

12. On the painting and its sources, see Bohrer, pp. 201–3.
13. Among popular music, consider They Might Be Giants, *The Mesopotamians*, and Chumbawamba, *On Ebay* [“from Babylon back to Babylon”]. Among contemporary music drama, see Robert Wilson, *The Forest* (1988) and Bohuslav Martinu, *The Epic of Gilgamesh* (1955). The BM exhibit listed none of these and instead displayed a table of music that looked like the result of a hasty Google search.
14. A particular lost opportunity was just across the Thames, where Cildo Meireles’ *Babel*, 2001 (a tower of radios tuned to different stations) was at Tate Modern as part of the artist’s retrospective there. It would have looked great in the BM’s central hall (*Cildo Meireles* (Tate Publishing: London, 2008), p.168). Another possibility is Léon Ferrari, *Torre de Babel* of 1963, which Tate Modern recently acquired.
15. A work by J&K, entitled ‘The Babylon Case’ was, in fact, installed in the ‘Reality’ section of the Berlin show. On Sundaram, see Saloni Mathur, ‘Art and Empire: On Oil, Antiquities, and the War in Iraq’, *New Formations*, vol. 65, Autumn 2008, pp. 119–38. For Rakowitz, Brian Boucher, ‘Babylon without Borders’, *Art in America*, April 2007, pp. 124–7. For Kim Jones ‘War Paintings’, Stephen Maine, ‘Things He Carried’, *Art in America*, November 2007, esp. p. 239.
16. *Iraq’s Past Speaks to Its Present*, 10 November 2008 to 15 March 2009.
17. In fact, the British Museum even lent a Babylonian boundary stone to the earlier ground-breaking exhibition *Strokes of Genius*, Maysaloun Faraj (ed.), *Strokes of Genius: Contemporary Iraqi Art* (Saqi Books: London, 2001).

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## Women’s Contributions to Modernism: Discover, Recover, or Revise?

**Camilla Smith**

Paula Birnbaum and Anna Novakov (eds), *Essays on Women’s Artistic and Cultural Contributions 1919–1939: Expanded Social Roles for the New Woman Following the First World War* (The Edwin Mellen Press: New York, 2009), 29 b&w illns, 316pp., hardback ISBN 978-0-7734-4807-0, £74.95.

Karen E. Brown (ed.), *Women’s Contributions to Visual Culture, 1918–1939* (Ashgate: Aldershot, 2008), 18 b&w illns, 200 pp., hardback ISBN 978-0-7546-6400-0, £55.00.

Ruth Hemus, *Dada’s Women* (Yale University Press: New Haven, CT, 2009), 20 colour plates, 60 b&w illns, 250 pp., hardback ISBN 978-0-300-14148-1, £30.00.

Modernist scholarship has come a long way since the publication of one of the first anthologies documenting women’s artistic contributions by Hans Hildebrandt in 1928.<sup>1</sup> *Woman as Artist* confirmed that artists such as Renée Sintenis, Sonja Delaunay, and Lotte Pritzel *could* produce work of high quality in a pan-global context during the interwar period. However, Hildebrandt did

little to hide his scepticism regarding the level of proficiency reached by women. Modernist scholarship thereafter, notably A. J. Barr’s *Cubism and Abstract Art* (1936) and the more recent *Painting the Difference Sex and Spectator in Modern Art* (2005) by Charles Harrison, do little to acknowledge women’s contribution to modernism, framing modernist practice and modern experiences in terms of autonomous art produced by European or American male artists.<sup>2</sup> In response to this, feminist art historical scholarship over the last 30 years has revisited and challenged these existing orthodox frameworks by asking questions regarding the conditions under which female artists worked and the representation of women during the interwar, ‘classic’ Modernist, period.<sup>3</sup> By examining socio-political, cultural, and psychological changes, feminist art historians have revealed not only the processes by which works produced by female artists have been marginalised, but also the opportunities afforded to female practitioners during this particular period. The three books under review continue to take up this challenge.

