

Outstanding among the other essays in the book is Caroline Hancock's "Medusa in Ecstasy," which considers the importance of Greece as a constant source of inspiration for Benglis, whose family are first generation immigrants from Kastellorizon, a southeastern Greek Island on the southern shore of Turkey near Rhodes (133). Benglis began her exploration of plasticity with her use of rubber and wax, which reminded her of wax death masks, noting the fact that these materials have a lifelike quality. Benglis's subsequent Knot series clearly had classical references. Titled after the Greek alphabet, the Knots resemble handwriting and signatures, reclaiming the artist's physical gesture. According to Benglis, knots in popular culture function as a memory trigger. Benglis's knots also refer to types made by sailors or fisherman (140).

A series of artists' statements add an amusing, more casual flavor to a book of

art historical essays. For example, video and light artist Keith Sonnier observes:

Thank goodness for Ms. Lynda...who dropped the drawers on the art world which really needed it at the time. Lynda Benglis and I go way back as artists and friends [and] have some similar roots and interests. We're both from Louisiana but she somehow developed more of the Greek aspect of her heritage whilst I took up the Acadian slack (373).

Cindy Sherman, Annette Messager, Ron Gorchov, and John Baldessari are among the other artists offering tributes.

The text is lavishly illustrated, mostly in full color, with all of the historical images associated with Benglis's early career, including the famous naked centerfold, which was financed by the artist (47), and reprints of pages from

Artforum, *The New York Times Magazine*, and *Art in America*. The final twenty five pages of knotted forms that the artist made in the 1970s feature wall pieces made of sprayed aluminum and zinc on plaster and cotton and another piece made with acrylic paint, gold enamel and sparkles on cotton bunting and aluminum screen. *Knossos 1977*, made of gold and sparkling knots, fills several of these final pages.

In the past decade, small catalogues on Benglis have been published to accompany exhibitions in commercial galleries in New York and Philadelphia. This book, therefore, is a singular contribution to the literature on Lynda Benglis. •

Corinne Robins is an art critic and poet. Among her five books of poetry are *One Thousand Years* (2004) and *Facing It Again* (2009).

Color Moves: Art & Fashion by Sonia Delaunay

edited by Matilda McQuaid and Susan Brown. With contributions by Matteo de Leeuw-de Monti and Petra Timmer
New York: Smithsonian, Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, 2011

Reviewed by Jan Garden Castro

Everything Sonia Delaunay (1885–1979) created was art. She was among the first, from her earliest art studies in Germany and Paris until her death at age ninety-four, to literally spend every day making art in a range of media. *Color Moves: Art & Fashion by Sonia Delaunay* is the catalog of the exhibition held at the New York City's Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum in 2011. Like the exhibition, the catalog mainly features the textile, fabric, and photo collection of Matteo de Leeuw-de Monti, the grandson of the founder of Metz & Co., a trend-setting department store in Amsterdam that commissioned original fabrics from Sonia Delaunay, chairs and tables by Rietveld, rugs by Bart van der Leek, and other innovative art/design work

during the 1930s. The catalog presents color images of a handful of the artist's art and fashion from the 1920s, but mainly presents textile swatches, bolts of fabric, documentary photographs, work by a few other Metz & Co. artists, and other historic materials. The catalog design and layout, starting with a close-up cover image of green, blue, and red shapes on a thinly-woven fabric and full-page reproductions of fabric designs, are exemplary in highlighting textile production as an aspect of Delaunay's artistic output.

This is the ninth book and exhibition since 1992 on which Matteo de Leeuw-de Monti and Dutch Curator Petra Timmer have collaborated and the first American publication of these materials. Substantial essays by these two principals follow a short introductory summary of the artist's fashion career by Matilda McQuaid, Cooper-Hewitt's Head of Textiles and Deputy Curatorial Director. McQuaid presents some basics regarding Delaunay's historically significant work, *La Prose du Transsibérien et de la petite Jehanne de France* (1913). Delaunay's vividly hued abstract design is coupled with Blaise Cendrars' rambling poem about a train ride from



Fig. 1. Two models in Sonia Delaunay's boulevard Malesherbes studio (1925). Photo: Germaine Krull. Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris.

Russia to Paris, which is set in varied hues and varied sizes and faces of type. This pioneering collaboration of abstract art and poetry unfolds to "stand" tall—a human-sized vertical work that sym-

bologically “joins” visual and verbal languages in a sort of embrace.

