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(Front cover) Maren Hassinger, *The Window* (2021). Installation at Dia Art Foundation, Bridgehampton, NY. Exterior, two bushes in steel; Interior, hanging fabric with images. A window provides a view onto the exterior sculptures.

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A surprising number of articles were submitted for consideration during the most restrictive months of the pandemic. Indicative of our international readership, the proposals were sent from various countries in Europe, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East. The editors are grateful to these authors. From Israel, we here include Shahr Marnin-Distelfeld's article on the multimedia artist Miri Abramsohn. A "second-generation Holocaust survivor," Abramsohn represents the plight of (now adult) children of parents who lived through the horrors of the Nazi invasion. Abramsohn's parents (who married after the War and the loss of their families) bore witness to the lifelong impact of cruelty and death. These children, writes Marnin-Distelfeld, were designated not only to serve as a lifeline for their parents who survived the war atrocities but to fill their lives with new meaning, providing compensation and a substitute for their lost families, communities, and previous lives. Based on an interview with Abramsohn and a discussion of theoretical writings about the second-generation Holocaust survivors and their art, Marnin-Distelfeld shows how the work of Abramsohn and other Israeli artists relates to and embodies these concepts.

The remaining articles focus on three distinctive groups of US artists from different eras. Stephanie Sparling Williams, a young African-American scholar and a curator at the Mount Holyoke Art Museum, here presents a comparative study of two contemporary sculptors, Maren Hassinger and Mary Ann Unger. Although their sculptures have shared space, appearing in the same large outdoor installations, and they became friends, this study brings their work into dialogue for the first time. Writes Sparling Williams, "... bringing these two artists together satisfies a personal and political goal ... and that is to rigorously integrate in research, writing, and exhibition the work of important Black women artists across time and media with the significant contributions of often also underrepresented peers." On our cover is a recent sculpture by Hassinger, an African-American artist, whose public art project will be on display for a year at the Dia Art Foundation. Tragically, Mary Ann Unger passed away in 1998, from cancer, at the height of her professional career, including a Guggenheim Fellowship and sculptural projects accepted for public sites. Sparling Williams honors both artists here with her elegant and insightful writing about their lives, their friendship, and their work.

More light-hearted is an article documenting the experiences of Abstract Expressionist women artists from New York and California who were celebrated, exhibited, and had their work embraced by a community of artists and collectors in Amarillo, Texas. The story of *The Women: Tops in Art*, a 1960 exhibition in Amarillo, is brought to life by Amy Von Lintel and Bonnie Roos. During the 1950s, art teacher and visionary Dord Fitz held classes and workshops across West Texas and Oklahoma, to introduce Abstract Expressionism to artists and collectors in the region. He also organized trips to New York, establishing relationships with galleries and with a number of women artists, who were then competing for attention with their male counterparts. Prior to the 1960 show, the Dord Fitz gallery had shown works by many of the AbEx painters, both male and female. Elaine de Kooning had come to Amarillo several times

for talks and workshops, and she and Jeanne Reynal recruited "top" artists for 1960 show. Among the seventeen participating artists were painters Hedda Sterne, Pat Passloff, Jane Wilson, Jane Freilicher, Mickey Wagstaff, Helen Frankenthaler, Yvonne Thomas, Ethel Schwabacher, Mariam Shapiro and Janice Biala. Several pieces were purchased by the Texas collectors, including Louise Nevelson's wall-size *Moon Garden*, which now has a permanent home in the Amarillo Museum of Art.

We are pleased to acknowledge the centennial of women's suffrage in our pages. Nicole J. Williams's "'Graphic Statues,' Female Monuments, Media Publicity, and the Struggle for Suffrage" offers some visual evidence of the obstacles that were overcome. While Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, and Sojourner Truth were among those struggling for women's rights, parallel efforts for "self-advertisement" sought to gain more lasting recognition for them through public artworks. Sculptor Adelaide Johnson's *Portrait Monument* of 1921, honoring Mott, Stanton, and Anthony, spent seven decades virtually out of sight before being restored to the US Capitol Rotunda in 1997. More recently, public sculptures related to women's suffrage continue to be dedicated, including the 2020 *Women's Rights Pioneers* monument featuring Anthony, Stanton, and Truth, in New York City's Central Park.

