creating masks, wigs, bodysuits, and clothing, Wearing posed as her mother at age twenty-one; her young, tuxedo-clad father; her smiling uncle Bryan; her sister, Jane; and her tattooed, shirtless brother, Richard. Wearing also included images of herself as a toddler, as an adolescent, and as her maternal grandparents. Her acutely observed portrayals confound viewers, for even though the artist's own eyes peer out from behind the masks of these personages, our ability to recognize the identity of other individuals has been compromised. The masks are compelling not only for what they conceal but for what they disclose, as art and cinema theorist Jean-Christophe Royoux has written: "The question of the mask is in itself a metaphor of representation. It lies at the heart of philosophical reflections on the multiple identities of the actor. For that, precisely, is how we define the actor, by the ability to play one role after another, without being limited to any given one."[22]

The production of oneself as "another" brings to mind Cahun's assertion that masks create identity. "Under

this mask, another mask," she wrote. "I will never finish removing all these faces." Cahun jotted down these words on one of the photomontages in her 1930 book *Aveux non avenus* (*Disavowals, or Cancelled Confessions*), which outlines her interest in hiding, revealing, masking, doubling, and performance.[23] In many of her self-portraits (no. 12) Cahun used masks to make the "real" Cahun disappear, exhibiting a fascination with diversifying the "I" that Wearing shares. Wearing, too, goes beyond the limiting specifics of individual appearance, reinventing the self as positional rather than fixed. This kind of engagement with the actor as impersonator can also be traced back to Sherman, whose portraits, with their cinephile references to B movies, film noir, and nouvelle vague, as well as to fashion shoots, the centerfold, and historical painting, have debunked the idea of an essential and unchanging identity. Her landmark series Untitled Film Stills, a wholesale catalogue of imaginary female roles from films never made, documents a suite of representations of representations (that is, copies without an original) that might be peddled through the media and the film industry. In *Untitled Film Still #56* (1980, no. 13) the artist holds her face so close to a mirror that the clarity of the reflection is disrupted; holding up, as curator Robert Storr has suggested, "a mirror to the mirror fictions in which women are asked to see themselves," she raises the tension between authenticity and falsehood.[24] The rupture that Sherman creates with the illusion of the "real" self is continuous with her mirroring in an endless horizon of representations.

Since the twentieth century changed to the twenty-first, the perception of portraits has been changed and challenged, especially considered through the eyes of women artists. Picking up the thread of an artistic legacy exemplified by Cahun, Höch, and Sherman, the four contemporary artists discussed here have converted the mediums of collage, montage, and assemblage into a platform for social commentary and critique of accepted typologies of the self, each artist in accordance with her own time and point of view. Their purposeful challenge

11. Gillian Wearing (British, born 1963). *Self-Portrait at 17 Years Old*. 2003. Chromogenic color print, 41 x 32" (104.1 x 81.3 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired through the generosity of The Contemporary Arts Council of The Museum of Modern Art

12. Claude Cahun (Lucy Schwob) (French, 1894–1954). *Untitled*. c. 1928. Gelatin silver print, 4 9/16 x 3 1/2" (10 x 7.6 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchase and anonymous promised gift

to received constructions of identity includes the investigation of role-playing and other performance pursuits. The artists—and the protagonists in their works—undertake full masquerade, in masks, makeup, and costumes, and also simply adopt poses, putting on roles and taking them off at will, thus reordering the clichés of mass media representation. As women of many faces, Gallagher, Harrison, Lucas, and Wearing destabilize the myths of a unified, authentic self, often doubling their artistic personalities, simultaneously as authors and models, by taking up positions both of viewer and viewed. Many artists investigate current issues of gender, race, and class through portraiture, but few have been as effective as these four in deconstructing the binding status of representation, or as provocative and compelling.

13. **Cindy Sherman** (American, born 1954). *Untitled Film Still #56*. 1980. Gelatin silver print, 6 3/8 x 9 7/16" (16.2 x 24 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired through the generosity of Jo Carole and Ronald S. Lauder in memory of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd

1. On the ways in which contemporary women artists have questioned the singular "I," see Linda Nochlin, "Women Artists Then and Now: Painting, Sculpture, and the Image of the Self," in Maura Reilly and Nochlin, eds., *Global Feminisms: New Directions in Contemporary Art* (London: Merrell, 2007), pp. 47–69.
2. Carolyn Lanchner discusses the term "montage" in "The Later Adventures of Dada's 'Good Girl': The Photomontages of Hannah Höch after 1933," in *The Photomontages of Hannah Höch* (Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 1996), p. 129.
3. See, for example, Hal Foster, Rosalind Krauss, Yve-Alain Bois, Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, *Art since 1900: Modernism, Antimodernism, Postmodernism* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2004), p. 240.
4. Monika Faber, "A Grand Finale and Off Into the Blue: Two Eras Reflected in Portrait Photography," in Faber and Janos Frecot, eds., *Portraits of an Age: Photography in Germany and Austria, 1900–1938* (Ostfildern-Ruit, Germany: Hatje Cantz; New York: Neue Galerie New York; Vienna: Albertina, 2005), p. 20.
5. Joan Riviere, "Womanliness as a Masquerade," *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 10 (1929); reprinted in Victor Burgin, James Donald, and Cora Kaplan, eds., *Formations of Fantasy* (New York: Routledge, 1986), p. 38.
6. The discussion of Ellen Gallagher's work is based on my previous analysis and interview with the artist published in Roxana Marcoci, *Comic Abstraction: Image-Breaking, Image-Making* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2007), pp. 17–19, 56–63.
7. Samuel R. Delany, "From The Mummer's Tale," *Callaloo* 7, no. 22 (Autumn 1984): 36–59; Delany, "The Tale of Rumor and Desire," *Callaloo* 10, no. 32 (Summer 1987): 416–78; Delany, "Among the Blobs," *Mississippi Review* 16, nos. 2–3 (1988): 86–92; Kevin Young, "How to Make Rain," *Callaloo* 14, no. 2 (Spring 1991): 340; Young, "Letters from the North Star," *Callaloo* 14, no. 2 (Spring 1991): 341; Thomas Sayers Ellis, "On Display," *Callaloo* 13, no. 3 (Summer 1990): 433; Ellis, "Ellis Hush Yo Mouf," *Callaloo* 13, no. 3 (Summer 1990): 431–32.
8. On these strategies, see Jeff Fleming, *Ellen Gallagher: Preserve* (Des Moines, Iowa: Art Center, 2001), pp. 6–8.
9. Herbert Molderings, "Umbo (Ruth)," in *Points of View: Masterpieces of Photography and Their Stories* (Göttingen, Germany: Steidl, 2007), p. 201.
10. Gallagher, "1000 Words," *Artforum* 42, no. 8 (April 2004): 131.
11. Mark Stevens, "Ellen Gallagher: DeLuxe," *New York Magazine*, February 21, 2005, p. 77.
12. Thyrza Nichols Goodeve, "The History Lesson: Flesh Is a Texture as Much as a Color," *Parkett* 73 (2005): 39–44.
13. Tania Modleski, "Cinema and the Dark Continent: Race and Gender in Popular Film," in Linda S. Kauffman, ed., *American Feminist Thought at Century's End: A Reader* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1993), p. 76.
14. Scott Bukatman, *Matters of Gravity: Special Effects and Supermen in the 20th Century* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2003), p. 148.
15. Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990), p. 142.
16. On the *corps morcelé* (body-in-pieces) in Hans Bellmer's work, see Foster, "Armour Fou," *October* 56 (Spring 1991): 64–97.
17. Andrea Dworkin, *Pornography: Men Possessing Women* (New York: Putnam, 1981).
18. Dworkin, quoted in Julie Bindel, "Obituary," *The Guardian*, April 12, 2005, p. 29.
19. The connection to photomontage is made in *MoMA Highlights*, rev. ed. (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2004), p. 371.
20. Maud Lavin adopted Höch's title for her insightful book *Cut with the Kitchen Knife: The Weimar Photomontages of Hannah Höch* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993).
21. Susan Gubar, "Blessings in Disguise: Cross-Dressing as Re-dressing for Female Modernists," *The Massachusetts Review: A Quarterly of Literature, the Arts and Public Affairs* 22 (Autumn 1981): 479.
22. Jean-Christophe Royoux, "Gillian Wearing: Violent Emotions Are the Heart of the Matter," in Wearing, *Gillian Wearing: Sous influence* (Paris: Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, 2001), p. 52.
23. Claude Cahun, *Aveux non avenus* (Paris: Éditions du Carrefour, 1930), p. 212; published in English as *Disavowals, or Cancelled Confessions* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2008), p. 183.
24. Robert Storr, *On the Edge: Contemporary Art from the Werner and Elaine Dannheiser Collection* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1997), p. 122.

1 and 2. Carrie Mae Weems (American, born 1953). *From Here I Saw What Happened And I Cried* from the series From Here I Saw What Happened and I Cried. 1995. Chromogenic color prints with sand-blasted text on glass with frame, each 43 1/2 x 33 1/2" (110.5 x 85.1 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift on behalf of The Friends of Education of The Museum of Modern Art

Nineteen-ninety was a watershed year for Lorna Simpson. The artist's trademark photographs of black female figures paired with evocative texts were featured in exhibitions from Long Beach, California, to Venice, Italy. In New York she was simultaneously positioned on the encroaching margins and at the contested center of artistic discourse. Her work was included in *The Decade Show: Frameworks of Identity in the 1980s*, an exhibition, jointly presented by The Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art, The New Museum of Contemporary Art, and The Studio Museum in Harlem, that became a touchstone of multicultural critique; at the same time her show at The Museum of Modern Art—the twenty-third in the Projects series devoted to living artists—became the first solo exhibition by an African American woman in the institution's sixty-year history.[1]

Blindness in the face of racially and sexually marked subjects is arguably endemic to Western culture. Yet more than a belated victory for colored girls everywhere, Simpson's MoMA exhibition can be seen as one of the signal moments of black feminine rupture, revelation, and misrecognition which, for good or ill, have shaped the Museum's accounting of modern art. In this essay, I will examine a few of those moments in order to articulate how "the black woman"—as absence and presence, artist and model, agitator and adherent, fiction and fact—matters to and puts pressure on MoMA's guiding assumptions and collecting practices, which have become paradigms of hegemonic modernism. In so doing, I conceive of the Museum and other cultural institutions, broadly construed, as contested sites in black women's struggles to represent themselves and to articulate critical practices that describe modernity's terrain with an alternative set of aesthetic imperatives and political cartographies.[2] Taken together, the works by and about black women in the Museum's holdings constitute a necessarily incomplete archive that allows us to reconsider not only the lives and strategies of individual artists but also the circumstances in which African diasporic female identity, visibility, and history have been produced and transformed.[3]

Carrie Mae Weems's landmark series From Here I Saw What Happened and I Cried (1995, nos. 1 and 2) offers an incisive meditation on just those circumstances, particularly the ways in which visual technologies have been mobilized to render black subjects transparent to a racializing gaze. This multipart work was commissioned by The J. Paul Getty Museum as a response to *Hidden Witness*, a 1995 exhibition of mid-nineteenth-century photographs of black men and women.[4] Weems selected, reproduced, enlarged, and tinted red thirty-two images, each of which she placed under a glass plate etched with affectively charged phrases: "scientific profile," "mammie, mama, mother," "playmate to the patriarch." This far-reaching pictorial inventory is bracketed on either end with an indigo-tinted reproduction of Léon Poirier's 1925 photograph of Nobosodrou, one of many Mangbetu women whose distinctive busts have been reproduced on everything from Belgian Congo stamps to Central African sculpture. Here, the artist inscribed an image of a singular woman with text that serves to mourn and witness the pernicious economies of classification and exchange that have determined the historicity of blackness in the visual field.[5]

From Here I Saw What Happened and I Cried was presented to MoMA in 1997, as a gift on behalf of The Friends of Education, a Museum affiliate group founded, in 1993, by lawyer and banker Akosua Barthwell Evans to "foster a greater appreciation of art created by African American artists and to encourage African American participation and membership at MoMA."[6] Like Simpson's

3. Constantin Brancusi (French, born Romania. 1876–1957). *Blond Negress, II*. Paris 1933 (after a marble of 1928). Bronze on four-part marble pedestal, limestone, and two oak sections (carved by the artist), overall 71 1/4 x 14 1/4 x 14 1/2" (181 x 36.2 x 36.8 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. The Philip L. Goodwin Collection

4. Doris Ulmann (American, 1884–1934). *Untitled*. 1929–31. From *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, by Julia Peterkin and Doris Ulmann (New York: Robert O. Ballou, 1933). Photogravure, 8 3/8 x 6 3/8" (21.3 x 16.2 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Blanchette Hooker Rockefeller

and Weems's work, Evans's advocacy reflects a remapping of social and sexual privilege in the late 1980s and early 1990s that transformed the cultural landscape as well as the relationship of black women to the Museum. MoMA has historically emphasized the individual author, medium specificity, and a formalist conception of quality, often denuding even the most politically astute art of its social context and downplaying artists' ambitions for social change in favor of a modernist narrative based on stylistic progression.[7] As a result, it has effectively reiterated the storied disjuncture between dominant teleological constructions of history and the fragmented, horizontal configuration of black memory, which is pieced together at the margins.[8]

For the black feminist artists, scholars, and advocates who emerged in the age of multiculturalism, MoMA's conceptions of the past and of the art object were inadequate to address the visual position of a Nobosodrou, let alone the historical re-vision of a Weems, whose work signifies on dominant representations of the black, the feminine, the photographic, and the modern all at once.[9] Cultural practitioners such as Freida High Tesfagiorgis, Lorraine O'Grady, Gilane Tawadros, and Michele Wallace have argued that we must reckon with the multiple sites and symbols through which African diasporic women's history has been routed, not only to reclaim black female subjectivity from the clutches of stereotype but also to comprehend the practices of violence and visualization which, in shaping raced and gendered bodies, have determined the contours of modernist practice.[10]

Western phantasms of difference doubled—blackness and femaleness untethered from the particularity of any given subject—might be said to take their measure from the Negress, that foundational figure of black femininity first named in seventeenth-century France, who has come to epitomize unalloyed darkness and sexuality.[11] To be

5. Romare Bearden (American, 1911–1988). *Patchwork Quilt*. 1970. Cut-and-pasted cloth and paper with synthetic polymer paint on composition board, 35 3/4 x 47 7/8" (90.9 x 121.6 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Blanchette Hooker Rockefeller Fund

6. George Overbury ("Pop") Hart (American, 1868–1933). *Nude Negress, Souvenir of the Tropics*. 1922. Lithograph, sheet 12 1/2 x 10 1/4" (31.8 x 26 cm). Publisher: unknown. Printer: probably J. E. Rosenthal, New York. Edition: unknown. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller

sure, "Negress" is an absurd and excessive appellation. Yet that is precisely why the term so effectively sums up what literary critic Hortense J. Spillers has called the "signifying property *plus*" of the black female body, which is everywhere marked by the trauma of colonial enterprise, the dislocations of transatlantic slavery, and the logic of international capital as mere flesh and recalcitrant thing.[12] Whether on the auction block or in the museum, the Negress casts a shadow over the black woman that has consistently overdetermined the conditions of her appearance.