*Essays on Women’s Artistic and Cultural Contributions 1919–1939* edited by Paula Birnbaum and Anna Novakov, *Women’s Contributions to Visual Culture, 1918–1939* edited and introduced by Karen E. Brown, and Ruth Hemus’ monograph *Dada’s Women* demonstrate the scope of women’s contributions and the different strategies adopted to negotiate their roles. The books share three common feminist interests. First, all take modernity as their prime determinant of experience, not making the discussion of gendered contributions their main emphasis. Instead, each book reveals the interdependent assessment of works of art produced by women, as well as ‘women’s art’ as subject to the choices of the individual maker. The three books are concerned with women who worked in or on the periphery of avant-garde practices and responded to developments in modern society in divergent ways. Secondly, all three books approach their subjects through methods of historical revisionism, by seeking to either recover or discover women as cultural producers. Women like Aurora Reyes and Concetta Scaravaglione, as editor Karen Brown explains in *Women’s Contributions*, have had ‘marginalized or hidden histories within both art-historical and curatorial canons’ (p. 2). Not dissimilarly in *Dada’s Women*, Hemus points out that previous Dada scholarship sidelined Emmy Hennings and Sophie Taeuber as ‘just’ the partner’s of male members and as a result, their work needs to be recovered and Dada’s history reassessed. Conversely, the aim of *Essays* is not necessarily recovery. Instead, the book intends to discover new methods of cultural production which may not necessarily have been considered valid or appropriate objects of study to the main modernist ‘agenda’. Thirdly, by adopting recovery and discovery as their main lines of enquiry, all three books encourage a series of questions revolving around the existing feminist art historical approaches, recalling the problematic claim: how are we

meant to approach the historical significance of women as makers of art?

*Women's Contributions to Visual Culture, 1918–1939* is composed of nine essays which, as Brown explains, evolved from a panel at the annual conference of the Association of Art Historians in 2005. The essays therefore revisit key issues raised during the panel, whose contributions focused on pan-European visual culture in the interwar period. Taking its cue from Robert Nelson and Richard Schiff, this collection is dedicated to art practitioners and art critics only and does not, for example, unlike *Dada's Women and Essays*, contain chapters that focus primary on poetry and journal writing.<sup>4</sup> The collection hinges around a series of enquiries dealing with modernity and modernist art practices, particularly with regards to the critical reception of women's work. This consideration of reception is one of the book's strengths and is also where it differs from *Dada's Women and Essays* which focus predominantly on the conditions and modes of production. By examining the reception of work and broader historical curatorial practices, the collection reveals how women have been marginalised, but also importantly, how these women pragmatically and often innovatively formed alternative committees and exhibition societies in order to negotiate contemporary ideological infrastructures.

Brown's introduction not only helpfully situates the collection in the expanding field of modernist scholarship, but also outlines the archival research carried out by the contributors, to which the nine essays are indeed testament. These essays can be grouped through a series of broader connections; first, those examining exhibition practices, collecting, and critical reception of female critics and artists; secondly, those probing issues revolving around nationality, artist identities, and colonial politics; and finally, those foregrounding visual culture in spaces of pedagogy and leisure. Of those working in the first category Katy Deepwell's illuminating essay identifies the ways in the Imperial War Museum's Women's Work Sub-Committee supported female artists' responses to war by commissioning, exhibiting, and patronising works. However, Deepwell's research demonstrates how this work remains diminished by the museum's current exhibition practices and archive bias. Similar issues are raised in Chariklia-Glafki Gotsi's essay on the disparaging reception of female avant-garde artists working in Greece then and now. In one of the most insightful essays in the collection, Christa-Maria Lerm Hayes persuasively re-evaluates the writings of Carola Giedion-Welcker. Refuting Krauss' assertion that the critic was a proto-Greenbergian interested in 'surface at the expense of all else' (p. 93), Lerm Hayes re-evaluates the Giedion-Welcker's work as more complex and suggests that both her sculpture and writing cannot be understood outside the cultural and political contexts in which she was operating.

