Women in Art and Literature Networks

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Spinning Webs

Edited by

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INTRODUCTION

MARIANNE CAMUS AND VALERIE DUPONT

If one goes by the Oxford dictionary, a network is "a chain or system of interconnected or intercommunicating immaterial things, points or people". It is the interconnection and intercommunication of people that this book is interested in or, to be more precise, of women in the arts. The reason for this choice is that, like many female art historians or literary critics, we are very aware of the fact that women have been erased from history in general–and therefore from the history of the arts. We know that progress has been made since the 1960s. We acknowledge our debt to the pioneering work of Germaine Greer in *The Obstacle Race*[1] and Whitney Chadwick in *Women Art and Society*[2]. They brought into greater prominence a number of important women artists such as Artemisia Gentileschi, Elizabeth Vigée-Lebrun or Paula Modersohn-Becker.[3] They also demonstrated the mechanisms that had assigned women artists to oblivion, thus opening a whole new field of research. Griselda Pollock's *Vision and Difference*, in which she analyses the aesthetics of women's art is another reference.[4] We have noted the rise of women-only exhibitions in prestigious, and official, places such as the Centre Pompidou (Elles@Pompidou, 27 May 2009-21 February 2011). Tate Modern put on two one-woman exhibitions in 2015 (Marlene Dumas, 5 February-10 May and Agnes Martin, 3 June-11 October). More remarkable perhaps, the Turner Prize has been awarded to women five times between 2006 and

[1] Germaine Greer, *The Obstacle Race* (London: Picador, 1979).

[2] Whitney Chadwick, *Women, Art, and Society* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1990).

[3] Proof of the importance of their work are the recent one woman exhibitions: Vigée-Lebrun at the Grand Palais in Paris (23 September 2015-11 January 2016), Modersohn-Becker at the Musée d'Art moderne de la ville de Paris (8 April-21 August 2016).

[4] Griselda Pollock, *Vision and Difference* (London, New York: Routledge, 1988). See also Karen Petersen, and J.J. Wilson, *Women Artists* (London: The Women's Press, 1978) or Marsha Meskimmon, *Women Making Art* (London, New York: Routledge, 2003).

2016.[5] There remains, however, the feeling that, however brave some curators are, the traditions of a male-dominated art world die hard and that feminist or at least gender conscious criticism still has plenty of work to do. We can think of two examples which prove this: the first is that of Rosa Bonheur, 19th-century naturalist painter, and Jules Breton, her male equivalent. While his talent and competence are generally recognized and mentioned in many art history books, she is by and large ignored, which, when one has seen her paintings, does not make critical sense.[6] One cannot help feeling that her gender and her open gender-crossing (she dressed as a man) count for more in her reputation than her actual work. Another, contemporary example is that of 'yarn bombing[7], the women's version of street art, a predominantly masculine practice.[8] They could not be treated more differently: street art has become fashionable and so valuable that towns whose walls have been used put up barriers to protect it from vandals.[9] Museums and galleries buy it and put on exhibitions of it. Nothing like this has happened to yarn bombing, which has remained largely ignored, despite its often spectacular quality.

The difference in treatment covers another difference that takes us straight to the theme of this book. Street artists are individuals working on their own, trying to establish a style that will differentiate them from others. Yarn bombers work together: dressing up a town bus in colourful handmade knitwear cannot be completed by one woman alone and as it is street art, there is no possibility of using a team of assistants to carry out the artist's project. A particular project may be a single woman's idea, but from the start she needs a network of other persons to collect the material, do the actual knitting and then go and dress the bus. Could the fact that yarn bombing produces collective works of art be a reason for its lack of visibility? Certainly yarn bombers lead us to wonder whether other women artists have taken part in networks, single sex or mixed. The question is not easy to answer. There has been little work done on women in artistic networks; even the still fashionable figure of the salonnière in 18th and 19th

[5] Tomma Abts in 2006, Susan Philipsz in 2010, Elizabeth Price in 2012, Laure Prouvost in 2013 and Helen Marten in 2016.

[6] See, for example, Lorenz Eitner, *La Peinture du XIXe siècle en Europe*, (Paris: Hazan, 2007).

[7] See Mandy Moore, and Leanne Prain, *Yarn Bombing: the Art of Crochet and Knit Graffiti* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2009).

[8] There are of course some female street artists: Lady Pink, the first one, Miss Van or YZ but they are far from being as well known as their male counterparts.

[9] An example has been seen in Cheltenham (GB) where a Banksy wall painting on which local graffiti had been sprayed was given a security perimeter.