MoMA's collection tells the tale. Consider Romanian-born sculptor Constantin Brancusi's *Blond Negress, II* (1933, no. 3), a bronze, made in Paris, whose interest evolves from the apparent contradiction of an Africanized subject rendered as a golden piscine abstraction, at once primitive and futuristic. Look to one of Doris Ulmann's numerous black-and-white photographs depicting an aged woman pausing in her work (1929–31, no. 4), an image that seems intent on fixing an idealized vision of black labor in the American South before it is lost to modernity. Recall, too, how in Romare Bearden's 1970 collage *Patchwork Quilt* (no. 5), an Egyptian goddess turned down-home odalisque precariously perches on a couch that is equally suggestive of African American fabric traditions and the nearly monochromatic canvasses of Agnes Martin. Contemplate the weirdly proportioned creature—half animal, half woman—who stares out from George Overbury ("Pop") Hart's *Nude Negress, Souvenir of the Tropics* (1922, no. 6), a rebarbative little print given to the Museum in 1940 by one of its founders, Abby Aldrich Rockefeller.[13] Finally, think back to Pablo Picasso's *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* (1907), that scandalously disjointed conjunction of African-ness and the feminine, which famously served the artist as a talisman of sexual aggressivity and MoMA as an epochal marker of what founding director Alfred H. Barr, Jr., identified as "a new period in the history of modern art."[14] Despite the varying racial, national, and sexual identities of their makers and the divergent ontological

assumptions that govern them, all of these works attest to the black woman's historical availability and transnational presence as Negress, an indispensable vehicle that both grounds the Museum's accounting of itself and allows for the grounding of modern artistic practices.

The work of Kara Walker offers the most recent and well-known example of what it might mean for an African American woman to take on and take up that vehicle for her own purposes. It has been reviled for its perceived infliction of further injury to the black female body, as well as for its runaway success among white critics, collectors, and institutions; in fact, her 1994 New York museum debut *Gone: An Historical Romance of a Civil War as It Occurred between the Dusky Thighs of One Young Negress and Her Heart* (no. 7) was acquired by MoMA in 2007. In this work, as elsewhere in her oeuvre, the artist uses black construction paper cut into silhouettes and affixed to white walls to outline a panoramic landscape, an "inner plantation," populated by figures that make reference to and quickly depart from those conjured up in classic narratives of the antebellum South, such as Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind* (1937).[15] Exploiting the medium's defined edges and amorphous centers, Walker carves out grotesque figurations meant to physically and psychically unmoor the viewer's sense of place and racial identity, everywhere confronting audiences with the phantasm of the Negress given precise optical form.[16]

The logic at work in these tableaux is not merely one of primitivist reversal, carnivalesque refiguration, or subjective exorcism. Rather, in Walker's practice, as in so many others that recruit the Negress, there is the mark of a determinative unconscious rooted in modernity's most extreme modes of symbolic and physical violence, which have taken the black female body as a primary locus. As critic T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting has written, to be a black woman is to be "a body trapped in an image of itself," to be "imprisoned in an essence . . . created from without."[17] Not unlike her precursors, from nineteenth-century sculptor Edmonia Lewis to Jazz Age sensation Josephine Baker, Walker has made her name in reckoning with rather than running from the Negress: the figure that underlines both the recursiveness and ubiquity of Western culture's profoundest misrecognitions of the "other," as well as the expansive capacities of countervailing raced, sexed, and gendered performances of self.[18]

A figure, a tactic, a subject, a structural position, and a means of mark-making, the Negress stands at the boundary of hegemonic and resistive discourses within and beyond the walls of the Museum. For modern artists, to grasp for the Negress, to conjure her into being, is to collapse a limit, to bring the world unbearably close, to perform an alchemy that transmutes subjects into objects and back again. Such transformations are made possible by the flows of bodies and images that have turned black women into fungible property yet also allow an oppositional approach to the figuration of African diasporic femininity and the aesthetic terms in which it is couched. In light of this economy, it is possible to imagine an alternative history of the Museum and its modernisms that centers on the work of African American women practitioners while also bringing forth the specific forms of affiliation, patterns of subjugation, and corollary modes of image-making that differentially produce black subjects in the wake of the Negress.

The faded career of Thelma Johnson Streat—likely the first black woman to have work collected by the Museum—provides one kind of object lesson. A dancer, folklorist, and painter born in Yakima, Washington, circa 1912, Streat was a woman of African and Native American descent who traveled to and worked in recognized hubs of modern artistic production: Paris, New York, Chicago, San Francisco. Her peripatetic existence can be viewed as a product both of the policing of space that necessarily impinged upon black folks in segregated America and of a desire to engage with alternative cultural formations. Streat spent time in

7. **Kara Walker** (American, born 1969). *Gone: An Historical Romance of a Civil War as It Occurred between the Dusky Thighs of One Young Negress and Her Heart*. 1994. Paper, overall 13 x 50' (4 x 15.2 m). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of The Speyer Family Foundation in honor of Marie-Josée Kravis

Hawaii, British Columbia, Haiti, and Ireland, where she made portraits of locals and collected material that would eventually be incorporated into her performances and paintings such as *Rabbit Man* (1941, no. 8), a gouache that suggests the range of influences, from Squamish to Kota, that informed her lushly colored and hieratic work.[19]

Streat might be thought of as taking up the same primitivist lexicon used by her white male contemporaries, such as Adolph Gottlieb, but for the cross-purpose of enacting a cultural reparation meant to situate her heritages within their historic and ritual contexts.[20] There were, of course, consequences in doing so: the press labeled her the "colored girl" painter, and European audiences feted her as "a charming Negro." These designations attest to the specters that accrued to the artist's person and practice, if not to their ambivalent effect.[21] While she often remains a marginal figure in accounts of black women's art, Streat's self-primitivizing self-promotion, so redolent of the Negress, made her work visible, legible, and laudable to modernist luminaries such as Barr, who was responsible for the acquisition of *Rabbit Man* in 1942.[22]

MoMA's investment in Streat and other African American artists was, however, inconsistent, even during the institution's early, more experimental years. Writer Russell Lynes recounted that in the 1930s and '40s the Museum "had lived on purposeful improvisation," exhibiting an incredible range of material, from industrially designed objects to popular film to children's drawings.[23] The aim of the institution's founders was to educate the New York public in the aesthetic appraisal of modern production, with a particular view to illuminating the prehistory of European and American pictorial innovation.[24] Accordingly, its early exhibitions featuring black art, such as *Ancestral Sources of Modern Painting* of 1941, emphasized African sculpture, highlighted American folk traditions, and occasionally gave pride of place to the work of an African American master such as Jacob Lawrence.[25] If these shows often reproduced the kind of primitivist logic that

8. Thelma Johnson Streat (American, 1912–1959). *Rabbit Man*. 1941. Gouache on board, 6 5/8 x 4 7/8" (16.5 x 12 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchase

positioned African diasporic art as ancillary to mainstream modernism, then the Museum's collecting practices came to enshrine that marginalization by focusing on, in Barr's words, "the best works by the best artists," "pioneer" objects that occasioned a shift within a narrowly defined aesthetic field.[26]

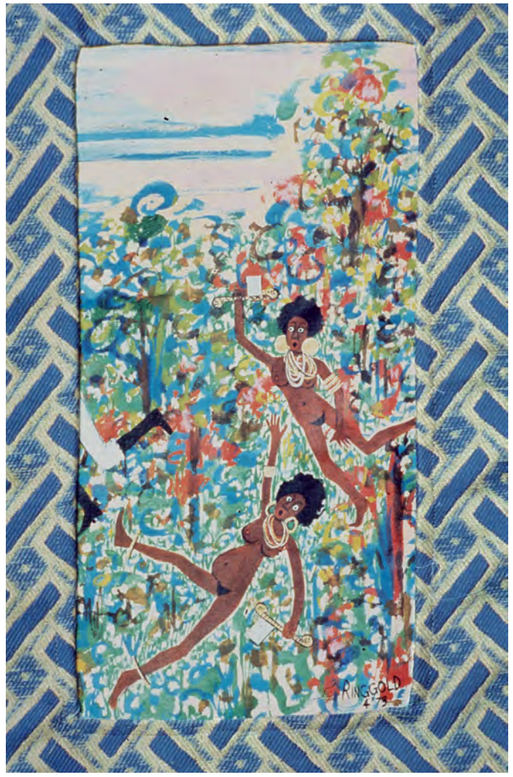
By the late 1960s the Museum had become the face of the establishment, its masterpieces increasingly displayed according to white-cube gallery conventions, its linear account of modern art effectively naturalized, its ideal viewer imagined as a universal subject.[27] Such tendencies, however, threw the Museum's ties to the military-industrial complex and its elision of nonwhite, nonmale, living, and American artists into sharp relief.[28] As such, MoMA, like other museums across the city, became a key site of ideological conflict in the ensuing decades of social crisis, a time that saw increased attempts to dismantle hegemonic culture and to redefine figures of visible difference, blackness foremost among them.[29]

Artists inspired by the Civil Rights and Black Nationalist movements worked to establish alternative museum sites in African American communities, such as The Studio Museum in Harlem, even as they clamored against the treatment of African Americans within mainstream institutions.[30] Perhaps the most signal of these came in April 1969: members of the Art Workers' Coalition (AWC) protested the exclusion of black artists from MoMA's memorial exhibition in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr., occasioning a series of extended dialogues between artists and Museum staff.[31] In this brief moment of opening, it appeared that MoMA might be transformed into a space of black radical imagining and connection between diasporic cultures. Numerous ideas were put forward, if only fleetingly entertained: a study center devoted to black and Puerto Rican culture; the decentralization of the collection, which would be placed at the behest of community groups throughout the city; and additional exhibition opportunities for women artists and artists of color.[32]

Almost from its inception the AWC had lobbied for the inclusion of underrepresented groups in the Museum, but more often than not the demands of each faction were articulated separately. Consequently, the black and women artists' movements came to parallel rather than inform each other, emphasizing the specificity of their respective identities and the different wells of experience from which they drew.[33] In some cases it appeared that these positions could not be occupied at the same time: although the women's AWC committee, Women Artists in Revolution, advocated for people of color, according to its thinking, the black woman was colored second and female first, "since this involved a more profound discrimination."[34] African American women were thus again produced as the sum of two differences rather than as individuals with their own ends and histories, but artists would soon emerge whose work and activism would challenge both the movements and the Museum.

Few figures reflected these tensions more acutely than Faith Ringgold, who played a central role in the AWC's negotiations for black representation while also contesting the sexism of the African American artists' group Spiral and the exclusionary practices of the white-male-dominated group Art Strike Against Racism, War, and Oppression. In 1970 Ringgold's quest for a space for black feminists led her to organize Women Students and Artists for Black Art Liberation (WSABAL) with, among others, her daughter, Michele Wallace, and eventually to shift the address, form, and structure of her own work. Trained in figurative and abstract oil painting, Ringgold embarked on the Slave Rape Series in 1973 (no. 9), a group of acrylic works executed on fabric sewn by the artist's mother, fashion designer Willi Posey. This series marked Ringgold's turn to a collaborative, textile-based practice that materially and pictorially illustrated the folk traditions and historical experiences of black diasporic women.[35]

As artist Lorraine O'Grady has observed, the 1970s marked a key stage in black female "auto-expression," when practitioners of very different aesthetic means and political sensibilities availed themselves of visual terms that moved out of the shadow of the Negress and subverted the biases of the Museum.[36] The early work of Adrian

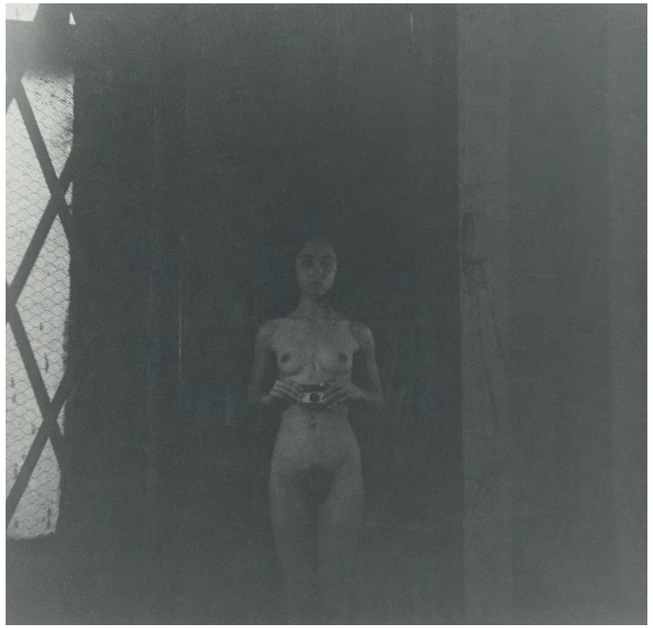


9. **Faith Ringgold** (American, born 1930). *Help, Slave Rape Series #15*. 1973. Acrylic on canvas, 35 x 22" (88.9 x 55.9 cm). Collection the artist

Piper provides a case in point. The artist was represented in *Information*, MoMA's landmark 1970 exhibition of Conceptual art, by a typewritten page that revealed nothing about her race or gender.[37] In a series of nude and semi-nude photographs taken in a mirror one year later (nos. 10 and 11), Piper faced the visual facts of her difference, which contributed both to her marginalization in the art world and to her increasingly radical stance toward its institutions.[38] The story of Howardena Pindell is equally telling. A curator in MoMA's Department of Prints and Illustrated Books for twelve years, Pindell grew weary of the "casual racism" and the "double-speak" around quality that alienated her from her own work and precluded black artists from being visible within the Museum.[39] After a personal crisis in 1979 she left her post, began teaching, and began a series of pieces (no. 12) that mobilized her previous abstract visual vocabulary toward autobiographical ends and that eventually explored affinities with African practices of textural adornment.[40]

As artists and activists these women and their cohorts did bring about immediate change. Thanks to the platform laid out by WSABAL and protests organized by Ad Hoc Women Artists' Committee, for example, black women were included in the 1970 Whitney Biennial.[41] Just as important, their writings created the discursive backdrop against which the work of subsequent practitioners could be seen, while emphasizing those persistent realities that, to paraphrase Piper, triply negate black women artists, that give rise to what Pindell calls "art world racism," and that continue the career of the Negress.[42] As Wallace has argued, the incommensurable status of black women as the other of the other, both invisible and ubiquitous, means that their art has been inextricably linked to the modern yet left out of established art-historical narratives and museum collections.[43]

MoMA is no exception. To search for the black woman within its archives is to encounter a series of traces that conjure up a host of absences. There are no works by Maren Hassinger or Lois Mailou Jones or May Howard Jackson; no signs that Martha Jackson-Jarvis or Senga Nengudi or Rose Piper were there; no evidence of Harriet Powers, Renée Stout, Alma Thomas, Pat Ward Williams, or even of Meta Vaux Warrick Fuller, whose life and career were "pioneering," to say the least. Born in 1877 to a middle-class black Philadelphia family and educated at the Pennsylvania Museum and School of Industrial Arts, Fuller went to Paris, where she studied until 1902, rubbing shoulders with the likes of W. E. B. Du Bois, and having her work positively appraised by no less than Auguste Rodin.[44] As art historian Judith Wilson has argued, Fuller, in her *Ethiopia Awakening* (c. 1921, no. 13), manifested not only an innovative approach to sculptural form but also



10. **Adrian Piper** (American, born 1948). *Food for the Spirit #3*. 1971. Gelatin silver print (printed 1997), 14 $^{9}/_{16}$ x 14 $^{15}/_{16}$" (37 x 38 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. The Family of Man Fund

11. **Adrian Piper** (American, born 1948). *Food for the Spirit #4*. 1971. Gelatin silver print (printed 1997), 14 $^{9}/_{16}$ x 14 $^{15}/_{16}$" (37 x 38 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. The Family of Man Fund

12. Howardena Pindell (American, born 1943). *Autobiography: Water/ Ancestors/ Middle Passage/Family Ghosts*. 1988. Mixed media, 9' 10" x 71" (299.7 x 180.3 cm). The Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, Conn. The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund

one of the earliest artistic iterations of a feminist African diasporic consciousness. Executed following the publication of West African writer Joseph Casely-Hayford's novel *Ethiopia Unbound* (1911) and after Emperor Menelik II successfully fended off invading Italian forces in 1896, Fuller's sculpture became a beacon of new black, transnational potentialities in art and politics.[45]

