



The Modern Woman Revisited: Paris Between the Wars

Whitney Chadwick, Ms. Tirza True Latimer

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The contributions of female artists to the development of literary and artistic modernism in early twentieth century France remain poorly understood. It was during this period that a so-called “modern woman” began occupying urban spaces associated with the development of modern art and modernism’s struggles to define subjectivities and sexualities. Whereas most studies of modernism’s formal innovations and its encouragement of artistic autonomy neglect or omit necessary discussions of gender, race, class, and sexual orientation, the contributors of *The Modern Woman Revisited* inject these perspectives into the discussion.

Between the two World Wars, Paris served as the setting for unparalleled freedom for expatriate as well as native-born French women, who enjoyed unprecedented access to education and opportunities to participate in public artistic and intellectual life. Many of these women made lasting contributions in art and literature. Some of the artists discussed include Colette, Tamara de Lempicka, Sonia Delaunay, Djuna Barnes, Augusta Savage, and Lee Miller.

In this book, an internationally recognized roster of art historians, literary critics, and other scholars offers a nuanced portrait of what it meant to be a modern woman during this decisive period of modernism’s development. Individual essays explore the challenges faced by women in the early decades of the twentieth century, as well as the strategies these women deployed to create their art and to build meaningful lives and careers. The introduction underscores the importance of the contributors’ efforts to engender larger questions about modernity, sexuality, race, and class.

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