In the second group of essays, Anna Maria Carlevaris similarly argues that formalist conventions do not eluci-

date Concetta Scaravaglione's sculpture *Woman with Mountain Sheep* (1939–40). Instead, Scaravaglione's work is understood as a nostalgic, immigrant response to her homeland Italy, during the European Fascist period. Examining the work of Dora Gordine, Jonathan Black's essay also draws attention to the complexity of her project within the prescribed modernist paradigm and offers a more nuanced reading based on notions of authenticity and empathy in contrast to contemporary Post-colonial lines of enquiry. Finally, Ruth Brown's essay invites us to consider Norah McGuinness' amalgamation of Byzantine and Celtic symbols in her illustrations for writer W. B. Yeats as a way of both probing and contributing to debates on Irish identity and modernism. In all three essays, therefore, modernist conventions are made to cede ground to wider cultural issues such as the artist's own and national identities.

In the remaining essays, the scholars consider women artists engaged in broader public commissions. As Britta C. Dwyer so aptly concludes in her appealing essay on sisters Doris and Anna Zinkeisen, for these artists, 'Modernism was not their aim, but rather modernity as experience' (p.134). Dwyer consolidates this idea by examining how the sisters' work intersecting luxury with utilitarian areas of modern life, by designing Kafkaesque stage sets and costumes and murals on luxury liners, to advertisements for London's underground. The remaining two essays examine mural paintings on the interior of school buildings in the two very different contexts of post-war England and Mexico. Alice Strickland suggests how the work of Evelyn Dunbar and the pedagogic attitudes of Evelyn Gibbs could have been influenced by pan-European attitudes towards art and education as espoused by figures such as Franz Cizek. The collection ends with Terri Geis' extremely powerful subversive reading of Aurora Reyes' mural painting for a Socialist school in Post-revolutionary Mexico. Even as these essays insist on the new opportunities afforded to female artists and teachers, the essays reveal the necessary pragmatic strategies developed by women in order to negotiate social and psychological attitudes towards sexual difference in the interwar period.

Among the many vivid narratives in this collection of essays, it is not difficult to find ones that concur. Many of the essays reveal the prudent approaches adopted by women combining the everyday business of producing art works with the challenge of creating avant-garde art exhibitions in galleries and museums. In doing so, the collection demonstrates not only the high standards of technical proficiency of women as cultural innovators, but also that they were and still are, comparably gendered and overlooked in modernist scholarship and wider curatorial and archival practices.

Similar underlying issues prompt *Essays on Women's Artistic and Cultural Contributions 1919–1939*, which also derives from an international conference held at the University of San Francisco. However, the collection's emphasis on discovery asks the reader to consider, or

indeed reconsider, prejudices regarding 'canonical forms of cultural expression' (p. i). As a result, the collection presents a rich patchwork of art historical, literary history, and women's social history methodologies in order to explore film, literature, sport, and art spanning the Americas, Europe, and Asia (in fact nine countries in all). It successfully helps to articulate original and at times compelling epistemologies around the work of well-known artists such as Frida Kahlo and Hannah Höch, as well as lesser known Bauhaus photographers such as Ivana Tomljenovic and invites us to recognise contributions further in terms of anonymous female marching teams.

Both the preface and introduction imply that these female contributors can be identified in terms of a homogenous 'New Woman Movement' (whatever that is) which the editors' state 'swept across Europe, North America, and Asia' (p. 3). Given that this collection effectively demonstrates the divergent strategies and practices of the female producer and the consummate feminist readings these invoke, this seems a dangerously reductive comment. A 'movement' suggests a type of conscious participation in or compliance with an ideology. This may well have been the case regarding the physical appearance of the *Neue Frau* in Germany, who has indeed been noted for 'buying into' the same androgynous look; *Bubikopf* ('bob') hairstyle, knee-high skirt, and cigarettes (most notably lampooned by 1920s journalist Vicki Baum), but in an introduction such as this, such comments risk undermining the heterogeneity of the subsequent case studies.<sup>5</sup> By using general historical information, Marcello Flavia's preface also seeks to explain what she argues was so 'particular about the socio-political context of the interwar years that allowed women to express themselves in this way?' (p. i) What way exactly? While provocative, generalised discussions such as these throw up more questions and problems than they perhaps hope to address. Conversely, the subtitle of the book 'Expanded Social Roles for the New Woman following the First World War' does not use the word 'movement' and in spite of introductory reservations, the collection is, at times, a rewarding read.