Among the reviews in this issue is Ann Sutherland Harris's detailed commentary on a recent publication and exhibition at the National Gallery, London, for Artemisia Gentileschi. Because the exhibition was scheduled to open during the pandemic and attendance would be greatly reduced, the curator and designer took special care in representing the works, so that "[b]rowsing through the catalogue can feel like standing so close to a painting that the guards will ask you to step back." One of our foremost scholars of Renaissance and Baroque art, Sutherland Harris's insights and remarks on the exhibition, the catalogue essayists, and the state of research on Artemisia are significant contributions to the ongoing study of this exceptional artist.

Other review topics are far ranging, from a book on contemporary feminist art and art history from the Middle East and North Africa, to a well-researched study on Autotheory, "the commingling of theory and philosophy with autobiography—as a mode of critical artistic practice indebted to feminist writing and activism." An unusual exhibition catalogue documents ephemera including press clippings, court sketches, and a variety of archival materials related to the Black activist Angela Davis and the international movement for her liberation in connection with a 1970s court case. Another new study refigures the much-written-about Ana Mendieta as "an artist and interlocutor of the Black Atlantic." These and more are included in *WAJ*'s selection of reviews in this issue.

As always, we are appreciative of the team that makes *WAJ* possible, our excellent book editor Aliza Edelson, Ian Mellanby and Guy Griffiths at Old City Publishing, and our friends at Rutgers University.

Joan Marter and Margaret Barlow
Editors, *Woman's Art Journal*

dance after the moment of the performance's ending, regardless of whether those forms were themselves photographic or not, were at some point mediated through photographic form. This larger issue, of dance in the age of its technological reproduction, say, is only implicitly suggested by Funkenstein's emphasis on mass media as a realm of representation as important for her research as painting and drawing. How many of these artists were actually viewing performances as opposed to seeing them already mediated through photographic form? I was led to this question upon seeing the striking comparison in the book of Paul Klee's drawing *Chinese Beauty (Precision)* (1927), and an illustrated page of the *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung (BIZ)* portraying Anna May Wong. The two "bear a direct similarity," according to Funkenstein, leading her to question "whether *BIZ* was the initial impetus for the Precision series, whether Klee's titles followed *BIZ*'s example, and whether Klee began the series with *Chinese Beauty*"—a series that included an unnamed portrait of Josephine Baker (160).

Though left unanswered, these questions are fascinating, but just as significant is the more fundamental issue to which they lead, which is whether dance could effectively *not be seen* outside of its mediation through technological reproduction, from film and photography to print media and the illustrated magazines. If that were the case, what implications would such a thesis hold for Funkenstein's concern with dance's representational character during these years? Furthermore, what would it say about technology's impact on the body—a topic broached explicitly in her last chapter on Schlemmer's *Gesamttanzwerk* and its iconography of metal (complete with connotations of armored bodies following Prussia's military defeat)? Would it help us to understand the contradictions at play in her conclusion, in which she points to how "images of dance declined in painting but increased in film" with the rise of National Socialist aesthetics, particularly the public dance spectacles in films like Leni Riefenstahl's *Olympia*? Here, instead of Schlemmer's quasi-mechanical figures, we have the archaic

return of the idealized Aryan physique but mediated through one of the most modern of representational forms, film. At the end of the book, the reader is left wondering, where exactly then should one locate the modernity of movement? In the body or its representation? •

Jordan Troeller is Lecturer in the history of modern art and theory at the University of Graz in Austria. Her recent publications have appeared in *Hyperallergic*, *October*, *The Burlington Magazine*, and, most recently, *Object Lessons: The Bauhaus and Harvard* (Harvard Art Museums, 2021).

