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Heather Dawkins, *The Nude in French Art and Culture, 1870–1910*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002, 231 pp., 60 black-and-white illus., $107 Cdn.

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Aller au sommaire du numéro

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the 'birth trauma,' the shock to get into our outer unassorted scene ... we all slip right into the hands of the architect" (p. 55). It is Rank's understanding of the house as the independent subject's material defense against the fear of detachment that is at work here, rather than Freud's notion of the house as enabling a surrogate return to the womb. If architecture, for Neutra, constitutes a site in which the traumatized subject can express a desire for self-negation and the loss of identity through regression into the spatial environment, the proper role of the architect is thus understood to lie in the production of spaces that offer protection against this unconscious wish. The house (and, more often than not, the architect) becomes a transference object with which the client can identify and fall in love.

Reich's theories of "orgone" energy (the unreleased tension of which is the source of neurosis) and the boxes he built to accumulate these energies, had a popular appeal in the new wave of "bohemian" counterculture in 1940s and '50s America. That these bohemians were among Neutra's clients in this period, and that "his work shared with Reich's not only the same ambition – to provide climate control, better sex, improved health, and happiness itself – but the same cultural milieu" (p. 75), allows Lavin to draw parallels between the former's houses and the latter's ideas of libidinal energy. Neutra's Chuey house of 1956, for example, is described by the architect as a space of "vibrating life" arousing the sensory apparatus of its inhabitants and resulting in "energy transactions" (p. 79). The layering of materials within these houses (corresponding to a similar layering in Reich's orgone boxes), and the production of indefinite environments within and without (through sliding window walls, glass corners, interpenetration of interior and exterior spaces), point for Lavin to a concern with directing and harnessing different forms of psychic and atmospheric energy. In turn, the tangible concern with energy links the design with a contemporary current of interest in psychic stimulation and altered states of consciousness.[4]

Lavin's account moves Neutra from the margins of architectural modernism to the atmospheric and energetic centre of contemporary environmental design. In doing so, it also attempts to shift architectural history away from its drive toward a comprehensive narrative of modernism, a drive evidenced by increasingly localized studies that do not significantly depart from received ideas. In place of this, Lavin points toward a mode of history that pays "as much attention to what might have been as to what happened" (p. 139), and to the other histories of modernism (such as that of psychoanalysis) to which architecture belongs. This new history is as compelling as it is timely. It follows on decades in which many architects and architectural historians fulfilled in the present the image of neutral and passionless design they projected onto the past. Or, as Lavin argues on the last page of this book, "Neutra's architecture does not dull the mind but instead generates mood. And that's why we like it now" (p. 144).

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Notes

1 A short list of recent works dealing with affect and subjectivity in modern architecture would have to include Anthony Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* (Cambridge, Mass., 1992) and *Warped Space: Art, Architecture, and Anxiety in Modern Culture* (Cambridge, Mass., 2000); Kathleen James-Chakraborty, *German Architecture for a Mass Audience* (London, 2000); Mark Jarzombek, *The Psychologizing of Modernity: Art, Architecture, and History* (Cambridge, 2000); Jeffrey Kipnis, ed., *Mood River*, exh. cat., Columbus, Wexner Center for the Arts (Columbus, 2002). Recent conferences on Architecture and Psychoanalysis organized by Mark Cousins at the Architectural Association in London in 2000 and by Peggy Deamer at Yale in 2003 attest to ongoing work in the field.

2 The key reference here is the important collection of primary sources *Empathy, Form, and Space: Problems in German Aesthetics, 1873–1893*, eds Harry Francis Mallgrave and Eleftherios Ikonomou (Santa Monica, 1994). Also valuable is Mitchell Schwarzer, *German Architectural Theory and the Search for Modern Identity* (Cambridge, 1995), and Jarzombek, *The Psychologizing of Modernity*.

3 Sylvia Lavin, *Quatremère de Quincy and the Invention of a Modern Language of Architecture* (Cambridge, Mass., 1992).

4 That the Chueys were followers of Reich and the guru Krishnamurti, who opened their house to groups engaging in orgone box use and early experiments with LSD, makes the energetic atmosphere of their house as envisioned by Neutra appear a potent contributor to this current.

Heather Dawkins, *The Nude in French Art and Culture, 1870–1910*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002, 231 pp., 60 black-and-white illus., $107 Cdn.