century Europe does not seem to interest many scholars, except in so far as she welcomed the important masculine figures of her time. When one reads about salons, one often has the impression that rather than the initiator of a network, the salonnière was simply the agent or the focus allowing men to create their own networks. She probably got some social and personal satisfaction out of facilitating meetings between the great minds of her time, but from our 21st century point of view, it looks very much like an elevated form of vicarious living. Things seem to be changing with, for example *Readers, Writers, Salonnières: Female Networks in Europe 1700-1900* edited by Hilary Brown and Gillian Dow[10] or *Plumes et Pinceaux: Discours de femmes sur l'art en Europe 1750-1850* edited by Anne Lafont.[11] But nothing has been done, to our knowledge, on women artists and in particular on visual artists. Perhaps because, although one is aware of women artists working alongside men, there is a tendency to position them as muses or helpmates to a brother, husband or lover. This is true of Pre-Raphaelite women painters, usually sisters or lovers of the great names, who are only, slowly, being rediscovered.[12] It is certainly ironic that the only woman of the Rossettis' entourage to be famous today is Christina, the sister who struck out her own path and became a poet. This is also true of the Impressionists: Berthe Morisot had to wait for the end of the 20th century and, for the general public, the big exhibition of her work in Martigny (Switzerland) in 2002 to be recognized as a major Impressionist. Until then she was mainly considered as Manet's pupil and the woman he was in love with. The same sort of remark could be made about Mary Cassatt, who remains to this day largely underestimated. Things do not really change in the 20th century; one can cite Sonia Delaunay, long seen as Robert's wife and follower. The big retrospective exhibition at the Musée d'art moderne de la ville de Paris (17 October 2014-22 February 2015) showed clearly the scope and originality of her work. She produced monumental murals as well as fabric designs and abstract paintings. But it also made clear that she was quite capable of articulating her own aesthetic principles. Sophie Taeuber-Arp is another case of this biased appreciation. She was one of the very first abstract painters, but is often seen only as her husband's shadow, without even the excuse that their work was similar. When they did collaborate on

[10] Hilary Brown, and Gillian Dow, eds., *Readers, Writers, Salonnières: Female Networks in Europe 1700-1900* (Bern: Peter Lang Verlag, 2011).
[11] Anne Lafont, ed., *Plumes et Pinceaux: Discours de femmes sur l'art en Europe 1750-1850* (Dijon: Les Presses du réel, 2012).
[12] See Jan Marsh, and Pamela Gerrish Nunn, Pre-Raphaelite Women Artists (London: Thames and Hudson, 1998).

a piece, it was systematically attributed to Arp. There is one big exception, namely, the city of Strasburg, which not only shows her work in the Musée d'art moderne et contemporain, but also preserves the "Aubette", the dancing rooms right in the centre of town, which she decorated in her very personal geometrical way in primary colours.[13]

Trying to overcome or bypass the gender bias in art history is, however, only one of two problems this project has had to try and solve. The second one takes us back to the definition given above. One has to be precise, or as precise as possible, as to what can be counted as an artistic network. The words interconnection and intercommunication found in the dictionary constitute a starting point, but they leave out several important aspects. Thanks to the internet, "network" has become a household word. It seems to suit the *Zeitgeist* with its image of a horizontal democracy in which everybody is or is supposed to be equal to everybody else. This equality between all those who interconnect brings a first nuance to the definition. To which one could add, as a direct corollary, the fact that perfect equality seems to go with complete informality. This, with the exponential development of social networks, blogs, etc. also encourages the idea that a network is based and relies on immediate and spontaneous action and reaction. A network would then be the interconnection of equals communicating in a spontaneous and easy-going manner.

It may be so, on some levels, but one cannot help observing the way in which militants/activists of all sorts, as well as, lately, politicians, have been using the world-wide web. All these individuals or groups with an idea or a programme do not so much aim at establishing egalitarian and democratic exchanges as at ensuring the highest possible visibility for their ideas or themselves, recruiting as many followers as possible and gaining a degree of influence or power, socially, politically or culturally. They are looking for disciples rather than comrades or brothers. The power-motivated use of the internet that one can sense behind the open-share front should not come as a surprise. For the word and the practice were not born with the web. Networking is indeed inherent to human society. Men have always felt the need to make contacts, build informal alliances and to exploit chance meetings in order to get what they wanted: more land, professional advancement, government position, fame or whatever they think will distinguish them from the crowd. One has only to read the pictures of society drawn by 19th-century novelists such as Trollope or Balzac to become aware that networking predates the internet. Christopher

[13] She did the work in 1926, in collaboration with Jean Arp and Theo van Doesburg, who is generally given the credit for the whole work.

Clark's history of European politics in the years preceding the First World War is a perfect demonstration of how, behind official agreements or conflicts, private personal networks were always at work.[14] And this goes on right to the present day if one is to believe Owen Jones and his description of the current workings of what is called "the old boys' network" as far as the distribution of positions of prestige, influence or power in Great Britain is concerned.[15].

If a historical look at networking confirms its link to the wish to gain or keep power, there is, however, a difference: while on the Internet everything is or is supposed to be open, in life networking implies some degree of secrecy, of being part of a special group. But what the comparison shows most clearly is the masculine flavour of the term. It is visible in the words used so far, "men", "brothers", "old boys" as well as in the fact that the examples which come to mind all have to do with politics. Again, it is not surprising, as men and power are associated words. This takes us back to women, who have traditionally been excluded by their gender from positions of power. Their position seems in fact to be either outside or on the margins of networks. Except that we know that women can be as ambitious as men and that the desire for influence crosses the gender line, as the salonnières showed by creating their own sphere of feminine influence at the heart of masculine networks. The questions about the position and role of women active within artistic networks are many. How did they negotiate the space left to them? Has their position been truly marginal or has it been constructed as such later by critics and historians? Have they had influence within the network? And if so of what sort: traditionally feminine, in a masculine style or feminist? Have they remained in the male-dominated networks or have they constructed their own, with women only? How did women-only networks differ from mixed ones? What sort of influence or recognition did they aim at? What did they achieve? These are the questions which this book would like to examine from a woman's point of view.