Petra Timmer’s essay on Delaunay’s fashions and fabrics is an introductory primer on the subject, taking the reader from the artist’s birth to her first textile art objects in 1911, including an abstract baby quilt for her son Charles. Delaunay’s “Simultaneous Dress” of 1913 is mentioned but not illustrated, nor are the simultaneous vests Delaunay made for her artist husband Robert Delaunay and their artist friends. The outbreak of World War I found the family in Spain and Portugal, where the artist founded Casa Sonia, her first attempt to produce fashions and home décor for clients including Sergei Diaghilev and his Ballets Russes company members. Timmer’s comments on Delaunay’s textile productions in Portugal and Spain, her return to Paris in the 1920s, and her simultaneous fashions in the 1920s are summarized in short chapters. A 1923–24 wool embroidery-on-cotton coat for Gloria Swanson is one highlight of this section. Starting on page 42 and continuing to the end of the 204-page book, the bulk of the illustrations and text focus on Delaunay’s textile designs of the 1930s. Timmer

summarizes design highlights between 1911 and 1936 and the artist’s relationship with Metz & Co. Much of this information appears in her books in Dutch, Portuguese, and other languages.

About halfway through the color-filled catalog, Matteo de Leeuw-de Monti takes over, providing two essays on Delaunay’s designs for Metz & Co. and the dating of her fabric designs. His friendship with Sonia Delaunay since he was a boy, and his deep familiarity not only with the materials his family collected, which are now preserved in several institutions, but also with the artist’s daily journal, a handwritten, multi-volume record housed at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, is evident in his essays, which are a highlight of the book. Metz & Co. has had American imitators (if we consider Martha Stewart and Isaac Mizrahi retail items as such), but Metz was remarkable for commissioning what is now museum-quality work from Marcel Breuer, Le Corbusier, Ludwig Mies van de Rohe, René Lalique, and many artists starting in the 1920s. De Leeuw-de Monti is passionate about Delaunay’s roles both as an artist for Metz & Co. and as a friend of the family. He also offers an oblique

reference to his grandfather’s romantic attraction to her, for which he cites one of her journal entries—without, however, revealing the entry’s contents.

In sum, *Color Moves: Art & Fashion by Sonia Delaunay* chronicles an important chapter in Sonia Delaunay’s art-filled, eventful life, giving readers a good idea about how she earned her living supporting her husband and son as a couturier and fabric designer during the 1930s, which was a difficult time for the arts. It skims over the first part of the artist’s career, and, except for *La Prose du Transsibérien*, keeps the focus on the artist’s fashions and textiles. It includes one painting from 1939 and one from 1946 but does not discuss the artist’s innovative paintings or prints or anything after 1936. Delaunay’s body of work foreshadowed the twenty-first century view that great art should not be limited to painting. •

Jan Garden Castro is a New York City-based curator, author, and arts consultant. Her exhibition and catalog *Sonia Delaunay: La Moderne* traveled to four venues in Japan and to the Jane V. Zimmerli Museum at Rutgers University in 2002.

Modern Women: Women Artists at the Museum of Modern Art

edited by Cornelia Butler and
Alexandra Schwartz
Museum of Modern Art, 2010

Reviewed by Nina Gara Bozicnik

In 1984, the white, male-dominated roster of MoMA’s exhibition, “An International Survey of Painting and Sculpture,” enlivened Linda Nochlin’s famous 1971 inquiry: “Why have there been no great women artists?” The exhibition invited protest over the proportionally small number of women included in MoMA’s collections and programs, and it inspired the founding of the artist-activist collaborative, the Guerilla Girls, in 1985. In 2007, MoMA invited this group along with acclaimed scholars, historians, artists, and curators

to participate in “The Feminist Future: Theory and Practice in the Visual Arts” symposium, part of its Women’s Project, an institution-wide initiative aimed at examining the role of feminist inquiry in the production of meaning and its potential as a site to “reshuffle the twentieth-century narrative” (18).

Inspired by *Femmes@Pompidou*, the 2008 Paris exhibition and catalogue, *Modern Women* is the first-ever survey of women artists, designers, filmmakers, sculptors, and architects in MoMA’s collection. Featuring over fifty essays and more than three hundred artists, the publication aims to move beyond the dated discourse of women’s exclusion and proposes alternatives to the problematic measure of merely inserting women into the existing modernist narrative. Instead, as art historian Griselda Pollock asserts in her essay, “The Missing Future: MoMA and

Modern Women,” the goal is to reorganize the whole structure of modernism by “understanding that modern art was created by diverse men and women, side by side, in various forms of conversation, rivalry, and difference” (51). Pollock’s text provides a foundation for *Modern Women*, chronicling the gendering of modernism and subsequent practices at MoMA that persisted despite women’s fundamental role in creating modern society.

Additional essays examine the institutionalization of feminism and complicate its operative mechanisms, posing methodological, theoretical, and practical platforms from which feminist perspectives might operate within scholarship and the museum. In “Fundamental to the Image: Feminism and Art in the 1980s,” Johanna Burton denounces a codified, historical feminism operative in the 1980s, and instead calls for a criti-