Her work has also been seen as indicative of how black women's art opens onto another order of aesthetic priorities. Here is how scholar Alain Locke began the entry on Fuller in his foundational 1936 survey *Negro Art: Past and Present*:

> The next artistic career of note was that of a woman artist and a sculptor. Sculpture has been strangely prominent in the work of Negro artists, for painting usually claims in modern times far the greater share of attention. But sculpture has been unusually popular with Negro artists, in spite of its technical difficulties and expensive processes. Certainly we have to deal with a more direct and vivid sense for form, unless we try to explain it by some doubtful carry-over of the African preference for three-dimensional form. Another odd fact, the majority of the outstanding Negro sculptors have been women.[46]

Art historian Lowery Stokes Sims has argued that such a preference for the sculptural highlights the significance of "tactility as a transmitter of cultural values" within a variety of black women's creative practices—hairdressing, weaving, quilting, performing—all of which take their measure from and embrace the sensate body.[47]

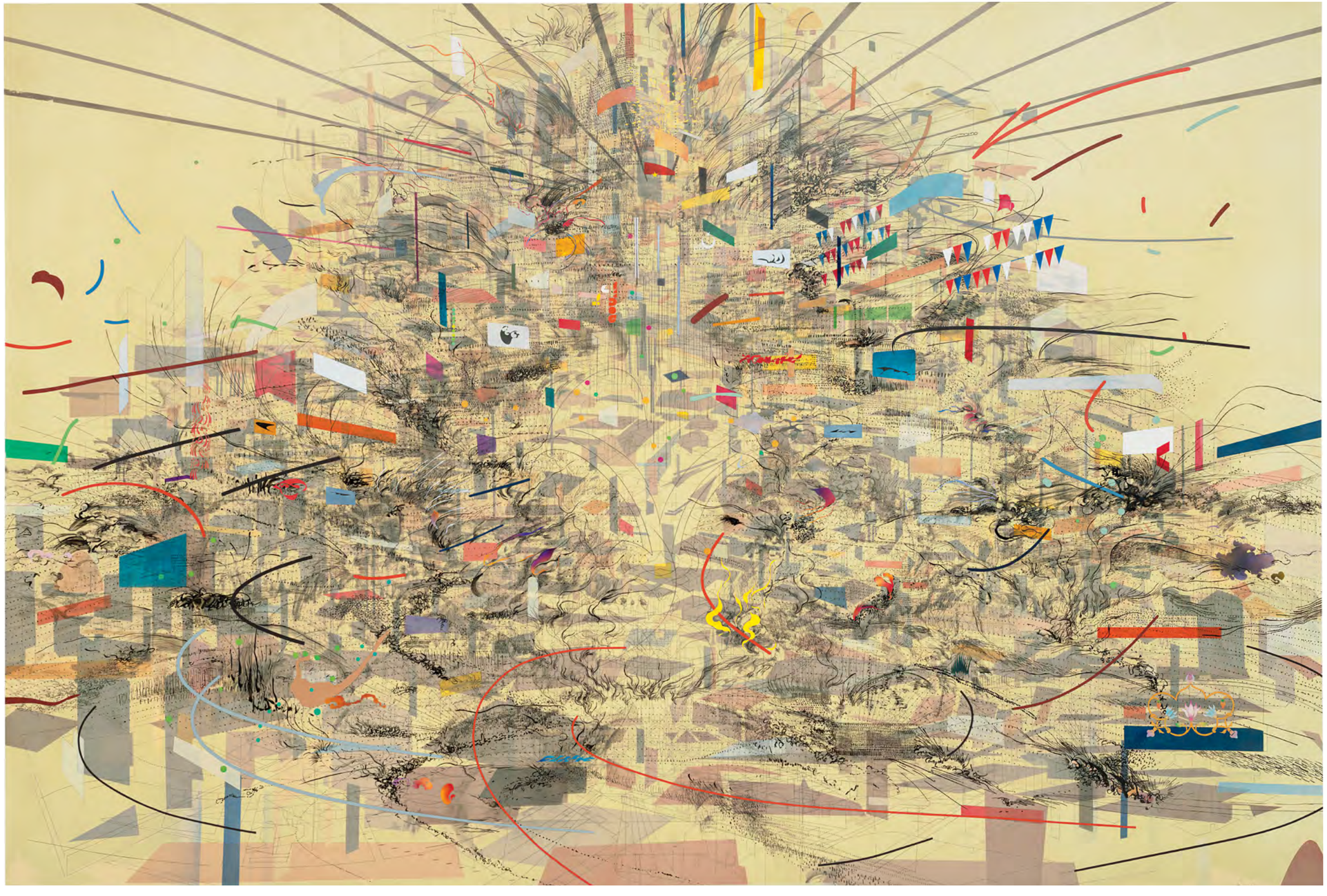
Historically confronted with scopic regimes that denigrate the black female image and received canons that privilege optical perception, African diasporic women have turned to the haptic as a resource for self-fashioning and for the preservation of memories otherwise lost to history. Touch brings the world close without presuming to master it, allowing for a recalibration of the self and the object, the aesthetic and the vernacular, that disarticulates notions of quality, medium, and cultural hierarchy. Pindell's investment in African textiles, Ringgold's turn to quilting, even Piper's lingering photographic contact with herself—these black women's engagements with the visual constitute manifestations of a modernist sensibility predicated not on the look of racial phantasm but on the feel of the subject's psychic and corporeal position.[48]

Simpson's work illustrates how the seemingly antithetical modalities of vision and touch hold each other in productive tension. Her multipart work *Wigs (Portfolio)* (1994, no. 14) is composed of lithographs, printed on felt, that depict hairpieces purchased in Brooklyn set alongside narrative fragments ranging from a psychoanalyst's interview with the mother of an avowed fetishist to lines lifted from William and Ellen Craft's 1860 slave narrative, which describes how they disguised themselves in order to escape from bondage. Simpson's wigs suggest that the look of black femininity might be altered to preserve the sensate self, a combination of visual ruse and tactile identity hinted at by the richly textured surfaces on which the images are printed. In this work it is as if the conditions affecting black women can only come into view when the body and the presumptions that accompany it are absented from the field of vision.

Much the same might be said of Julie Mehretu's *Empirical Construction, Istanbul* (2003, no. 15), in which space is both homogenized and hopelessly undone, giving disembodied visual form to the sorts of cultural displacements that took the artist from Ethiopia to the United States and to those historical vectors that have shaped the experience of the modern subject. Both Simpson's and Mehretu's work reveal the range of possibilities available to black women artists in the present; that the pieces are found in MoMA's collection suggests the viability of their practices in the culture at large. Yet the terms of their appearance are still haunted by the specter of the Negress, a figure that makes clear how the production of the aesthetic and of the human within Western institutions remains structured by the desire to locate cultural renovation in bodily difference: whether real or virtual, the black woman in the Museum continues to tell untold stories and to give rise to an uncertain future.

13. Meta Vaux Warrick Fuller (American, 1877–1968). *Ethiopia Awakening*. c. 1921. Bronze, 67 x 16 x 20" (170.2 x 40.6 x 51 cm). Art & Artifacts Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations

Following pages:
14. Lorna Simpson (American, born 1960). *Wigs (Portfolio)*. 1994. Portfolio of twenty-one lithographs on felt, with seventeen lithographed felt text panels, overall 6' x 13' 6" (182.9 x 411.5 cm). Publisher: Rhona Hoffman Gallery, Chicago. Printer: 21 Steps, Albuquerque. Edition: 15. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchased with funds given by Agnes Gund, Howard B. Johnson, and Emily Fisher Landau



15. **Julie Mehretu** (American, born Ethiopia 1970). *Empirical Construction, Istanbul*. 2003. Ink and synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 10 x 15' (304.8 x 457.2 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Fund for the Twenty-First Century

1. On Simpson's discursive construction in the age of multiculturalism and its aftermath, see Huey Copeland, "'Bye, Bye Black Girl': Lorna Simpson's Figurative Retreat," *Art Journal* 64, no. 2 (Summer 2005): 62–77.
2. Katherine McKittrick conducts a related inquiry in *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006).
3. For a useful reckoning with the concept of African diaspora—which refers to the forcible dispersal of black peoples from the continent as well as to their efforts to create political and cultural community in the wake of such displacement—see Brent Hayes Edwards, "The Uses of *Diaspora*," *Social Text* 19, no. 1 (Spring 2001): 45–73.
4. Images from the exhibition—based on the holdings of the Getty Museum and that of collector Jackie Napolean Wilson—are reproduced in Wilson, *Hidden Witness: African-American Images from the Dawn of Photography to the Civil War* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999).
5. My reading of this work expands on Enid Schildkrout's in "*Les Parisiens d'Afrique*: Mangbetu Women as Works of Art," in Barbara Thompson, ed., *Black Womanhood: Images, Icons, and Ideologies of the African Body* (Hanover, N.H.: Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College; Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008), pp. 70–93.
6. "The Friends of Education," www.moma.org/support/support_the_museum/affiliate_groups/index.
7. My account of the Museum's practices draws upon Douglas Crimp, "The Art of Exhibition," in *On the Museum's Ruins* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993), pp. 262–71.
8. On this disjuncture, see Michael Hanchard, "Black Memory versus State Memory: Notes toward a Method," *Small Axe* 12, no. 2 (June 2008): 45–62.
9. Here I use "signify" in the sense elaborated by Henry Louis Gates, Jr., who traces the term's history as a form of troping and ironic reversal in black expressive cultures in "The Blackness of Blackness: A Critique of the Sign and the Signifying Monkey," in *Figures in Black: Words, Signs, and the "Racial" Self* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 235–76.
10. Freida High W. Tesfagiorgis, "In Search of a Discourse and Critique/s That Center the Art of Black Women Artists," in Stanlie M. James and Abena P. A. Busia, eds., *Theorizing Black Feminisms: The Visionary Pragmatism of Black Women* (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 228–66; Lorraine O'Grady, "Olympia's Maid: Reclaiming Black Female Subjectivity," *Afterimage* 20 (Summer 1992): 14–15, 23; Gilane Tawadros, "Beyond the Boundary: The Work of Three Black Women Artists in Britain," *Third Text* 3, nos. 8–9 (Autumn–Winter 1989): 121–50; Michele Wallace "Modernism, Postmodernism, and the Problem of the Visual in Afro-American Culture," in Russell Ferguson et al., eds., *Out There: Marginalization and Contemporary Cultures* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990), pp. 39–50.
11. T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting offers an invaluable gloss on the meaning of the Negress in *Black Venus: Sexualized Savages, Primal Fears, and Primitive Narratives in French* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1999), p. 56. *The Oxford English Dictionary* offers a thorough account of the etymology of "Negress."
12. Hortense J. Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book," 1987, in *Black, White, and in Color: Essays on American Literature and Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), p. 203.
13. On Abby Aldrich Rockefeller's collection, its importance for the Museum, and her investment in George Overbury ("Pop") Hart, see Sybil Gordon Kantor, *Alfred H. Barr, Jr. and the Intellectual Origins of the Museum of Modern Art* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2002), pp. 191–95.
14. Alfred H. Barr, Jr., *Picasso: Forty Years of His Art* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1939), p. 60.
15. Kara Walker, quoted in Jerry Saltz, "Ill-Will and Desire," *Flash Art* 29, no. 191 (November–December 1996): 84.
16. I have relied on Darby English's thoroughgoing account of Walker's practice in *How to See a Work of Art in Total Darkness* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2007), pp. 110–12.
17. Sharpley-Whiting, *Black Venus*, p. 10.
18. My theorization of the Negress is indebted to Hilton Als's memoir, *The Women*, which tells the stories of black gay men and women, most notably the author's mother, whose "remarkable way[s] of being" constitute their "Negressity." Als, *The Women* (New York: Noonday Press, 1996), p. 19.
19. On Thelma Johnson Streat's life and work, see Lizzetta LeFalle-Collins, "Streat, Thelma Johnson," in Thomas Riggs, ed., *St. James Guide to Black Artists* (Detroit: St. James Press, 1997), pp. 512–13; Judith Wilson, "How the Invisible Woman Got Herself on the Cultural Map: Black Women Artists in California," in Diana Burgess Fuller and Daniela Salvioni, eds., *Art/Women/California, 1950–2000: Parallels and Intersections* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press; San Jose: San Jose Museum of Art, 2002), pp. 201–16; and Ann Gibson, "Two Worlds: African American Abstraction in New York at Mid-Century," in *The Search for Freedom: African American Abstract Painting, 1945–1975* (New York: Kenkeleba Gallery, 1991), pp. 11–54.
20. I borrow the notion of "a dictionary of 'primitivist' styles" from Gibson, *Abstract Expressionism: Other Politics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), p. 160; and that of "ethnocultural redemption and retrieval" from Wilson, "How the Invisible Woman Got Herself on the Cultural Map," p. 207.
21. In characterizing Streat's discursive production, I have drawn on clippings included in Painting and Sculpture Artist File I. 315, The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York: "Colored Girl to Exhibit Paintings," *Oregon Journal*, September 19, 1934, sect. C3, p. 5; and "The News That's Going Around," *The Irish Press*, May 6, 1950.
22. The MoMA file on Streat contains lists of the artist's notices, critics, and collectors that she herself produced and submitted to the Museum. Between 1947 and 1953 Streat also wrote several letters to Barr and to curator Dorothy Miller that reveal her consistent desire to show at the Museum.
23. Russell Lynes, *Good Old Modern: An Intimate Portrait of the Museum of Modern Art* (New York: Atheneum, 1973), p. 212.
24. Barr, "A New Art Museum," 1929, in *Defining Modern Art: Selected Writings of Alfred H. Barr, Jr.*, eds. Irving Sandler and Amy Newman (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1986), p. 71.
25. For a working draft of the Museum's exhibition history, see www.moma.org/learn/resources/archives/archives_exhibition_history_list; on Barr's various engagements with black diasporic culture, see Alfred H. Barr Papers, The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York.
26. Barr, quoted in Kantor, *Alfred H. Barr, Jr. and the Intellectual Origins of the Museum of Modern Art*, p. 369.
27. Mary Anne Staniszewski, *The Power of Display: A History of Exhibition Installations at the Museum of Modern Art* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1998), pp. 110–11.
28. Lucy R. Lippard, "Dreams, Demands, and Desires: The Black, Antiwar, and Women's Movements," in Mary Schmidt Campbell, *Tradition and Conflict: Images of a Turbulent Decade, 1963–73* (New York: The Studio Museum in Harlem, 1985), p. 78.
29. For a brilliant gloss on the multiple valences of the black sign in the 1960s and '70s, see Kobena Mercer, "Tropes of the Grotesque in the Black Avant-Garde," in Mercer, ed., *Pop Art and Vernacular Cultures* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press and Iniva, 2007), p. 147.
30. For useful surveys of black art and activism, see Campbell, *Tradition and Conflict*, pp. 45–68, as well as Mary Ellen Shannon, "A Question of Relevancy: New York Museums and the Black Arts Movement, 1968–1971," in Lisa Gail Collins and Margo Natalie Crawford, eds., *New Thoughts on the Black Arts Movement* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2006), pp. 92–116.
31. Lippard, "Dreams, Demands, and Desires," p. 78.
32. "The Demands of the Art Workers' Coalition," May 6, 1970, and "Byers Committee Report to Trustees," February 1971, John B. Hightower Papers III.1.8 and I.9.70, The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York.
33. Collins, "The Art of Transformation: Parallels in the Black Arts and Feminist Art Movements," in *New Thoughts on the Black Arts Movement*, p. 274.
34. Betsy Jones, "Report on Meeting with the Women's Committee of the AWC," n.d., p. 2, John B. Hightower Papers III.1.11.a, The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York.
35. Faith Ringgold reflects on this moment in *We Flew Over the Bridge: The Memoirs of Faith Ringgold* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1995), pp. 143–216.
36. O'Grady, "Olympia's Maid," p. 23.
37. Adrian Piper, "Three Models of Art Production Systems," in Kynaston L. McShine, ed., *Information* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1970), p. 111.
38. Piper, "Introduction: Some Very FORWARD Remarks," in Piper, *Out of Order, Out of Sight*, vol. 2, *Selected Writings in Art Criticism, 1967–1992* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1996), pp. xxx–xxxiii.
39. Howardena Pindell, "Art World Racism: A Documentation, 1980–1988," 1988, in *The Heart of the Question: The Writings and Paintings of Howardena Pindell* (New York: Midmarch Arts Press, 1997), pp. 17, 7.
40. On autobiography and adornment in Pindell's practice, see "Autobiography: In Her Own Image," 1988; "Free, White and 21," 1992; and "'The Aesthetics of Texture in African Adornment,'" 1984, in *The Heart of the Question*, pp. 72–73, 64–69, 84–86.
41. Wallace, "Reading 1968: The Great American Whitewash," 1988, in *Invisibility Blues: From Pop to Theory* (London: Verso, 1990), p. 196.
42. Piper, "The Triple Negation of Colored Women Artists," 1990, in *Out of Order, Out of Sight*, vol. 2, pp. 161–73; Pindell, "Art World Racism," pp. 3–19.
43. Wallace, "Variations on Negation and the Heresy of Black Feminist Creativity," in *Invisibility Blues*, p. 218.
44. See Renée Ater, "Making History: Meta Warrick Fuller's *Ethiopia*," *American Art* 17, no. 3 (Fall 2003): 14.
45. Judith Wilson, "Hagar's Daughters: Social History, Cultural Heritage, and Afro-U.S. Women's Art," in *Bearing Witness: Contemporary Works by African American Women Artists* (New York: Rizzoli International, 1996), pp. 95–112.
46. Alain Locke, *Negro Art: Past and Present* (Washington, D.C.: Associates in Negro Folk Education, 1936), pp. 27–28.
47. Lowery Stokes Sims, "African American Women Artists: Into the Twenty-First Century," in *Bearing Witness*, p. 85.
48. This paragraph expands my thinking on the subject's visual and sensual predication in Copeland, "'Bye, Bye Black Girl,'" pp. 74–76, in light of Tesfagiorgis's and Sims's thinking about the disruptive and healing forces of black women's vernacular traditions. See Tesfagiorgis, "In Search of a Discourse," p. 232, and Sims, "African American Women Artists," p. 86.