But when one works on networking in the world of art, there remains a further difficulty. Artists have tended to form groups according to their vision of art, their aesthetic principles and their idea of the artist's role in society. Some of these groups look simply like a loose comradeship of likeminded people. One thinks here of the Impressionists. Others were more formal and defined themselves as movements; this is the case of the different avant-gardes of the 20th century, Futurism, Suprematism, etc.

[14] Christopher Clark, *The Sleepwalkers* (London: Allen Lane, 2012).
[15] Owen Jones, *The Establishment. And how they get away with it* (London: Penguin, 2015).

How close are they to the notion of network? The answer seems fairly straightforward when it comes to movements; they usually gave themselves a name–rather than be given a name by critics, as was the case with the Impressionists. They also made a public declaration of their artistic philosophy or project. One can cite the Pre-Raphaelites, their decision to break from traditional painting and William Holman Hunt's declaration: "it is simply fuller Nature that we want. Revivalism, whether it be of classicism or medievalism, is a seeking after dry bones".[16] One can also think of some of the last century's avant-garde movements, Cubism, Dadaism, etc. One notices, besides, that there is usually a leader who sets the tone and upholds the initial concept. One thinks of Malevich and Suprematism, or André Breton, the "pope" of Surrealism. This looks, at first sight, as a going against the very idea of an open and mobile network, especially as we know that quarrels leading to exclusions or departures were frequent. However, the closed aspect of the group or movement does not necessarily mean that they evolve as stable units separated from the rest of the artistic world. The comings and goings within the group constitute a first indication that their ideas spread in a rather more haphazard way than they may have wished. Indeed, one can advance the idea that the group or the movement often ends up as the nodal point of a network. If one takes the Surrealist example again, one cannot ignore the Belgian Surrealists (Magritte, Delvaux, but also E. L. T. Mesens or Marcel Mariën) who, without being part of the inner circle, went on painting pictures that were at the same time surrealist and popular, thus spreading a taste for surrealism that is still perceptible today in Belgian art production. One cannot ignore either outsiders such as the Argentinian Leonor Fini and her poetic and disquieting world of women with cats or birds. Another good example would be that of what is now called the Arts and Crafts movement, which started with William Morris and a group of friends–Burne Jones, Crane and de Morgan–who, inspired by Ruskin, wanted to raise crafts to the level of so-called high art. Morris wrote the manifesto for the movement and was the acknowledged leader of a group that set itself the task of revising Victorian design all round. They were very much a movement in a given place at a given time, and they are still seen as such. But, with hindsight, they appear rather as the starting point for a web of artists, craftswomen and craftsmen that spread first through the whole of Great Britain, with as its best known meeting points Birmingham and its Guild of Handicrafts (John Paul Cooper and Benjamin Creswick) and

[16] Quoted in Leslie Parris, ed., *The Pre-Raphaelites* (London: Tate Gallery Publications, 1994), 11.

Scotland with the Glasgow Four (Charles Rennie MacIntosh and his wife Margaret). The web then crossed the Channel and spread over Northern Europe with, in France, the Art Nouveau of the École de Nancy (Gallé, Majorelle), in Germany the Dresden and Munich Werkstätte (Peter Behrens), in Austria the Wiener Werkstätte (Josef Hoffmann, Koloman Moser), to cite the most famous of the groups who were inspired by Morris. In fact, one can find people belonging to this network in Ireland, in Denmark, in Sweden (Carl Larsson) and even in Poland with the Young Poland movement in Krakow. Without forgetting the USA, the furthest point in space but not the least inventive; everyone still recognises the names of Tiffany and Frank Lloyd Wright.[17] This is a real network in so far as it was totally informal, grew from encounters with Morris's ideas, directly or indirectly, and produced works that are obviously related but also subtly different. Each creator worked according their own creative temperament and integrated the traditions of their native culture, and as in any organic growth, time played its part too. The Viennese Werkstätte, for example, blossomed at the turn of the century, after Morris's death, and one can see the net continuing in the Twenties with the Bauhaus and in the Thirties with the Art Deco style.

The Arts and Crafts movement looks like a perfect example of an artistic network, even more so when one realises that it did not limit itself to fellow artists. Patrons played their part, buying and showing the works, critics defended the new style, and amateurs who came to admire the productions, went home with minds open to new things. They all contribute to what is a network's main characteristic, the informal, one could almost say organic dimension of its growth. It is not so much a system as a body evolving constantly, just like any living organism responding to its environment, alternating phases of stasis and activity and moving in unforeseen directions.

This non-linear progress is very notable in women's networks; they can be observed to evolve in different ways in given periods. This is why this book will not be based on a chronological approach, but rather on the ways women react to the gender constraints of the society and the time in which they live. The idea of stages in the construction of networks appears more flexible as well as more realistic. Three main stages have emerged: following the rules, bending the rules and making up your own rules. They are, up to a point, linked to historical background, but can occur concurrently or within one woman's lifespan. One cannot but notice,

[17] See Pamela Todd, *The Arts and Crafts Companion* (New York, Boston: Bulfinch Press, 2004) and Leopold Diethard, and Peter Weinhäupl, eds., *Wien 1900* (Wien, München: Christian Brandstätter Verlag, 2009).

however, that the moving factors from one stage to the next are feminist awareness and the feminist movements and networks, whether one thinks of the suffrage movement or the second wave of feminism.