In 1956 Kenneth Clark outlined what he saw as important distinctions between the naked and the nude by concluding that:

> To be Naked is to be deprived of our clothes, and the word implies some of the embarrassment most of us feel in that condition. The word "nude", on the other hand, carries, in educated usage, no uncomfortable overtone. The vague image it projects into the mind is not of a huddled and defenceless body, but a balanced, prosperous, and confident body: the body re-formed.[1]

Clark's much-cited differentiation paved the way for a discursive practice that aestheticized the body, marking it as "ideal," classical, and faultless, emphatically removing it from the flesh's more mundane and sundry experiences of being-in-the-world. What this invariably revivified and seemingly proved was a purportedly inherent and asymmetrical power dynamic enacted by an active patriarchal (desiring) viewer and passive (desired) female object, a relationship legitimized in the canon of academic art since the eighteenth century. In opposition to Clark's patriarchal formula, Lynda Nead has argued that what underlines his approach is a binary that reaffirms the mind/body dyad constructed through a male/female opposition that renders female, femininity, and feminine inferior.[2] Always on the losing end of this equation, the female is never a free agent, but rather a supple and porous surface on which the ink of male desire is inscribed.

Just when one thought no more could be written on the subject of the nude, Heather Dawkins reminds us in *The Nude in French Art and Culture, 1870–1910* how the (unclothed) body services as a site of numerous social interdictions far exceeding the exclusionary realm of artistic production and patronage. In an era of deep political and cultural conservatism in which gender roles are being steadily remapped, layered over familiar, traditional, and seemingly safe ones, Dawkins's examination of the female nude is a welcome addition to an already substantial corpus.

By exploring the various avenues through which the nude was experienced and understood through the eyes of women, Dawkins demonstrates how French artists, critics, and models of the Third Republic circumvented an exclusionary system to reconceptualize their subjectivity and desire, as well as their own relationship with the female body. In the end, the author successfully establishes "the diversity, complexity, and instability of spectatorship of the nude in the early Third Republic" (p. 60). In Dawkins's remapping of the nude between 1870 and 1910, women are not outside or even on the margins of culture, but full and often precarious participants, forging identities at once based on old exclusionary models (connoisseur, art critic) while resorting to new voices of intellectual vigour and artistic zeal.

In lucid, straightforward, and economical prose, Dawkins illuminates throughout her four discreet yet interrelated case studies that the nude and naked are neither separate nor estranged. The body is always *the* site of social, cultural, and psychical constructions, for as Nead reminds us the naked like the nude "is always already in representation."[3] In chapter one, Dawkins begins with an investigation of the historically and culturally fraught relationship between the state and power and censorship, a relationship that clearly informs the author's subsequent case studies. As a socially condoned act of suppression facilitated under the auspices of public morality, security, and decency, censorship for Dawkins is itself a form of spectatorship unexamined until this present study (p. 8). The question then is one of positioning. Whether man or women, judge or artist, model or critic, each weighed in on the debate on the nude and public decency in the republican French capital, which purported to guarantee *Egalité, Fraternité, et Liberté* for all. In 1881, official censorship of images was abolished, but in the previous system images were submitted for approval by the censorship administration. The administration's censorial spectatorship was to discern the boundary between the "art of the nude" and obscenity and to carry out its rigorous and unforgiving process of vetting. This boundary was never made clear, nor was it ever systematized, which resulted in numerous cases of discrepancies arbitrarily ruled over by the administration. Photographs of naked men and women, for example, may have proven too scandalous for the public sphere, but could pass as *academies* for artists who would transform them into the ideal, the nude. Despite the steadfast and traditional academic notion long set in place to safeguard the use (and abuse) of the nude as embodied Truth and Beauty, the state more than ever felt itself responsible for the well-being of each and every spectator. The strong and steady guiding hand of the Catholic Church, with its palpable influence on the state of the Moral Order in the Republic, was painfully felt by illustrators, painters, sculptors, and photographers alike and underpinned every legal decision, shift in cultural perception, and discursive strategy purportedly toward the betterment of society's moral well-being.

Central to many of the illustrations and paintings discussed in the text, the Catholic Church more often than not loomed large in critics' scathing visual and literary attacks on the government and censorship. Taken from *La Prostitution contemporaine* by Gabriel Antoine Jogand-Pages (a.k.a. Léo Taxi) and confiscated by the police in 1884, two prints, *Le Sadisme* and *Les Pédérastes*, represent acts of sexual debauchery instigated by a member of the clergy. The former represents a prelate engaged in rapturously morbid necrophilia performed with the assistance of a female prostitute acting as a corpse; in the latter illustration a clergyman fiendishly sucks on the toes of a young male prostitute while his cohorts nonchalantly go about their business. These images not surprisingly were deemed obscene by the court. However, it is worth noting that not all of the illustrations included in the series were deemed immoral. It would appear as though the mere mention or representation of prostitution in the 1880s was no longer a mitigating factor for censorship (p. 39).