The book is divided into five parts. Sections 1, 3, and 4 converge around notions of identity and assess women's works predominately in terms of sexuality, puberty, gender, and national identities. In 'Reconfiguring Girlhood', Jennifer L. Shaw's essay persuasively argues that in Claude Cahun's 'Sophie la Symboliste', the writer turns the Surrealist understanding of *femme enfant* on its head by making the child protagonist discover sexual autonomy. Similar issues are explored in Jennifer Helgren's essay analysing American girl camps and Margaret Macdonald's examination of marching teams in New Zealand during the 1930s. Although Macdonald nods at Kracauer and his cultural criticisms laid bare by the banners and uniform of these marching teams, she concludes that these displays were 'far from the heart of industrial capitalism' (p. 33) due to their sporting con-

text.<sup>6</sup> Helgren on the other hand posits that the taking part in induction rituals, wearing ceremonial gowns, and reciting texts signified the positive 'transference of her [the camp girl] identity to the group' (pp. 44–5). While it might be inferred that camp girl and marching girl exercises show degrees of individual cultural negotiation, the use of uniforms, banners, and rituals as ideological constructs was perhaps deserved of more nuanced reading here. In 'Craftswomen and National Identity', Heather A. Vaughan's essay exploring Elizabeth Ginno's national costume etchings for the World Trade Fair of 1939–1940 in San Francisco and Tusa Shea's examination of British Colombian handicrafts carefully champion positive notions of knowledge transfer; emulation and adoption by moving away from Post-colonial readings and suggest how women used works to question national boundaries as well as their own role as creators and dominant working conditions.

In 'Re-imagining Gender and Race', Tirza True Latimer examines the film *Borderline* produced by POOL. In one of the most perceptive essays in the collection, Latimer constructs her reading of the film portraying a mixed race relationship around wider homosexual debates and the work of sexologists Hirschfeld and Ellis. In *Borderline* the cinematic signifiers of intermediate-borderline race becomes the organising metaphor for intermediate-borderline sexuality, revealing how the filmic strategy of discursive layering employed by POOL allows for nuanced exploration of publically 'difficult' social and psychic codes of racial difference and sexuality. Celia S. Stahr and Susan Martis' remaining essays on Frida Kahlo and sculptor Malvina Hoffman suggest that their working methods and subjects evolved from clear biographical and gendered motivations.

The second and fifth sections examine the works of women in relation to urban environs (Paris and Berlin) and male professionalism, assessing their relevance as architects, photographers, and as New Woman figures of consumerism. In 'Modernity and Visual Culture', both Melissa Johnson's non-synchronic approach to Hannah Höch's montages and Paula Birnbaum's essay assessing the images of motherhood by de Lempicka and Blanchard indicate the complex attitudes female artists cultivated towards the New Woman through post-war suffrage. Laura W. Allen's fascinating essay on Yoshida Fujio's non-figurative Western images of domestic interiors invites the reader, not unlike Höch and Blanchard's works, to consider the ambivalent response to the evolving social positions of modern women revealed through Fujio's contributions to women's organisations and leftist magazines. In Section 5, 'Women and Public Spaces' the essays continue to raise further questions regarding multiple identities and the gendered notions of designation and dislocation in urban spaces. Both Despina Stratigakos and Anna Novakov use Weimar Germany as their backdrop, assessing how female architects such as Grete Schütte-Lihotzky and Marie Frommer, and Bauhaus student Ivana Tomljenovic