Part I: Following the Rules

The four first chapters examine the first stage of women's networks, the attempts made by women to carve a place for themselves within the constraints of patriarchal society. The posture of the lone independent artist being almost impossible for women, networking was essential. It took different forms, but the references were masculine, to start off with at least. For practical reasons, the support of men, preferably rich and/or powerful, was something that could not be neglected. Bertha Zuckerkandl (whose career is analysed by Armelle Weirich) would not have become a journalist and art critic without her newspaper-owning father and his international network. It allowed her the trips to Paris where she discovered the avant-gardes of the time and which put her artistically ahead of everybody else in Vienna. Marlène Gossmann recalls how Laure Albin-Guillot's first steps in photography were taken under her husband's wing, and when she decided to become a professional, she relied, at least to begin with, on his network. Nelly Sanchez makes it very clear that the ladies of the "Vie Heureuse" prize fitted in with Hachette's commercial strategy for their women's magazines, and Friederike O'Connell's network, as described by Gitta Ho, includes only men's names. This did not stop her reputation as an artist from declining within her lifetime, perhaps because her husband had abandoned her. The lack of official male support left her vulnerable to all sorts of attacks.

But what these chapters also show is that having to lean on male power did not really prevent women from going ahead and going beyond their traditional role as encouragers of other people's (men's) talents. If the salon is still present in the chapters written by Gitta Ho, Armelle Weirich and Marlène Gossmann, it is clear that it is meant to serve the woman at its centre as much as if not more than its habitués. Bertha Zuckerkandl not only became the spokeswoman of the Viennese Secessionists, she acted, through her journalism, as the go-between between European avant-gardes and the Secessionists as well as between the avant-gardes and the general public. Friederike O'Connell and Laure Albin-Guillot openly ran a salon in order to get commissions. If one looks at the "Vie Heureuse" prize, not only did the ladies establish the "Prix Femina" for good, they also launched several other prizes to encourage new writers and writers in non-literary fields.

But success came at a cost. First, there was the necessity of being constantly careful not to trespass beyond the limits assigned to their sex. Of course, Laure Albin-Guillot or Bertha Zuckerkandl were to some extent protected by their upper-class liberal backgrounds. But one notices that they did not step out of their world: Zuckerkandl showed very limited interest in the networks women artists tried to set up to counteract the isolation they were left in by their male fellow artists of the Secession. Albin-Guillot, although she was more open to other women's work, privileged high society in her network. Prudence as regards male opinion is best observed in the example of the jury of the "Vie Heureuse" prize. We learn that the first panel of the prize was composed of respectably (outwardly at least) married women. Rachilde, one of the best writers of the end of the 19th century, was excluded because her novels were too sexually scandalous. We also notice their absolute submission to official patriotic propaganda during World War I, as well as their decided preference for the society pages of newspapers and magazines over the literary sections. This seems to send us back to George Eliot's "lady novelists".

All this goes, almost naturally, with an ambiguous attitude toward other women. With the exception of the internationally known Rachel, Friederike O'Connell did not seem to link with other women. Her choice of "virile" history painting even suggests a wish to stand apart from them. Bertha Zuckerkandl's opinion of women was very similar to George Sand's in France or George Eliot's in Britain: she put the blame both on society for discriminating against women and on women for not fighting harder for their rights to education and a career. Her salon, however, did not do much for promoting the careers of women; she was careful to keep to her network of dominant male figures and never encouraged ambitious or talented women to join her circle. The ambiguity is perhaps best observed in the ladies of the "Vie Heureuse" prize. They wanted to assert their dignity as women of letters and to defend women writers, but they continued to reward more men than women. At the same time, they launched other prizes to encourage new or different productions, and these were awarded to women. This wish to maintain a balance between respectability and independence can be explained by the precariousness of a woman's class and gender status in a patriarchal society. The one brilliant exception is Laure Albin-Guillot. Socially privileged, ambitious and successful, surrounded by a high society network, she nevertheless turned out to be very open to her contemporaries' efforts. If she never belonged to the women's artistic networks of her time, she systematically used her position to help them, organizing exhibitions where women's

work was shown next to men and a women-only exhibition in 1937, declaring that women's photography was of the same level as men's.

The fact that she was a photographer may have been significant: this was a new form of art with no school or clique as yet. The equipment needed was minimal, which suited women's generally restricted means. In a way, it was the equivalent of video art at the end of the twentieth century, a form which attracted women for exactly the same reasons. One has an example in Albin-Guillot of a middle-aged woman who not only helped her younger contemporaries, but also joined feminist associations in the Thirties (a tough time for women) in order to defend their right to work and their rights in the workplace. With hindsight she appears as a forerunner.

Part II: Bending the Rules

Abiding by the rules is never easy, and it becomes less so when those rules are felt to be arbitrary. The arbitrariness was felt rather than articulated in the networks analysed in part one. Nevertheless, women did not give up (Albin-Guillot is a good example). They elaborated strategies in order to push back the limits assigned to their gender. These strategies depended on individual temperament, social status, country and period. One should also take into account the building up of a women's history, one generation benefiting from what the previous one had accomplished.

