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1



Thomas

WOMEN ARTISTS, EXPRESSIONIST AVANT-GARDE CULTURE, AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE

Paula Modersohn is thus a woman Expressionist. She was the earliest Expressionist of modern painting in the German field.

Paula Modersohn-Becker is venerated . . . as the crown princess of Expressionism, she stands there as the prophetess (of Worpswede) . . . It is a painful duty to confirm the opposite, that for us the talent of this woman painter appears more trivial than deep.

Seven years separate the two epigraphs cited above. The author of the first was the critic Anton Lindner, who reviewed a posthumous exhibition of Modersohn-Becker's works in 1914 for a daily newspaper, the *Neue Hamburger Zeitung*.¹ The second dates from 1921 and was written by the well-known art historian and critic Karl Scheffler. Here he was reviewing a recently published monograph on the artist for the widely circulated specialist journal *Kunst und Künstler*.² While both authors testify to the consensus that Modersohn-Becker was the preeminent Expressionist painter, an initiator of a movement, which by 1914 permeated German metropolitan culture at many levels, Scheffler nonetheless found her talent highly overrated. Notorious for his hostility toward the very notion of a woman artist, particularly as argued in his publication *Die Frau und die Kunst* (1908), Scheffler was clearly baffled by the phenomenon of Modersohn-Becker. In 1909, after attending the memorial exhibition of her works that traveled from Bremen to Berlin, he criticized her paintings as mere experiment. Yet he acknowledged that they evinced "a sincere struggle for truth and pure feeling for nature" and that she brought "an intensity of an almost mystical kind to expression."³

However, my purpose in introducing these reviews at this juncture is neither to emphasize the ambivalent reception of the artist after her untimely death in 1907, nor to underscore prejudiced societal attitudes toward women practitioners, but rather to highlight the fact that cultural identity in Expressionist art and its critical discourses was not exclusively gendered male. To be sure, Scheffler's comments unwittingly attest to the intriguing specter of the feminization of the movement: Modersohn-Becker as the "crown princess of Expressionism." Why then, we are led to inquire, have narratives of Expressionism so rarely observed women artists' participation? Whereas it was mainly in the last thirty years of the twentieth century that feminist intervention substantially altered the course of cross-disciplinary scholarship, the answers to the question as to why women artists disappeared from the text after 1933,



1 Anonymous, *Confiscated Works of Paula Modersohn-Becker and Franz Marc in the Depot Niederschönhausen, Berlin, October 1938*, photograph, Stiftung Preußische Kulturbesitz, Berlin

only to reappear at the end of the twentieth century, are complex. They encompass the fields of history, sexual and cultural politics, and the historiography of art history. Certainly, a major factor for the exclusion of women artists from accounts of early twentieth-century German modernism arises from the impact of the Third Reich between 1933 and 1945. At a time when they could have been enjoying the conjunction of their emancipation (achieved in 1919) with the benefits of a pluralistic art market, women modernists' careers were blighted.

Indeed, the art historian Ingrid von der Dollen has recovered the careers of more than four hundred women artists who were active during the Weimar period (1919–33).⁴ She introduces the text by a methodological inquiry into the *doppelte Verschollenheit* (double absence) of women “expressive realists” who, if they didn’t perish during the Third Reich, were marginalized and ignored in the postwar years by discriminatory cultural practices and the promotion of modernist abstraction in West Germany. While the label “expressive realists” is problematic given the

eclecticism of the modern period, the generational model serves as a unifying element.⁵ Born between 1890 and 1910, this so-called *verschollene Generation* (lost or forgotten generation) suffered an ignominious fate.⁶ Yet this was inevitably the case, too, for the generation of women Expressionists born in the late 1860s, 1870s, and 1880s.

In the tragic case of Olga Oppenheimer, who was born in 1886, her precarious mental health and Jewish identity led to her deportation and murder in Poland in 1941.⁷ Her oeuvre, curtailed as it was through illness, was lost and dispersed, and only a few works remained in the hands of family members. Never as favorably courted as their male colleagues in the institutional endorsement of modernism during the 1920s, women Expressionists' works were nonetheless associated with “degenerate art” and confiscated in the Nazi purge of public collections. Not only was Modersohn-Becker represented in the infamous *Entartete Kunst* (Degenerate Art) exhibition in Munich in 1937, but her works were also seized from the Kunsthalle in Bremen and Hamburg, the Folkwang Museum in

Essen, the Kestner Museum in Hanover, and the Von der Heydt Museum, formerly the Städtische Bildergalerie, in Wuppertal-Elberfeld.⁸ Alongside those of Franz Marc, one can view a selection of her paintings in a photograph of the Depot in Schloß Niederschönhausen, Berlin (fig. 1), which was used for storing confiscated works in order to elicit foreign currency from potential buyers.⁹

On a methodological level, while one has to be wary of interpreting the historical trajectory from empire to Holocaust as “inevitable,” its legacies are ever present in tracing the cultural production of the early twentieth century.¹⁰ In addition, since they were predominantly held in private or family collections, women artists’ oeuvres and journals were destroyed or fragmented during Allied bombing.¹¹ Whether they retreated into so-called inner emigration or managed to eke out a living in exile, few women artists were recuperated in the immediate postwar period. Since the 1950s, art historians took as their yardstick a rather selective reading of the critical framework that both originated and defined the term “Expressionism,” one that harbored the paradigm of male artistic genius. This they could find in the first documentary history of the movement, *Der Expressionismus*, published in 1914, in which the art critic and newspaper *feuilletonist* Paul Fechter (1880–1958) established parentage for the movement in the Norwegian artist Edvard Munch and progeny in the works of Brücke artists (mainly Max Pechstein), the Blaue Reiter, and individuals such as Oskar Kokoschka and Ernst Barlach.¹² The overarching narrative has not changed substantially, with the exception of new evidence and emphasis on other regional manifestations of the movement, activities during the First World War, and the recognition of a later, second generation of Expressionists, who participated in the revolutionary fervor of the early Weimar Republic.¹³

Although trends in the secondary literature have made immense strides in devoting attention to the broader issues of art, society, and cultural politics, their focus mostly dwells on the contribution of male protagonists, whether artists, sculptors, writers, supporters, or promoters of the movement. The problematic manner in which gender is inscribed within modernist theory and practice clearly lies at the heart of evaluating women’s role in Expressionism. In 1980, the American feminist art historian Alessandra Comini challenged this litany, concluding her essay

“Gender or Genius? The Women Artists of German Expressionism” with the hope that “[i]n the future, when we think of German Expressionism, perhaps we shall not think, teach and exhibit exclusively in terms of Munch, or Kirchner, or Kandinsky, but rather expand our scope to embrace the individual and fascinating qualities of Münter and her co-travelers, Kollwitz and Modersohn-Becker, in their different routes toward Expressionism.”¹⁴ Comini was not alone in inquiring into notions of “gender difference,” since German feminist art historians forged their own paths, as evidenced in the catalog accompanying the exhibition *Künstlerinnen International, 1877–1977* and in the various publications arising from the conferences of the group Women Art Historians.¹⁵

Concurrently, in pivotal interdisciplinary studies, the cultural historian Renate Berger scrutinized the patriarchal institution of art and rigorously anchored women’s production in social history.¹⁶ In 1988, my introduction *Women Expressionists* provided a survey, taking into consideration the works of Kollwitz, Modersohn-Becker, Münter, Marianne Werefkin, Erma Bossi, Clara Anna Maria Nauen, Olga Oppenheimer, and other artists deemed Expressionist, such as Jacoba van Heemskerck from Holland and the Swedish artists Sigrid Hjertén and Vera Nilsson.¹⁷ Since then, advances in research have expanded the field in considering specific centers of training, such as the Mal- und Zeichenschule des Vereins der Berliner Künstlerinnen und Kunstfreundinnen (Painting and Drawing School of the Association of Berlin Women Artists and Women Supporters of Art), a pioneering, privately funded painting and drawing school for women artists started in 1868.¹⁸ The implications of regional identity were further explored in relation to the group of Rhenish women Expressionists, the Munich circle around the Neue Künstlervereinigung München (Munich New Artists’ Association; hereafter NKVM) and Blaue Reiter, and those belonging to the Hamburg Secession.¹⁹

In 1992, Annegret Hoberg, well-known curator at the Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus und Kunstbau in Munich, was instrumental in staging the traveling exhibition *Gabriele Münter, 1877–1962*, the first major retrospective of the woman artist’s oeuvre.²⁰ Alexandra von dem Knesebeck’s formidable publications and compilation of the definitive *Käthe Kollwitz: Werkverzeichnis*

der *Graphik* have proved invaluable to the field.²¹ Further monographic studies, among them Elizabeth Prelinger's *Käthe Kollwitz*, Reinhold Heller's *Gabriele Münter: The Years of Expressionism, 1903–1916*, and Diane Radycki's *Paula Modersohn-Becker: The First Modern Woman Artist* have become beacons of scholarship and interpretation in the historiography.²² Gisela Kleine's biographical study *Gabriele Münter und Wassily Kandinsky* and Bibiana Obler's publication *Intimate Collaborations: Kandinsky and Münter, Arp and Tauber*, moreover, highlight the phenomenon of "significant others," its relevance to early twentieth-century modernism, and methodological challenges to art-historical inquiry.²³

Just as Comini states in the above quotation that it is important to acknowledge women artists' "different routes toward Expressionism," so the feminist literary historian Barbara D. Wright, who terms women the "intimate strangers" of the movement, warns us against interpreting their role "in traditional, stereotypical categories of binary thinking about the nature of masculinity and femininity."²⁴ How to escape this mindset is the departure for chapters in this book, their arguments being underpinned as much by art-historical evidence as by gender theory, which questions the binary norms that operate as regulatory practices in society. What challenge, the philosopher of gender and sexuality Judith Butler queries, does deviation from this symbolic hegemony pose "that might force a radical rearticulation of what qualifies as bodies that matter?"²⁵ Here the terminology employed, that is, "matter [of the body]" with its multiple implications as a material form and as a topic of discourse, is relevant to the sections below. The term *Malweiber* (women painters), for example, is representative of the gender problems that permeated the art world of fin-de-siècle Germany. How could the distinctiveness of women artists' struggles and contribution be embodied within the world of *Künstler* (gendered male) as well as within Expressionism? Certainly, the nonfixity of the movement known as Expressionism is amenable to further scrutiny in terms of its emergence and terminology.

The problems of defining the word "Expressionism" and its application to these very diverse artists mean that the issues of individual and group identity are not easily resolved.²⁶ In particular, their various origins and the inconsistent features of their training complicate notions

of group cohesion. Women artists' insecure social and professional status need to be viewed in light of broader debates concerning the "woman question" and the concurrent "transformation of higher learning." With gradual professionalization of new fields such as teacher training and higher technical or business education, *Bildung*, or classical education and cultivation—a lineage aspired to among the German bourgeoisie—gave way to *Ausbildung*, or professional training.²⁷ However, by the time the doors of universities were opened to women, a general devaluation of the humanities and a concomitant increase in popular respect for scientific-technological fields had taken place. Women's educational advancement lagged behind, and the inconsistencies of their career structures signal their equivocal position in relation to modernizing processes.