respond to metropolitan life and attitudes through their work. Originally from Yugoslavia, Novakov argues that Tomljenovic's photographs of Berlin's street expanses are symbolic of the photographer's 'microcosm of a topographic struggle' as a result of her displaced identity 10 years after the disintegration of the Balkans (p. 219). Stratigakos' essay asserts that architects such as Marie Frommer deliberately designed spaces designated as 'feminine' in order to design flexible [female] spaces, thereby locating herself in a male professional sphere. In the final essay, Ellis aptly brings notions of designation and dislocation together by suggesting that the 'tramp tramp tramping' of work carried out in the domestic spaces of the New Woman, was not dissimilar to the mobility of their 'hobo sisters' nomadic existence around America (p. 236). She convincingly posits the backdoor as the mythical site of interchange; it keeps the hobo out, but also holds the New Woman in.

If the reader is looking for a collection of art historical essays dedicated to reasserting and exhuming the talent and proficiency of female practitioners deserving to be 'canonised', the scope of these essays may disappoint. And in some cases the catch all gambit 'cultural contributions' is perhaps stretched. *Essays on Women's Artistic Contributions 1919–1939* speaks to an interdisciplinary audience who are interested in, as the subtitle suggests, the 'expanded social roles' of women during the inter-war period, be these historical, social, and indeed cultural. In these broader areas, it offers an important and at times stimulating contribution to both gender and cultural studies assessing the interwar period.

Ruth Hemus' monograph *Dada's Women* closely examines the work of five artists/writers, such as Emmy Hennings and Sophie Taeuber in Zurich, Hannah Höch in Berlin, and Suzanne Duchamp and Céline Arnaud in Paris, in order to locate them firmly alongside their Dada male counterparts at the structural heart of the avant-garde developments in European modernism during Dada's heyday from 1916 to 1924. In doing so, Hemus adopts the feminist stance of 'intervention', a type of approach deemed potentially risky by Marcello in her preface to *Essays*. In some cases this might imply, according to Marcello, rediscovering mediocre works by 'merely trawling through art history in an attempt to exhume female artists who have been passed over and ignored' (p. i). Be that as it may, Hemus does this with persuasive scholarly acumen and proves that the work of each artist discussed here is fundamental to understanding Dada.

Taking her lead from Nochlin, Hemus' introductory question 'Why have there been no great women Dadaists?' (p. 1) frames the five case studies in her book.<sup>7</sup> In each chapter Hemus answers this by drawing attention not only to the sexual difference and oppressive masculinity which underpinned the formation of European Dada groupings (Höch being branded a 'tea-lady' and Hennings as 'child' are prime examples), but

also offers explanations of how subsequent memoirs, legacies, and Dada historiography may have substantiated patriarchal attitudes further. More importantly, however, she succinctly shows in each case study that these five women did not merely 'contribute'. Rather they must be understood as Dada's founding 'mothers' (pp. 17–18). Hemus' approach implies that scholarship focusing on women's 'contributions' can reduce female practitioners to the monolithic placing of women as 'Other', deeming their work 'private symbolism' and further suggests 'a smaller scale of engagement and, subsequently, interest and value' (p. 163). As a result, she adopts the two approaches of 'intervention' and 'innovation' which succinctly demonstrates the extent to which each artist was involved in the groups. Their works not only share affinities with their male counterparts, but are often shown as innovating and bringing new dimensions to the group, be this through performances like Hennings', puppets like Taeuber's, or Höch's combination of textiles with montage. Hemus' approach recalls her clever title, for she succinctly reveals that 'Dada's Women' paradoxically own and were indeed owned by Dada.

Each chapter is richly illustrated and constructed around the artist's biography. Hemus does not, however, focus on biographic evidence as a way of understanding the works; rather she examines production closely in its wider cultural contexts, further avoiding 'speculation about interpersonal relationships' (p. 11). In the first two chapters, the interventions of Emmy Hennings and Sophie Taeuber are assessed. Hennings is considered for her iconoclastic performances which were equally in tandem and at odds with Ball's conception of theatre. Hennings' bodily gestures are placed alongside pan-European avant-garde circles. Taeuber (a dancer herself) is likewise argued as having facilitated the relationship between Rudolf Laban's dancers and the Cabaret Voltaire and Galerie Dada. Both chapters draw attention to the wider cultural innovations and contributions of both women in Dada and beyond; Taeuber's textiles are assessed as modernist precursors to the later work of her husband, Jean Arp, and Oskar Schlemmer, whilst Hennings' literary achievements and her prose for *Die Aktion* and *Die Neue Kunst* are discussed.