One striking point in this second part is the recurrence of what one might call the multiple networks overlapping and opening into new dimensions. Julie Verlaine, after warning us that art collecting is a highly individual activity, goes on to show how private friendships or associations grew–in a woman's lifetime and over generations–into much wider networks including artists and their circles, the world of art criticism and feminist movements. Louisine Havemeyer, the first collector she deals with, is an almost perfect example. She started by being part of Mary Cassatt's network, along with many young American women fighting for their autonomy. Through her, she entered the circle of the Impressionist painters and became one of the very first to buy their work and show it in the United States. She may have felt obliged to conform to the social rules of her time and hide her collection under her father's or her husband's names, but, once a widow, she came out as a modern art collector and as an active supporter of the American suffrage campaign, using her art collecting to support it. One can observe here, beside the slow and organic growth of her networking, the fact that it inscribes itself in several networks: young American women in Europe, Impressionist painters, the

American gallery world and finally feminism. The other examples in Julie Verlaine's text follow a similar pattern with as a nodal point the conjunction of rebellion against gendered norms and love of art, as well as a move from the private to the public. The artist's networks lead to those of galleries and the art market. Finally, women collectors can come into contact with feminist networks when they decide to defend women artists

A mistress of the art of multiple interconnecting networks was Yvonne Serruys, one of the links in "la chaîne des dames" analysed by Marjan Sterckx. There was first the solid Belgian family network which supported her in her wish to become a sculptor and in her career even after she had settled in Paris. One notices that many of her commissions were obtained through the influence of members of her family or friends of the family. From that secure family network, she ventured into Parisian artistic and intellectual networks. These were predominantly male, but she also frequented other women's houses where she met writers such as Anna de Noailles and Tinayre and above all women who, if they were not declared feminists, nevertheless supported one another. She was also a visitor at Natalie Barney's. Barney was a lesbian, feminist and rather scandalous society woman, but also a woman who managed to gather round her all that counted in Paris. The great men were there of course (Rodin, Cocteau, James Joyce, etc.) but also the great women (Gertrude Stein, Isadora Duncan, Colette, etc.). She is a perfect case study of how to bend the rules without anybody questioning one's respectability, simply through belonging to more than one network.

Clara Zgola, writing about women artists in Poland, brings another dimension to the question of networks. Unlike Western women artists who centred their work on gender issues, Polish women could not ignore the political background (Communism, transition and democracy in a globalised context). Clara Zgola explains how the heavy influence of political constraints during the Communist period led to the existence of discreet networks, mostly underground, on the margins of official social and artistic life. They denounced inequalities in general, gender inequalities being just part of a bigger picture. But she also points out that feminist art work was produced in Poland before 1989. The problem being that it remained on the margins with little impact in the country as a whole. She points out that those women who have achieved a reputation have done so thanks to the international feminist movement whose artistic networks were quick to spot them. The message is clear: for a Polish woman artist, the home artists' network is not enough; one needs a much wider one. Alina Szapocznikow, who remains largely underestimated despite being a precursor of later feminist artists, is the proof of that. She

lived just before women's networks became active. Eva Partum, a feminist in Poland from the start, and Natalia LL, who was first part of a mixed neo-avant-garde network in her country, both joined the international feminist network in the 1970s before they achieved first international then national fame. What is interesting is that they did not stop there, but worked at introducing women's art (from everywhere) in Poland. With the result that today's young generation of women artists feel enabled to produce their art more freely. Feminist art networks are no longer Western or Eastern, but throw their net globally.

However, the practice of multiple belonging does not always work. Muriel Andrin and Anaëlle Prêtre draw rather mixed conclusions from their analysis of art criticism networks in late 20th-century Belgium. Despite a strong feminist movement, there quickly appeared a reluctance to include artists, as being too individual. One has the feeling that opposition to existing rules simply produced another set of rules which were just as constraining. This is confirmed by the institutionalisation of feminist ideas and actions. Entering universities and research centres or getting official grants does not seem to have helped as much as one might have expected, certainly as far as the visibility of women artists is concerned. Firstly, because the academic framework limited the scope of growth of any network, confining it to academic circles, and then because of a lack of interest in or timidity concerning contemporary artists who were not already known nationally or internationally, which did not help women artists. But above all, because official feminist art criticism replicated, for a time at least, the usual masculine journal format: few women critics and few women artists. The overlapping of feminist, artistic and academic networks did not seem to function. Of course one discovers a few outstanding women dedicated to both art and feminism who networked relentlessly between themselves, and with whoever was willing, in order to make things move forward. But a few names do not make a network, and one sympathises with the authors' suggestion that the future for women's networks might well be outside institutions, and why not on the net? Which might be another way to go global.

Part III: Making up one's own Rules

Whether women acted within the given rules or whether they tried to bend them, their strength of character is undeniable. They may have failed; they may have limited themselves or not have gone as far as they wished, but one can say that every failure or half success in fact paved the way for the generations to come. The salons, for example, so present in one form

or another in the first two parts of this book, can be seen as genteel versions of Iris Clert's gallery. Servin Bergeret actually uses the word salonnière to describe her, before he quickly goes on to point out what made her different. It was mainly that she did not see herself as a supporter or facilitator of other people's aesthetic agenda; she had her own, which she defended to the end with a clear idea of what sort of network she wanted, as well as what sort of art that she wanted to support. At the same time, she conceived her gallery as a meeting place for works of art and for individuals. She thus set herself alongside, and to a certain extent against, the Parisian gallery world of her time with its elitist and sometimes rather solemn dimension. She attempted to blur the lines and expand the art network well beyond its traditional limits: she made a salon of her gallery and exhibited works in her own home. She advertised her exhibitions through the mass media; she used photo reporters to record the openings and made sure that celebrities of all sorts were present. More radical even was her project of an art truck driving through the country to bring portable modern art exhibitions everywhere, thus giving everybody the chance to be part of the network.