Status and Deviant Body of the Woman Artist

During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the various teaching schools of the Royal Academy in Wilhelmine Germany were limited to male students, as were the gymnasia and universities. In 1908, Prussia was the last state to allow women to matriculate, or gain their *Abitur* (equivalent to a high school diploma) for university entrance.²⁸ Concordant with the rise of the bourgeoisie in German society, the Allgemeiner Deutscher Frauenverein (General German Women's Association), which was founded in 1865, agitated both for women's equality and their need to find paid work. They argued for the access of women to educational institutions in view of the necessity for the growing number of single middle-class women, the so-called *höhere Töchter* (bourgeois "young ladies"), to find employment as governesses or teachers.²⁹ Apparently, in 1890, between 16 and 25 percent of upper- and middle-class women did not get married. Teaching was one of the few careers that parents accepted as appropriate to their daughters' social status and was certainly higher on the list of priorities than the choice of becoming an artist.

Yet, equally, in the field of the arts, the agitation for women's access to higher educational outlets led to the formation of various *Vereine* or associations, the painting and drawing school of the Verein der Berliner Künstlerinnen und Kunstfreundinnen (Association of Berlin Women Artists and Women Supporters of Art) being founded



2 Anonymous,
*Lovis Corinth's School
for Women Painters*,
Berlin, 1902
(Charlotte Berend
stands immediately
behind Corinth),
photograph, Ger-
manisches National-
museum Nürnberg,
Deutsches Kunstarchiv,
DKA_NLCorinth-
Lovis_IB254-0002

around a private bequest in 1868. In 1882, this was followed by the formation of the women's academy of the Münchner Künstlerinnenverein (Munich Women Artists' Association).³⁰ As we will see, Kollwitz, Modersohn-Becker, and Münter all pursued part of their initial instruction within such institutions.

However, due to the expense and unsystematic quality of formal education, feminist practitioners and campaigners called for reform. In 1913, in a lecture in Frankfurt am Main entitled "Das Kunst-Studium der Frauen" (The Art Education of Women), Henni Lehmann (1862–1937), a Berlin-born artist and social activist, revealed that state subsidies for academic training meant that male artists paid only 120 marks per annum, while private training for women cost a minimum of 765 marks.³¹ In the same year, the constitutive discourses surrounding the professionalization of the woman artist gathered momentum with the formation of the Frauenkunstverband (Women Artists' Union) under the leadership of Käthe Kollwitz.³² In arguing for equal rights in art education, public commissions, and exhibiting opportunities, Lehmann and Eugenie Kaufmann (1867–1924) gathered statistical information

in stating their cause.³³ In her lecture, Lehmann argued effectively that the women's movement had successfully secured entrance to the intellectual professions, for which university study formed the basis.³⁴ Behind these, however, lay those occupations for which *Ausbildungsmöglichkeiten* (professional training possibilities) were scarce and expensive. In order to differentiate serious artists from the "herds of dilettantes," Lehmann pressed for women's equal access to state academies and their high art traditions.

In case one should think that she was out of touch with modern tendencies, one notices that Lehmann added, “We place artistically a Manet-painted asparagus higher than some large battle painting. The ‘how’, not the ‘what’ defines the value of the work of art.”³⁵ In view of their identification with modern trends, many women chose to continue their training in studios run by individuals. The privileged could opt for the route of attending private “ladies’ classes” offered by former academicians like Lovis Corinth who, in turn, were able to subsidize and finance their own careers by such methods.³⁶ As shown in a studio photograph of 1902 (fig. 2), there was no shortage of aspiring women artists; see Charlotte Berend (1880–1967),

Corinth's favorite model and future wife, posing immediately behind him. The daughter of a German Jewish merchant and banking family, Berend's career, while indicative of the acculturation of bourgeois Jewish women and demographic identity of Corinth's circle of patrons, was increasingly subservient to her husband's.

The Kunstgewerbeschulen (Schools of Applied Art), the first founded in Munich in 1868 and in Hamburg in 1896, further attracted a high proportion of female enrollment.³⁷ A Kunsthochschule für Mädchen (Art School for Young Women) was established in 1868, coincident with the founding of Die Kgl. Kunstgewerbeschule München (The Royal School of Applied Arts of Munich). Although transformed from a privately funded Kunstgewerbeverein (Arts and Crafts Association) into an official institution, women were charged for their tuition. In 1872, women were permitted entrance to the Münchner Kunstgewerbeschule

(School of Applied Arts of Munich) but were taught separately from their male colleagues until the year 1917. The teaching schools of the academies were also only officially opened to women with their emancipation in 1919. Yet, in 1908, Ida Kerkovius (1879–1970) continued her training under Adolf Hölzel at the Damen Malschule (Painting School for Ladies), founded at the State Academy of Fine Arts in Stuttgart and, by 1911, advanced to the position of teaching assistant.³⁸ This was an unusual case, however; women gained access to state-run institutions at a time when most talented male students had already rejected the fundamental tenets of academicism.³⁹

The 1890s in Germany, for instance, witnessed the founding of urban-based secessions and independent artists' groups, which veered away from academic and related professional associations. It was rare, however, even in the ranks of the newly formed secessions, for women artists



3 Anonymous, *Members of the Jury of the Berlin Secession Selecting Paintings for an Exhibition*, 1915, photograph, Ullstein Bild



to gain a foothold in the male hierarchy; only Kollwitz and Berend-Corinth—the latter seated on the right in a photograph of members selecting paintings for an exhibition (fig. 3)—achieved equivalent status on the jury of the Berlin Secession. Thomas Theodor Heine’s poster for the 1912 Berlin Secession exhibition well demonstrates the improbability of women artists’ being taken seriously, as the dilettantish young wisp, personified as the muse Pittura and merely adorned with palette and paintbrushes, is portrayed showering her attentions on Berlin’s symbol of masculine prowess (fig. 4).⁴⁰ Such images detract from the concurrent professional commitment of a woman like Kollwitz who, in the midst of great dissension within the ranks of the Secession, continued to dedicate her time serving in what she considered a demeaning status of second secretary on the jury for the summer, autumn, and spring exhibitions well into 1913.⁴¹

4 Thomas Theodor Heine, *Poster for the Berlin Secession*, 1912 (designed 1901), color lithograph, 66.5 × 91 cm

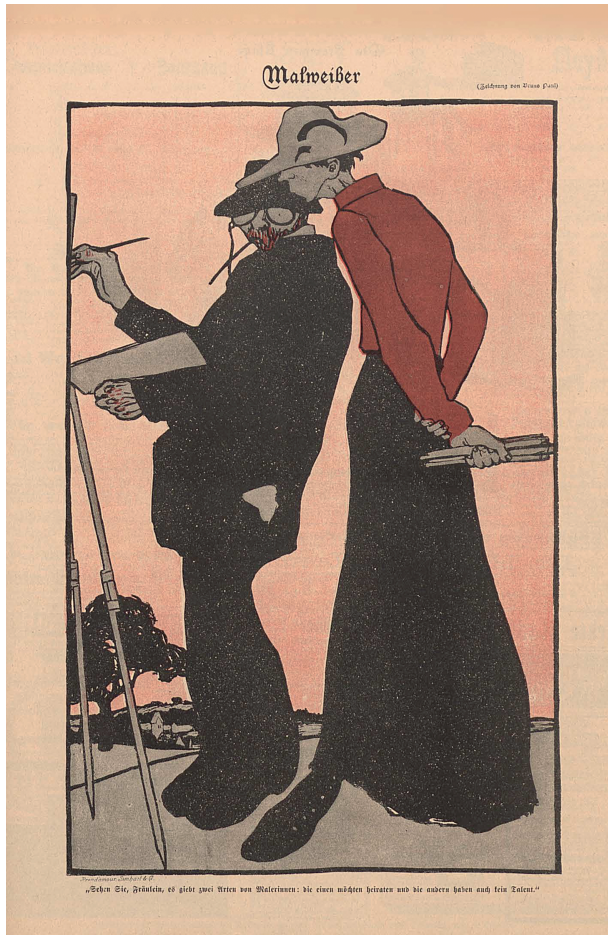


5 Peter Zankl, "Das Malweib," *Simplicissimus* 12, no. 31 (October 28, 1907): 484: "Mein neues Bild müssen Sie sehn! Ein warmes und kaltes Weiß kämpfen um ein von Schwarz unterstütztes Rosa!"

At the turn of the century, the increasing visibility of women artists in studio life and the art world appeared to threaten the hegemony of male artistic identity and practice. *Malweiber*, as they were called, became the target of caricaturists in the specialist media press. In art and literary journals, they were portrayed either as immodestly clad, albeit unbecoming, or as severely masculinized, clearly unsuited to the task in both cases. *Simplicissimus*, for instance, a satirical weekly magazine, started in 1896 in Munich by the publisher Albert Langen, notwithstanding their brash and politically daring content, lampooned the *Malweiber* in a light and modern graphic style consistent with Jugendstil, the equivalent of the Arts and Crafts movement in Germany. In Peter Zankl's sketch of the Munich salon milieu (fig. 5), a young woman painter is shown as sexually provocative, her figure and gestures emulating the curvilinear designs of the sofa and repeat pattern of the modern decorative furnishings.⁴² Pretentiously, she

entices the "decadent," fashionable male with a description of her latest (abstract) painting as a battle between warm and cold colors.