1. Joan Snyder (American, born 1940). *Sweet Cathy's Song (For Cathy Elzea)*. August–September 1978. Children's drawings, newsprint, papier-mâché, synthetic polymer paint, oil, and pastel on canvas, 6' 6" x 12' (198.1 x 365.8 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of the Louis and Bessie Adler Foundation, Inc., Seymour M. Klein, President

Let's begin with a working definition. According to Eli Zaretsky, a Marxist historian writing in the 1970s, feminism aspires to "revolutionize the deepest and most universal aspects of life—those of personal relations, love, egotism, sexuality, and our inner emotional lives."[1] I like this definition; it helps me remember that part of what I'm after, as a feminist, is the fundamental reorganization of the institutions that govern us, as well as those that we, in turn, govern. Therefore, thinking about the introduction of feminism into the museum is no small matter. It seems clear that feminist art history has made enormous gains in the academy: we have recovered scores of women artists from oblivion, populated the academy with female professors, established classes on feminist art practices, and entered numerous women artists into the canon, so that your average art history student would be hard-pressed to graduate without knowing at least a smattering of women artists and maybe even a few feminists. But American museums have been slower to encompass feminism's challenges than the academy, despite a work force largely comprising women. Art history needs its objects of study to be displayed, and thus the history of the museum can be seen in part as a struggle for how to display works of art. This essay looks to recent art-historical ideas with the aim of beginning to think through the translation of these new discursive formations into the spatial logic and requirements of the museum. In other words: I feel fairly confident that I know how to write an essay as a feminist, less sure I know how to install art as one.

The pervasive sexism in museums is evidenced by how slow museums of modern and contemporary art were to acquire feminist art of the 1970s. And when they did buy it or accept it as gifts, they were often reticent to exhibit it. Much feminist art in permanent collections, like that of The Museum of Modern Art, rarely, if ever, graces the walls. For instance, MoMA owns two terrific paintings:

2. Lee Lozano (American, 1930–1999). *Untitled*. 1963. Oil on canvas, two panels, overall 7' 10" x 8' 4" (238.8 x 254 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Jo Carole and Ronald S. Lauder

Sweet Cathy's Song (For Cathy Elzea) by Joan Snyder (1978, no. 1) and an untitled work by Lee Lozano (1963, no. 2). The Snyder work, acquired the year it was made, has been on view twice: once in an exhibition of new acquisitions in 1979 and then again in a rotation of the collection in 1987. The Lozano work was acquired in 2004 and has been shown just once, in *What Is Painting?* in 2007. I do not wish to engage in the ever-popular sport of MoMA-bashing. There are a million reasons why art objects live lives of quiet desperation in the vault. Rather than simply denounce the status quo, I'd like to ask some questions about the distinct lack of visibility of feminist art production. What are the ramifications for the reception and understanding of contemporary art given the lack of display of earlier feminist work? How do we redress the incomplete history currently on view in most museums? Given that art made by women and subsequently by feminist artists (women and feminists not being the same thing) has been so prominently absent, what forms of history can feminism offer in the space of the museum? And, more specifically, if art objects demand of their viewers various forms of competence for interpretation, what conditions of exhibition does the museum need to establish to create and satisfy those demands? For instance, if feminist works demand that viewers draw on new and different skills to interpret them, how can the museum help create and accommodate those skills?

These questions of history-making struck me very strongly in 2005, when MoMA bought and quickly exhibited *Presentation*, a mammoth painting by a young artist named Dana Schutz (2005, no. 3). Schutz had garnered an enormous amount of press: she was young, a recent graduate of the newly hot Master of Fine Arts program at Columbia University, and she made big, expressive paintings. I confess I was slow to see what was interesting about Schutz's work; I had a typically contrary reaction to a splashy article about her in the *New York Times Magazine*. I think I had difficulty seeing what was interesting about Schutz largely because she was presented as an ingénue without any *history*, so it is telling that what eventually turned me around were my own scattershot attempts to place her work into some kind of historical trajectory or narrative. For instance, several years after Schutz's meteoric rise to fame I became interested in Snyder's stroke paintings from the 1970s. These paintings took a modernist grid, with all of its will to silence and impartiality, and combined it with wildly expressive brushstrokes resembling those of an impassioned censor. The combination of expressionism and its disavowal seemed to me emblematic of the feminist struggle to make the personal political. My interest in Snyder was accompanied by an associative—but rather counterintuitive—chain of thoughts about the importance of Willem de Kooning for Amy Sillman (no. 4). As a feminist trained during the heady days of 1980s theory, I was under the impression that de Kooning paintings were bad—their expressivity garish, their misogyny self-evident. But it became clear to me that Sillman had picked up on the extraordinary use of pink in de Kooning's paintings, which meant that she wasn't having the same problems. Far from feeling compelled to decry de Kooning "the misogynist," Sillman, in her paintings, suggested that in de Kooning one might find a feminized practice of painting in which abstraction is ineluctably linked to the decorative in a nonpejorative way. (I'm thinking of his paintings from the 1970s, the pastoral, frothy, and almost rococo ones, with palettes of rose, cream, and silver.) When I next saw work by Schutz it was in the context of an awful exhibition at the Royal Academy of Arts in London called *USA Today*, a show of recent American art drawn exclusively from Charles Saatchi's collection. Schutz's paintings did not support the exhibition's jingoistic premise (such crass nationalism during wartime was hard to swallow) but unraveled it from the inside. Her oversized, self-devouring figures, awash in a pukey palette, seemed to encapsulate perfectly the horror of America's wartime conditions, particularly the obliteration of rational speech that was a central strategy of George W. Bush's administration.

3. **Dana Schutz** (American, born 1976). *Presentation*. 2005. Oil on canvas, 10 x 14' (304.8 x 426.7 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Fractional and promised gift of Michael and Judy Ovitz

4. **Amy Sillman** (American, born 1956). *Psychology Today*. 2006. Oil on canvas, 7' 8" x 7' ½" (233.7 x 214.6 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Fund for the Twenty-First Century

Perhaps part of the unbridled popular affirmation for Schutz's paintings was due to their energy and vibrancy—a directness of paint on canvas and a disarmingly emotional palate. The paintings display a particularly legible kind of neurosis about power and the body, with devouring and purging mouths desperately spitting out paint—instead of food or words—in an attempt at a kind of pre- or post-linguistic form of communication. Although the body is a perennial feminist subject, Schutz, for the most part, was not discussed in terms of a tradition of feminist work; rather her newness and youth were offered as the primary filters through which to approach her paintings. Part of her meteoric rise, therefore, was tied to the way her work appeared *unconnected* to artistic precedents. This amnesia, although prevalent in the current market-driven art world in general, is largely not the case with young male artists, who are quickly legitimized into comfortably entrenched art-historical narratives, given fathers by their critics. This makes sense given that the average museum's presentation of its permanent collection is an offering of pluralist harmony (one good picture after another) intermittently punctured by Oedipally inflected narratives of influence, in which sons either make an homage to their fathers (Richard Serra to Jackson Pollock), kill their fathers (Frank Stella to Pollock), or pointedly ignore their fathers (Luc Tuymans to Pollock).

Genealogies for art made by women aren't so clear, largely because they are structured by a shadowy absence. This is why art historians and curators have so often turned to the tasks of recovery and inclusion (we can think here of the recent retrospectives of Snyder, Lozano, and Lee Bontecou, as well as *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution*).[2] The work of recovery is important; I have done it myself and will continue to do so. But I am increasingly puzzled about how to reinsert these absences, repressions, and omissions into the narrative continuum favored by the museum. I know I don't want ghettoized galleries dedicated to art made by women or even a room of "feminist art."[3] But where, for instance, after not exhibiting *Sweet Cathy's Song (For Cathy Elzea)* and Lozano's *Untitled* should MoMA hang these works? Is it really as simple as reinserting them into a chronological narrative that hitherto hasn't accounted for them? Lozano near Philip Guston, Snyder near Brice Marden? The chronological purist in me loves this idea, but I fear it is the nonfeminist in me that desires such a pat formulation: a broken story repaired by insisting that these artists occupy their rightful places in the grand narrative. But is this solution feminist *enough*? Is it a revolution of the deepest order to insert women artists back into rooms that have been structured by their very absence? What would it mean to take this absence as the very historical condition under which the work of women artists is both produced and understood? Might feminism allow us to imagine different genealogies and hence different versions of how we tell the history of art made by women, as well as art made under the influence of feminism?

For instance, I have a fantasy room in which hang works by Snyder, Cindy Sherman (no. 5), Sillman, Wangechi Mutu (no. 6), and Schutz. I have an intuition that these works might, as curators say, "talk to each other." My first response to this fantasy is to be made nervous by its ahistorical or potentially essentializing nature, but despite my anxieties, such a room would be true to the kind of associative chain I described earlier, when I moved from Schutz to Snyder to Sillman to de Kooning and back again. Might such a room, organized by the very process of coming to terms with new work, offer a way out of the current impasse created by the opposition of chronological installation (such as that favored by MoMA) versus thematic (favored by Tate Modern, in London)? Instead of coming to terms with Schutz, Snyder, and de Kooning and then putting them back where they "belong," should the museum experiment with other models of history-making?

Two art historians, Lisa Tickner and Mignon Nixon, have recently argued, tentatively but with promise, for historical models of influence, production, narration, and interpretation that eschew the two most powerful and

5. **Cindy Sherman** (American, born 1954). *Untitled #92*. 1981. Chromogenic color print, 24 x 47 15/16" (61 x 121.9 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. The Fellows of Photography Fund

familiar in art history: the Oedipal narrative of the son who murders his father (the trumping of one style by another) and the mother-daughter model of the daughter learning through the transmission of oral history (women painters who worked in their fathers' studios; the history of the decorative arts; even some of the mythology surrounding Womanhouse).[4] Tickner and Nixon look to another version of family life for models of production and reception, specifically to the relationships of siblings and cousins.

Tickner argues that historically women artists have sought attachment rather than separation, meaning that one of the effects of operating within a genealogy marked by absences and omissions is that you try to seek out your predecessors rather than refute them. She writes that although women may experience "the anxiety of finding oneself a motherless daughter seeking attachment," the discovery of "(real and elective) artist-mothers releases women to deal with their fathers and encounter their siblings on equal terms. Feminism fought for our right to publicly acknowledge cultural expression; it also insists on our place in the patrimony, as equal heirs with our brothers and cousins."[5] This is an interesting idea for two reasons. On the one hand it moves quickly from a familial narrative to a social one—from a putatively private arrangement to an explicitly public one—in a hallmark of feminist critique: the making public and legible of inequities deemed private. On the other hand it subverts the potentially pathological nature of familial narratives by insisting on the category of "elective mother." Queer

6. **Wangechi Mutu** (Kenyan, born 1972). *Yo Mama*. 2003. Ink, mica flakes, pressure-sensitive synthetic polymer sheeting, cut-and-pasted printed paper, painted paper, and synthetic polymer paint on paper, overall 59 1/8" x 7' 1" (150.2 x 215.9 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. The Judith Rothschild Foundation Contemporary Drawings Collection Gift

life and theory have offered us increasingly expansive models of the family, and Tickner's argument reaps the benefit of a model developed by those for whom family is established through choice as well as through chance.[6]

To amplify the logic of her argument, Tickner turns to Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's powerful idea of the rhizome as a metaphor for organizing history and knowledge. Unlike the image of the tree—vertical, hierarchical, and evolutionary—the rhizome offers a horizontal, nonlinear structure in which all ideas have the possibility of connecting to all other ideas. Building on this open model of family, she quotes Deleuze and Guattari: "The tree is filiation, but the rhizome is alliance, uniquely alliance."[7] If we think according to the logic of the rhizome, we can see that history is filled with gaps and fissures *and* moments of connection and synchronicity, and that while there is loss and neglect (as there is regarding the history of art made by women), there are also alliances formed despite geographical distance and temporal incommensurability. Thus an artist seeking an elective mother might not place her in a hierarchical relationship but might instead construct a situation of relative degrees of parity—which might cause those elective mothers a degree of consternation, especially those from the generations of women who fought for the rights we currently take for granted; to them such a synchronic version of history might appear unfair. But a model of history structured by alliance allows us to think about lines of influence and conditions of production that are organized horizontally, by necessarily competing ideas of identification, attachment, sameness, and difference, as opposed to our all too familiar (vertical) narratives of exclusion, rejection, and triumph. Such a modification in our thinking might, in turn, help us reorganize our institutional dynamics of power.

What would happen if we thought about the museum in this way? After all, it presents its objects simultaneously and equally, while at the same time arranging them chronologically and with an implied tale of progress. Is it possible to privilege the horizontal or rhizomatic aspect over that more powerful vertical spatialization of chronology or those hierarchical family dramas? Better yet, might we be able to highlight or foreground the idea that the model of interconnectedness and the older chronological Oedipal model are already simultaneous with each other? Might we be able to give credence to the deferred and delayed temporality of the recognition of feminist art, to pay better attention to which artists become available and/or important to us, and at what point? Can we allow this double sense of time and space to have more traction in our ideas about how to present art to contemporary viewers? If we did this, we could better understand the young woman who comes of age as an artist in the halls of MoMA but doesn't see her first Snyder painting until it suddenly emerges at the (corrective) retrospective at The Jewish Museum. Does this young artist, when she encounters an artist heretofore left out of the grand narrative, need the diachronic narrative of mother-daughter or father-son influence in order to incorporate and make sense of the lessons of her discovery? Or does Tickner's model of affiliation and alliance offer other possibilities?

