

2 The *Künstlerehepaar*: Ideal and reality

Erika Esau

Faced with the dilemma of finding an appropriately focused topic about German women artists of the Weimar period, I began my research quite basically, by trying to uncover the women artists who were active and who until quite recently have been so forgotten. In tracking down those that I could, I was constantly surprised to find that so many of the practising women artists were married to artists; of the 40 or so that appeared during my researches at the Archiv für bildende Kunst, Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg, more than 20 were married to artists.¹ If one takes into account that several of these artists – most notably Renée Sintenis and Anita Ree – were lesbians, this statistic is even more astonishing. The number of artist-couples that surfaced was so overwhelming that it seemed to be determined by more than serendipity or coincidence, that it indicated some societal attitude, some ideological commitment, that transcended purely personal motivations. This preliminary examination, then, is an attempt to explore the phenomenon of the *Künstlerehepaar* – a term actually used in 1920s Germany – and to establish some of the significant factors determining these complex relationships, particularly as they influenced the art that was produced and the social reception of ‘artist’ in Weimar Germany.²

Numerous examples could be selected, often revealing striking similarities in terms of societal expectations and biographical inevitability based on gender. Specific focus on two of these artist-couples, however, will serve to elucidate some of the more intriguing issues, while presenting as well some important contrasts in circumstances which further distinguish between myth and reality. The Berlin artists Oskar Moll and Marg Moll and the Cologne painters Anton Räderscheidt and Marta Hegemann occupied different societal niches in terms of artistic status, but they nonetheless shared a number of cultural assumptions that provide room for compelling comparison. Both couples considered themselves ‘modern’, aligned to the idea of the avant-garde, albeit expressed in contrasting aesthetic forms. Both

relationships exhibited a quickness to change. As a couple, participating equally in their artistic production also meant that the examination of larger social and sexual situations was part of the construct of the ‘artist’ in their own couples’ own vision of their artistic creativity. Their circumstances, social and sexual situation, underwent substantive change from past to present that was not realized in an entire question of gender re-orientation, participation in the public life, the works of the artists themselves, and larger social issues can be seen in the imagery with the man’s.

The idea of the artist-couple, creative endeavours had its roots in the states, ‘Romantics extolled the once physical and spiritual intimate community of undeveloped speaking to soul’ (Honour, ostensibly egalitarian attitude, luminaries as Friedrich Schlegel, secondary position for the woman’s intellectual work was (Berger 1982 pp.33–57). As independent of women in the concept of marriage: ‘What than a formally legitimized meaning which Romantic devotion to the other person same time respect for both

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relationships exhibited a quite conscious projection of the idea of the artist-couple, participating equally in a public artistic life. Their relationships and their artistic production also offer exemplary and representative models for the examination of larger issues concerning gender, marriage and the construct of the 'artist' in this period and place. Of major concern are the couples' own vision of their roles and participation in marriage as well as in artistic creativity. Their circumstances raise the question of whether the social and sexual situation in Germany of the 1920s represented a substantive change from past patterns or was simply an intellectual argument that was not realized in actual life. Central to these considerations is the entire question of gender relations, and how these issues affected women's participation in the public life of the artist. Finally, one must consider the works of the artists themselves, to determine if anything pertaining to these larger social issues can be revealed through a comparison of the woman's imagery with the man's.

The idea of the artist-couple as a union of like-minded souls sharing creative endeavours had its roots in German Romanticism. As Hugh Honour states, 'Romantics extolled the perfect union of bodies and souls in a love at once physical and spiritual', and, in terms of their art, sought 'a more intimate community of understanding between artist and sitter . . . of "soul speaking to soul"' (Honour 1979 p.251). For women of the time, such an ostensibly egalitarian attitude, although intellectually nurtured by such luminaries as Friedrich Schlegel and Goethe, still assumed in reality a secondary position for the female partner as helpmate or muse in which the man's intellectual work was given priority, especially in the public realm (Berger 1982 pp.33–57). As Ute Frevert points out, moreover, even the most independent of women in the early nineteenth century were still tied to the concept of marriage: 'What they had in mind was less a marriage "as such" than a formally legitimized relationship based on love, with all the particular meaning which Romantic writers bestowed on that word: passionate devotion to the other person, fusion into a homogeneous whole and at the same time respect for both identities' (Frevert 1989 p.57).

Such idealistic notions, however, had little to do with the practical realities of life between the sexes, and actual inequalities within society were rarely addressed with any commitment to change. Nevertheless, the notion of the artist-couple became in the nineteenth century an identifiable ideal and an entrenched construct within German cultural life.