However, Bruno Paul portrays the *Malweib* as lanky and unfeminine (fig. 6). Watching over the shoulder of the male artist, who shows her how to paint, the woman is informed: "You see, miss, there are two sorts of women painters: there are some who want to marry and the others also have no talent!"⁴³ While the "constitutive constraints" on modern artistic identity in Germany were applicable to both genders, societal constructions of the terms "woman" and "artist" were mutually exclusive. According to the art historian Scheffler, whose reviews of Modersohn-Becker we encountered earlier, "atrophy, sickness or hypertrophy of sexual feelings, perversion or impotence" resulted from women's rejection of their biological destiny.⁴⁴ In seeking to become original artists, they turned into a defeminized "third sex":



6 Bruno Paul, “Malweiber,” *Simplicissimus* 6, no. 15 (July 1, 1901): 117: “Sehen Sie, Fräulein, es gibt zwei Arten von Malerinnen: die einen möchten heiraten und die andern haben auch kein Talent!”

dualities plagued the Munich-based Russian artist Marianne Werefkin, who found it necessary to invent a third self, as she noted in her journal in 1905:

I am not cowardly and I keep my word. I am faithful to myself, ferocious to myself and indulgent to others. That is, I, the man. I love the song of love—that is I, the woman. I consciously create for myself illusions and dreams, that is I the artist . . . I am much more a man than a woman. The desire to please and to pity alone makes me a woman. I hear and I take note . . . I am neither man nor woman—I am I.⁴⁸

In Scheffler’s comments, too, we find the common alignment of women’s artistic endeavors with the dilettantish. She could only impersonate male artists’ sensitive creativity. While bearing similarity, her work was also considered dissimilar in disguising “manly art forms.” The notion of *différance*, as espoused by the cultural philosopher Jacques Derrida, well characterizes the movement of signification that welds together difference and deferral, “presence-absence” that typified women practitioners’ relationship to early modernism.⁴⁹

Between 1890 and 1920, the period in which women artists became visible in the public sphere, male critics appeared to lack the experience and vocabulary to assess this phenomenon. Concurrently, official reaction and conservative critical reception viewed the modern art world as an attack on the social body. Here they invoked the ideas of the Hungarian-born physician and amateur art historian Max Nordau as disseminated in his well-known book *Entartung* (Degeneration), which was published in two volumes between 1892 and 1893.⁵⁰ In this text, he employed terminology evolved within the legal and medical disciplines, equating modern stylistic tendencies with criminality and hysteria. When dedicating his book to the Turin-based anthropologist and psychiatrist Cesare Lombroso, Nordau declared that “degenerates are not always criminals, prostitutes, anarchists, and pronounced

If she forces herself to be artistically creative, then she immediately becomes mannish. That is to say: she cripples her sex, sacrifices her harmony and, with that, surrenders out of hand every possibility of being original . . . Therefore, since woman cannot be original, she can only attach herself to men’s art. She is the imitatrix par excellence, the empathizer who sentimentalizes and minimizes manly art forms . . . She is the born dilettante.⁴⁵

Evidently, the language of the new sciences of eugenics and sexology, while increasing an understanding of sexuality and the body, was readily accepted by popular and media culture as a vehicle for stigmatization.⁴⁶ Wilhelmine societal norms set up a binary opposition in which sexual identity could be “performed” only in relation to heterosexuality, hence the considered deviancy of the woman artist’s body as a *Mannweib* or “manwoman.”⁴⁷ No wonder such

lunatics; they are often authors and artists.”⁵¹ Such ideas became common to the rhetoric of both the detractors and supporters of Expressionism. Women artists were a volatile presence in this narrative, one that embraced the implications of modernity and the conflicting challenges of pre-emancipation womanhood.

Expressionism, the Foreign, Modern, and Avant-Garde

Interestingly, the word “Expressionism” had its origins in this shifting ambience between tradition and the modern.⁵² In fact, it was initially applied to a selection of French and not German artists, the term “Expressionisten” being employed in the foreword to the catalog of the twenty-second spring exhibition of the Berlin Secession held in April 1911.⁵³ Apart from Picasso, most of these artists were associated with the circle of Matisse—Braque, Derain, Friesz, Dufy, Marquet, van Dongen, Puy, and Manguin. Given the largely Impressionist leanings of the Secession, the collective term “Expressionisten” was a convenient way of signifying the “newest directions” (viz., Fauvism and early Cubism) in French art. Fundamentally, the word signaled the distinction between the Impressionist recording of external appearances and the Expressionist response to the imperatives of an inner world. By this time, the engendering of Impressionism as feminine and as celebrating sensory experiences was well established in critical discourse.⁵⁴

Many of the women artists we are considering were familiar with modern French art, which they could view in public collections, at secessionist or private dealers’ exhibitions. Indeed, notwithstanding the conservative backlash of Wilhelm II, German museum directors, such as Hugo von Tschudi at the Berlin National Gallery or Gustav Pauli at the Bremen Kunsthalle, avidly acquired works by Cézanne and Van Gogh long before official French culture realized their value. Yet, women artists sought out cosmopolitan experience; travel provided both a release from the strictures of bourgeois society and the experience abroad of avant-garde subcultures and metropolitan life. In Paris, the Académie Julian, founded in 1868, was the first to offer women training comparable to the official École des Beaux-Arts, which did not accept women until 1897.⁵⁵ However,

at the Julian, women were charged much higher fees than their male colleagues; after an initial trial of mixed classes, male and female students were separated. Posthumous publication of the journal of the gifted Ukrainian artist and feminist Marie Bashkirtseff, who began her art studies at the Académie Julian in earnest in 1877 until her untimely death in 1884, offered a precedent for many aspiring women artists.⁵⁶ Next to the expensive Julian, the Académie Colarossi was the most well known, especially for drawing from the nude and the challenges of croquis—short, spontaneous sketches of models, who changed their poses every half hour.⁵⁷

Hence, the private academies in Paris—Colarossi, Julian, and Matisse—attracted many foreign students. As we can see in Arvid Fougstedt’s ink drawing of *Matisse Teaching Scandinavian Artists in His Studio* (fig. 7), Matisse’s praise for Sigrid Hjertén’s work met with much surprise among the predominantly male attendees. Interestingly, Matisse’s concepts of expression, as advanced in his well-known theoretical treatise of 1908 “Notes d’un Peintre” (Notes of a Painter), were publicized by young women artists who attended his school.⁵⁸ In 1909 it was translated into German by the sculptor Marg or Greta Moll for the specialist journal *Kunst und Künstler* (Art and Artists) and the Swedish woman painter Hjertén popularized his ideas in the Stockholm daily newspaper *Svenska Dagbladet* in 1911.⁵⁹ In this treatise Matisse had famously claimed, “I am unable to distinguish between the feeling I have about life and my way of translating it.”⁶⁰ Such concepts of vitalism certainly resonated with both German and Scandinavian artists’ ambitions to achieve an authentic and innovative aesthetic.

However, while the international referents of Expressionism were maintained until 1914, the term accrued specifically German connotations when the aforementioned critic Paul Fechter, while acknowledging its decorative, cosmopolitan associations, invested it with implications of the instinctual, the emotional, and the spiritual—“the metaphysical necessity of the German people.”⁶¹ Drawing heavily on the art historian Wilhelm Worringer’s (1881–1965) professorial thesis, *Formprobleme der Gotik* (Form in Gothic), which was published in 1911, Fechter constructed a genealogy for contemporary artistic identity based on the anticlassical features of the German Gothic past.⁶² Yet an

overemphasis on the nationalistic features of Fechter's text as canonical tends to conceal criticism of its premises. Rosa Schapire (1874–1954), for instance, one of the first women to qualify in the art-historical discipline in Germany, decried its selective methodology and wrote: "It may be that the time is not yet ripe to write this book, and that it is an ominous sign of the hustle and bustle of the new when one seeks already to fix in words a movement that extends across Europe and is barely a decade old."⁶³ Similarly, other leftist art historians and critics offered a nuanced, counterandrocentric and internationalist promotion of Expressionism on the eve of and during the war; the writings of the Marxist Wilhelm Hausenstein (1882–1957) are a case in point.

Although distancing himself from Worringer's psychological taxonomy of style, Hausenstein nonetheless saw the nonnaturalistic art of the Gothic and the Baroque as metaphysical and communal (organic) as opposed to the

Naturalism of the Greco-Roman and Renaissance traditions; he regarded the latter as serving the private pleasure of capitalist-orientated societies (critical). His sociology of style was dependent on a Saint-Simonist characterization of these dual historical epochs and their dialectical succession.⁶⁴ Thereby, in his book *Die Bildende Kunst der Gegenwart* (Visual Art of the Century), the manuscript of which was completed in 1913, Hausenstein supported the abstracting and spiritual directions of Wassily Kandinsky's oeuvre, hailing this form of Expressionism as imminent and leading to a new social order by virtue of its antimaterialism.⁶⁵ While Hausenstein still retained a nineteenth-century art-historical emphasis on national schools, he was firmly internationalist in promoting French and Russian art, and in a catalog essay entitled "Die Neue Kunst," he instructively seized on Werefkin's paintings as symptomatic of the futurity and collective coordinates of Expressionism.⁶⁶ Hence, the methodology adopted in this study works



7 Arvid Fougstedt, *Matisse Teaching Scandinavian Artists in His Studio*, 1910, pen and ink on paper, 49.5 × 30.5cm, Borås Konstmuseum, Borås

outward from the evidence and does not merely attempt to fit women practitioners into preexistent definitions of the word “Expressionism” or narratives of the movement.

The view that women artists led solitary, individual existences, and that their works were created outside these public debates on the direction that contemporary art should assume, is now outdated.⁶⁷ Reading through their journals and correspondence, one ascertains that they did not consider themselves external to the discourses of cultural politics, regional, or national formation. In 1912, Gabriele Münter, for instance, wasn’t immune to deploying anti-Semitic stereotypes when characterizing the gallery dealer Hans Goltz as a *schlimmer Jude* (a petty-minded Jew), even though he was not Jewish.⁶⁸ So normalized were these tropes in the common vernacular that Münter possibly never associated them with inherent racism; indeed, in 1917, while in Scandinavia, she publicly defended the Expressionist Isaac Grünewald from virulent anti-Semitism.⁶⁹ In the case of the Dutch artist Jacoba van Heemskerck, during 1915, with the market for her works residing in Germany, she eschewed French modernism and rigorously embraced what she considered to be “die grosse Kraft von Deutschland” (the great strength of Germany).⁷⁰

As has been well established, detractors of the “foreign” and the “modern” reared their heads in the prewar years as the former Worpswede artist Carl Vinnen (1863–1922) gathered signatures of colleagues in his pamphlet *Ein Protest Deutscher Künstler* (A Protest of German Artists).⁷¹ Here he railed against the acquisition of inferior French works by museum directors and the inflation of the art market, together with the corruptive influence this had on German culture. This attack forced the supporters of early modernism, among them many Expressionist artists, to frame a response.⁷² As we will see, women artists were directly or indirectly involved in this affair—Kollwitz surprisingly signing Vinnen’s *Protest* and, posthumously, Modersohn-Becker’s oeuvre being inscribed within these debates.

These conflicts revealed much about the tensions between city and country, urban and rural, *Zivilisation* and nature that pervaded the cultural criticism of the period. At the same time, they also demonstrated Vinnen’s discontent with the rapid changes that overtook patterns of artistic training, production, and display during the

imperial era, his manifesto legitimizing concurrent anti-Semitic outbursts associating “foreignness” with dealership and urban cosmopolitanism.⁷³ If conservative *Mittelstand* (middle-class) male artists admitted to such insecurities, how much more difficult it must have been for women artists to negotiate a modernizing aesthetic and to secure a niche in the competitive market economy of late imperial Germany.⁷⁴ Yet engage they did in the diverse structures of the art world, seeking professional paths within private as well as independent exhibition venues, participating, too, in exhibition organizations limited to female membership.