And what new forms of competence would the objects in my fantasy installation, placed in such a configuration with one another, demand of the viewer? In the back and forth between the forces of abstraction and representation, between expressionism and its restraint, in the highly affective use of color, might we see a common exploration of nonlinguistic communication? Establishing Snyder as an elective mother allows us to see her expressive strokes of enthusiastically colored paint as a rejoinder to the properness of a tastefully muted Minimalist palette, as both a refusal and an embrace of modernism's love of the monochromatic grid. My hope is to suggest that abstraction, expressionism, and beauty or bad taste (depending on your predilection for Snyder's dime-store palette) are not only formal attributes but also constitutive elements in the highly contested field of nonlinguistic expression, a form of expression that might have been particularly problematic for artists negotiating the terms of patriarchy

(that is, the rules surrounding who gets to speak when about what). Seen in this framework, the tension between Snyder's censorious strokes and demonstrative use of color coheres into a kind of unsolvable contradiction.

Establishing Snyder as an elective mother lets us tease out elements of struggle between silence and expression in all of the works: in Schutz's proliferation of mute figures facing a gaping void; in Sherman's macabre mimicry of Hollywood and fairy-tale narratives, her characters forever silent (despite the prominence she gives to images of mouths); in Mutu's laying bare, with her unwavering cut-and-paste, of women's bodies, particularly her exposure of the colonialist fantasy that is the resplendent, silent, and perpetually available body of color, poised for pleasure and destruction; and in Sillman's neurotic cartoonish figures, delicately sitting on top of powerfully explosive fields of color, begging for captions that never appear. What I see in this installation is an alliance among works formed by a shared disavowal of speech and language and a common ambivalence toward claims of self-expression and toward the privilege afforded such claims by bourgeois capitalism and patriarchy. The internal dynamics of each image show a pictorial struggle to occupy a place in a world structured by language—be it the language of painting, abstraction, color, Hollywood, glossy women's magazines, racism, gender, or family. The combined effect suggests that the artists have entered into these preexisting languages with ambivalence and a degree of difficulty. The works also suggest a perennial feminist dilemma: the simultaneous occupying and denying of these positions (or of our place in these languages). They want expressive power as much as they are critical of it. My hope is that this fantasy room of artworks would make an issue out of the psychic and social conditions of patriarchy, suggesting that not all art by women is the same (the problem created by thematic installation), or that art by women gets progressively better over time and therefore can now be exhibited (the weakness of the chronological installation); it would suggest that these conditions have consistently presented women artists with certain challenges, ranging from the neglect of historical figures to the hierarchy of gender, from the assignation of very strongly defined societal roles to the exclusion of women from the history of painting, and that in this room those challenges and struggles are made visible and become part of the competency required for engaging with art made and installed under the rubric of feminism. The elective mother allows us to see that the silences and absences are indeed part of the history of feminist thought and art-making. By installing a 1970s stroke painting by Snyder in a room with more contemporary works I hope to articulate the temporality of certain art becoming necessary for artists and art historians at certain times. This act is something more than merely rescuing Snyder from the vault. The painting should certainly be shown: it's a great painting (made by a woman), and it's a great feminist painting. By installing it in this way I hope to intimate that "to articulate the past historically does not mean to recognize it 'the way it really was,'" but might mean instead to present it as crucial for recalibrating the effects of the new.[8]

My earlier quandary—how we might create feminist genealogies in the museum—remains. I have declined a ghettoized room of feminist art and refused the simple insertion of women back into canons predicated upon their exclusion. My fantasy room suggests that I am also not interested in rooms where who made the work and under what conditions doesn't matter; it's important to me that these artists are women (important even in the midst of wanting it to not be important: feminism's double bind, its inescapable contradiction). Assembling works of art synchronically through alliance permits them to "talk to each other" about what does matter in our struggle for cultural expression: that women artists, although they might find themselves on what appears to be equal footing with their brothers, still labor under conditions that are demonstrably shaped by patriarchy, and that those conditions and the work they produce can and should be discussed rather than ignored. But lest the model of alliance seem too sunny—everything and everyone happily ensconced in their equality in the benign space of the museum—I want to attend to some of the psychic ramifications of such a model.

Nixon has also been thinking about shifting our interpretation away from the vertical, with a feminist analysis that redirects the hierarchical and vertical family drama of psychoanalysis ("mommy, daddy, and me") toward the horizontal logic of siblings.[9] For Nixon, however, this would not be primarily a model or metaphor for alliance or equality; rather it constitutes a recognition as traumatic as that of sexuality itself, that siblings and cousins are the undeniable proof that one is serial, that one exists in a continuous chain of sameness and difference, of repetition and death. Nixon comes to her argument through *Siblings: Sex and Violence*, a book by the feminist psychoanalytic theorist Juliet Mitchell.[10] Why, Mitchell wonders, do we organize our most powerful narratives of personal identity around our parents rather than our siblings? After all, we know our siblings for our entire lives, and they us. She notes that in Western cultures we talk of liberty, equality, and *fraternity*, and feminists, in upending the gendered logic of democracy, once talked of *sisterhood*. Mitchell contends that while we foreground and even fetishize the hierarchical nature of society, the primary structure of our social organization is lateral, and sibling-based social formations (such as peers, friends, and colleagues) are based on alliances and as a result operate differently from those based on vertical structures (such as parent and child, employer and employee, king and subject). Why, then, do our accounts of selfhood privilege the vertical model to the exclusion of the lateral? Might it be that museums celebrate uniqueness (the genius, the masterpiece) as a way of denying or avoiding the psychological tension produced by the equally strong counternarrative of sameness? (Let's face it, a lot of those Renaissance altarpieces look alike, as do formal portraits, still lifes, even abstract paintings.) Mitchell proposes that the recognition of sameness—the seriality and repetition implied and instantiated by our siblings and cousins—generates in us a terrifying fantasy of annihilation and of our expendability. Siblings are the traumatic recognition of our mortality. Nixon takes Mitchell's emphasis on repetition in sibling relations and makes an analogy with the serial as a mode of artistic production (from Minimalism and photography to the artist producing her works in editions or series) and suggests that in the hands of someone like Eva Hesse, an artist highly attuned to the activities of her artistic peers, lateral thinking and feeling, rather than Oedipal rivalry, was the very engine for her quirky, medium-extending, bodily engaged, psychically affective work.[11]

I return to my question: is there a way to install works of art so that the artist and the art historian do not experience the space of the museum as the site of one triumph over another? What of the artist who experiences a sisterhood of artists, in which sameness and difference are attributes in constant (pleasurable?) friction with one another? Mitchell, sensing the possibilities her argument has for artists, discusses how artists experience their predecessors "though long dead and buried . . . as the same age as the subject. In other words, these artistic ancestors are 'lateralized.'"[12] Thus it's possible that artists already see the museum as lateralized in that they imagine themselves in a kind of temporal continuity with either Hesse or Albrecht Dürer. Can we permit the fantasy of contemporaneity and the trauma of sameness and its attendant fear of mortality to permeate our museums in a recognizable way? Can we install works of art in ways that permit us this complicated realm of feelings and associations rather than in ways designed to hold such anxieties at bay? Could we reengage with the language of sisterhood, not as a discourse of essentializing sameness but as a complicated narrative of horizontal or lateral thinking?

I have been thinking about relatively new models of thinking (Deleuze and Guattari's horizontal rhizome and Mitchell's lateralization of siblings) and how these are being used by feminist art historians (Tickner and Nixon respectively) to rethink the kinds of stories art history

tells us, particularly the stories it tells us about art made by women—stories of exceptionalism or uniqueness, or stories of strays and misfits who simply cannot find their proper place in the gallery. I have been groping around for ways to ways to imagine the fullness of these feminist critiques in the space of the museum, using the installation of the permanent collection as a kind of limit case. Before I close I want to register a few other instances of lateral thinking, as a way to suggest that the influence of feminist thinking might not always be labeled as such, but we might find it flowing through our discipline nonetheless.

For example, the art historians George Baker and Miwon Kwon have taken up the problem of the postmedium condition. Examining the works of Anthony McCall and Jessica Stockholder, respectively, they have each tried to articulate what is at stake for contemporary artists as they extend and explore the boundaries between and among traditional mediums such as painting, sculpture, and film. Far from celebrating the proliferation of the new post-medium condition for its own expansive sake, they have attempted to make sense of why and how discussions of medium have either fallen into disrepair or become so contentious as to be rendered useless. I have been paying close attention to their language, sifting through the layers of nuance and possibility in the words they chose to describe their objects of study. I listen as Kwon confronts the "tendency toward spatialization in postwar art" and discusses how "three notions of space seem to come together and coexist in her [Stockholder's] installations," meaning that "Stockholder's work asserts (sometimes voraciously) a both/and attitude rather than one of either/or."[13] Consider this alongside Baker's account of the status of medium specificity in McCall's works; he does not insist that they are sculpture, nor that they are film. Baker instead lands upon the seemingly simple word "touch," as in, "A transgressive model of medium-belonging that sought to take mediums to the limits where they began to touch and shape other forms, but only by 'othering' themselves in the process."[14]

In both of these instances, and notable also in the writing of Briony Fer, a new language has crept into the discourse of art history: an understated but decided move away from dialectical thinking, a tacit refusal to structure arguments in terms of opposition.[15] This art-historical generational shift is being mediated neither through "a line of unbroken maternal production" nor "through murderous rivalry either."[16] We are witnessing the replacement of the either/or logic of the dialectic with the conjunction "and." So, too, the go-to structuring word "tension," used to discuss an artwork, has given way to "touch." To my ear such shifts, however delicately deployed, rhyme with the drift away from vertical or hierarchical thinking toward the more lateral and connective rhetorical tissue offered by Tickner and Nixon. "And" and "touch" imply proximity; they are not the language of the inevitable but the contingent, wobbling our routine spatiotemporal conventions, shying away from the hard-and-fast language of causality. They are words that when used in a museum context might offer an opening that would allow us to learn from artists seeking elective mothers in the mode of alliance (as Tickner would have it) or to experience the museum as a site of temporal immediateness (as Mitchell suggests) or to negotiate the psychic ramifications of sameness and difference as they are played out in a field marked by parity (as Nixon proposes). What if we let artworks touch each other in the museum? What if, instead of making demarcations between mediums and artists, we let their mutual otherness act as a kind of contagion? What if, in the next room, around the corner from the Sillman we placed a de Kooning, and maybe next to it a Hesse? (It's worth noting that Hesse was obsessed with de Kooning.) I'd like to install an early Hesse (1960, no. 7), one of those not thought to be fully mature, the paintings in which she worked through the logic of one, two, and three. Or, abandoning the language of math, the ones in which she negotiated aloneness, the couple, and the group. What if we made a gallery of paintings by the feminists who were touched by de Kooning, artists for whom there

7. Eva Hesse (American, born Germany. 1936–1970). *Untitled*. 1960. Oil on canvas, 18 x 15" (45.7 x 38.1 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Murray Charash

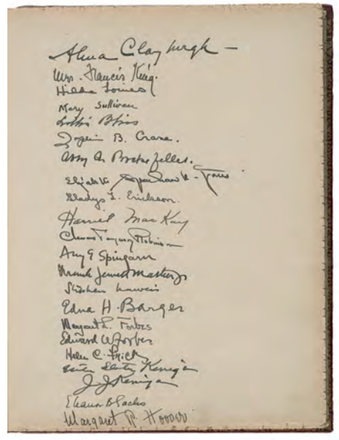
is no either/or between de Kooning and feminism? Could we recover what they found in his work that perhaps now we can no longer see or feel; can we register the artists' sense of alliance; can we enable museum viewers to see their sisterhood?

To close a provisional note: Might there be a way of rethinking the notion of sisterhood—a word so out-of-date it almost sounds cool again? What if sisterhood were not based on essentialist claims of gender? What if it were not dependent on behaving as our mothers or fathers would like us to (or rebelling against them as they expect us to)? What if sisterhood offered a model for forming alliances structured by a loving but skeptical engagement with the new, one that saw the new as part of a larger pattern of seriality and repetition, sameness and difference, annihilation and birth, that defied the logic of chronological or teleological history? Such a model of interpretation, sisterhood, or genealogy would demonstrate that the new does not cancel out the old; it would show us that the new is not a form of triumph but a recalibration of alliances. (Think of the moment a new baby comes home, an arrival that simultaneously produces a mother, a sister, an aunt, and a grandmother: everyone's identity shifts.) In such a model, narratives of influence would be open to a Rashomon-like chorus of voices of nieces, nephews, cousins, sisters, and brothers, opening up single objects to multiple points of alliance, much the way an individual can simultaneously be an aunt, sister, mother, and grandmother. In such a model the seemingly ahistorical installation of Snyder in a room with Schutz, Sillman, and Mutu would allow us to register the affiliations among the artists, to see them as engaged in a common pursuit striated with differences. It might be the beginning of a way of telling history that incorporates the challenges of feminism beyond enumerating which women worked when. So, too, it might be a way of acknowledging the long gaps and absences, the blind spots produced by the vertical narratives of patriarchy, stories so familiar that we often forget that they serve certain interests and not others. Such a room might instead suggest something about how women artists have often forged connections over disjointed periods of space and time, about moving laterally in order to revolutionize the deepest aspects of our lives.

1. Eli Zaretsky, *Capitalism, the Family, and Personal Life* (New York: Harper and Row, 1976), p. 1.
2. Each of these exhibitions was accompanied by important catalogues: Hayden Herrera, *Joan Snyder* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2005); Adam Szymczyk, *Lee Lozano: Win First Dont Last Win Last Dont Care* (Basel: Schwabe AG, 2006); Elizabeth A. T. Smith, *Lee Bontecou: A Retrospective* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004); and Cornelia Butler and Lisa Gabrielle Mark, eds., *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution* (Los Angeles: The Museum of Contemporary Art; Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2007).
3. I place "feminist art" in quotes because I don't believe in it as a designation of style. I prefer "art made by feminists" or "art made under the influence of feminism"—both are awkward formulations but nonetheless speak to the inherent limitations of rendering a political stance into a matter of style or preference.
4. It bears noting that despite the powerfully gendered quality of these narratives of influence, they are structural, available to either sex; some male painters have been taught via oral tradition, and some female artists have staged Oedipal rebellions. See Lisa Tickner's "Mediating Generation: The Mother-Daughter Plot," in Carol Armstrong and Catherine de Zegher, eds., *Women Artists at the Millennium* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2006), pp.85–120. Tickner suggests that it is better to think of "the question of attachment or rupture not as a *gendered* distinction, but in terms of a *historical* contrast in modes of production." Ibid., p. 89.
5. Ibid., p. 91.
6. "Family—a code word referring to gays or the gay community, as in, 'Ellen DeGeneres is Family.'" Rebecca Scott, "A Brief Dictionary of Queer Slang and Culture," www.geocitrus.com/WestHollywood/Stonewall/4219.
7. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (London: Atholone Press, 1988), p. 25; quoted in Tickner, "Mediating Generation," pp. 91–92.
8. Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," 1950, in *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), p. 255.
9. Mignon Nixon, "0 + X," *October* 119 (Winter 2007): 6–20.
10. Juliet Mitchell, *Siblings: Sex and Violence* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003).
11. Nixon, "Child Drawing," in de Zegher, ed., *Eva Hesse Drawing* (New York: The Drawing Center; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), pp. 27–56.
12. Mitchell, *Siblings*, pp. 16–17.
13. Miwon Kwon, "Promiscuity of Space: Some Thoughts on Jessica Stockholder's Scenographic Compositions," *Grey Room* 18 (Winter 2004): 52–63. The quotes appear on pages 54, 58, and 59.
14. George Baker, "Film Beyond Its Limits," *Grey Room* 25 (Fall 2006): 92–125.
15. See in particular Briony Fer's chapter on Eva Hesse, "Studio," in *An Infinite Line: Remaking Art after Modernism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), pp. 116–43.
16. Tickner, "Mediating Generation," p. 94.