Notes

1. Yvonne Rainer, "A Quasi Survey of Some 'Minimalist' Tendencies in the Quantitatively Minimal Dance Activity Midst the Plethora, or an Analysis of Trio A," (1966) in *Minimal Art: A Critical Survey*, ed. Gregory Battcock (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1995 [1968]), 271.
2. Whitney Elaine Laemmler, "The Choreography of Everyday Life: Rudolf Laban and the Making of Modern Movement," PhD diss., Univ. of Pennsylvania, 2016.

Women, Aging and Art: A Crosscultural Anthology

Edited by Frima Fox Hofrichter and
Midori Yoshimoto
Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2021

Reviewed by Catherine McCormack

This anthology opens excitedly with a lighthearted anecdote from one of the co-editors about confronting her own aging features in 2008, and the determination to correct what she saw as the invisibility of old women within art historical scholarship. While the former observation is an unusually whimsical point of departure for Frima Fox Hofrichter and Midori Yoshimoto's volume, the latter assumption may be an overly confident claim. Hofrichter and Yoshimoto's collection of essays joins an established corpus of critical work on female senescence in visual culture, which

includes Erin J. Campbell's *Growing Old in Early Modern Europe* (2006), an edited volume, and the monograph *Old Women and Art in the Early Modern Italian Domestic Interior* (2016), along with Cathy McGlynn, Margaret O'Neill, and Michaela Schrage-Früh's *Ageing Women in Literature and Visual Culture* (2017).

Rather than make claims for innovation within the field, then, perhaps what the editors might have chosen to emphasize is the anthology's impressive global reach (what the editors refer to as "cross-cultural"), with essays attending to visual culture from Europe to the Polynesian Marquesas Islands, and the art of the Americas (including the pre-settler communities on the Northwest coast) to West Africa and Japan. These are approached with a variety of historical methods, taking in postcolonialism, feminist theory, social history and traditional connoisseurship, unfurled over twelve chapters that are

held together by a uniting thematic of representations of elderly women in a variety of media—from carved masks to painted portraits, photographs, prints, and paintings. (An obvious omission within this cadre is a contribution concerned with the art of Southern Asia, which would have been a welcome enrichment of the comparative analysis across different visual cultures offered by the volume.)

The opening six chapters of the anthology are dedicated to the field of medieval and early modern visual culture, with the first few chapters building on well-developed feminist art historical discourses concerned with images that belie a European misogynistic world view and deep social anxieties about women, aging, and agency. Unsurprisingly, the generalized visual archetype of the witch or the hag is central to these discussions. M.E. Warlick's opening essay considers the disappearance of

female herbalists and pharmacists in illustrated manuals and textbooks for herbal preparations, and the contiguous proliferation of what became archetypal images of malevolent witches around a boiling cauldron as the professionalization of the medicinal and apothecary roles evicted women practitioners from places of learning.

The theme of disappearing women continues with Zirka Z. Filipczak's analysis of the evolution of representations of religious women in the seventeenth century from serial prints and books of emblems. Filipczak focuses on three case studies: the New Testament prophetess Anna, the Sibyls, and the personification of Heresy as an old woman with withered drooping breasts. Of the three, Heresy, made deliberately repulsive as an aging woman, is the most compelling discussion for understanding how the external physical characteristics of female maturity took on moral implications, and how this was bolstered by the regular representation of its opposite, Virtue, as a pert breasted, smooth-skinned young woman. The theme continues with Jane Kromm's essay on the association of elderly women with the deadly sins of anger, envy, and avarice in images in which anger and envy all become indexical to the physical characteristics of old age. Kromm links these to discourses about gender, property, and community in illuminating ways and the threat posed by these feminized vices. With both essays an emphasis on or discussion of the elite male spectatorship that consumed these images would have offered another rich angle.

But while some women were becoming less visible in visual culture, Diane Wolfthal's essay argues that others were becoming more visible—chiefly mature female servants whose presence and identity were recorded as sitters, even when the developments in architectural design of grand homes did much to limit the visible presence of working staff.

