

Joan B. Landes, *Visualizing the Nation: Gender, Representation, and Revolution in Eighteenth-Century France*. Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press, 2001, 254 pp., 60 black-and-white illus., \$41.50 U.S.

Vivian Cameron

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its failures, left art from the middle years of the century can provide a “starting point” for contemporary efforts. For Denning, the past still has a pulse.

I would argue that a brighter history of this period would require a redefinition of what counts as left-wing art. Like all mainstream art history, this book identifies “art” primarily with “painting.” But perhaps the most important works of Gropper, Jones, White, and others were their posters and cartoons. Perhaps with a shift in emphasis toward their “lesser” work, it might be possible to demonstrate that the convictions of left cultural workers from the 1930s to the 1950s did make a difference and can provide a working model for activist artists today.

PAMELA ALLARA
Brandeis University

Notes

- 1 The most obvious case in point is Barbara Rose, *American Art of the Twentieth Century* (New York, 1975); or Sam Hunter, *American Art of the 20th Century* (New York, 1972). Sadly, this is also true of more recent surveys as well, for instance, Erica Doss, *Twentieth Century American Art* (Oxford, 2002).
- 2 Hemingway’s “Select Bibliography” cites Patricia Hills, et al., *Social Concern and Urban Realism: American Painting of the 1930s* (Boston, Mass., 1983); Erika Doss, *Benton, Pollock, and the Politics of Modernism: From Regionalism to Abstract Expressionism* (Chicago, 1991); Jonathan Harris, *Federal Art and National Culture: the Politics of Identity in New Deal America* (New York, 1996); Marlene Park and Gerald E. Markowitz, *Democratic Vistas: Post Offices and Public Art in the New Deal* (Philadelphia, 1984); as well as standards by Francis V. O’Connor, *A New Deal for Art* (Washington, 1972) and *Art for the Millions* (Greenwich, Conn., 1973); and David Shapiro, *Art As A Weapon* (New York, 1973).
- 3 Park and Markowitz make this point in their discussion of another of Jones’s threshing scenes, *Democratic Vistas: Post Offices and Public Art in the New Deal*, 158.
- 4 See Andrew Hemingway’s own outstanding article on Schapiro’s politics and his criticism: “Meyer Schapiro and Marxism in the 1930s,” *Oxford Art Journal* 17, no.1 (1994), 13–29.
- 5 See Melanie Herzog, *Elizabeth Catlett: An American Artist in Mexico* (Seattle, 2000).
- 6 Hemingway, “Epilogue,” 281. Editors note: On Marion Greenwood, see Catherine Mackenzie, “Place Really Does Matter: Marion Greenwood’s 1947 ‘China’ Exhibition,” *RACAR* XXV, 1–2 (1998).
- 7 For Neel, see my *Pictures of People: Alice Neel’s American Portrait Gallery* (Hanover, NH, 1998); and Susan Rosenberg, “People as Evidence,” in Ann Temkin, ed., *Alice Neel*, exh. cat., Philadelphia Museum of Art (Philadelphia, 2000).
- 8 Frances Pohl, *Ben Shahn: New Deal Artist in a Cold War Climate, 1947–1954* (Austin, 1989). Deborah Martin Kao, Laura Katzman, and Jenna Webster, *Ben Shahn’s New York: The Photography of Modern Times*, (Cambridge, MA, 2000). Hemingway also laments the fact that a new book on William Gropper was not available at the time of his writing, when an important dissertation by Norma Steinberg, “William Gropper: Art and Censorship from the 1930s to the Cold War Era,” was completed at Boston University in 1994.
- 9 Andrew Hemingway, “Fictional Unities: ‘Antifascism’ and ‘Antifascist Art’ in 30s America,” *Oxford Art Journal* 14, no. 1, (1991), 107–17.
- 10 Hemingway, “Epilogue,” *Artists on the Left*, 280.
- 11 Walter Benjamin, “Eduard Fuchs, Collector and Historian” (1928), *One Way Street and Other Writings*, (London, 1979), 352. Hemingway states that this is the best essay ever written on historical materialism.
- 12 Michael Denning, *The Cultural Front: The Laboring of American Culture in the Twentieth Century* (London, 1997), 462.

Joan B. Landes, *Visualizing the Nation: Gender, Representation, and Revolution in Eighteenth-Century France*. Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press, 2001, 254 pp., 60 black-and-white illus., \$41.50 U.S.

In *Visualizing the Nation: Gender, Representation, and Revolution in Eighteenth-Century France*, Joan B. Landes, a historian, or as she calls herself, a “cultural archaeologist” (p. 23), focuses on the gender politics of popular imagery created during the French Revolution. As France changed politically from monarchy to constitutional monarchy and then to republic, so artists constructed images that would support the redefinition of nation as a popular sovereign body. Intermeshed with this political change was the altered position of women, which shifted from one of power in the *ancien régime* within the public sphere of the salon and court into the public arena of the street and parliament during the Revolution and subsequently to a relegation to the

private space of the family. As this trajectory is traced, Landes offers a complex analysis of women’s relationships to the numerous female visual personifications of republican values, such as the Republic, Liberty, and Equality, arguing that “the exclusion of women from the practice of revolution and their inclusion in representation reaffirmed the masquerade of equality within the masculine republic” (p. 22). Equally, Landes explores the impact that various female allegorical figures might have had on the behaviour of Revolutionary male citizens. Landes is “chiefly concerned with the role played by images of the female body in the constitution of national identity, democratic equality, and political liberty, and in shaping the manner and morals that accompanied national identity in republican France” (p. 13).