Hemus' discussion of Suzanne Duchamp's work reveals that she was a collaborator with her artist brother, but also innovator, as her mechanomorphic forms predate Picabia, Crotti, and Man Ray in New York, thereby facilitating initial links between European art centres and the transatlantic before the real unfolding of Dada in Paris in 1919–1920. Here Hemus' clear prose style and compelling semiotic analysis of Duchamp's compositions allow for considerable visual analysis, focusing the reader on the physical properties of Duchamp's works. Examination of Céline Arnaud's poetry prose and short dramatic pieces further demonstrates Hemus' astute ability to explore literary text. She reviews Arnaud's interventions in terms of Dada

play and deconstruction of language, as comparable with the works of Arp, Breton, and Soupault.

The chapter on Berlin Dadaist Hannah Höch is the least successful, which is in part, due to the plethora of the existing scholarship on both Höch's work and life. Hemus herself draws attention to this (p. 11), but never offers to conjecture why out of all Dada's women, it is Höch's work which continues to attract the most attention.

Given she lists over 25 Dada-associated women across European centres upon whom she claims there is little written (pp. 2–3), the reader cannot help wondering at her choice of Höch here alongside the 'largely forgotten' Arnauld (p. 166). While she does build on Maud Lavin's insightful biographic readings of Höch's work and moves away from Maria Makela's aim to 'disentangle Höch from the Knot of Dada', there is perhaps a missed opportunity here for examining Hemus' proposed notions of intervention by means of Höch's lesser known works as opposed to looking again towards *Das schöne Mädchen* (1919–1920) and *Dada-Rundschau* (1919).<sup>8</sup> Hemus's thesis that Höch's images of women 'add a dimension to Dada which would have otherwise been missing' (p. 126), whilst convincing, risks being somewhat undermined by her subsequent continued emphasis on the similarities between the artist and her male counterparts. Indeed, she rightly asserts that Höch's work is not necessarily 'women's art', but by stressing analogous political sympathies, aesthetic strategies, and her ambivalent attitudes towards the New Woman, Hemus' chapter implies at times that Höch's intervention was by being merely 'one of the boys', only imitating, as opposed to innovating. Nonetheless, Hemus' astute visual analysis again deserves attention here; the chapter literally peels back the layers of Höch's montages and thus provides enlightening reading of her works.

Some of the underlying issues addressed in *Dada's Women* are the conscious strategies employed by these five women in order to negotiate their 'difficult' positions within the relative groups, which Hemus points out in her conclusion. Here the author argues that their subjects and methods often coalesce, particularly around notions of performance and the ways in which these figures drew attention to, or away from their roles as women within the group (p. 20, p. 47). For example, Hemus identifies the shared interests explicit in Höch's, Hennings', and Taeuber's creation of dolls and puppets, suggesting that they act as a metaphor for 'how they [the artists] saw themselves in works and others saw them' (p. 51). Hemus allows us to consider how such objects might serve to highlight their paradoxical position as 'Dada's Women'; as both innovator–mother–creator, but also object–child. Likewise, Duchamp's playful experiments with typography and sound, and Taeuber and Höch's teasing references to 'Dada' in their work, might well be considered, according to Hemus, as conscious negotiation strategies revolving around authorship

and agency and are pinpointed as further intervening approaches.