Another important point is the recurrence of the more or less feminist women's network, which one noted as part of the experience of most women in earlier generations and which becomes central in the twentieth century. Servin Bergeret highlights this often neglected aspect of the flamboyant Iris Clert. She belonged to a network of female gallery owners; she progressively showed more women artists and supported feminist artists' groups. Proof of this engagement is the fact that the homage paid her after her death was initiated and organised by women who had known and worked with her.

Friederieke O' Connell was derided as a virile woman for her choice of manly historical painting. But it is the determination of women like her that led to Carolee Schneemann's open declaration "I was with the guys", which Pauline Chevalier uses as an epigraph to her analysis of this now internationally recognised artist. It expresses the will not to be crushed or even marginalised by the talented but very masculinist men she met and worked with. Schneemann, like O'Connell, worked on her own networks and unlike her, benefited from the feminist movement. Pauline Chevalier points out the artist's dilemma: between "the wish to inscribe her career into a mostly male network of artists and the desire to undermine the tradition she was part of." The move into a more female-centred choreographic project was a first step out of this dilemma and a start on the multiple interacting dimensions that seems to characterise women's networking. The dancers' then the film makers' networks not only allowed

her to get away from the "guys", but also to enrich and deepen her artistic project: the questioning of the image of the body. She had, however, to wait until the Seventies and the second wave of feminism to finally liberate herself from her attachment to her initial network and to go for radically feminist art work and women-based art criticism. The feminist network, already present in the lives of Laure Albin-Guillot, Louisine Havemeyer or Polish contemporary artists, appears as a determining factor in a woman's achievement as well as in her self-definition. Does that mean that it could be seen as an equivalent of the old boys' network, a vehicle for empowerment?

Certainly it does appear to give women the strength and confidence to carry out their projects and fight their fights. It is at the heart of Margot Lauwers' account of the struggle of ecofeminists not to be erased–in the good old fashion–from the history of ecocriticism. She recounts how feminist ecocriticism was started in the 1970s by, among others, Mary Daley, but was set aside when ecocriticism was taken up by men and became an official trend. She shows the way in which the accusation of essentialism allowed for the recuperation and the marginalisation of a real network, swallowed up by what presented itself as new theory. Finally, she underlines the fact that, despite these attacks, the network has survived. It has done so partly through the relentless critique by feminist ecocritics of their male counterparts' writings, pointing out their biased presentation and their tendency to forget or ignore the feminist writings that had started the movement. It has also and perhaps mainly survived through an informal and quasi-organic opening of the initial network: the ideas defended by the theorists have percolated far and wide among women authors and particularly among women novelists, Margaret Atwood and Toni Morrison being two of the most famous.

It is at the heart, too, of the remarkable story of the A.I.R. Gallery as recounted by Floris Taton. Surfing on the counterculture of the 1960s and all the alternative galleries that went with it, women artists targeted the specific problem of a male-dominated art world that simply ignored them. A.I.R. was one of several ways women got together to become visible. Created in 1972, it was the first women-only gallery in the USA and based from the start on deliberate networking, a group of women artists setting out to make contacts with other–very often isolated–women artists. Floris Taton's description is of an almost dream network. It pulled women out of isolation, helped them to become aware not only of their numbers, but also of their strength, and of course it gave them freedom: freedom of the medium they wanted to work with, freedom of subject matter, freedom as to what and how to show. What is probably most striking about it is the

virtuous quality of the enterprise. If it is supportive, it is not of individuals who "belong", but of professionals producing high quality work. This stress on quality over ideology accounts for the fact that A.I.R. is still very much alive today. It did not, however, ignore the feminist network it came from. This is perceptible in the fact that it now belongs to an American network of women-only galleries and that the artists bring their feminist preoccupations to it. But what is most remarkable about A.I.R. is its openness to people: young artists, who are given help to start, women artists from abroad, invited from France, Japan, or Central Europe. A.I.R positions itself too at the centre of a much wider network, that of the students and journalists who come and work in their archives and that of the public in general invited to performances, conferences, symposiums, etc. One has the feeling that somehow A.I.R. has managed to create a modern, women-centered and egalitarian salon, a place where one can feel both comfortable and stimulated

Last, but not least, there is the extraordinary Ariadne project as described by Émilie Blanc. The period is the same as for A.I.R., the Seventies, but it takes place on the West Coast. Like A.I.R., Ariadne presents women artists acting as part of the big feminist movement of the time. But Ariadne as a feminist art collective went beyond the female artists' network. It is a perfect example of active networking: the flexible women artists' group was a part in a bigger network with various feminist associations. The artist's work, mainly performances, was the nodal point opening out into practical actions and everyday life initiatives such as self-defence groups, discussion groups, etc. They reached out to and welcomed politicians, journalists and any ordinary person who felt concerned by what was at the heart of their project: war against violence against women. Female networks are no longer reactive, shelters or refuges in a hostile world; they are proactive, open to society in general. One should note here that it is the political stance that binds the network, even when its starting point was the work of art. Perhaps this is in a way specific to women's vision of life: things cannot be pigeon-holed, everything is linked to everything else, art and life go hand in hand.