By the early twentieth century, women had made some significant gains in their participation in cultural and public life, and had achieved, at least legally, a substantial progression in terms of their perceived role in society. Political changes in the first years of the century mirrored and nurtured a seeming transformation in social attitudes. In 1908, women were admitted to German universities and political parties. At the same time, organizations such as the *Bund für Mutterschutz* (Federation for the Protection of Motherhood), under Helene Stöcker, began efforts to obtain equal status for

husband and wife in marriage (Evans 1976 pp.115–43; Hackett 1984). The *Bund* also worked for the repeal of rules requiring dismissal of women professionals when married or pregnant, and it struggled for access to sex education and the ready availability of contraception. By the end of the First World War, Germany was considered the most advanced country in terms of the promotion of sexual equality, and most intriguingly, of a woman's right to sexual pleasure (Koonz 1978 p.36; Usborne 1992). Germany became the locus for concepts of the 'rationalization' of sexual relations, establishing an enormous sex reform movement, both middle-class and proletarian (Usborne 1992 pp.123–6).

While the earliest efforts for sex education and access to contraception were initiated by feminists such as Helene Stöcker with the establishment of sex clinics run by lay persons, the immense popularity of these groups was soon recognized by the medical establishment. Soon the sex-reform movement was run by male doctors and scientists, promulgating sexual equality and harmony as a means of stabilizing the family, and nurturing an essentially conservative social structure.³ Through a proliferation of sex manuals, journals and popularized information from qualified experts, women were exhorted to create a harmonious and egalitarian sex life within marriage, just as they were encouraged to apply 'scientific' methods of economic management to the running of their household and modern educational principles to the raising of their children. While ostensibly proclaiming new 'liberation' for women, these recommendations still placed women firmly within the traditional structures of domesticity and family (Frevert 1989 p.192 and Grossmann 1984a).

These popularized tenets of emancipation led to the rise of the so-called *neue Frau*, who, at least in the popular imagination, eschewed the repressive moral values of the past to lead a social life on equal terms with men. In the area of marital relations, the epitome of these enlightened attitudes was the concept of *Kameradschaftsehe*, or companionate marriage, popularized in such books as Theodor H. van de Velde's *Vollkommene Ehe* (*The Ideal Marriage*), published in Germany in 1928;⁴ and Judge Ben B. Lindsey's *Companionate Marriage*, published in the United States in 1927 and translated into German as *Kameradschaftsehe* in 1928 (Lindsey and Evans 1972).

The philosophy – and the factual information – promoted in these books offers fascinating insight into the direction these egalitarian marriages were supposed to take. Van de Velde was a Dutch gynaecologist who wrote more than 80 books on sexuality. He completed *Vollkommene Ehe* when he was 53. The book served as the most popular 'how-to' guide, and was immensely influential throughout Europe and America. The German edition went through 42 printings in eight years, until suppressed by Hitler in 1933. As Edward Brecher entitles his section on Van de Velde in *The Sex Researchers*, 'He Taught a Generation How to Copulate', *Ideal Marriage*

became the prototype of the revised American edition.

Despite its supposedly moderate stance on premarital sex, the book was primarily on the idea of graphic scientific information. Sexual pleasure was meant to encourage good marriages. *Vollkommene Ehe* stressed being a good lover; an equal partnership; and the desirable maintenance of a healthy sex life (Gordon 1987 pp.77ff).

Ben Lindsey was a judge who wrote about the increase in divorces, especially in the 1920s, and how it was workable, and therefore more expert on the causes of juvenile delinquency than any other book. *The Revolt of Modern Youth* was based on his everyday experience. In this book, in fact, the idea of 'trial marriages' was yet prepared financially for the future. Lindsey extended his scope to include divorce, and the means to prevent it. Then, was meant to be a rationalizing the need for amiable and aiming at keeping marriage and addressing a popular audience in magazines and Sunday newspapers, abroad. Today Judge Lindsey is a guest on afternoon talk show.

Both Dr Van de Velde and Judge Lindsey were maintaining conventional marriage, simply 'redefined marriage' to new freedoms that post-suffrage relationship rested on the equality rather than the fulfilment of the individual and Freedman 1988 pp.265–6. The revision was the acknowledged sexual fulfilment in marriage, the encouragement of such attitudes towards marriage as decidedly and successfully.

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became the prototype of the marriage manual; indeed, as late as 1965, a revised American edition appeared (Brecher 1969 pp.82-103).

Despite its supposedly 'common-sense' approach and his relatively moderate stance on premarital sex, Van de Velde's book was based primarily on the idea of mutual enjoyment of sex within marriage; his graphic scientific information about sexual response and the giving of sexual pleasure was meant to encourage and sustain monogamous marital relationships. *Vollkommene Ehe* stressed the idea that being a good wife included being a good lover; an equal and active sex life was seen as central to the desirable maintenance of the marital state (Lawrence 1988 pp.124-5; Gordon 1987 pp.77ff).