The expansion of galleries in Berlin during this period pointed to the rising political and commercial status of the city and catered to the interests of this burgeoning clientele, already familiar with developments in Paris. As will be shown, the dealers Paul Cassirer (1871–1926) and Herwarth Walden (1879–1941) were instrumental in promoting women artists. Walden, for instance, provided exhibition opportunities and media promotion for Münter, Werefkin, Van Heemskerck, and Hjertén through his Sturm (Storm) Art Gallery, which was established in Berlin in 1912, and his publishing of the journal *Der Sturm* (1910–32), featuring reproductions of their original graphics and drawings. Dealership also became the preserve of women, the Swedish-born linguist and musician Nell Roslund (1887–1975), who married Walden in 1912, playing a more important role in networking and encouraging women artists than has hitherto been recognized. In her gallery Neue Kunst Frau Ey (fig. 8), the dealer and collector Johanna Ey (1864–1947) forged a space in the public arena without which male avant-garde activity in Düsseldorf could not have flourished.⁷⁵

Evidently, in line with cultural theory, this inquiry directs attention to the range of “institutions, artifacts, and practices” that made up the symbolic universe of Expressionist avant-garde culture. As the art historian Charles Haxthausen has usefully observed, the term “Expressionism” was neither meant as the name of a “coherent art movement, nor as a consistent aesthetic theory, let alone as an identifiable style, but above all as a theory of the avant-garde.”⁷⁶ Here, Haxthausen uses the term in a broad sense, not merely as an artistic movement but as a social phenomenon. While the term “avant-garde” implies the acceptance of a progressive, modern cultural identity, its meanings



8 Anonymous, *Exterior of Johanna Ey's Gallery "Neue Kunst Frau Ey,"* 1929, Hindenburgwall 11, Düsseldorf, photograph, location unknown

have been inscribed primarily through the male artistic canon. Indeed, the semantic definitions offered by the cultural historian Peter Bürger in his *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, whereby he differentiates chronologically between an aesthetic-orientated avant-garde and that which altered the praxis and institutions of art, exclude consideration of gendered identity.⁷⁷

Given women's lack of political voice and their tenuous role, the feminist literary historian Susan Suleiman considers the historical status of the female practitioner as one of "double marginality," viewed by patriarchal society as incompatible with professional commitment and regarded as peripheral within avant-garde communities.⁷⁸ In her notable publication *Avant-Garde Gambits, 1888–1893: Gender and the Colour of Art History*, the feminist art historian Griselda Pollock further deconstructs the strategies of

canonic modernists.⁷⁹ Drawing in particular on chapter 4 of Sigmund Freud's *Totem and Taboo* (1913), her psychoanalytical methodology points to the oedipal parallels of male artists' reference to, deference of, and subsequent jettisoning of their predecessors so as to reclaim the coveted niche of male avant-gardism.⁸⁰

Keeping these debates about the nature of the avant-garde, its conceptual processes, gendered, and historical exclusions firmly in mind, avant-gardism in this book embraces a broad field of practitioner, patron, and dealer in a mutually reflexive definition of what constituted modern theory and practice.⁸¹ Urbanization and modernity, the concomitant rise of the middle classes and the struggle for emancipation, were guarantors of women's participation as creators, supporters, and consumers of contemporary artistic production. However, when it comes to locating contemporary theoretical models for women's experiences of modernity in the early twentieth century, one is reliant on the familiar binary oppositions that relegate them to the realms of the biologically reproductive rather than the artistically productive. According to this model, the female remains a subjectively unified whole, cyclical, and beyond the frictions of contingent time and space, a quasi-mythic entity.

Interestingly, this gendering of temporality was characterized by the social theorist Georg Simmel, who established many of the tropes of modernity peculiar to the development of urban culture in Germany during this period. In his two essays "Weibliche Kultur" (Female Culture, 1902) and "Das Relative und das Absolute im Geschlechter-Problem" (The Relative and Absolute in the Problem of the Sexes, 1911), he conceptualized a split between objective (male) and subjective (female) culture by means of which women are excluded from direct participation in the objective culture of the metropolis, in "which the male becomes alienated, objectified and ultimately fragmented under the conditions of modern capitalism."⁸²

This theoretical privileging of the male as active in the public milieu (albeit alienating) precludes women from

socialization. Therefore, it is appropriate to consider the theories of a progressive woman social theorist, such as the writer and feminist Lu Märten (1879–1970), in order to gauge more effectively contemporary women’s experiences of modernity. Notwithstanding her humble upbringing in a Berliner Mietskaserne on Potsdamer Straße, Märten was drawn into the milieu of middle-class social and cultural reform. In light of her background, she had a heightened awareness of the physiognomy of the growing metropolis in relation to the politics of class and gender.⁸³

Die Künstlerin (The Woman Artist, 1914)

It is understandable why Lu Märten, in her publication *Die Künstlerin* (The Woman Artist, 1914), negotiated the intellectual terrains of *Wirtschaft* (economics) and *Wissenschaft* (science) in seeking to advance the professional status of women artists in society.⁸⁴ Here she anchors the woman firmly in *Gesellschaft* (society), and while *Die Künstlerin* is utopian in aspiration, Märten retrieves the persona of the woman artist from cyclical, temporal rhythms by interposing the values of the transitory, locating women’s labor within metropolitan and technological experience. Thereby, she argues forcefully for women’s access to academies and similar official institutions. Not that one should overestimate the importance of academic tendencies to artistic development, she adds, but exclusion from such training limited women’s access to the mechanisms of economic and social engagement.⁸⁵

At the core of Märten’s intervention, however, lies her theorization of why “the whole of women’s education . . . still does not count as professional training as for a man.”⁸⁶ This was due to the ideological assessment of the *Qualitätsarbeit* (valued work) according to the criteria of the *alte Männerkultur* (long-established men’s culture):

At the same time it was the devaluation of work through the machine which—as we mentioned at the beginning—first brought women’s work onto the scene—simply as the cheapest and most submissive workforce, as the most willing “hands.” This economic disqualification shrouded itself in mystery as a scientific and ethical judgement on women’s work as “naturally inferior.” This mystification was

ascribed to women’s achievement of every kind and every nature. The woman’s enslavement was therefore preserved, the revolutionizing of her social being, her economic freedom compared to men’s work—had to be hampered and held up. So, from the first, all women’s work steps into the economic struggle with the stigma of inferiority.⁸⁷

As relayed in the above passage, Märten subjected the metaphor of the “woman artist” as “worker” to rigorous scientific and economic scrutiny. Only socialization in an economic sense could secure emancipation from the private sphere and the structures of male hegemony. Echoing Simmel’s text *Über Soziale Differenzierung* (On Social Differentiation, 1890), which focused on the interactions and interrelations of modern society, Märten foresaw the need for the specialization and differentiation of women’s work, a dynamic initiated by technology.⁸⁸

Gesellschaft (society)—“a modernity that offered no exit from a transitory existence”⁸⁹—would secure women’s autonomy. Indeed, particularly when compared to the 1920s, Märten’s proposed sociological models for the future—one country, one history, one people, one class—lacked the wholeness of a new *Gemeinschaft* (community).⁹⁰ Her utopian notions of *Weiblichkeit* (femaleness) and *Mütterlichkeit* (the maternal), while postulated as ideal socialized concepts, were predicated not on outdated historical and scientific legacies of women’s essential nature but on psychological and intellectual experiences that were constantly in process:

So they [women artists] hurry, so they design for the future; things for tomorrow and beyond their time—but not the timeless and eternal—it is in this way that they hurry ahead of society . . . because only their activity and thought, their action and their being is recognizable. And thus every outstanding mind is after all a social, physical creature.⁹¹

What more appropriate definition of women avant-gardists can we find, one defined by their thoughts and actions—the socialized body—and not by hidebound, essentialist concepts of their gender?

Ultimately, Märten proclaims, socialization has its

impact on the traditional forms of women's erotic life—family and marriage—and gives rise to new androgynous configurations of the female as well as the male artist.⁹² Within a classless society, there was neither need to disparage dilettantism nor to speculate “that women have among them still no Goethe and no Beethoven.”⁹³ Märten argued that, with the locus of the aesthetic residing in the quality of production, distinctions between high and low, the fine, applied, and industrial arts were superfluous. Interestingly, this quotation has resonances with the institutional and societal barriers that caused Linda Nochlin, fifty-seven years hence, to raise the question, “Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?”⁹⁴ Nochlin's interventions in the art-historical discipline have helped us to expose how significant first-wave feminist commentators were to declaring Modersohn-Becker and Kollwitz “great women artists” and to offer reasons why this recognition only came to the fore so much later in the twentieth century.

Hence, in upholding Märten's sociological model, this study aligns itself with tendencies in German historiography that question the traditional relegation of women to the private and domestic sphere, and the harnessing of maternalism to intrinsically conservative ideology.⁹⁵ Instead, it seeks to uncover the variety of ways in which women engaged meaningfully in public life “despite legal and ideological restraints.”⁹⁶ Thereby, we encounter several hallmarks of the “public sphere,” as laid out by the cultural theorist Jürgen Habermas in his book *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* (The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere), published in 1962.⁹⁷ As the historian Geoff Eley has observed, Habermas was writing as “a legatee of the Frankfurt School, who resumed their critique of mass culture at the height of the Christian Democratic state and the post-war boom and at a low ebb of socialist and democratic prospects.”⁹⁸ Hence the book's motivating problematic, in which Habermas perceived a “degeneration” of democratic principles in the Adenauer era, was critiqued through the past—the Enlightenment as the founding moment of progressive modernity.

Notwithstanding the fact that Habermas's usage of the classical liberal model was limited to the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, in early twentieth-century administering and promotion of modern art, we can detect features of what he termed the “democratic bourgeois

public sphere.” Here I will not attempt to expand on the controversies generated by Habermas's text in the intervening years. Suffice it to say that feminist commentators have argued constructively that the gender-blindness of Habermas's model needs to be overcome.⁹⁹ Indeed, in his essay “Further Reflections on the Public Sphere” (1992), Habermas, who is loath to revise the standard text, acknowledged that structural transformation of the political public sphere proceeded without affecting the patriarchal character of society as a whole.¹⁰⁰

But we need not credit this observation solely to him since the German Jewish Expressionist writer, poet, and critic Margarete Susman (1872–1966) wrote eloquently regarding women's position in surveying the imperial period, through the November Revolution (1918), to the rise of Nazism. In her essay, “Wandlungen der Frau” (Transformations of Woman, 1933), she traced the journey of the women's movement as a competition with man for his world.¹⁰¹ But, then, with revolution and emancipation, “when almost overnight the doors to this longed-for world were opened, it entered into the most catastrophic collapse. It became clear: Man no longer had a world to offer woman; all his orders and laws had disintegrated.”¹⁰² Commenting on the existential loneliness of the new, autonomous, self-confident woman with great dreams in her heart, Susman concluded: “Upon awakening from a dream as long as European history, woman stands freezing in the emptiness.” Acknowledging these ongoing challenges to self-realization, via the vehicle of the notion of the public sphere, chapters of this book examine how we can locate sites where the trafficking of ideas among women provided a tool for imagining and transforming civil society into the political.