The rolling momentum of feminist historical method in the opening chapters of the book is dramatically interrupted by Paul Crenshaw's contri-

bution, which draws largely on traditional connoisseurship and formal analysis to determine the identity of a mature woman in a painting by Frans Hals in the Metropolitan Museum of Art presumed to be an elderly Judith Leyster (1609–60). Crenshaw's is the only essay in the volume that focuses on archival provenance and speculative formal visual analysis over a critical method. The reader is invited to compare and contrast different images of Leyster on the grounds of "girth," "weight," and "fulness" with scant material on offer to reflect on Leyster's social and political position as both an artist and mature woman sitter of the late seventeenth century beyond such superficialities. A more probing discussion of portraits of female maturity can be found in Vanessa Rocco's essay on Lucia Moholy's (1894–1989) photographs of stateswoman Clara Zetkin (1857–1933) and the aesthetic of New Vision photography in which the elderly orator is read as a symbol of idealized heroicism, although at times the analysis risks sentimentalization and an overdependence on biographical discursions.

The denigration and vilification of elderly women in European visual culture discussed in the volume's early essays is in direct contrast to three essays that explore an indexical relationship among age, social status, and authority in matrilineal societies in non-global north countries. Megan A. Smetzer problematizes the assumptions that Haida masks of mature, high-ranked Haida women from the northern Northwest Coast of America were produced to satisfy the demand for souvenirs for Euro-American fur traders in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and instead argues for the overlooked centrality of mature women to indigenous Haida ritual. Carol Ivory's essay narrates a potted history of the colonial transformation of the social roles and sexual identity of Polynesian people of the Marquesas Islands via a discussion of the portraits of two Marquesan



Fig. 1. Louise Nevelson and *Moon Garden*, New York, 1958. Photo by Walter Sanders / The LIFE Picture Collection / Getty Images.

women, Paetini and Vaekehu, and the evolution of their visual depictions over the nineteenth century during the period of contact with and infiltration by colonial settlers. Ivory mobilizes a critique of the so-called "dusky maiden" archetype of the exoticized, sexually available non-western woman and sets up a tantalizing trope for the "dusky matriarch," but without ever fulfilling this potentially compelling angle of enquiry.

Susan Kart's essay looks to a different relationship between sexuality and empowerment in a discussion of the Sowo masks (carved wooden head-pieces) worn by Mende women, who, unusually for mask-wearing ritual performing societies in West Africa, were not only the performers but the primary commissioners of their sculpted ceremonial masks that denoted their status as elders with social authority. This authority and "autonomy" that Kart describes included playing a key role in girls' initiation into Sande society—which traditionally entailed performing what the author describes as "genital modification" but which is routinely described by the international community as female genital mutilation (FGM). Kart's essay examines the controversy over the place of such helmet masks in museum collections in light of the perceived barbarism of the initiation rituals. Kart

seems to privilege (problematically for this reader) the right for Sande women to “dictate their own femininity and to thwart the norms of Euro-American society by shaping their daughter’s genitals” (150) without examining how FGM serves the wider interests of patriarchal authority over women’s bodies and their sexual pleasure—in an attempt to avoid slipping into the colonist’s language of finding fault with more “primitive,” less “civilized” societies. Women’s aging seems here to be a phantom heuristic as the author shifts focus away from FGM to argue that the solution to the dilemma faced by museums in how they acknowledge or tacitly condone or erase discussion of genital mutilation would be to include narratives from older women who did not speak negatively of the practice; however, Kart does not offer any such narrative or example of visual culture to support or elucidate how the experiences of elderly women would change these implications.

The central trope of the aging woman as witch returns later in the volume, with Johana Ruth Epstein’s richly argued discussion of American sculptor Louise Nevelson (1899–1988). Epstein explores the artist’s inversion of the malignant stereotype into a figure of

aging female power as an astute means to capture the interest of a mainstream audience in the 1950s. Given Epstein’s recurring motif of domestic objects, the author presents interesting strands of enquiry around the entanglement of the figure of the hostess and witch in Nevelson’s self-curated persona (Fig. 1), which offer interesting points of reflection, ones that could also potentially have been enlivened by a reflection on the Marxist-feminist movements of the 1970s that overlapped the figure of the witch with the oppression of women in the home.