It is the nude, the naked body cleaned, idolized, and idealized, which takes its honorific place in the canon of art devoid of and separate and distinct from any reference to the female

model's actual body and embodied experience, engendering the illusion of purported objective distance and realism. Undoubtedly the most overlooked relationship in the art world, the artist-model relationship is sanitized and aestheticized in the final product of the work of art bought and sold on the open market. The case of the model Alice Michel breaks with class contrivances that have long ensured the silence and absence of the working classes in nineteenth-century culture and art. After years of intolerable working conditions in Degas's studio, Michel published her revenge in the *Mercure de France* in the compelling and witty fictionalized/autobiographical account "Degas et son modèle." The story is told through the eyes of Pauline, a model who worked for almost a decade for the aged artist. Although Degas provides a regular and stable income, a rarity in most models' career, Degas nevertheless subjects Pauline to far more frustrating, gruelling, and at times painfully difficult conditions than is the norm amongst his contemporaries. Savvy and consciously aware not to challenge outright the often difficult painter, Pauline suffers in silence, at times flirts, and keenly observes her environment. In Dawkins's retelling of the story it is not Degas who is the spectator, but Michel through the eyes of Pauline, one of the many missing lenses through which nineteenth-century art can be viewed. "Degas et son modèle" was published after the artist's death and as such marks a decisive testimonial of the instability and orchestration of the roles of spectators in the theatre of class, gender, identity, and the body.

In chapter three, "Improper Appreciation," Berthe Morisot's homoeroticism, closeted by art historical writings of the nineteenth century, is given light. Courbet et al. may have portrayed lesbians rolling around, cavorting on lopsided beds, but what to make of homoeroticism from within the frame of female desire and spectatorship, from the vantage point of a female artist? What to make of the subversive and avant-garde practice of appropriating the imagery of a well known eighteenth-century academic artist (notably Francois Boucher) with his emphasis on the mythological realm of reverie, power, desire, seduction, and separation, at whose centre was the majestic and enticing Venus? Morisot's challenge is one of homoeroticism, of bodily companionship in a world of bourgeois morality and prudery, of desire beyond the frame of hetero-patriarchal (navel) gazing. The intimate embrace the women share in Dawkins's example *Apollon rélévant sa divinité à la bergère Issé* (1892), duplicitously intimates a double meaning. The first prosaic interpretation suggests a mother's tender embrace of her young daughter, while the second alludes to a homoerotic intimacy experienced only in the secluded and sheltered realm of female homosociability. As Dawkins posits, Morisot's picture may be the progenitor of an academic embryo with Boucher as its originator, but more importantly it "was reoriented and amplified within a woman's culture to which it very much belongs" (p. 131).

Dawkins certainly saves the best for last. More compelling than her overview of censorship and the state in chapter one, in chapter four, "A Defiant Imagination," Dawkins enticingly evokes how one female writer/critic, Marie de Montifaud, erotically conjured the female nude in a myriad of genres. Having left behind art criticism for good in 1877 after a successful run with a number of influential journals, Montifaud expanded her interest in female spectatorship, specifically the nude, to include other genres, notably the novel and short stories. The visual arts as an entrenched disciplinary force seemingly stifled Montifaud's creative abilities. Despite the Third Republic's repressive censorship laws to which Montifaud fell victim several times in her fascinating career, the author was relentless in her quest to satirize normative notions of femininity and Catholicism. Montifaud's novel *Madame Ducroisy*, on which Dawkins spends considerable time, is the fictional account of a Madame Ducroisy, who through the pen of Montifaud affronts public decency for her double life, her illicit affair with an artist (Aloysius Brandt), and her ability to engender the gaze of the connoisseur, officially prohibited and openly discouraged by the Salon and art schools. Here artistic practice and sexual pleasure commingle, transforming the female nude into an unparalleled object of unprecedented beauty and passion. Aesthetic form and sexuality are seamless. "Montifaud's writing on the female body is satirical, decorous, crude, and salacious," belonging to neither one definitive school nor ascribing to any sense of decorum or propriety (p. 151). For this work the Tribunal correctional found her guilty of affronting public decency, fined her five hundred francs, and sentenced her to four months imprisonment. At the heart of Dawkins's interest in Montifaud is how she defied the gendered relationship of the gaze, and how with ease, grace, and humour she assumed the compromising position of a female spectator and the power it entailed.

Understandably more difficult to locate, and admittedly a different project altogether, a fascinating study would be to investigate female spectatorship of the male body (nude or otherwise) in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Although perhaps impossible to locate enough concrete examples as illuminating as those vividly recalled in Dawkins's text, the suggestion for such a project made here would not only highlight the myriad ways in which women were full, and at times clandestine, participants in an art community that was clearly unsuccessful at exclusion, but would also further subvert the hetero-sexist paradigm in which the gaze resides.