Expressionist Avant-Garde and the Public Sphere

The marketing of Expressionism, while being a significant factor in informing a range of supporters, was only one of several conditions that led to an upsurge in the collecting of contemporary art. As the historian David Blackbourn sets out in his introduction to the anthology *The German Bourgeoisie*, the number of entrepreneurs and businessmen rapidly expanded as industrialization took hold in

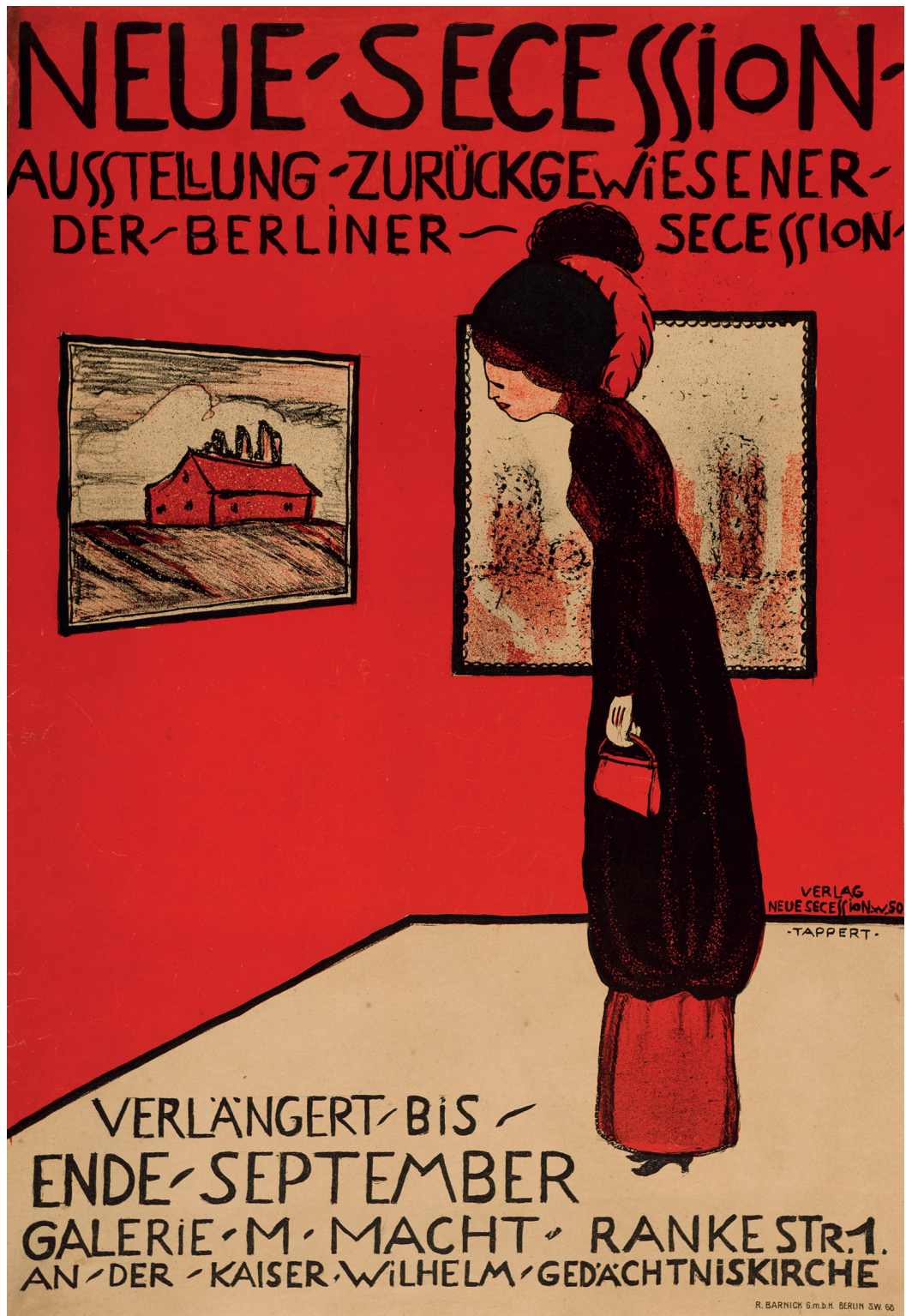


9 Adolf Oberländer, "The Housewife at the Art Exhibition," *Fliegende Blätter* 117, no. 2977 (1902): 79, Heidelberg University Library

the latter part of the nineteenth century.¹⁰³ He also reveals that the *Bildungsbürgertum*, affluent and educated middle classes (civil servants and university-trained professionals), shared interests in the realms of cultural and social identity. Not included in his account, however, is the phenomenon of bourgeois women's increasing emergence into modern public life and their role as consumers. But here we are not referring to the notional female consumer whose taste was so unfairly disparaged as promoting bad industry and mass production.¹⁰⁴

Whereas Adolf Oberländer's caricature *The Housewife at the Art Exhibition* (fig. 9), illustrated in *Fliegende Blätter*

in 1902, portrays the stereotypical housewife as disinterested in the modern scribbles in the paintings, Georg Tappert's *Poster for the Extension of the First Exhibition of the Neue Secession* (fig. 10) reveals a newfound respect for the woman viewer. Held in 1910 at the privately owned gallery of Maximilian Macht in Berlin, this important exhibition featured an installation of Brücke works. Apparently, these were hung together on bright red walls in a single room, repeatedly referred to as the *Schreckenskammer* (chamber of horrors) in critical reception.¹⁰⁵ The exhibit also puts on display the most modern methods of marketing. The paintings are simply framed, well spaced against a neutral background, allowing for close and intimate scrutiny more appropriate to semiprivate viewing by a liberal middle-class elite than to a public salon. Just as intriguing is the motif of the single fashionable woman who, though portrayed as



10 Georg Tappert, *Poster for the Extension of the First Exhibition of the Neue Secession*, 1910, color lithograph, 70 × 47.5 cm, Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, Hamburg

both spectator and spectacle, vying with the paintings for our attention, nonetheless appears as an empathetic viewer and as thoroughly absorbed in this process. In this poster she is recognized as a serious and cultivated arbiter of discriminating taste for contemporary avant-garde art.

As participants in debates that called for cultural reform, women patrons therefore constituted a strong social entity in developing direct relationships with artists. This was particularly apparent in regional cities, such as Hamburg, where efforts were made to forge modern identity by mobilizing local institutions, traditions, and culture. Clearly, as Jennifer Jenkins has noted, this view from the province “destabilizes the view at the center . . . by challenging its national focus with the differences and peculiarities of regional perspectives.”¹⁰⁶

Direct contact with contemporary artists was accompanied by the construction of the modern patron and collector, which was informed by the expanding function of the public museum and its societies, by feminist and women’s cultural groups, in addition to the role played by “print-capitalism” in the age of modernity. Benedict Anderson has claimed in his account of nation formation that this latter factor “made it possible for rapidly growing numbers of people to think about themselves, and to relate to others, in profoundly new ways” and was critical to the search “for a new way of linking fraternity, power, and time meaningfully together.”¹⁰⁷ Yet Anthony D. Smith, in his book *Nationalism and Modernism*, argues that Anderson’s claims for the “printed word” neglects other portrayals of nation that stirred people into action, which were oral, audial, and visual rather than literary.¹⁰⁸ Following Smith’s cue, it is evident that women’s socialization speedily increased via discursive networks as well as through cultural institutions, music, and art. The emergence of women critics, such as Märten and Anna Plehn (1859–1918), and appearance of exhibition reviews in feminist journals suggests that there was an entire parallel discourse of critical reception intended for a female audience. This invention of new traditions of *Frauenkultur* (women’s culture) beyond the framework of the proverbial domestic salon was an indicator of women’s expanding public sphere.

Interestingly, esoteric movements also played a role in this process. The cofounding of the Theosophical Society in New York in 1875 under the leadership of Helena

P. Blavatsky (1831–91) and Henry Steel Olcott (1832–1907) spread its message of “divine wisdom.” Based on an amalgam of Western occult practices and Eastern (Hindu and Buddhist) belief systems, Theosophy promoted notions of universal brotherhood, which were anchored in a rejection of Darwinian accounts of natural evolution. Instead, as conveyed in Blavatsky’s major opus *The Secret Doctrine* (1888), evolution was considered a cosmogenic force directed toward a metaphysical rather than an earthly explanation of the universe. Such ideas signified not only the appeal of a unifying belief at a time of increasing dissatisfaction with officially recognized religions, but also responded to a gendered sociopolitical imperative; the relationship between alternative or esoteric spirituality and feminism offers an expanded field of inquiry.

In 1907 Annie Besant (1847–1933), a prominent British socialist, theosophist, and women’s rights activist, became president of the Theosophical Society, whose headquarters were in Adyar in India. However, as the historian of religion Joy Dixon cautions, the gendering of spiritual experience was a heavily contested field, “the response more complicated, and the women to whom Theosophy appealed more diverse than a straightforward reading of the feminization model would allow.”¹⁰⁹ Male theosophists were troubled and considered the implications of feminization, with its links to feminism, as “virility among women.”¹¹⁰

In early modernism, too, the reception of Theosophy was nuanced in its appeal to a growing audience of creative women in Britain, Northern Europe, and Scandinavia. The abstractionist Hilma af Klint (1862–1944) became a member of the Swedish Theosophical Lodge shortly after its founding in Stockholm in early 1889.¹¹¹ She chose to remain unmarried, preferring instead to be a spiritual medium and inspirational force among a group of women. Here we can speak of an avant-garde subculture directed toward a female audience—one dominated by *kvinnokultur* (women’s culture) and yet excluded from the annals of modernist discourse. Indeed, it was only in 1986 that af Klint’s oeuvre became available to an exhibition-viewing public.¹¹² For the purposes of this study, however, the focus is on women practitioners who engaged in the world of Expressionist avant-garde culture, exhibitions, dealership, and promotion. Nevertheless, what they shared with

Hilma af Klint was an eventual shift from a theosophical to an anthroposophical outlook. This came about in the German-speaking sections of the movement under the aegis of the Austrian-born philosopher, social reformer, and esoteric Rudolf Steiner (1861–1925).