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PART I:

FOLLOWING THE RULES

CHAPTER ONE

VIENNESE NETWORKS OF THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY: THE SALON OF BERTA ZUCKERKANDL (1864-1945)

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Between the seventeenth and twentieth centuries, feminine salons played a vital role in Europe in the development and diffusion of intellectual, aesthetic and artistic currents. As catalysts of avant-garde currents and fashions, they allowed women to create, at home, spaces for cultural exchanges whose social impact was particularly important.[1] The salon of Berta Zuckerkandl, an essential figure in Viennese intellectual life, was one of the last European examples. From the end of the 1880s up to the onset of the Second World War, she engaged continuously in the development of the arts, of literature and of the theatre, as well as in the artistic, cultural and political exchanges which she established and consolidated between France and Austria. Thanks to her position as both journalist and salonnière, she imposed herself as one of the most important sponsors of a great number of the artists, composers and men of letters who were noted at the time and who have continued to be well known.

At the centre of Zuckerkandl's activities was a solid network of international relations, based on her salon, which she inaugurated in her villa in 1889 and which rapidly became a meeting place for a part of the Austrian intelligentsia. Up to 1918, those regularly invited included artists of the Viennese Secession movement and writers belonging to *Jung Wien*. Beyond facilitating personal links, Zuckerkandl supported her guests in their various projects, particularly the Secessionists, whom she defended vigorously in a great number of articles and reviews. Her power of

[1] See V. von der Heyden-Rynsch, *Les Salons européens: les beaux moments d'une culture féminine disparue* (Paris: Gallimard, 1993).

attraction and her successful relationships with her guests invite us to consider on the one hand the means by which Zuckerkandl succeeded in placing herself at the heart of a still conservative society, with rigid rules in regard to women, in order to build up one of the most important European networks, and on the other hand, to what extent she included women in her network, in particular the women artists who found it so difficult to enter the social circles already in place in Vienna.

Berta Zuckerkandl inaugurated her salon in the particularly favourable context of the *Wiener Moderne*, a period of profound political, social and cultural change which raised Vienna to the status of a world capital of modernity. Between 1890 and 1910, an exceptional creative outpouring in the fields of thought, science, the arts and literature was accompanied by a networking of relationships in the cafés and salons of the city, which, as meeting-places and centres of discussion, encouraged the forming of circles of intellectuals in the same disciplines or with the same beliefs, whose exchanges influenced the development of modern thought. At the turn of the century, they developed into real cultural institutions, which it was indispensable to frequent for whoever wished to be modern, to express his ideas and to make his work known.

Cafés and salons were different more in form than in substance. The cafés were open, public places, receiving their customers daily, reserving tables for their regulars and allowing them to stay for as long as they wished, all in an atmosphere favourable to the creation of both individual works and currents of ideas. However, the development and the diffusion of their activities were more effectively realised through the private salons, held at a fixed time, and access to which was determined by the lady herself, according to the nature of the network she wished to establish, of her objectives and her personal affinities. The two spaces in any case offered a greater freedom of creation and expression than the somewhat conservative official institutions. The women who held the salons offered an additional bonus by occupying an intermediate position between the artists and the Austrian public from which to spread ideas and facilitate access to contemporary works. Nevertheless, few salons were still in existence at the beginning of the twentieth century, victims of the popularity of the cafés as well as of their worldly image and their exclusive character.

Started at the behest of her husband, the anatomist Emil Zuckerkandl, with the object of catering for their social circle, Berta Zuckerkandl's salon took its first habitués from amongst her husband's friends and colleagues, before widening out to include the Secessionists in the middle of the 1890s, and going on to become, before the War, an indispensable

part of literary and artistic Vienna. Few Viennese women succeeded in making themselves known or in launching ambitious projects at that time, but Zuckerkandl had benefited since childhood from circumstances favourable to self-expression, exceptional for a young Austrian girl, as she had grown up in a bourgeois milieu of assimilated Jews, liberal and Francophile in outlook, and had received an excellent education at home, particularly in literature and the history of art. These privileges, together with her strong character, allowed her to emerge from isolation and to avoid the exclusion with which women of the period were threatened. She had also been strongly influenced by her father, Moritz Szeps, an important journalist and ardent defender of liberalism. The friend of both Gambetta and Clemenceau, he edited a powerful newspaper, the *Wiener Tagblatt*, in which he published his views on imperial policies and expressed the liberal ideas which he had developed through his travels in France. Amongst his most assiduous readers featured the Habsburg prince Rudolf, who, in spite of his position as heir to the imperial throne, shared Szeps's ideas and discussed them with him, treating him as both friend and confidant.