Given that Hemus identifies the 'transgression of cultural and national boundaries' (p. 7 and p. 129) as being key to Dada in the introduction, and Hennings and Taeuber both worked in Zurich, the reader might have expected to find more underlying opinions and exchanges between these five women (p. 63). Whether Hemus chooses not to explore these, or they simply did not exist, is left unclear. Moreover, although it might be argued that the brief account of each five artists and their productivity can never do justice to the varied cultural output across an astounding array of practices; these are minor objections that do not undermine the significance of *Dada's Women*. Hemus' book provides a welcome return to the assessment of modernist avant-garde groups and female intervention, alongside works such as Naomi Sawelson-Gorse ed., *Women in Dada: Essays on Sex, Gender and Identity* (The MIT Press, 2001) and Anja Baumhoff's *The Gendered World of the Bauhaus* (Peter Lang, 2001) and is both well written and conscientiously researched. *Dada's Women* will appeal to scholars with specialist knowledge as well as wider audiences interested in pan-European modernist practices and offers a distinct and valuable contribution to the field.

No neat conclusions can be drawn from these three books. *Dada's Women* raises broader questions regarding the opportunities afforded by women in modern society and brings to the fore issues raised in both *Essays* and *Women's Contributions*. All three books offer the reader frank assessments of work by women, discovering and recovering their contributions and strategies of intervention no matter how slight. In doing so, each book exposes the gender asymmetry of the modern experience. Significantly the books reveal that in some cases these strategies often revolved around negotiating, and indeed exploiting, dominant male narratives. For example, whilst in central Europe Hennings' and Taeuber's successes were helped by often 'primitive' and sexualised performances, Weimar architect Lilly Reich designed their 'rightful' domestic spaces. In Britain the Zinkeisen's decorated recreational spaces and in Japan, Fujio exploited consumerism, exhibiting her works in 'feminine' emporia. As Hemus herself implies in her conclusion, part of the 'palatability' of women's interventions does appear to be the initial conceptions of Dada as an anti-art, anti-establishment, anti-artist group, thereby in effect 'allowing' female contributions (p. 200). Although this may be a case of the reviewer's own post-hoc rationalisation here, the three books suggest that when women produced visual culture, they were not afraid to exploit sexual difference in order to show their proficiency.

Not only do the books raise wider issues of interest to feminist art historians in terms of their respective approaches, but the works also beg questions regarding the inclusiveness of feminist scholarship. It is note-

worthy that out of the 24 scholars here across three books, only one is male. As Katy Deepwell so aptly asked over a decade ago in 1998, is it the case that 'to write about women artists is still seen as a highly specialised, even esoteric, occupation or as an irrelevance to the "main" [male] agenda?'<sup>9</sup> The reader is indeed left asking here is this *still* the case? Moreover, there are also many female voices unheard in these collections. The vast majority of women producers discussed are middle class and are subsequently offered the art educational and financial opportunities this presents. If we are indeed to consider anonymous marching girls as contributors, should we in future scholarship perhaps be focussing more on lower echelons, make-up artists and shop assistants for theirs? In this respect, all three books inspire a great number of future lines of enquiry to be explored. In her examination of hobo girls in *Essays*, Stephanie Ellis demands that in order to begin to study the interwar period at all, the reader must consciously engage in 'peripheral vision instead of gazing ahead at the spectacle of the auspicious' (p. 225). These three books successfully do just that, encouraging us to look and look again in order to continually expand and question our understanding of this period and the intrinsic role women played within it.