Ben Lindsey was a judge in Denver, Colorado, who, lamenting the increase in divorces, espoused a kind of marriage that would be more workable, and therefore more sustainable, in modern times. As a well-known expert on the causes of juvenile crime, he had gained his initial fame for his book *The Revolt of Modern Youth*, in which he presented his rather liberal observations about the causes of anti-social behaviour among the young, based on his everyday experience as a judge (Lindsey and Evans 1925). It was in this book, in fact, that Lindsey first expressed sympathy for the idea of 'trial marriages' for those ready for sexual experience but not yet prepared financially for marriage. In *Companionate Marriage*, he simply extended his scope to include his considered opinions on the causes of divorce, and the means to prevent such a societal breakdown. His approach, then, was meant to be a rational one, based on common sense, concerning the need for amiable partnerships and compatible sexual relations, and aiming at keeping marriages together. Filled with anecdotal details and addressing a popular audience, Lindsey's book was discussed in movie magazines and Sunday newspapers throughout the country, and, eventually, abroad. Today Judge Lindsey would certainly have been a regular guest on afternoon talk shows; his books filled the same sensationalist niche.⁵

Both Dr Van de Velde and Judge Lindsey, then, were committed to maintaining conventional relationships through redefinition. This new ethic simply 'redefined marriage in more egalitarian terms, consistent with the new freedoms that post-suffrage women seemed to possess . . . A successful relationship rested on the emotional compatibility of husband and wife, rather than the fulfilment of gender-prescribed duties and roles' (D'Emilio and Freedman 1988 pp.265-6). On a popular level, however, the important revision was the acknowledgement of women's sexuality and her right to sexual fulfilment in marriage outside of the need for procreation. The encouragement of such attitudes marked the concept of companionate marriage as decidedly and self-consciously modern.

That Van de Velde and Lindsey reached such a broad audience internationally indicates that their views were moderate and acceptable enough to avoid any major clashes with mainstream attitudes. Indeed, as

Wilhelm Reich perceptively points out in his famous *Die Sexualität im Kulturkampf* (*The Sexual Revolution*), Van de Velde and Lindsey were still tied to the institution of marriage itself, as necessary for the continuation of, as Reich termed it, capitalism's 'sex-economy' which allowed them to remain attached to moral and ethical judgements concerning sexual relations deemed 'abnormal' or outside the legalized state of matrimony:

Contradictions in the institution of marriage are logically reflected in the contradictions in marital reform. The reform of marriage by eroticisation (à la Van de Velde) is inherently contradictory, while Lindsey's proposal of 'companionate marriage' suffers not from the fact that he has confirmed the decline of marriage as such and examined its causes but from his desire to patch up a crumbling institution with the idea that 'marriage is the best sexual reform' (Reich 1974 p.151).

Despite such radical denunciations as Reich's on the one hand, and the predictable lamentations by conservative factions about a decline in traditional values on the other – the German Catholic Church especially blamed women's emancipation for the renunciation of the husband's 'God-given' rights as familial patriarch – marriages continued to occur in Weimar Germany (Usborne 1992 pp.96–101). Indeed, they increased relatively, and the popularized notions of egalitarian couples represented by Lindsey and others were eagerly embraced, especially by the intellectuals and professionals with liberal leanings who espoused the *Fortschrittsoptimismus* (faith in progress) that permeated so much of the German approach to social issues.⁶ That so many publications dealing with sexuality and gendered relationships gained such enormous popularity in this period is evidence of a public audience eager to accept and acknowledge a transformation in social expectations concerning male and female roles, and to enjoy participation in 'modern' life.

In terms of artistic life, by the 1920s in Germany, young women had gained access to established art schools where they met fellow artists, both male and female, with whom they established artistic as well as political and sexual solidarity. As self-consciously 'modern', they, like other young women, enthusiastically believed in the espoused principles of the Weimar Constitution, and saw themselves as participants in this newly enlightened community. Combining artistic endeavour and life commitment in marriage, then, became a romantic as well as political ideal.

Such a committed union was quite obvious and self-conscious in the case of the most politically determined artists, such as Oskar Nerlinger and Alice Lex-Nerlinger.⁷ Their art was meant to serve the cause of the proletariat by emphasizing depictions of working-class oppression, grounded stylistically in figurative realism and images of revolution. They were most likely to work in media such as woodcut, which were reproducible and therefore, at least theoretically, accessible to the masses. Among such artist-couples, stylistic similarity was often the most pronounced, since it was informed by

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In actual life, however, most involved with militar were maintained. An intrigue most radical artistic circle appears in the memoirs of Kölner Progressiven:

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a conscious commitment to politically motivated expression rather than a competitive manifestation of individual genius. They considered themselves modern in terms of their desire for radical social change, to which end art could be used as a tool.