In *The Nude in French Art and Culture* the reader is de-

lighted by provocative imagery, a peephole to absent figures in art's history, and perceptive ways of handling the gendered nature of visual culture. In short, the most significant contribution this book makes is the way in which the author discloses how women in the Third Republic discussed, represented, and delighted in the bodies of other women, away from the moral underpinnings which pepper so much of late nineteenth-century literature on the body. Thus, what makes this book unusual and compelling is how the author weaves the stories of women as full participants in culture by forging identities on their own terms, something Dawkins herself can lay claim to.

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Notes

1 Kenneth Clark, *The Nude: A Study in Ideal Form* (Garden City, New York, 1956), 23.
2 See Lyn Lynda Nead, *The Female Nude: Art, Obscenity, and Sexuality* (London and New York, 1992).
3 Nead, *The Female Nude*, 16.

Steven Harris, *Surrealist Art and Thought in the 1930s: Art, Politics, and the Psyche*. Cambridge, New York, Port Melbourne, Ruiz de Alarcón, Cape Town, Cambridge University Press, 2004, 340 pp., 35 black-and-white illus., $90.00 Cdn.

Johanna Malt, *Obscure Objects of Desire: Surrealism, Fetishism, and Politics*. Oxford, New York, Oxford University Press, 2004, 244 pp., 7 black-and-white illus., $141.00 U.S.

These new texts by Harris and Malt appear in the wake of a long period of writing on surrealism dominated by scholars associated with the journal *October* (namely Rosalind Krauss, Hal Foster, and Denis Hollier). The important work of the *October* scholars opened up the field of surrealist studies and brought it to the forefront of academic discussions, but now a new generation has begun to take research on surrealism in other directions. One of these directions is to return to the problem of political surrealism. While questions of aesthetics are imperative, it is easy to forget that when surrealism was launched in 1924 its purpose was revolution, not just a revolution of art, but a "revolution of the mind" that would change life. A collective statement issued by the Bureau de recherches surréalistes in 1925 makes this explicit: "*Surrealism* is not a new means or expression ... nor even a metaphysics of poetry. It is a means of total liberation of the mind *and of all that resembles* it. We are determined to make a Revolution."[1]

In 2003, *Surrealism, Politics and Culture*, edited by Raymond Spiteri and Donald LaCoss, signalled a new direction in scholarship. Spiteri and LaCoss lamented the lack of serious study of political surrealism in English, noting that "the revolutionary political ambitions of Surrealism ... [and] the Surrealists' ambitions for radical change and their obstinate love of freedom [have been replaced] with expensive paintings hanging in museums and poems taught in literature class."[2] That surrealist works of art are now valuable and have become part of the canon of Western art signals the merging of surrealism and the mainstream art market, something the movement's members wanted to avoid. A shift in academic discourse to address politics more overtly has not meant the end of aesthetics or theory, but has meant a change in the kinds of questions that are asked. Taking different approaches, two recently published books, *Surrealist Art and Thought in the 1930s: Art, Politics, and the Psyche* by Steven Harris and *Obscure Objects of Desire: Surrealism, Fetishism, and Politics* by Johanna Malt, take the surrealist object as a starting point for considering surrealism's relationship to politics. The focus on the surrealist object is significant, for these items, both found and assembled, marked an attempt to transcend the traditional aesthetic categories of painting and sculpture. As an "art that would no-longer-be-art," as Harris describes it, the surrealist object was the most significant development in surrealism in the 1930s and certainly warrants comprehensive study (p. 4). Where Malt's work is theoretical, however, Harris's study is historical, making the two excellent companion volumes.

One of the pitfalls of writing on surrealism is to rely solely on the movement's self-referentiality for material, adopting its own terms, without criticism. In *Obscure Objects of Desire: Surrealism, Fetishism, and Politics*, Malt attempts to overcome this predicament by analyzing the movement's literature and questioning what its practitioners preached. Malt addresses the relationship between Freudian and Marxian concepts of fetishism in surrealist objects, looking at the objects themselves as political rather than focusing on surrealist political ideology. While sexual fetishism of the surrealist objects might seem to be obvious, their commodity fetishism is less so. In her "dialectical treatment of these fetishisms in relation to the object" (p. 6), Malt intends to avoid regarding surrealism only as subjective and introspective, but instead address it as collective, objective, and political. Underlying Malt's treatment of the subject is a question applicable to other periods in the history of art: can there be a political art?

In chapter one, "Subjectivity and Revolutionary Commit-