Between 1888 and 1897, Steiner worked in the Goethe Archive in Weimar, where he edited Goethe's scientific writings. During this period, he held progressive ideas on women's liberation and promoted a Nietzschean form of vitalism and individuality in his publication *Die Philosophie der Freiheit* (The Philosophy of Freedom, 1894). As he stated: "To all who fear an upheaval of our social structure through accepting women as individuals and not as females, we must reply that a social structure in which the status of one half of humanity is unworthy of a human being is itself in great need of improvement."¹¹³ Hence, it is understandable why talented women and feminists were drawn to Steiner's writings. He maintained close correspondence with Rosa Mayreder (1858–1938), a prominent figure in the Allgemeiner Österreichischer Frauenverein (General Austrian Women's Association), which was founded in 1902. In 1897, after his move to Berlin, he secured contacts with bohemian literary and theosophical circles as well as meeting up with the Russian-born actress and his future second wife Marie von Sivers (1867–1948).

Although Steiner became general secretary of the Theosophical Society in Berlin, and Annie Besant appointed him leader of the Esoteric School in 1904, his views differed from the theosophist emphasis on Eastern religions. Instead, Steiner propounded a mystic strain of Christianity (Rosicrucianism), which was mediated through the lens of Goethe's epistemological theories. Critical to this interpretation was the notion of personal agency and creativity in conceiving of "human wisdom" as a spiritual science.¹¹⁴ Importantly, Steiner admired Sivers's declamatory skills, and women took a prominent role in the performance of his mystery plays (1910–13).¹¹⁵ Yet, clearly, women's so-called natural skills remained subservient to Steiner's autocratic voice in this relationship. In 1913, following Adyar's promotion of the eighteen-year-old Jiddu Krishnamurti as a World Teacher, Steiner split with the theosophists and founded the Anthroposophical Society in Munich. As will be shown, in addition to Münter in

Munich and Sweden, Van Heemskerck and her patron Marie Tak van Poortvliet in The Hague were familiar with Steiner's ideas, which gathered momentum during the First World War with the move of the headquarters to Dornach in Switzerland.

However emancipated women were as producers, collectors, and patrons of modern art, their status was transitional in sexual politics. While feminist-inspired endeavors had been at an intense pitch for roughly a quarter of a century—in 1865 Louise Otto-Peters founded the Allgemeiner Deutscher Frauenverein (General German Women's Association)—political emancipation was achieved only in 1919. This had a great deal to do with the nature of the major organizational platform of bourgeois women, the Bund Deutscher Frauenvereine (Alliance of German Women's Associations, BDF). Founded in 1894, the BDF took on a new lease on life when Marie Stritt (1856–1928) established a clearly defined radical stance and headed the group from 1899 onward.¹¹⁶ In 1908, an Imperial Law of Association finally permitted women's participation in politics. But Gertrud Bäumer's (1873–1954) ousting of Stritt in 1910 led to the abandonment of the emancipative ideal by underscoring the differences of female character, contrasting them with the male-dominated structures of industrial society. Particularly in the period leading up to and through the First World War, they stressed the need for "motherly" policies. While maternalism was conceived as a cultural rather than political mission, as has been argued, "social motherhood" as a metaphor for a specifically female approach to social reform proved useful and flexible in gaining a niche in the developing bureaucracy of the welfare state.¹¹⁷ The enthusiasm of some German feminists for eugenic theory in the early twentieth century was used on the whole to argue not for biological determinism but for women's reproductive self-determination, particularly in the formation of the Bund für Mutterschutz und Sexualreform (Union for the Protection of Mothers and Sexual Reform), a league for the protection of single mothers that was founded by Helene Stöcker (1869–1943) in Leipzig in 1905.¹¹⁸ So it was left to other organizations, such as the Deutscher Reichsverband für Frauenstimmrecht (German Imperial Suffrage Union), founded in 1902, to agitate for, but not achieve, democratization until the early Weimar period.

While few of the women artists considered in this book, apart from Kollwitz, engaged directly with the feminist movement, many of the women patrons and collectors of Expressionism had links with the organizations mentioned above. German Jewish women were prominent among their ranks, the acculturation of middle-class Jewish women trailing behind that of their male counterparts, who received full political and civic rights in Germany in 1871.¹¹⁹ As has been observed, more leisure time offered Jewish women the chance to mold their families to the *Bildung* (education and cultivation) and *Besitz* (new aspirations to wealth and display) of the German bourgeoisie.¹²⁰ By 1911, Jewish women made up more than 10 percent of women students at Prussian universities, and they participated in both the leadership and rank and file of the German women's movement.¹²¹ However, there were also nuances in women patrons' political affiliations: the art historian and critic Schapire was associated with socialist politics, whereas Ida Dehmel (1870–1942), a tireless promoter of the vote for women, found a niche within national liberalism. As we will see, however, there was no magical “German Jewish” symbiosis to counteract the forces of anti-Semitism, and within the early decades of the twentieth century, the women's movement was attacked as “anti-German, full of foreign poisonous spirit . . . with few exceptions, being non-German oriental women.”¹²²

The forthcoming chapters, though loosely chronological, span the late Wilhelmine and early Weimar period from around 1890 to 1924. In line with the frameworks outlined above, these are issue-driven, focusing on particular themes that are synchronous rather than discrete. The content examines distinctions between major art centers, such as Berlin and Munich, and regional identity that informed debates on cultural reform. The period of the First World War looms prominently, not only in terms of developments in Expressionist theory but also in light of the geopolitical climate of the period. Berlin remained an important art center, where women artists from the neutral countries Holland and Sweden found an outlet. Yet, in economic terms, across the classes, women's contribution to agriculture, as much as to munitions, was critical to the war effort.¹²³ The major thrust of this study is to uncover the relevance of their aspirations for equality, wittingly

or unwittingly, to the shaping of Expressionist avant-garde culture.

Accordingly, the sequence of chapters draws on the explanatory potential of women artists' diaries, journals, writings, and correspondence, either archival or published retrospectively. At the outset, I cast the more familiar figures (Modersohn-Becker, Kollwitz, and Münter) in a new light before introducing less-recognized individuals (such as Werefkin, Hjertén, Van Heemskerck, Nell Walden, and the Dutch patron Marie Tak van Poortvliet) into a richer context of exchanges, setbacks, and achievements than heretofore acknowledged. In line with art historian Isabel Wünsche's mapping of patterns of Expressionist identity beyond Germany's borders, the inquiry extends to Scandinavia and the Netherlands to reveal networks of international connection between women in this milieu.¹²⁴ Further interrogation of women's role as patrons, collectors, and dealers within the complex theme of gendered spectatorship serves to underscore their socialization.

Chapter 2, entitled “The Canonizing of Paula Modersohn-Becker: Embodying the Subject and the Feminization of Expressionism” sets the artist against a configuration of post-Bismarckian politics. Modersohn-Becker's upbringing as a *höhere Tochter* invested her with a firm sense of German nationhood, albeit more conservative than expected. However, her commitment to becoming a progressive artist shone through her early training in the private school of the Berliner Künstlerinnenverein and marginalized practice in the Worpswede colony. Via reference to her experiences in Paris, the chapter follows Modersohn-Becker's transition from regionalism to early modernism and the embodiment of subjective agency in her final paintings.

I trace the positive reception of Modersohn-Becker's works and writings following her death in 1907. Notwithstanding the Worpsweden Vinnen's protest against dealers, museum directors, and art critics in promoting French art and neglecting national interests, her oeuvre became prized in both public and private collections. Print capitalism was crucial to the forging of women artists' reputations in the public domain, and the Bremen art historian Sophie Gallwitz (1873–1948) was instrumental in securing the prewar publication of selections of Modersohn-Becker's journals. In exploring the posthumous inscription of the

artist within the critical framework of Expressionism, the findings show how her legacies became entwined with the mid-war intuitionist development in the historiography.

To illuminate this process, I cite theoretical coordinates in journal reviews, as well as in Hermann Bahr's publication of 1916, *Expressionismus*.¹²⁵ Yet I argue that the "feminization of Expressionism" should not be interpreted merely in accordance with the discourses of the woman/nature paradigm, but in line with the emancipative ideal, as espoused by Lu Märten. In view of the canonic status of Modersohn-Becker, disseminated knowledge of her ambitious struggle for independence in art and life offered a potent model for women practitioners who sought female lineage within the art-historical trajectory of Expressionism.

In Chapter 3, "Käthe Kollwitz, the Expressionist Milieu, and the Making of Her Career," I explore Kollwitz's complex relationship to the movement. Her formation spanned the late years of the empire, the First World War, and emancipation at the outset of the Weimar era. As witness to the inception and flourishing of Expressionism during this period, Kollwitz's active engagement in the art world makes for an instructive comparison with Modersohn-Becker. I highlight Kollwitz's origins in Königsberg, the importance of the *Freie Gemeinde* (Free Congregation) to her upbringing, and her familial connections to socialist politics. During the 1880s, her training in the Künstlerinnenverein in Munich provides the opportunity to introduce the city as a major art center that vied with Berlin for excellence. The Bavarian capital was the locus not only of her encounter with feminism but also of her experimentation with the intaglio medium. Thereafter, from the outset of her professional life in Berlin and affiliation with the Secession, Kollwitz was uncompromising in seizing on graphic production as a vehicle for both technical innovation and sociopolitical commentary.

From etching through to lithography, she experimented with the hybridity of the surfaces, which arose from the combination of the graphic medium with textured imprints and draftsmanship. While she distanced herself from the Expressionists, the study shows how her works communicated a forceful take on Wilhelm Dilthey's concept of *Erlebnis* and Freudian psychoanalytical theory. Of consideration, too, is the value of gestural drawing in

Kollwitz's wider oeuvre and her turn to sculpture, inspired by Rodin's use of the figure in motion and the function of the part object.

The nub of this chapter revolves around institutional support and critical reception of Kollwitz, in particular through the eyes of the women reviewers Märten and Anna Plehn. Kollwitz was astute at promoting her oeuvre in relation to dealership and patronage, and this held implications for her honorific retrospective—celebrating her fiftieth birthday—in 1917. I bring to the fore Kollwitz's previously unpublished correspondence with patrons, which shows her preference for her drawings over and above her etchings. Indeed, she offered photographs of the former as a substitute for the original. Rosalind Krauss's deconstruction of both originality and modernism in Rodin's studio workshop proves helpful when questioning Kollwitz's attitudes to authenticity, reproducibility, and the function of the "potential multiple."¹²⁶

In the wake of the November Revolution in 1918, Kollwitz undersigned the first manifesto of the Arbeitsrat für Kunst (Working Council for Art), which was drawn up by Bruno Taut. Official recognition of her talents came with enfranchisement in January 1919; at the age of fifty-three, she was the first woman to be nominated to the Prussian Academy of Fine Arts. Deeply imbricated in the milieu of antiwar pacifism, her efforts to bridge the gap between collective and subjective memory found vital form in the preeminently Expressionist medium of the woodcut, her portfolio *Krieg* (1922) commemorating, as well, the loss of her son Peter in the First World War. Gestalt psychologist Max Wertheimer characterized his viewing experience of Kollwitz's retrospective exhibition as one of "being there," as an intuited moment in which he could access the primordial maternal presence.¹²⁷ In a similar outcome to the chapter on Modersohn-Becker, the overall evidence points to Kollwitz as integral to a mid-war feminization of Expressionist theory and its discursive structures.