Having become her father's personal secretary, Zuckerkandl was party to their exchanges as well as pursuing her apprenticeship through contact with the prestigious names invited to the family home. According to her Memoirs, in the salon held by her mother, "all of liberal Vienna"[2] would meet around statesmen, poets, artists and actors, whilst her father regularly entertained, arranging either sumptuous or more intimate dinner parties, where the children could mix with personalities of the first rank, such as Georges Clemenceau, invited to dine with them one evening in 1883.[3] From that day on, a deep friendship united him to the Szeps family, a friendship later sealed by the marriage in 1886 of Berta's older sister, Sophie, to Paul Clemenceau. As for Berta herself, she remained particularly close to Georges Clemenceau, and at his invitation went regularly to Paris from the 1880s to 1900. In his company she visited avant-garde galleries which exhibited Impressionist and Art Nouveau works, and so discovered the modern art as yet absent from the artistic scene in Austria. She also encountered a Parisian circle formed around Clemenceau and his sister, which had its salon in the capital, a salon

[2] B. Zuckerkandl, *Österreich Intim* (Wien: Propyläen, 1970), 100.
[3] B. Zuckerkandl-Szeps, *Clemenceau tel que je l'ai connu*, (Alger: Éditions de la Revue Fontaine, 1944), 23.

frequented by, amongst others, Eugène Carrière, Auguste Rodin and Gustave Geffroy, with whom she maintained a close contact.[4]

Enriched by these encounters and by the discovery of Parisian artistic modernity, Zuckerkandl took up journalism. She published her first articles from 1893 onwards in her father's newspaper, then in the weekly *Die Zeit*, co-founded by Hermann Bahr. In her critical articles, she denounced Vienna's backwardness in artistic matters and described foreign experimentations in the hope of prompting an awakening which would allow Austrian artists to begin a process of modernisation. Her portraits of Carrière, Rodin and other representatives of French and English modern art drew the attention of the future Secessionists–Gustav Klimt, Otto Wagner, Josef Hoffmann, Kolo Moser, Carl Moll, Alfred Roller–who had been seeking for several years to impose a new aesthetic within the Academy of Fine Arts, but who had met with the resistance of their elders. A year before the birth of the Secession (the first movement of modern art in Austria) in 1897, the pioneers of the *Jugendstil*, who had already benefited from the support of prominent art critics such as Bahr and Ludwig Hevesi, invited Zuckerkandl to become their movement's spokesperson, on account of the network which she had built up in France: "You must collaborate with us. Through your relations with France, you could be the leader of a movement which awakes Vienna from its slumbers. You are, as we know, the friend of Carrière and Rodin. So you are well placed to give our undertaking the services of a pioneer.[5]"

Thanks to her experiences in Paris and her privileged social position (her husband had been raised to the rank of imperial councillor), Zuckerkandl had gained the credibility necessary for her to be listened to by the main actors of the art world as well as by the Austrian public. From then on, artists and supporters of the Secession movement met in her salon to debate artistic questions and constitute an association, as Hevesi records:

> […] it was in [Berta Zuckerkandl's] salon that the idea of the Viennese Secession was first formulated. It was there that certain modern people met to give shape to the idea and to begin the fight to renew art in Vienna. Later, as [she] had not lost her spirit of initiative, she more than once

[4] See A. Weirich, "Berta Zuckerkandl-Szeps ou l'importance de l'amitié d'une femme et d'une critique d'art", in *Clemenceau et les artistes modernes: Manet, Monet, Rodin…,* exh. Cat., (Les Lucs-sur-Boulogne, Historial de la Vendée, 8 December 2013-2 March 2014) (Paris: Somogy, 2013).

[5] B. Zuckerkandl-Szeps, *Souvenirs d'un monde disparu, Autriche 1878-1938* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1939), 149.

> pronounced the first word to launch some important matter. She would say the word that no one else would have said.[6]

Zuckerkandl devoted a large part of her publications to the work of the Secessionists and to the international exhibitions which they organised, as well as publishing general articles aimed at encouraging artistic renewal in line with her own expectations. For the general public she played a vital role in keeping it informed of the most recent artistic developments in Europe, and preparing it to accept the new *Jugendstil* aesthetic of the Secessionists, developed from European examples of Art Nouveau.

Zuckerkandl had an important role in developing the artistic influence of Vienna at the beginning of the twentieth century. Her network, centred on her salon, was based on the strong friendships of its members. It placed her salon at the heart of Viennese modernity and made it a main centre of development of the avant-garde and the expansion of Austrian art. The Secessionists already met regularly at the Secession Pavilion and they frequented individually other circles of acquaintance. If they came each week to her salon it was not so much for the services that she might render them as for the pleasure of being there. Her personality and charisma certainly played an important part: she was a woman of character, who had acquired since childhood a great freedom of expression. When Klimt was faced with the violent rejection of the works he had planned for the University of Vienna, Zuckerkandl, in her own words, "threw herself into the fight",[7] and undertook the artist's defence in the press with courage and determination, fearing neither the criticism nor the personal attacks which she received more for her Jewish origins than for her convictions.

Berta Zuckerkandl lived and worked in a male-dominated environment. If women were no doubt present at her meetings, very few are mentioned in the sources available for research–archival documents and the correspondence, memoirs and diaries of the participants. Before the First World War, only the names of Marya Freund and Alma Mahler emerge from these records. The presence of the latter was due principally to the fact that she belonged to the Secession circle through being the daughter-in-law of the painter Moll, the "number two" of the association. As for the soprano Marya Freund, she was a close friend of both Zuckerkandl and her sister Sophie, whom she visited regularly in Paris.

As a general thing, women were not admitted to the discussion groups held in Viennese cafés, the privileged places of intellectual activity, and if

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[6] L. Hevesi, in B. Zuckerkandl, *Zeitkunst Wien 1901-1907* (Wien-Leipzig: Hugo Heller and co., 1908), ix, author's translation.

[7] B. Zuckerkandl-Szeps 1939, *op. cit*., 149.