MODERN WOMEN: A PARTIAL HISTORY

/ MICHELLE ELLIGOTT WITH ROMY SILVER



1. Signatures in the Museum's guest book, including those of **Mary Quinn Sullivan**, **Lillie P. Bliss**, **Josephine B. Crane**, and **Abby Aldrich Rockefeller**. Museum Guest Book, 1929–44. The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York

The Museum of Modern Art owes a large share of its success to women. The Museum was the idea and creation of three women, and from those founders of 1929 to the associate director and president of the Museum today, women have been instrumental in the development of the institution's mission, program, and collection. This essay highlights a few of the innumerable contributions they have made to the Museum over its more than eighty-year history—as curators, administrators, scholars, artists, patrons, and activists. While meant to be informative, it is partial and by no means comprehensive. Organized alphabetically, it presents a selection of brief biographical and historical notes, with an emphasis on the Museum's early years. The goal is to highlight significant achievements and innovations by women, many of which are linked with the establishment of programs that MoMA and countless other museums now take for granted.

Barr, Margaret Scolari (1901–1987) Margaret Scolari Barr, born in Rome to Irish and Italian parents, studied linguistics at the University of Rome. After earning a master's degree in art history from Vassar College, in 1929 she moved to New York City to study at New York University. She met Alfred H. Barr, Jr., the Museum's founding director, that year, shortly after the institution's debut, and the two were married in 1930. Over the following decade the couple spent summers traveling in Europe, organizing future exhibitions at MoMA and securing the necessary loans of artwork. In summer 1940, after the fall of Paris to the Germans, Alfred began to receive desperate letters from European artists asking for assistance with emigration to the United States. "I had worked as my husband's assistant during all of our European campaigns," Barr said, "so I was not surprised when one evening he came home with a sheaf of requests and asked me to undertake the whole operation. I would do the work, and he would sign the letters that I would write on his official Museum stationery."[1] The process of obtaining the appropriate papers from the State Department was extremely laborious, but in the end Barr's work facilitated entry to the United States for Marc Chagall, Max Ernst, Jacques Lipchitz, André Masson, Piet Mondrian, and Yves Tanguy. For thirty-seven years she taught art history at The Spence School in New York, and in 1963 the Museum published *Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)*, Barr's definitive monograph on the Italian modernist sculptor.

Barry, Iris (1895–1969) Barry, born and educated in Birmingham, England, was a film critic for the London weekly *The Spectator* from 1925 to 1930, motion-picture editor of the London *Daily Mail*, cofounder of the London Film Society in 1925, and author of the first serious book of film criticism published in England, *Let's Go to the Pictures* (1926).[2] She moved to New York in 1930 and joined the staff of the Museum in 1932. In 1935 MoMA established its Film Library, with Barry as its curator and guiding light (no. 2). That film was an art form was a completely new idea, and the American film studios were initially skeptical. Years of advocacy by Barry led them to realize that by depositing prints of their works in the library they could both clean out their vaults and build an enduring legacy. In addition, Barry brokered the nonprofit feature film exhibition in North America; the studios agreed that after two years of a commercial run, a film could enter the library archive and be screened for educational purposes, as long as admission was not charged.[3] In 1940 she organized the exhibition *D. W. Griffith, American Film Master* at MoMA, establishing the paradigm for film curatorship, and wrote the accompanying publication, still one of the greatest books on film in the history of the medium. In 1946 she was named director of the Film Library, in addition to curator, and held both titles until her retirement, in 1951.

Bauer, Catherine (1905–1964) A major advocate for the improvement of urban life through attractive, functional, and low-cost housing, Bauer (later Wurster) was first associated with the Museum in 1932, when she assisted in the preparation of the housing section of *Modern Architecture: International Exhibition*, the show that coined the appellation "International Style" for modern architecture. She contributed to the catalogue for the Museum's exhibition *America Can't Have Housing* (1934), and she wrote the foreword to the exhibition catalogue *Architecture in Government Housing* (1936). Also that year she joined the Museum's advisory committee on architecture, on which she served for six years. Through her efforts and those of her sister, Elizabeth Mock, the Museum's Department of Architecture and Industrial Design became an advocate in the fields of urban planning and housing in the 1930s and 1940s.

Bliss, Lillie P. (1864–1931) In 1929 Bliss founded The Museum of Modern Art with Mary Quinn Sullivan and Abby Aldrich Rockefeller.[4] She had been a financial supporter of the 1913 Armory Show, of which her friend, artist Arthur B. Davies, was a main organizer, and she had purchased multiple works from the show. Another major buyer at the Armory Show was John Quinn, who within a decade amassed the most important collection of modern art in the country. When Quinn died, in 1924, Bliss, along with Sullivan, made purchases from the auction of his collection. She also acquired work from Davies's collection after his death, in 1928. Bliss herself died on March 12, 1931, when the Museum was not yet two years old. At that time she owned twenty-six works by Paul Cézanne, including *The Bather* (c. 1885), in what was considered one of the most discerning privately held groups of Cézannes in the United States, as well as works by Honoré Daumier, Davies, Hilaire-Germain-Edgar Degas, André Derain, Henri Matisse, Amedeo Modigliani,

2. **Iris Barry**, Curator, and her husband, John E. Abbott, Director, in the Film Library, c. 1930–39. Department of Public Information Records, II.C.17. MoMA Archives

3. View of **Lillie P. Bliss**'s apartment, showing some of her art collection, New York, c. 1925–29. Lillie P. Bliss Scrapbook. MoMA Archives

Pablo Picasso, Odilon Redon, Pierre-August Renoir, Henri Rousseau, Georges Seurat, and Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (no. 3). Her collection was valued at nearly $1.14 million and, in a complete surprise to staff and trustees at the Museum, including Rockefeller and director Alfred H. Barr, Jr., it was revealed after her death that she had bequeathed the largest and most important part of it to MoMA.[5] Her will included two stipulations: three specific works could never be sold or otherwise disposed of (the rest could be deaccessioned provided the funds be used to acquire other artworks) and MoMA must raise $1 million to endow the bequest. This was during the Great Depression, and the Museum could only raise $600,000. That proved sufficient, however, and in 1934 the Bliss bequest was officially acquired. Through this unparalleled gift, the Museum established the nucleus of its collection.

Bonney, Thérèse (1894–1978) *War Comes to the People: A Story Written with the Lens* was the first one-woman exhibition at the Museum. On display from December 10, 1940, to January 5, 1941, it featured two hundred photographs by Bonney, an American journalist and photographer, representing the plight of the Finnish people during the Finnish-Soviet War (1939–40).

Chief Curator Each of the Museum's medium-based curatorial departments has a chief curator. The following women have held this position: Mary Lea Bandy (Film, 1980–93; Film and Video, 1993–2001; Film and Media, 2001–06), Iris Barry (Film, 1946–51), Cornelia Butler (Drawings, 2005–), Riva Castleman (Prints and Illustrated Books, 1976–95), Margit Rowell (Drawings, 1994–2000), Ann Temkin (Painting and Sculpture, 2008–), and Deborah Wye (Prints and Illustrated Books, 1996–).

Constantine, Mildred (1913–2008) "Connie" Constantine came to the Museum in 1948 as an assistant curator in the Department of Architecture and Design (a title she held until 1952, when she was made an associate curator). An important mentor to many younger design historians, she organized a wide range of design and architecture exhibitions and was responsible for promoting the applied and decorative arts—graphic and product design, in particular. She organized design competitions for the Museum and initiated MoMA's involvement in social causes with the 1949 Polio Posters Competition, the first joint effort between a museum and a national health foundation. Her influential 1968 show *Word and Image* was the thirty-fifth exhibition of posters at the Museum but the only one to seriously address twentieth-century works and present a comprehensive historical survey of the Museum's rich collection of graphic art. In 1970 Constantine became a consultant to the Department of Architecture and Design and special assistant to the director of the Museum, posts she held for a year before leaving MoMA in 1971.

Courter, Elodie (1911–1994) The Museum achieves its goal of educating the public about modernism in part through circulating its exhibitions, domestically and internationally. Though MoMA was not the first museum to have a program dedicated to traveling exhibitions, from the beginning its program was unique in scope, professionalism, and management. Courter (later Osborn) began volunteering in the Department of Circulating Exhibitions in 1933, and by 1935 she was in charge (no. 4). Exhibitions were sent to museums, art galleries, schools, universities, department stores, movie theaters, and social clubs and associations, in an immense outreach project. The work was highly methodical: devising instructions for installations, writing gallery wall text, preparing press releases, and composing explicit directions for the unpacking and repacking of artworks. In conjunction with the Museum's education program, she was also responsible for the introduction of teaching portfolios—visual aids designed for classroom use and sent to schools. During her tenure the department developed from very modest beginnings into a widely emulated, internationally prestigious program. Courter resigned as director of the Department of Circulating Exhibitions in 1947. About her Alfred H. Barr, Jr., said, "Elodie was the kind who when she left the Museum it took four people to replace her."[6]

Crane, Josephine Boardman (1873–1972) Crane (widow of Murray Crane, former governor of Massachusetts and president of the paper company Crane & Co.) was a devoted supporter of the Museum and a member of its first board of trustees. She was not an expert on modern art, but she was a close friend of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller and held a legendary weekly cultural salon at her apartment. She was also the main benefactor of New York's Dalton School and deeply interested in experimental education. She chaired the Museum's first membership committee and was chairman of the education committee in the early 1930s.

Daniel, Greta (1909–1962) Daniel (no. 5) arrived at MoMA in 1943 from Germany (where she had worked at the Museum Folkwang, Essen) and proceeded systematically to build the Museum's collection of design objects. She almost always assisted with exhibitions and publications rather than organizing or authoring them herself, but

4. **Elodie Courter**, Director, Department of Circulating Exhibitions, with panels from the teaching portfolio *Elements of Design*, c. 1945. Photographic Archive. MoMA Archives

5. **Greta Daniel**, Associate Curator, Department of Architecture and Design, selects objects for the exhibition *20th Century Design from the Museum Collection* (December 17, 1958–February 23, 1959). Photographic Archive. MoMA Archives

Opposite:
6. **Dorothy H. Dudley**, Registrar, with a preparator during installation of the exhibition *Rodin* (May 1–September 8, 1963). Photographic Archive. MoMA Archives

7. View of the exhibition *Mrs. Simon Guggenheim Memorial 1877–1970* (February 25–March 17, 1970). Photographic Archive. MoMA Archives

she was an expert on the collection and on contemporary industrial design. Manufacturers looking for a good designer and journalists hoping to identify the best-designed product at a certain price went straight to her with their questions. Perhaps the culmination of her activity at the Museum was the 1958–59 exhibition *20th Century Design from the Museum Collection* and the accompanying catalogue, the first major attempt to showcase the range and quality of the collection.[7] She was an associate curator of design in the Department of Architecture and Design at the time of her sudden death, in 1962. Arthur Drexler, director of the department, recalled that Daniel could unerringly unearth "the best knife, fork, and spoon and the best teacup. She was a walking encyclopedia of everything produced both here and abroad, and worked like a dog for the wages of a porter. She carried a card file in her head, and after her death we had pandemonium."[8]

Deputy Director for Curatorial Affairs This position was created in 1986 along with four other deputy directorships as part of a restructuring program at the Museum, and Riva Castleman, Chief Curator of Prints and Illustrated Books, was the first person to take on the role. Mary Lea Bandy, Chief Curator of Film and Video, assumed the position from 1999 to 2006. The deputy director for curatorial affairs is the liaison between the director of the Museum and the seven curatorial departments, the Department of Education, the library, and the archives.

Dudley, Dorothy H. (1903–1979) Dudley (no. 6), formerly a registrar at the Newark Museum, in New Jersey, came to MoMA in 1936. Alfred H. Barr, Jr., referred to her as the "head of all registrars," and she is acknowledged for establishing professional registration practices, developing record-keeping systems and procedures that were subsequently adopted by museums throughout the country.[9] In 1958, with Irma Bezold Wilkinson, Dudley literally wrote the book on museum registration. Titled *Museum Registration Methods*, it is a true classic in its field.[10] In addition to her registrarial duties, Dudley was a member of the National Committee to Liberalize the Tariff Laws for Art and chair of the American Association of Museums Committee on Customs. At that time the Tariff Act provided for the importation and return, free of duty, of artworks for exhibition purposes, but with some staggering exceptions. If, for example, a sculpture did not represent a "natural object" (as many in the Museum's collection did not), a duty would be levied. In 1959 the Treasury Department agreed in principle to liberalize the antiquated tariff laws for art and asked Dudley to help revise the law. In 1959 the Senate and House of Representatives passed the bill, and Senator Jacob K. Javits, who introduced the legislation, wrote to Dudley thanking her for her efforts: "You are an outstanding example of how a dedicated individual can move aside mountains of indifference and pave the way for increased cultural growth of all our citizens."[11]

Founders The death of John Quinn, in 1924, and Arthur B. Davies, in 1928, and the subsequent dispersals of their collections of modern art gave urgency to the idea of a museum for modern art in New York—envisioned as a possibility since the Armory Show, in 1913, among the city's network of collectors and patrons. It found particular traction among three women: Lillie P. Bliss, Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, and Mary Quinn Sullivan (no. 1). In 1936 Rockefeller recalled the formation of the Museum: "I began to think of women whom I knew in New York City, who cared deeply for beauty and who bought pictures, women who would be willing, and had faith enough, to help start a museum of contemporary art. Miss Lizzie Bliss and Mrs. Cornelius Sullivan were outstanding in this group; I asked them to lunch with me and laid the matter before them. I suggested that we form ourselves into a committee of three and that we find a man to be president of the museum that was to be."[12] As president the three women enlisted A. Conger Goodyear, a collector and former trustee of the Albright Gallery, in Buffalo, New York, and for the initial board of trustees they recruited Josephine Boardman Crane, Frank Crowninshield, and Paul J. Sachs. Nelson Rockefeller later remarked, "It was the perfect combination. The three women, among them, my mother, Lillie Bliss and Mary Sullivan,

had the resources, the tact and the knowledge of contemporary art that the situation required. More to the point, they had the courage to advocate the cause of the modern movement in the face of widespread division, ignorance and a dark suspicion that the whole business was some sort of Bolshevik plot."[13] Bliss, Rockefeller, and Sullivan established the tradition at the Museum of women providing critical leadership and essential patronage.

Guggenheim, Olga Hirsch (1877–1970) Mrs. Simon Guggenheim, a regular member of the Museum, on her own initiative and unsolicited, walked into the director's office on December 6, 1937, and asked whether he would accept from her an important painting of his choice for the Museum collection. Her only stipulation was that it be a masterpiece—a work of excellence and enduring value. Pablo Picasso's painting *Girl Before a Mirror* (1932) was selected, and it was purchased in 1938 for $10,000. Margaret Barr later described Guggenheim's donation as "the first pearl in the brilliant necklace of gifts that bear her name."[14] In 1939 she provided $30,000 for the purchase of *The Sleeping Gypsy* (1897), by Henri Rousseau. After these two gifts, Guggenheim established a purchase fund at the Museum, with two conditions for its use: she must approve of the works purchased, and they must be masterpieces. The sixty-nine acquisitions she funded are staggering in their breadth and importance, and most have become integral to the identity of the Museum (no. 7). Guggenheim joined the board of trustees in 1940; in 1954 she was named honorary trustee.