The book then turns to the prominence of women artists in Munich-based avant-gardism, their transcultural links with developments in Paris allowing insight into their approaches. In the 1890s, as the birthplace of the secessionist movement, Munich offered a progressive milieu with improved and purpose-built exhibiting spaces. Russian nationals were particularly attracted to Schwabing,

home to the academy and university, and they were crucial to the founding of the international exhibiting groups the NKVM (1909–12) and the Blaue Reiter (1912–14). Chapter 4, “Female Avant-Garde Identity and Creativity in the Blaue Reiter: The Possibility of a ‘Blaue Reiterreiterin’” acknowledges the relevance of the intimate, creative partnerships of Marianne Werefkin and Alexej Jawlensky and Gabriele Münter and Wassily Kandinsky. However, its main aim is to tease out the dynamic relationship between Werefkin and Münter, their different national and cultural origins and paths toward Expressionism.

The tasks are twofold in considering the status of female identity in male-controlled vanguard groups on the one hand and, on the other, their creativity in light of the strategies outlined in Pollock’s account of avant-garde gambits.¹²⁸ With the benefit of the Expressionist poet Else Lasker-Schüler’s (1869–1945) naming of Werefkin as a “Blaue Reiterreiterin” (Blue Rider/Woman Rider), indicative of a perceived fluidity of gendered authorship, the chapter noticeably revises the well-worn historiography of the movement.¹²⁹ Instead, it explores the importance of Werefkin’s early training under the painter Ilya Repin in St. Petersburg and centrality to the Russian émigré community in Munich.

Familiar with both Russian and French symbolism, Werefkin favored the aesthetic theories of the Pont-Aven school, and when she resumed painting in 1906, she adopted a mixed medium with a vivid palette and radical stylization. Symptomatic of the avant-garde strategies outlined by Pollock, that of *reference* and *deference* to contemporary tendencies, Werefkin’s enigmatic figural landscapes *differenced* the genre in her bid for an expressive, modern art. Twelve years younger than Werefkin, Münter was born in Berlin and raised in Herford. She received training in draftsmanship in Düsseldorf and the chapter follows her travels in North America and the implications of her photographic practice, as both medium and memento, to her artistic formation.

In Munich and travels abroad, Münter’s partnership with Kandinsky spurred her easel painting and interest in graphic production, their teaming up with Werefkin and Jawlensky in Murnau, between 1909 and 1912, highlighting the transcultural exchange at work in this social metagroup. Benefiting from the dual inspiration of folk art

and Paris-inspired Synthetism, Münter’s bold, painterly landscapes match the avant-garde credentials, as outlined by Pollock. I compare Münter’s and Werefkin’s works, particularly in their handling of portraits of the same model in Murnau, which allude to tropes of travel—*scènes et types*—found in commercial photographs and guidebooks in the period of empire. They held shared concerns for city/country themes, issues of which, as elucidated in chapter 2 on Modersohn-Becker, were fiercely debated in the cultural politics of the period.

In a discussion of self-portraiture and portraits of each other, I draw attention to the creative energy and rivalry between Werefkin and Münter, characteristics of which are usually reserved for male avant-garde practice. Münter’s formative role in the breakaway group of the Blaue Reiter is assessed in light of her still life arrangements of religious folk-art objects. I argue that Münter, as much as Kandinsky, was taken with the theosophical ideas of Rudolf Steiner but toward different ends. Instructively, neither Münter nor Werefkin’s works conform to paradigms of autonomy and spiritual abstraction, and they retained immense respect for painterly figuration throughout their careers.

Involvement with Kandinsky and the Blaue Reiter led to Münter’s introduction to the Berlin-based dealer Herwarth Walden. The fascinating trail of their correspondence reveals how important his and Nell Walden’s networking were to the artist’s viability in the public sphere. They were also Werefkin’s dealers, and previously unpublished correspondence with the Waldens illuminates the circumstances of the artist’s return to Lithuania in November 1913, and subsequent enforced emigration from Germany to Switzerland on August 3, 1914. More favorably received in critical reviews and, indeed, venerated by other members of the Blaue Reiter community, Werefkin’s legacy as a Blaue Reiterreiterin has superseded Münter’s restless search for artistic integrity within the group. However, this chapter restores her positionality and revises the ideal of male-bonding containment as found in the literature.

Chapter 5, “Europeanism and Neutrality as Active Intervention: Gabriele Münter, *Sturm-künstlerin*, and Swedish Expressionism (1915–20)” commences with an introduction to the indispensable role played by the Walden

couple in promoting Expressionism and women artists during the war. Due to Herwarth's negotiations with the German Foreign Office, he was permitted to export and import works to and from the neutral countries of Sweden, Holland, Denmark, and Switzerland as a form of progressive cultural propaganda. Nell's translations of German newspaper cuttings for a Swedish audience, as well as her own journalism and contacts, provided the context in which Münter went into voluntary exile in Scandinavia. Given the geopolitics at the time, it was inevitable that the artist was drawn into debates regarding internationalism and nationalism, culture and politics.

While Münter's intention was to meet up with Kandinsky in neutral territory, the study aims to uncover her agency and development beyond their partnership and brief reunion for the final time in early 1916. To this effect, I deploy Märten's contentions regarding the socialization of the woman artist as giving rise to new configurations of womanhood, entailing the embodiment and psychology of women's experience. Due to Münter's émigré identity and the expansion of her universe in a more democratic public sphere, it becomes clear that the Stockholm period represented an emancipatory phase in her life and art. Consideration of her interaction with the Swedish Expressionists in general and Sigrid Hjertén in particular, who studied in Paris prior to 1914, raises compelling issues of the cultural politics in neutral Scandinavia.

Bearing in mind the coordinates of Walden's enterprise, the dealer was responsible for selecting works for Münter's solo exhibition, which was held at Gummesson's Gallery in Stockholm in 1916. Since these paintings all dated from the pre-1914 period, it is understandable why her oeuvre was categorized in national terms. Moreover, Kandinsky's essay "Om Konstnären" (On the Artist), which was translated into Swedish for the catalog, defined Münter's creativity in relation to the finest traditions of authentic German art: folk art, poetry, and music. Yet, as in chapter 4, the evidence points to her strategic interplay with avant-garde theory and practice. Issues of figuration and abstraction were seriously debated in the enlightened cultural milieu in Stockholm, in particular in the circle of the psychiatrist Poul Bjerre. I contend that Münter was responsive to these discourses, as well as to Bjerre's ideas on the threat to Europeanism during imperial warfare.

Indeed, examples of his publications can be found in her former library.

I assess Münter's move beyond Kandinsky in relation to an installation that she shared with Hjertén and Malin Gyllenstierna at the Liljevalchs Konsthall in Stockholm in January 1917. Organized jointly by the Swedish Women Artists' Association and the Association of Austrian Women Artists, this extraordinary exhibition demonstrates that international modernism found a niche within the mobilizing forces of women artists' initiatives in pre-emancipation Sweden. Münter became adept at forging these more informal, transnational partnerships, as in the exhibition she shared with the Swedish Cubist Georg Pauli in the New Art Gallery in May 1917. At this venue, Münter's paintings gave powerful testimony to her involvement with the images, contemplative moods, cropped hairstyles, and fashionable dress of early twentieth-century mature womanhood.

While there is little biographic detail regarding the model—the Jewish woman Gertude Holz—for the works *Sinnende* (Reflection), *Zukunft* (Future), and *Krank* (Illness), we are aware that she was a much admired and close friend of Münter's during 1917. Reference to the archivally held sketches and accompanying notes make it possible to follow the evolution of the compositions as well as verify Münter's preoccupation with notions of temporality. With the aid of previously unpublished material from her sketchbooks of this period, I reveal her interest in Steiner's anthroposophist ideas, as delivered in his four lectures *Human and Cosmic Thought* in 1914.¹³⁰ She transcribed a paragraph from the fourth lecture in which Steiner proclaimed the boundlessness of individual thought, which partook of a greater cosmic process. Münter's strongly feminized embodiment of introspection, meditation, and anticipation in this series of paintings was matched by a formal language that advanced all aspects of the canvas into a space-defying metaphysics.

That Münter concurrently requested a Sturm photograph of herself gives credence to Märten's utopian aspirations for the modern *Künstlerin* (woman artist), those based on psychological and intellectual experiences of the socialized body. I argue that, in common with Bjerre's activist promotion of Europeanism during wartime, Münter predisposed herself toward French-inspired Expressionism,

and this continued after her move to Copenhagen in December 1917. As an expatriate in neutral Scandinavia, she could give free rein to her antiwar sentiments and was able to question the traditional values of national belonging and gender identity. Thereby, her works of this period bring forth not only nuances to our understanding of the transnational and transcultural boundaries of Expressionism but also insight into the strength of her unique intervention and commitment to expressive figuration.

If Münter's relationship with Herwarth and Nell Walden secured a modicum of professional identity in the turmoil of mid-war geopolitics, then it was a significant and career-making move for Van Heemskerck. In 1914, Walden became her exclusive agent, and in chapter 6, "The Gender and Geopolitics of Neutrality: Jacoba van Heemskerck, the *Sturm* Circle, and Spiritual Abstraction (1913–23)," I account for the intriguing circumstances in which the artist *differenced* key tenets of German Expressionism. Unlike Münter, who was drawn to Europeanism and pacifism during the war, Van Heemskerck supported the German offensive and assisted Walden's cultural propaganda by translating German press cuttings into Dutch. From her extensive correspondence with the dealers, one gains an understanding not only of the conditions of Dutch neutrality in relation to the Triple Entente but also of Holland's economic ties to Germany and the structures of the art market during the war. As I relay, it was during these years that Van Heemskerck's lifelong companion and patron, Marie Tak van Poortvliet, added many Expressionist works to her valuable collection of the European avant-garde.

Specializing in landscape and the marine genres, Van Heemskerck looked to Paris and the Cubism of Le Fauconnier on the one hand and, on the other, was equally taken with Mondrian's Domburg paintings. However, the axis between Berlin and The Hague intensified after Van Heemskerck exhibited at the Herbstsalon in 1913. She was drawn to Kandinsky's theories on the spiritual in art and the dematerialization of form in his apocalyptic landscapes. Her oeuvre underwent stylistic variation as she experimented with painterly abstraction and the severity of architectonic-bound seascape compositions. Dissemination of her original prints in the pages of *Der Sturm* alerted broader constituencies to her works and she was extolled

in the interdisciplinary circles of the *Sturm*, in particular by the architectural historian Adolf Behne (1885–1948).