Rachel Middleman’s essay on Joan Semmel’s (b. 1932) unflinching nude self-portraiture as a mature female artist strikes a key note in the anthology with its discussion of agency, aging, sexuality, identity, and, most importantly, visibility of aging female bodies as creative bodies that matter. This is bolstered by Midori Yoshimoto’s essay on Japanese artist Miwa Yanagi (b. 1967) that concludes the anthology. Yoshimoto positions Yanagi’s photography and performance as an interruption to the standard Japanese cultural trope of the elderly woman as cannibalistic devouring crone, with works that play with the relationship between female old age and youth, and center the “transcendental grandmoth-

ers” for whom the societal pressures of the performance of femininity are obsolete in exchange for freedom and creativity in old age. Both Yoshimoto’s analysis and Yanagi’s content resist any collapse into sentimentality and explore elements of the uncanny and discomfiting elements of folklore and Japanese fairy tales that infuse the artist’s corpus.

Reading the back cover, much of the rich and at times provocative content of *Women, Aging, and Art* is obscured behind an overdetermined idea of beauty as a value signifier, with a tendency in some appraisals to insist that geriatric women can be beautiful as opposed to demolishing beauty as a value judgment on women’s bodies altogether. This anthology is much more than a consciousness-raising project to comfort the aging female readers or women “anxious” about their wrinkles that the book’s dedication addresses. It reveals as much insight into the at times conflicting and contrasting approaches to art historical method as it provides material for comparative analysis from a global and largely decolonized perspective. •

Catherine McCormack is a consultant lecturer at Sotheby’s Institute of Art in London and an independent curator.

Angela Davis: Seize the Time

Edited by Gerry Beegan and Donna Gustafson with contributions by Angela Y. Davis, Nicole R. Fleetwood, René de Guzman, and Lisbet Tellefsen
Hirmer and Zimmerli Art Museum,
Rutgers University, 2020

Reviewed by Rebecca VanDiver

In 1972 the African American artist Elizabeth Catlett (1915–2012), then living in Mexico, created a serial portrait of the political activist and Black feminist Angela Y. Davis (b. 1944) entitled *Angela Libre* (Fig. 1). The horizontal silkscreen features Davis’s recognizable face with her well-known natural hairstyle repeated six times in varying rainbow colors on a shiny sheet of metal

foil. Catlett based her print on a photograph of Davis, one of the many that circulated widely in the media between 1969 and 1972. At the time of Catlett’s printmaking, the then twenty-eight-year old Davis sat in jail awaiting trial for her connection to an August 1970 armed attack at a California courthouse. Davis’s October 1970 arrest ignited an international movement for her liberation. Catlett’s silkscreen, titled in Spanish, was one of the myriad visual objects produced in service of the ensuing Free Angela Davis campaign and is part of a larger body of visual culture that takes Davis’s image as a referent.¹ A number of these impressive images, including Catlett’s *Angela Libre*, are included in *Angela Davis – Seize the Time*, an exhibition that opened in September 2021 at the Zimmerli Art Museum at

Rutgers University. With Catlett’s appropriation of a mass media image, subsequent repetition and reproduction of Davis’s iconic visage, and use of the print medium, *Angela Libre* opens onto several themes tackled in *Seize the Time*, among them an “exploration of the politically charged image of Angela Davis” (7), contemporary artistic engagements with Davis’s image, and the significance of print and ephemera to Davis’s place in the history of Black liberation struggles. Co-curated by Donna Gustafson, curator of American art at the Zimmerli, and Gerry Beegan, chair of the Department of Art and Design in the Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers, *Seize the Time* takes Davis and her image as subject. The exhibition presents “magazines, press photography, court sketches, videos, music, writings, and