## Notes

1. Hans Hildebrandt, *Die Frau als Künstlerin: Mit 337 Abbildungen nach Frauenarbeiten Bildender Kunst von den Frühen Zeiten bis zur Gegenwart* (Rudolf Mosse: Berlin, 1928). See in particular the introduction in which Hildebrandt poses questions revolving around whether women can be creative at all and if so, in what specific areas. Unsurprisingly, Hildebrandt's index of female artists detailing working methods and dates also considers such information as 'the wife of', as vital. Despina Stratigakos also refers to Hildebrandt's problematic assertions regarding female contributions in her insightful essay 'The Bobbed Builder: Women Architects in the Weimar Republic', see Paula Birnbaum and Anna Novakov (eds), *Essays on Women's Artistic and Cultural Contributions 1919–1939: Expanded Social Roles for the New Woman Following the First World War* (The Edwin Mellen Press: New York, 2009), p. 203.
2. I am not suggesting that a comparison can be drawn between Harrison's insightful work and Barr's much earlier and highly critiqued rendition of modernism. However, although Harrison contains one chapter on Cassatt and Morisot, the book does little to acknowledge Central European Modernism, or indeed women practitioners. Harrison, 'Morisot and Cassatt: "A Woman's Painting"', *Painting the Difference* (University of Chicago Press: London, 2005), pp. 127–48.
3. See for example, Marsha Meskimmon and Shearer West (eds), *Visions of the 'Neue Frau': Women and the Visual Arts in Weimar Germany* (Scholar Press: Aldershot, 1995), Katharina von Ankum, *Women in the Metropolis: Gender and Modernity in Weimar Culture* (University of California Press: Berkeley, CA, 1997) and Katy Deepwell (ed.), *Women Artists and Modernism* (Manchester University Press: Manchester, 1998).
4. Brown points out that the established framework for the collection is focused on 'the interpretation of some work of art' (p. 1), as taken from Robert Nelson and Richard Schiff (eds), *Critical Terms for Art History* (University of Chicago Press: London, 1996).
5. See, in particular, Viki Baum's description of the fashion slave and copyist Yipsi in 'People of Today', in Anton Kaes and Martin Jay (eds), *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook* (University of California Press: London, 1994), pp. 664–66. Originally published in 1927 in 'Leute von Heute', in *Die Dame* (27 November 1927).
6. For Siegfried Kracauer's comments on chorus line dancing with whom these New Zealand marching girls show particular affinity and further essays by the same author on mass culture and production, see *The Mass Ornament. Weimar Essays*, translated, edited, and introduced by Thomas Y. Levin (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA, 1995).
7. Linda Nochlin, 'Why have there been no great women artists?', first published in *Art News*, LXIX, January 1977, abridged in Amelia Jones (ed.), *Feminism and Visual Culture Reader* (Routledge: London and New York, 2003), pp. 229–33.
8. See, in particular, 'By Design: The Early Work of Hannah Höch in Context', in Peter Boswell and Maria Makela *et al.* (eds), *The Photomontages of Hannah Höch* (Walker Art Centre: Minneapolis, MA, 1996), pp. 49–81 and Maud Lavin, *Cut With The Kitchen Knife: The Weimar Photomontages of Hannah Höch* (Yale University Press: New Haven, CT, 1993).
9. Deepwell, *Women Artists and Modernism*, p. 2.

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## Against Indeterminacy

Robert Slifkin

Michael Lobel, *James Rosenquist: Pop Art, Politics, and History in the 1960s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).

Joshua Shannon, *The Disappearance of Objects: New York Art and the Rise of the Postmodern City* (Yale University Press, 2009).

Unlike that of its main precursor Abstract Expressionism, the academic discourse surrounding Pop Art has not undergone an extensive social–historical revision. While it has become almost second nature for many scholars to examine the art of Jackson Pollock and Mark Rothko, for instance, in terms of Cold War politics or mid-century conceptions of masculinity, Pop Art, when considered within its specific historical conditions, is often addressed in terms of the rather predictable (if undeniably relevant) burgeoning postwar commodity culture. With the exception of the work of Andy Warhol and a few significant studies of other artists associated with the movement, Pop, like its historical counterpart minimalism, has been frequently treated as a homogeneous occurrence, sacrificing fundamental differences various artistic practices and, equally important, preventing close analysis of individual works.

Certainly a key factor to this paucity of visual and historical interpretation can be located in the works themselves. From Jasper Johns' series of number and letter paintings and Frank Stella's early stripe paintings to Warhol's Brillo Boxes and Donald Judd's 'stacks', Pop and minimalism (along with their respective 'proto' manifestations) appear as deliberate attempts to short-circuit any sort of interpretation, whether psychological or historical, offering viewers objects of seemingly unwavering literalness and immediate materiality. Responding to