Having previously written about eighteenth-century texts that authorized a societal shift based on gender difference into separate private and public spheres, Landes here equally applies political theories and feminist analyses to visual images. In one

chapter, examining a number of caricatures, she investigates how “gendered imagery figured in the process by which the body politic was defined” (p. 18). Subsequently, she considers how women embodied virtue and vice in prints illustrating allegorical figures, such as Equality, Fraternity, Victory, as well as a few depicting specific events. In the final, and probably most original and controversial chapter, “Possessing la Patrie,” Landes explores the relationship between nationalism and sexuality that figured in the revolutionary print culture and discusses the concept of possession of the depicted sexual body of the nation or France by its male citizens. As well, she analyzes the idea of “belonging” that was projected by the images of various maternal figures, who comforted, protected, and educated the nation’s children, that is, Frenchmen.

Such an organization is an indication that the author makes “no claim to completeness” (p. 13) in investigating Revolutionary prints and that her focus is primarily on caricatures and allegories which foreground gender distinctions. Within these limits, Landes offers sophisticated analyses of individual images, such as *Necker has a Man of the Third [Estate] take Measurements for France’s New Costume* (fig. 4.1), where France’s nakedness is interpreted as standing “for the return of France to a wholly natural condition, before the country’s subjection to the overreaching power of a venal ruler” (p. 142). The reader can find equally astute comments about other prints. In some instances, one might want to re-interpret an image, particularly in the cases of works illustrating virtue and vice in chapter three, where Landes’s polarized model does not allow for the possibility that female images are examples neither of virtue nor of vice. This is the case with the Lesueur brothers’ *The Jacobin Knitters* (fig. 3.18), where the three women might not be construed as grotesque but merely unidealized women of the people. And a different interpretation might be posited for the powerful image, *Citoyens né libre*, where a robust market or peasant woman lifts her skirts and delivers an equally stalwart, already standing baby. Such a figure recalls Bouchardon’s voluminous creatures of the Paris streets that were engraved by the Comte de Caylus and issued in a series entitled *Les Cris de Paris*, in five batches from 1737–1746, a series incredibly popular amongst collectors.¹ Rather than grotesque, this woman of the people pictured in *Citoyens né libre* might be a positive example of the healthy,

strong women of the countryside, lauded in earlier medical texts for their constitution, compared to women of antiquity, and contrasted with the enervated noblewoman.² Or, the print might even be viewed allegorically.³ Such alternative readings would surely be welcomed by Landes, who states in her introduction that her studies are “meant to illuminate, but not to foreclose, further debate and discussion on the problem of gender and representation in the period” (p. 23).

Landes herself places this book within an ever-expanding group of studies of visual imagery, extending from the work of historians of the Revolutionary image such as James Leith, Maurice Agulhon, Antoine de Baecque, Claude Langlois, to the more feminist interpretations of Madelyn Gutwirth and Lynn Hunt. Finally, both historians and art historians should welcome the deft way that Landes interweaves political textual arguments with a feminist analysis of this selection of Revolutionary prints.

VIVIAN CAMERON
New Haven, Connecticut

Notes

- 1 Several of these are illustrated in Vincent Milliot, *Les “Cris de Paris”, ou, le Peuple Travesti* (Paris, 1995), 91, fig. 5; 171, fig. 16. Milliot (p. 68) notes that the drawings were also engraved by Jacques Juillet, with the ensuing prints published in 1768. The theme, *Les Cris de Paris*, can be traced back to the sixteenth century (see the chart in Milliot, p. 67). It was incredibly popular in the eighteenth century and was treated by Boucher, N. Guérard, Juillet-Crepy, Poisson, and others. Not only were the Bouchardon works popular in prints, they were even ordered as subjects for ceramics. See Milliot (p. 110) for the percentage of collectors who owned the Bouchardon series. Milliot (p. 111) recounts that the Comte d’Angiviller, Directeur général des bâtiments, ordered ceramic figures after Bouchardon’s drawings from the Sevres factory in 1788.
- 2 See, for example, M. Desessart, *Traité de l’éducation corporelle des enfants en bas âge ou Réflexions pratiques sur les moyens de procurer une meilleure constitution aux citoyens* (Paris, 1760), 397–99, 409–10.
- 3 See the entry of Françoise Reynaud in *L’Art de l’estampe et la Révolution française*, exh. cat., Paris, Musée Carnavalet (Paris, 1977), 23, no. 102, where the image is interpreted as follows: “C’est ici la naissance de l’animal politique, véritable petit homme du peuple.”

Rose Marie San Juan, *Rome: a City Out of Print*. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2001, 320 pp., 81 black-and-white illus., \$55.38 Cdn.

All roads may lead to Rome, as the popular saying goes, but in Rose Marie San Juan’s new book *Rome: a City Out of Print*, one discovers that neither the roads nor Rome are exactly as ex-

pected. While scholars of the built environment of seventeenth-century Rome, such as Richard Krautheimer or Joseph Connors, offer us architectural studies of the city based on the close study of patronage networks in the context of urban politics, San Juan instead reveals the city, or the many cities, ignored by research on the building campaigns initiated by the papacy, the religious orders, and the aristocracy. By drawing on Henri Lefebvre’s