Gund, Agnes (Born 1938) Gund joined the Museum's board of trustees in 1976. An outspoken advocate of women in the arts, she has been responsible, through advocacy and direct funding, for the addition of scores of works of art by women to MoMA's collection. She is the founder of Studio in a School, which since 1977 has brought artists into schools and community organizations in New York to lead classes in art-making and work with teachers to integrate art into the curriculum. In 2008 Gund endowed a program outside the Museum in memory of artist Elizabeth Murray: a series of interviews that will compose an oral history of women in the visual arts, administered by the Oral History Research Office at Columbia University, New York. She is currently president emerita of the Museum and chairman of MoMA's International Council.

Halbreich, Kathy (Born 1949) In 2007, Halbreich, acclaimed former director of the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, assumed the position of associate director at the Museum. The associate director's role is to strengthen and support contemporary programs at MoMA and P.S.1 and to partner with the director on global initiatives and advocacy. It is the highest-ranking staff position held by a woman in the history of the institution.

Heiss, Alanna (Born 1943) In 1971 Heiss cofounded the Institute for Art and Urban Resources, which sought to transform underutilized and abandoned spaces across New York City into accessible artists' studios and exhibition venues. Under this umbrella she founded P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, in Long Island City, Queens, in 1976. For thirty-seven years, until her departure in 2008, Heiss oversaw the programming of this artist-centric *Kunsthalle*, widely acknowledged to be among the most innovative and important in the world; in 2000 P.S.1 formally became an affiliate of MoMA. In 1998 Heiss received a Women of Distinction Award from the Girl Scout Council of Greater New York and was recognized as one of New York's one hundred most influential women by *Crain's New York Business*. She established Art International Radio, a nonprofit Web radio station and media arts center operating out of the Clocktower Gallery, in Lower Manhattan, in 2009.

Hostesses From 1939 until the early 1940s, the Museum's Reception Committee employed a cadre of female volunteers, called hostesses, to assist with entertainment functions. For the opening ceremonies of its Goodwin-Stone building, in 1939, for example, the Museum held a formal dinner on its premises for elite guests but also organized satellite events in at least fourteen private homes. A head shot of each hostess was sent to the social press, captioned "Mrs. ——, who will be hostess at one of the many dinners preceding the reception to be held the night of May 10th by the Trustees of the MOMA at the private opening of the Museum's new two million dollar building. Mrs. —— and her dinner guests will attend the reception and the preview of the Museum's opening exhibition, *Art in Our Time*."[15] Later, hostesses were also deployed to organize

tea parties at the Museum to interest potential new members. Their role in building an audience and a philanthropic community for the Museum is in keeping with the long history of women in the founding and support of nonprofit institutions in the United States.

International Council In 1952, at the urging of Museum director René d'Harnoncourt, MoMA created its International Program, underwritten by a five-year grant from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, with the goal of furthering international understanding through the exchange of contemporary art. The International Council—an affiliate membership group designed to expand the program's base of support—was conceived in 1953 by d'Harnoncourt with Blanchette Rockefeller. Rockefeller spearheaded the organization, enlisting Eliza Bliss Parkinson and Emily Woodruff as colleagues. Members of the council contributed energy, ideas, and annual dues to support the International Program, and the body has continued to thrive under the leadership of remarkable women, such as Jo Carole Lauder and Agnes Gund, to this day.

Junior Council The Junior Council was established in February 1949 to further the Museum's programming through volunteer activity by younger people with an interest in the arts. Though not restricted to female membership, the council and its leadership were predominately female. Blanchette Rockefeller was the founding chairman of the council, and over its thirty-year existence it was led by women with remarkable skill and passion, including Lily Auchincloss, Beth Straus, Joanne Stern, and Barbara Jakobson. The council was responsible for many important, innovative programs at the Museum, including its Art Lending Service, Penthouse exhibition program, and Christmas card and appointment calendar fundraising endeavors as well as a number of lecture series. In 1981 the Junior Council became the Associate Council, which, in 1986, became the Contemporary Arts Council.

Lippard, Lucy R. (Born 1937) In her early career, shortly after her graduation from Smith College in 1958, the critic and activist worked as a page in the Museum Library. In 1960 Lippard resigned that position, but she continued to spend a significant amount of time at the Museum, conducting research and translations and compiling bibliographies. Starting in 1969, with the advent of the Art Workers' Coalition (in which she was a leader), Lippard participated in protests and artists' rights demonstrations against the Museum.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The Woman of Violence

SHE DELIVERS 81 SMACKS IN THE EYE

By Star Art Critic

I WALKED into the Tate Gallery today and received 81 smacks in the eye. Mainly responsible for this display of violence, which is euphemistically called The New American Painting, is a woman, a mild, blue-eyed, charming spinster, who holds one of the world's plum art jobs.

As Curator of Exhibitions in New York's Museum of Modern Art, Miss Dorothy C. Miller has brought us her personal choice of the very latest American "action painting."

The result is the most sensational (in the most sensational sense of the word) art show London has ever seen.

The huge canvases slash from the walls of four large rooms at the Tate and the visitor is compelled to dodge in and out of the pictures as he goes through the rooms.

The loudest (and happiest) attacks are set up the way a person acting his 81 smacks in the eye.

What they say

Her name, Dave Bomberg, the artist, "I no longer invite the spectator to walk into my canvases. I want to walk out and invite him to join me."

That thing about most of these artists whose pictures will seem complete jumbles, particularly to most people, is that they are not trying to please their eyes. What they want to please more complex faculties than what they point to. It is certainly more ambitious.

Sam Haines, who paints "horror landscapes" in which weird insect-like shapes crawl over deserts of crude colour, says, "I work on many canvases at once.

"In the morning I hit them up against the wall of my studio. Some spend some days on the floor. Then I work on them. They tell me when I am finished."

But the hard scrambling-up of what these revolutionaries in paint are trying to do came from one of the oldest of them, Richard Sickert, who, though he died in 1942, was still illustrating showbiz in his old contemptuous style.

These artists are, Miss Miller's favourites. "I had about 10 to choose from," she told me.

She thanks they were well chosen for best of these new artists in the present an appreciation does not say much later on.

So here your reviewer sidles to the Tate and considers them. Here goes to the glossary to some

MISS DOROTHY MILLER
And background of "action painting" at the Tate Gallery today.

8. "The Woman of Violence: She Delivers 81 Smacks in the Eye," *Star* (London), February 23, 1959. This article about the Museum's circulating exhibition *The New American Painting* includes a picture of **Dorothy Miller**, Curator, Department of Painting and Sculpture, the show's organizer. International Council/International Program Exhibition Records. The New American Painting: V.ICE-F-36-57.13. MoMA Archives

Opposite:
9. **Sarah Newmeyer**, Director, Department of Publicity, c. 1930–39. Photographic Archive. MoMA Archives

Her activism included founding the group Political Art Documentation/Distribution (PAD/D) in 1979, an artists' collective (active through 1988) with the following goals: "To provide artists with an organized relationship to society, to demonstrate the political effectiveness of image making, and to provide a framework within which progressive artists can discuss and develop alternatives to the mainstream art system."[16] PAD/D's archive of clippings, photographs, posters, mail art, and ephemera from the period 1979–88 is now part of the Museum Library.

London, Barbara (Born 1946) London began her career at the Museum in 1970 as program assistant for the International Program. In 1974, while working in the Department of Prints and Illustrated Books as a curatorial assistant, a position she held until 1977, she established a pioneering video program at the Museum, showcasing work being produced internationally in the new art medium. London was responsible for numerous key acquisitions by women video artists at a critical point in the medium's early history. In 1978 she founded the long-running Video Viewpoints lecture series (now Modern Mondays), in which contemporary video artists present their works, and in 1984 she initiated the Museum's Video Study Center. Artwork using video and other time-based media (as well as Web, performance, and installation art) is now the purview of the Department of Media and Performance Art, created by the division of the Department of Film and Media in 2006. London is currently an associate curator in that department.

Miller, Dorothy (1904–2003) Miller, a curator of painting and sculpture, organized six legendary *Americans* exhibitions at the Museum between 1942 and 1963. Designed to showcase recent trends in American art, as a series they reflected and promoted what Miller saw as the best work of the day. In 1952 her exhibition *15 Americans* debuted Abstract Expressionism at the Museum, bringing the innovations of the New York School to a (somewhat hostile) mass audience for the first time. In 1956 Miller organized *12 Americans*, giving voice to the apostles of the Abstract Expressionists, the second generation of the New York School. In 1958–59 her traveling exhibition *The New American Painting* proclaimed the radicalism of American abstraction throughout Europe (no. 8), propelling the artists onto the international scene—it was "the equivalent of the Armory show in reverse," collector Ben Heller said.[17] Perhaps the most radical of Miller's *Americans* exhibitions was *16 Americans*, of 1959–60. This historic exhibition featured the next generation of American artists—those whose work, departing from Abstract Expressionism, led to the Neo-Dada, Minimalism, and Pop art of the latter decades of the century. In addition to her discerning eye and uncanny ability to scout new talent, Miller was distinctive in her approach to exhibition installation. "What you try to achieve," she said, "are climaxes—introduction, surprise, going around the corner and seeing something unexpected, perhaps several climaxes with very dramatic things, then a quiet tapering off with something to let you out alive."[18] Miller retired from the Museum in 1969.

Mock, Elizabeth Bauer (1911–1998) Mock began working at MoMA part-time in 1937 and with John McAndrew, Curator of Architecture and Industrial Design, she organized *What Is Modern Architecture?*, a circulating exhibition, in 1938. In 1940 she became McAndrew's assistant and after he was dismissed, in 1942, she took over the Department of Architecture and Industrial Design, heading it during the war years. She organized several exhibitions relating to housing—*Built in the U.S.A.: 1932–1944* (1944), *Tomorrow's Small House: Models and Plans* (1945), and *If You Want to Build a House* (1946)—and through her efforts and those of her sister, Catherine Bauer, the department became an advocate in the fields of urban planning and housing in the 1930s and 1940s. In 1964 the Museum published Mock's book *Modern Gardens and the Landscape* (she was known then as Elizabeth B. Kassler), one of the definitive surveys in the field.

Modern Women's Fund The Modern Women's Fund was established at the Museum in 2005, through the generous support of Sarah Peter, to promote scholarship on women in the arts. The first project financed by the fund was the two-day international symposium "The Feminist Future: Theory and Practice in the Visual Arts," in January 2007. The symposium brought together artists, art historians, curators, and activists to examine the ways in which gender is and has been addressed by museums (including MoMA), the academy, and artists and to discuss its future role in art practice and scholarship. This book, *Modern Women: Women Artists at The Museum of Modern Art*, is its second major undertaking. The fund has also sponsored educational programs (including The Feminist Future series of panel discussions, 2007–08, and the Women and the Bauhaus lecture series, 2009–10), research and travel opportunities for curators, and a series of exhibitions featuring work by women artists in the Museum's collection in 2010.

Newhall, Nancy Wynne Parker (1908–1974) When her husband, Beaumont, the Museum's curator of photography, was drafted into the Army Air Forces in 1942, Newhall—a painter and an expert on the work of photographer Alfred Stieglitz—was hired in his stead.[19] Although inexperienced in museum work, she steered the department through a turbulent period, including the dismissal of Alfred H. Barr, Jr., as director of the Museum, in 1943, and an exhibition program that included—against her wishes—large-scale photographic reproductions for propagandistic aims (in shows organized by Edward Steichen), very much in opposition to the department's scholarly and aesthetic approach to the medium. During her tenure Newhall organized more than a dozen exhibitions, including *New Acquisitions: Photography by Alfred Stieglitz* (1942–43); *Helen Levitt: Photographs of Children* (1943), Levitt's first solo exhibition; and significant monographic exhibitions of work by Paul Strand (1945) and Edward Weston (1946), the first photography retrospectives at the Museum and the first for Strand at any American museum. Despite these contributions, the Museum did not allow Newhall to remain in the department after Beaumont's return, in 1945. In 1946 Steichen was hired to head the department and Beaumont resigned in protest.

Newmeyer, Sarah (Dates unknown) In 1933 the Museum hired Newmeyer (no. 9) to organize its first publicity department. Her initial project was a national tour-in-progress of James McNeill Whistler's painting *Arrangement in Grey and Black No. 1* (1871)—also known as "Whistler's Mother." Revitalizing an almost nonexistent publicity effort, she sent a flood of press releases announcing each city on the tour, describing the lengths the Museum had gone to borrow the painting from the Louvre and highlighting its insurance valuation of $1 million. Due in large part to her efforts the tour was a nationwide sensation: more than two million people visited their local museums to view the work and the United States Postal Service created a stamp featuring it. For the 1935 exhibition *Vincent van Gogh*, Newmeyer issued advance releases announcing Alfred H. Barr, Jr.'s trip to Europe to select works and giving highly sentimental descriptions of the artist's life. During the show, police had to be brought to the Museum to control the crowds. Newmeyer likewise capitalized on sensation with the 1940 exhibition *Italian Masters*, which consisted of loans of Renaissance masterworks, including Botticelli's *Birth of Venus* (c. 1485), that had been insured for $26 million. When they arrived in New York, she arranged to have them escorted by mounted police to the Museum and unpacked under floodlights, inside the back entrance. By 1947 the Museum was the most highly publicized in the world, receiving roughly ten times as much publicity as any other museum and probably more than all the museums in North America collectively.[20] When Newmeyer left the Museum in 1948 Nelson Rockefeller noted, "She has been a pioneer in this field."[21]

***Photography (6 Women Photographers)* (October 11–November 15, 1949)** This show, the first group exhibition of women artists at the Museum, showcased the work of Margaret Bourke-White, Esther Bubley, Tana Hoban, Dorothea Lange, Hazel Frieda Larsen, and Helen Levitt. These artists—three well-known and three lesser-known—worked in various aspects of photography, including photojournalism, documentary photography, portraiture, and commercial photography. The exhibition was organized by Edward Steichen, Director, Department of Photography.