Nell Walden's role in administering the *Sturm* receives prominence in this chapter. Through her interaction with Van Heemskerck, we learn of her importance as a dealer and collector in her own right. Moreover, her creative output was aligned with the Expressionist concept of the *Doppelbegabung* (double talent) in exploring the viscosity of *Wortkunst* poetry and the evocative grammar of pictorial abstraction. In 1916, Walden made her debut as a painter in the *Sturm* exhibition *Expressionisten Kubisten*, which was held at Herman d'Audretsch's gallery in The Hague and included works by Münter, Hjerdtén, and Van Heemskerck.

I consider Van Heemskerck's subversion of the Dutch rural landscape as a "picturesque" genre in light of art historian Jane Beckett's writing about Dutch male avant-gardists' mid-war efforts to cleanse and purify rural landscape through geometry, making it safe for urban eyes.¹³¹ In a similar time span to Mondrian, Van Heemskerck's spiritual and utopian mission was generated in various esoteric circles: via membership of Masonic lodges in Amsterdam and The Hague, the Theosophical Society in The Hague, and Steiner's breakaway Anthroposophical Society in Dornach. From Tak van Poortvliet's essays, we gain insight into Van Heemskerck's favoring of the emotional and spiritual coordinates of geometric and curvilinear formal elements, which reinforce intuitionist theories over and above rationalist and masculine schema. Intriguingly, Van Heemskerck's spiritual abstraction offered a nonmechanistic apotheosis of spirit over matter, which appealed to the *Sturm* circle.

The most compelling outcome of this transcultural exchange arose from Van Heemskerck's involvement with glass painting and her adoption of the art and life project of the Expressionist *Gesamtkunstwerk*. Already in 1914, in her insightful communications with Walden, she revealed her familiarity with Bruno Taut's *Glashaus* in Cologne and Paul Scheerbaart's treatise *Glasarchitektur*, which was published by *Der Sturm*. Her project matured during 1918, but by then Van Heemskerck had devised utopian ideals of collaborating with architects in evolving a vital culture into a new environment, what Behne called an *Einheitskunstwerk*, a unified artwork rather than an additive synthesis of the arts.¹³²

In 1920, her partnership with the Dutch architect Jan Buijs for the Villa Wulffraat in Wassenaar demonstrates her concern for the role of architecture in coordinating the stained-glass windows, color scheme, and floor coverings. Within the valences of postwar Expressionism, Van Heemskerck was versatile in invigorating the discourses on spiritual abstraction in Germany, and her preoccupation with glass painting steered her toward the futurity of architecture's spiritual potential. But it was Tak van Poortvliet, as significant other, who financed, sustained, and articulated the feminist implications of Van Heemskerck's engagement with the public sphere. The legacies of this remarkably interesting couple remain tangible both in national collections in Holland and in the importance of the Cultural Community of Loverendale in Domburg to the history of agricultural biodiversity.¹³³

The discussion of Nell Walden and Tak van Poortvliet as major collectors of contemporary art introduces the themes of chapter 7, "The Formation of the Modern Woman Patron, Collector, and Dealer: From Brücke to Second-Generation Expressionism." It raises how important civic identity and feminist ideas were to women's patronage of male avant-gardism in the regional centers of Germany. The presence of many German Jews in these spheres of activity signaled their participation in the shaping of modernity. Coining the phrase "provincial modernity" for the Hamburg context, historian Jennifer Jenkins illuminates how efforts were made to forge modern identity by reforming local institutions and inventing new traditions.¹³⁴ With such sociohistorical models in mind, case studies focus on prominent individuals to emerge in the Wilhelmine and Weimar periods, such as the art historian Schapire in Hamburg and the dealer Ey in Düsseldorf.

Since both protagonists wrote enthusiastically of the key value of museum pedagogy to their formative experiences in the visual arts, the trajectory of the arguments is more wide-ranging in theorizing the nuances of gendered spectatorship. Through the application of Judith Butler's ideas regarding notions of the masquerade and the performative, the study maintains that the female gaze could be a productive instrument of knowledge as well as a mode of institutional critique.¹³⁵ In a section that dwells on the arts of beholding and collecting, I underscore the epistemological framework of institutional viewing in light of

the appointment of a new generation of museum directors. They shared ideas governing spectatorship, which stemmed from a neo-Kantian belief in the relevance of emotional feeling to the aesthetic experience. From Hugo von Tschudi in the Nationalgalerie in Berlin to Alfred Lichtwark in the Hamburger Kunsthalle, their openness toward the modern and the foreign went against the grain of Wilhelm II's cultural politics. Dedicated to concepts of *Bildung*, these directors formed voluntary associations of art lovers so as to fashion the collecting habits of an enlightened bourgeoisie. Women who participated in these associations, such as Mary Warburg (1866–1934) in Hamburg or Irene Eucken (1863–1941) in Jena, were accultured to the arts of beholding and the collecting of modern art via these means.

I explore performative viewing in relation to the Folkwang Museum in Hagen. The director Karl Ernst Osthaus was pivotal to the decentralization of Prussian dominance in museology, and both his private wealth and *völkisch* mission steered him to bring modern visual culture to the Ruhr. He commissioned the architect Henry van de Velde to craft the museum interior around the collection of modern, decorative, and south global art in accordance with Jugendstil ideas of the Gesamtkunstwerk. As an aspiring photographer, Gertrud Osthaus (1880–1975) serves as an intriguing example of the female gaze behind the lens in documenting her encounters with artists, modern painting, and the museum's holdings. Moreover, in 1913, she theorized aspects of the Folkwang experience in an essay in the *Kölnische Zeitung*.¹³⁶ Her interests were characteristic of other women patrons and collectors whose aesthetic tastes moved beyond the contemplative and intimate modernism of Jugendstil in favor of the attack on the senses of Expressionist primitivism.

I demonstrate how the Osthaus couple's strategies held implications for women practitioners through the examples of the Expressionist sculptor Milly Steger (1881–1948) and the poet and artist Else Lasker-Schüler. Steger's architectural sculpture of four female nudes on the facade of the Hagen Municipal Theater caught the attention of Lasker-Schüler, whose dedicatory poem seized on the sculptor's appropriation of the male gaze. Lasker-Schüler was not only an exemplar of the performative viewer, but she also adopted the male guise for the purposes of creative autonomy. As a frequent visitor to the Folkwang

in her capacity as an Expressionist poet and artist, her Old Testament themes linked to the wider discourses of the Folkwang collection, albeit that their ostensible Jewish content strained the limits of Osthaus's völkisch project to spur national regeneration.

In investigating the patronage of the Brücke artists' group, which was founded in Dresden in 1905, Kirchner's lists of passive members reveal the extent of their recruitment in regional cities. In Hamburg, where the support of modern art was already well entrenched, eleven of the passive members were women. Their networking arose from the roughly simultaneous phenomenon of the Deutscher Frauenklub (German Women's Club), which spread rapidly in major cities and regional centers of Germany. In Hamburg, the Frauenklub was founded by Bertha Rohlsen (1852–1928) and Ida Dehmel in 1906, and it catered to the cultural and spiritual aspirations of bourgeois women by organizing literary events, recitals, exhibitions, and lectures. Via such networking, Schapire became a passive member of the Brücke, and she thereafter recruited other professional women in her circle. The success of the Frauenklub in cultivating women's patronage of contemporary art, its nexus with feminism, and the rise of female consumerism is demonstrated in relation to Eucken's role in the Jena milieu. She had already commissioned a family portrait from Kirchner in 1915, and in 1916 the artist produced woodcuts for the catalog of her fashion show, which was held on the premises of the Bremen Frauenklub.

In Hamburg, Schapire's activities as a freelance art historian are explored in relation to her intermittent contact with Aby Warburg. While the archivally held correspondence testifies to her marginalization in this elite circle, her methodological outlook was attuned to the neo-Kantian philosophical basis of the Hamburg school, the coordinates of which are richly illuminated in Emily J. Levine's study *Dreamland of Humanities: Warburg, Cassirer, Panofsky, and the Hamburg School*.¹³⁷ As can be confirmed in Schapire's reviews of both Emil Nolde's and Karl Schmidt-Rottluff's exhibitions between 1907 and 1910, her criticism bridged the great divide between empiricist and idealist philosophy. The chapter's findings also expose the anti-Semitism that Schapire encountered as a Jewish critic and patron.

Women's promotion of the individual Brücke artists continued after the disbanding of the group in Berlin

in 1913, and this was no different in the case of Schapire's lifelong promotion of Schmidt-Rottluff. She was immensely receptive to his engagement with the applied arts and responded to Expressionism's denunciation of academic hierarchies in favor of the broader implications of modernist primitivism. Against a backdrop of her civic duties during the war, in her cofounding the Frauenbund zur Förderung Deutscher Bildenden Kunst (Women's Society for the Advancement of German Art) with Dehmel, Schapire's acquisition of Schmidt-Rottluff's works for her private collection gathered momentum. In 1921, she commissioned him to design her apartment as a total entity, testifying to the integration of art and life, and to the aesthetic unity of applied and fine art, whether sculpture, relief, or easel art.

In the early Weimar years, within a context of spiritual millenarianism, Schapire published an essay in *Die Rote Erde* (The Red Earth) on Schmidt-Rottluff's religious woodcuts, which offers further insight into her distinctive and idealistic Expressionist critique.¹³⁸ In contrast, I show how Johanna Ey's response to Expressionist works in her private collection was more viscerally performative. In particular, in her account of Gert Wollheim's war works of 1919, she wrote of her fear and attraction to its graphic portrayal of the wounded soldier.¹³⁹ The dealer's adoption of confrontational tactics to attract a clientele was one of the most intriguing aspects of her interaction with the public. Seizing on the modernity implicit in glass-fronted shops, she seduced the public gaze by allowing artists to display controversial works in the windows of her gallery. Furthermore, Ey encouraged avant-garde transgressive behavior and the notion of spectacle by sponsoring practitioners who attracted official scandal. Although Ey herself was not an artist, a less monolithic view of what constitutes avant-gardism allows for a more fruitful exploration of her dealership as an inroad to gauging women's spectatorship and cultural interaction in Weimar Germany.

In the epilogue, I suitably trace the fate of many of these women during the Third Reich in attempting to account for their disappearance from the text, only to reappear at the end of the twentieth century. Their absence is significant since it emerges that women serve as the unconscious of the Expressionist story. In spring 1915, in Vienna, Freud shifted his focus on death, war, and the role

of censorship to writing his seminal essay on “The Unconscious.”¹⁴⁰ The historian of science and physics Peter Galison likens Freud’s topographical picture of the unconscious to war-torn Europe and its censorship boundaries.¹⁴¹ If, as Freud maintained, the psychical act is “*capable of becoming conscious* . . .—that is, it can now, given certain conditions, become an object of consciousness without any special resistance,” then the unconscious retains valuable information.¹⁴² Clearly, it is my contention that this interweaving of surface and depth provides Expressionist culture with its rich and multivalent textures.

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