Protest In June 1969 the Art Workers' Coalition (AWC), a New York–based group of artists, architects, filmmakers, critics, and museum and gallery personnel (leadership included Lucy R. Lippard and Joan Snyder), made a number of demands of MoMA on behalf of artists: that its board of trustees be divided evenly between museum staff, patrons, and artists; that admission be free; that a section of its exhibition space be under the direction of underrepresented groups and devoted to the exhibition of their work; that artists retain control of their work in the Museum collection; and that "the Museum should encourage female artists to overcome the centuries of damage done to the image of the female as an artist by establishing equal representation of the sexes in exhibitions, museum purchases and on selection committees."[22] In December 1969 AWC's Women Artists in Revolution (WAR) committee met with Museum staff Betsy Jones, Associate Curator, Department of Painting and Sculpture, and John Szarkowski, Director, Department of Photography. In the negotiations that followed, the Museum agreed in principle to the following recommendations: that it should designate a curator in the Department of Painting and Sculpture to research women artists not represented by major galleries and report his or her

10. View of **Abby Aldrich Rockefeller**'s apartment, showing some of her art collection, New York, 1936. Rockefeller Archive Center

findings to the department; investigate the feasibility of a historical survey of women artists; and consider a temporary exhibition of work by lesser-known women artists.[23] There is no evidence that the Museum took substantive action on these matters. In 1976 a group of women artists—the MoMA and Guggenheim Ad Hoc Protest Committee (organized by Nancy Spero)—picketed the Museum during the exhibition *Drawing Now*, organized by Bernice Rose, Curator, Department of Drawings, on the grounds that the show included too few women artists (of the forty-six artists in the show, five were women), and artist Joanne Stamerra placed erasers stamped "erase sexism from MOMA" throughout the galleries (see p. 19). The group accused the Museum of "blatant sexism in overlooking both black and white women artists" and demanded, unsuccessfully, that MoMA organize another *Drawing Now* exhibition in which fifty percent of the artists would be women.[24] The Museum was picketed again in 1984, on the opening of its new, greatly expanded building and the exhibition *International Survey of Recent Painting and Sculpture*, organized by Kynaston McShine, Senior Curator, Department of Painting and Sculpture (see p. 17). The show, intended to be an up-to-the-minute survey of the most significant contemporary art in the world, included only fourteen women among the 169 artists chosen. The protest was sponsored by the New York chapter of the Women's Caucus for Art, with organizational support from the magazine *Heresies*, the Women's Interart Center, and the Feminist Art Institute, all in New York. Out of this protest and subsequent research into the under-representation of women artists at other museums and galleries, the Guerrilla Girls were born. In one of its earliest posters, from 1985, the activist artist group asked, "How many women had one-person exhibitions at NYC museums last year?" MoMA was listed below with the tally "1."[25]

Rockefeller, Abby Aldrich (1874–1948) Some twenty-five years after her marriage to John D. Rockefeller, Jr., son of the wealthiest man in the world, Rockefeller began to form her collection of modern art.[26] Primarily amassed between 1925 and 1935, it was heavily weighted toward works on paper, and Rockefeller (no. 10) had a particular fondness for the work of living Americans. Like Lillie P. Bliss, an old friend of hers, she was also a patron, directly supporting individual artists through acquisitions, commissions, and financial contributions. With her contacts, her knowledge of art, and her family's vast wealth, Rockefeller was able to offer the critical financial backing necessary to create a new museum, and in 1929 she, Bliss, and Mary Quinn Sullivan founded The Museum of Modern Art. Rockefeller's gifts to the Museum are far too numerous to itemize. In 1935, acting anonymously, she donated $1,000 for director Alfred H. Barr, Jr., to purchase works with during his trip to Europe that summer with Margaret Barr. The following year she donated $2,500 for the purchase of work by American artists and $2,000 for purchases abroad; in 1938 she contributed $20,000 for acquisitions, to which her son Nelson added $11,500 in his mother's name, and she renewed this gift in 1939. In 1935 she donated 181 paintings and drawings to the Museum; in 1939 thirty-six works of modern sculpture and fifty-four pieces of American folk art; in 1940 approximately 1,630 prints; and in 1946 ninety-two prints. She was not only generous with her financial support but also had complete faith in Alfred Barr's direction of the Museum. When a purchase fund she had established was used to acquire Picasso's etching *Minotauromachy* (1935), she suggested, "Let's label this: purchased with a fund for prints which Mrs. Rockefeller doesn't like."[27] After her death, in 1948, Barr wrote to Nelson, "Few realize what positive acts of courage her interest in modern art required. . . . She was the heart of the Museum and its center of gravity."[28]

Rockefeller, Blanchette Ferry Hooker (1909–1992) Blanchette Rockefeller, the wife of John D. Rockefeller 3rd, was a major benefactor of the Museum. In 1949 she spearheaded the Junior Council, and four years later she was named to the board of trustees and became founding president of the International Council. She was twice president of the board, from 1959 to 1962 (the first female president) and from 1972 to 1985, and she was chairman from 1985 to 1987. Among her many contributions to the institution is her leadership of a fund-raising campaign that enabled the Museum to undergo the 1984 expansion that doubled its gallery space, raising $55 million. She was named president emeritus in 1987.

Roob, Rona Roob worked at the Museum as Alfred H. Barr, Jr.'s assistant from 1961 to 1965 and then from 1969 to 1971. She returned in 1979 for research projects involving the Museum's historical archival collections. In 1989, with the authority of the board of trustees, she established The Museum of Modern Art Archives, the first formal archival repository at MoMA, as founding archivist. She was chief archivist from 1996 to 1998. Today the archives are home to over 4,500 linear feet of historical documents pertaining to modern and contemporary art, including personal papers, program records, audio and visual recordings, photographs, and oral histories.

***Sense and Sensibility: Women Artists and Minimalism in the 90s* (June 15–September 11, 1994)** Organized by Lynn Zelevansky, Curatorial Assistant, Department of Painting and Sculpture, this large group show was the first exhibition at the Museum to deal explicitly with gender in relation to art practice. It featured work by Polly Apfelbaum, Mona Hatoum, Rachel Lachowicz, Jac Leirner, Claudia Matzko, Rachel Whiteread, and Andrea Zittel.

Sipprell, Clara E. (1885–1975) Sipprell's photograph *New York City, Old and New* (c. 1920), acquired in 1932, was the first work by a female artist to enter the Museum's collection.

Sullivan, Mary Quinn (1877–1939) In 1917 Mary Quinn, an art teacher, married prominent lawyer Cornelius Sullivan (a noted collector of art and rare books).[29] She began to form her own collection a few years later, acquiring important works by Paul Cézanne, Amedeo Modigliani, Pablo Picasso, Georges Rouault, and Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, and in 1929, with Lillie P. Bliss and Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, she founded The Museum of Modern Art. Of the three founders, Sullivan was the most knowledgeable about art education, and one of her legacies is the Museum's strong educational mission, an integral element since the institution's inception. In October 1933 Sullivan resigned her position as a trustee. She opened a gallery and began to deal in art, a position that precluded further involvement with the Museum at a leadership level.

Trustees The Museum's board of trustees has always been partially composed of women, beginning with its three founders, and women have held top-ranking leadership positions. Female officers have included chairmen Blanchette Rockefeller (1959, 1985–87) and Agnes Gund (1993–95); presidents Rockefeller (1959–62, 1972–85), Eliza Bliss Parkinson Cobb (1965–68), Gund (1991–93, 1995–2002), and Marie-Josée Kravis (2005–); and presidents emerita Rockefeller (1987) and Gund (2002).

Volkmer, Jean (Born 1920) In 1958 a fire broke out at the Museum; one person was killed, three paintings were destroyed, and several artworks were damaged. In the wake of the disaster the Museum founded its Department of Conservation and appointed Volkmer as its first staff head conservator. Volkmer had been trained by Sheldon and Caroline Keck, the foremost living American art conservators, who had routinely performed contract work for the Museum.

***WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution* (February 17–May 12, 2008)** This exhibition, the first comprehensive historical examination of the international foundations and legacy of feminist art, was organized by Cornelia Butler, Chief Curator of Drawings at MoMA, for The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. *WACK!* traveled to New York, where it was installed at P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center. The exhibition spanned the period 1965–80, featuring 120 artists and artist groups and comprising work in a broad range of media, including painting, sculpture, photography, film, video, and performance art.

1. Margaret Scolari Barr, typescript, "Rescuing Artists in W.W. II," January 7, 1980. The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York.
2. Iris Barry, *Let's Go to the Pictures* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1926).
3. Haidee Wasson describes Barry's advocacy in *Museum Movies: The Museum of Modern Art and the Birth of Art Cinema* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press), p. 137.
4. For further reading on the life of Lillie P. Bliss, see Rona Roob, "A Noble Legacy," *Art in America* 91, no. 11 (November 2003): 73–83.
5. Ibid., 81.
6. Alfred H. Barr, Jr., quoted in Russell Lynes, *Good Old Modern: An Intimate Portrait of the Museum of Modern Art* (New York: Atheneum, 1973), p. 261.
7. Arthur Drexler and Greta Daniel, *Introduction to Twentieth Century Design: From the Collection of the Museum of Modern Art, New York* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1959).
8. Drexler, quoted in Lynes, *Good Old Modern*, p. 322.
9. Barr quoted in incomplete typed notes, Department of Public Information Records, II.C.69. MoMA Archives.
10. Dorothy Dudley and Irma Bezold, *Museum Registration Methods* (Washington, D.C.: The American Association of Museums, 1958).
11. Jacob K. Javits, letter to Dudley, September 25, 1959. René d'Harnoncourt Papers, IV.319. MoMA Archives.
12. Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, letter to A. Conger Goodyear, March 23, 1936, quoted in Betty Chamberlain, unpublished manuscript, "The History of MoMA," p. 5. MoMA Archives.
13. Nelson Rockefeller, quoted in *The Museum of Modern Art, New York: The History and the Collection* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art/Harry N. Abrams, 1984), p. 10.
14. Margaret Scolari Barr, "Our Campaigns: Alfred H. Barr, Jr., and the Museum of Modern Art: A Biographical Chronicle of the Years 1930–1944," *The New Criterion*, special summer issue, 1987, p. 50.
15. Photographic Archive. MoMA Archives.
16. PAD/D promotional brochure, c. 1984.
17. Ben Heller, letter to Dorothy Miller, March 11, 1958. Dorothy C. Miller Papers, I.14.d. MoMA Archives.
18. Miller, quoted in Lynn Gilbert and Gaylen Moore, "Dorothy Canning Miller," in *Particular Passions: Talks with Women Who Have Shaped Our Times* (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, 1981), p. 26.
19. For further reading on Nancy Newhall's life and work, see *Nancy Newhall: A Literacy of Images* (San Diego: Museum of Photographic Arts, 2008).
20. See Roger Butterfield, "The Museum and the Redhead," *Saturday Evening Post*, April 5, 1947, p. 108.
21. Rockefeller, quoted in Museum press release #48323-16, 1948, MoMA Archives. Newhall left the Museum to complete her book *Enjoying Modern Art* (New York: Reinhold Publishing Corporation, 1955).
22. "Demands of the AWC," 1969. John B. Hightower Papers, III.1.8. MoMA Archives.
23. Typescript recommendations, signed by John Szarkowski and Betsy Jones, n.d. John B. Hightower Papers III.I.11.a. This copy, belonging to MoMA director John Hightower, includes the following addendum to the first point: "Betsy Jones has reservations about the idea of a gynecurator. She feels that one individual would be an easier target for criticism, and that this responsibility should be accepted by the P&S staff as a whole."
24. For more on this action, see Joanne Stamerra, "Erasing Sexism from MOMA," *Womanart*, Summer 1976, p. 12–13.
25. For more information about the Guerrilla Girls and the founding of the group, see Guerrilla Girls, *Confessions of the Guerilla Girls* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1995). The 1985 poster is reproduced on page 36.
26. For further reading on the life of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, see Bernice Kert, *Abby Aldrich Rockefeller: The Woman in the Family* (New York: Random House, 1993).
27. Rockefeller, quoted in Wendy Jeffers, "Abby Aldrich Rockefeller," *Antiques*, November 2004, p. 124.
28. Alfred H. Barr, Jr., draft letter to Nelson Rockefeller, 1948. Alfred H. Barr, Jr., Papers, 1.192. MoMA Archives.
29. For further reading on the life of Mary Quinn Sullivan, see Howardena Pindell, "Mary Josephine Quinn Sullivan," typescript, n.d. Dorothy C. Miller Papers, III.7.e.

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This publication is made possible by the Modern Women's Fund, established by Sarah Peter.

Produced by the Department of Publications, The Museum of Modern Art, New York

Edited by Emily Hall, with Kyle Bentley, Kate Norment, and Rebecca Roberts
Designed by Bethany Johns
Production by Christina Grillo
Printed and bound by Dr. Cantz'sche Druckerei, Ostfildern, Germany

Yuko Hasegawa's essay was translated from the Japanese by Pamela Miki. Andres Lepik's essay was translated from the German by Russell Stockman. Luis Pérez-Oramas's essay was translated from the Spanish by Alex Branger.

This book is typeset in Prensa Book, designed by Cyrus Highsmith, and Akkurat, designed by Laurenz Brunner. The paper is 150 gsm Arctic Volume.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2010924877
ISBN: 978-0-87070-771-1

Published by The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, New York 10019-5497
www.moma.org

Distributed in the United States and Canada by D.A.P./Distributed Art Publishers Inc., 155 Sixth Avenue, New York, New York 10013
www.artbook.com

Distributed outside the United States and Canada by Thames & Hudson Ltd., 181 High Holborn, London WC1V 7QX, United Kingdom
www.thamesandhudson.com

Printed in Germany

Front cover: Maya Deren. Alexander Hammid. *Meshes of the Afternoon* (detail; see p. 50)

Back cover (two versions): Anna Maria Maiolino. *Buraco preto* (Black hole) (detail; see p. 36) or Sarah Lucas. *Geezer* (detail; see p. 472)

Half title: Howardena Pindell. *Untitled #7* (detail; see p. 108)

Frontispiece: Charlotte (Lotte) Beese. *Untitled* (see p. 202)

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Images on the pages indicated are by the named photographers: James Craig Annan: 224 right; Marco Anelli: 20 right; Peter Sumner Walton Bellamy: 24 top; Christopher Burke: 277; David Campos: 374–75; Paul Davis: 223 top; Howard Dearstyne: 224 left; Department of Imaging Services, MoMA: 28–29, 48, 54, 72, 75, 94 right, 118, 119 bottom, 121, 128, 130–31, 133, 135 right, 136–37, 140, 142, 144–45, 148–49, 161 left, 162–63, 171, 178 bottom, 197–98, 203 right, 206, 238, 240, 262, 265, 269 top, 283, 293, 296–97, 327, 394–95, 435, 444, 447–49, 451–57, 459–60, 478, 482 left, David Allison: 110, 245, 372, 413, 433, 506, Jon Cross & Erica Staton (Luna): 170 left, 290, Robert Gerhardt: 76, 78–79, 112, 117, 119 top, 120, 209, 285, 380–81, Thomas Griesel: 19, 104, 111 bottom, 113–15, 165–67, 169, 244, 250, 264, 274, 276, 331, 344–45, 362, 392, 399, 404, 406, 412, 438, 476, 500, 511, Seth Joel: 161 right, Kate Keller: 31–32, 41, 46, 84, 86, 100, 111 top, 422, 424, 498–99, Keller & Mali Olatunji: 92, Keller & John Wronn: 414, Paige Knight: 30, 44 top, 441, 472, Jason Mandella: 330, Jonathan Muzikar: 98–99, 124, 135 left, 178 top, 192, 200, 202 right, 203 left, 205, 208, 210, 249, 253, 278, 280–81, 319 bottom, 343, 383, 387 bottom, 423, 470 right, 477, 482 right, 483 right, 486, 489, Olatunji: 15–16, 35, 40, Soichi Sunami: 287 bottom, Wronn: 12, 17, 20 left, 23, 24 bottom, 34, 56, 96, 107–08, 147, 152–53, 170 right, 242, 246, 252, 256, 258, 260, 261 left, 269 bottom, 270 left, 328, 334, 338, 342, 350, 376, 388, 390–91, 396, 428, 437, 463, 466–67, 469, 473, 480, 483 left, 492–95, 503, 505, Wronn & Knight: 378; Charles Eames: 298; John Entenza: 220; Mel Finkelstein: 14; Samuel Gottscho: 520; Bärbel Högner (cover): 403 top; Pierre Jeanneret: 179; Joerg Lohse: 257; James Mathews: 517; Marti Catala Pedersen: 219 bottom; Don Pollard: 26; Reinaldo Armas Ponce: 316; Leo Trachtenberg: 221, 289; Willem Velthoven: 58

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From The Museum of Modern Art's founding by three pioneering women in 1929 to the disruptions and interventions of the 1960s and 1970s by women artists drawing attention to their own lack of representation in the Museum to contemporary work by women of the postfeminist generation, the history of women at MoMA is inextricable from the history of the institution. *Modern Women: Women Artists at The Museum of Modern Art*, a groundbreaking examination of the Museum's collection, looks at work over the course of this history by modern and contemporary women artists, whose diversity of practices and contributions to the avant-garde movements of the last 150 years have been enormous, if often underrecognized. Fifty essays, written by many of the strongest voices in current thinking on art and gender, examine both canonical figures and lesser-known artists. Through this diversity of voices and ideas, *Modern Women* explores how history might account for the women missing from the familiar narrative of modernism; how women variously fit into, redefine, or upend the usual categories of art and art-making; and the role of The Museum of Modern Art as a site of both patronage and protest. Richly illustrated with works from MoMA's collection, this book offers a lively discourse around gender and the production of meaning in art, one absolutely necessary for a more complex understanding of the art of our time.

ISBN: 978-0-87070-771-1
9 780870 707711