In actual life, however, one finds that even in the relationships of those most involved with militant political causes, traditional role distinctions were maintained. An intriguing revelation concerning women's status in the most radical artistic circles, at least in the memory of one participant, appears in the memoirs of Hans Schmitt-Rost about the artists' group, Die Kölner Progressiven:

The women from our circle often played host, cook and caretaker and helped to nurture that cosiness that encouraged good conversation. Because of course we all liked to eat well . . . From the great number of wives and girl-friends I can remember a few. They belonged to the group, they completed it.⁸

While committed politically and ideologically to the idea of equality, in reality Schmitt-Rost expressed traditional bourgeois expectations and assumptions about women's roles – attitudes which doubtless affected the ultimate recognition of these women as independent artists.

The concerns of Oskar and Marg Moll could not have been further from those of the proletarian artists, although they envisioned their modernist aesthetic cause as equally radical, if not directed toward political social change. As a couple, they exemplify a marital model more common among the generation coming of age before the Weimar era: Oskar had been Marg's older teacher; they met when she studied at Lovis Corinth's school, and married in 1906.⁹ As Marg wrote in her memoirs, 'he jokingly stated that he had to marry away the competition'.¹⁰ After a revelatory confrontation with Matisse's art in Paris in 1907, the couple became committed advocates of French modernism. They were instrumental, along with fellow German Hans Purrmann, in establishing the Matisse School in Paris, where they stayed to study; Marg was the only sculptor in the group. They became close friends of Matisse, who painted a famous portrait of Marg. Even more significantly, they became important early collectors of Matisse's work. This fact was particularly important when they returned to Germany, where they were eager to promulgate this vision of avant-garde aestheticism in a country that had been slow, mainly through lack of exposure, to acknowledge modern art.

Oskar Moll eventually became the Director of the Breslau Art Academy, where Marg, while still working as the only sculptor of the Matisse group, was active not only as an artist, but in her role as 'director's wife'.¹¹ The couple were quite conscious of their mission as an artistic team, nurturing a particular aesthetic image in their public, as well as in their private lives; as Thwaites quite correctly mentions, they lived within 'the aristocracy of European art'. The German art historian Ernst Scheyer wrote on the occasion of Marg Moll's 75th birthday:

As a young art historian returned home from Cologne to Breslau in 1925, it was the couple Oskar and Marg Moll who opened for him the world of great modern French art. Matisse, Leger, Braque and Picasso; they graced the walls of the beautiful patrician apartment on Schlosspark. That was intimate, direct contact, different than anything he knew from books . . . Visits to the Moll house were revelations, signified a cornerstone in art education!¹²

Their apartment was famous for its collection and furniture – by *art nouveau* designer August Endell – as well as for its famous guests. Even in 'inner exile' in Berlin after Hitler's rise to power, the Molls were able to build an ultra-modern house designed by Hans Scharoun; here they continued to entertain like-minded artist friends, even during the Second World War (the house was bombed in 1943).

Despite this ostensible solidarity and shared commitment, it is more than coincidentally significant that after her marriage, Marg stopped painting – at least painting for public consumption – and concentrated on sculpture, 'in order', as one later biographer states quite baldly, 'to avoid competition with him'.¹³ While Marg Moll was later praised for her ability to remain an independent artist while married to one, she felt compelled to change her medium in order to maintain that independence. Her work was decidedly abstract, greatly influenced by Brancusi, and she worked in a variety of materials. That she was able in 1928 to take an '*Eheferien*' – a vacation from marriage – and go to Paris alone for an extended period of time, points further to the fact that Oskar Moll's status as a successful professional allowed the financial security which could insure such freedom. An equal artistic partnership, it seems, was most likely to be sustained and nurtured when financial burdens were eliminated and the couple were able to maintain publicly acknowledged social status with success. Such privilege also evidently eased the problems which most women encountered when trying to continue an artistic life after having children. While this responsibility is a constant theme in many of the writings of women artists of the period,¹⁴ Marg Moll makes no mention of this hindrance in any of her reminiscences, although the couple did indeed have children.¹⁵

When Oskar died in 1947, Marg continued to be active in GEDOK – the Gemeinschaft deutscher und österreichischer Künstlerinnen, an organization founded in 1926 by the widow of the poet Richard Dehmel to aid women artists and to provide venues to exhibit their work. She participated in some gallery shows, in most cases in joint exhibitions with Oskar. While Marg was acknowledged in most of the early literature concerning Matisse's circle, she was usually discussed in terms of the couple's participation in the school and for their contribution to the reception of modernism in Germany. It has only been in recent years that any substantial reference to Marg's artworks has surfaced.¹⁶ Her public persona in conjunction with her partner gained the most attention.

The Molls' artistic commitment was to cerebral, analytically motivated modernism, that art associated with the concept of 'art for art's sake', and

concepts of 'classical modernism'. Detlev Peukert (1991 pp.27-28) reveal anything of their biographical or their personal life or everyday relationship through the testimonies of objects of high modern art, reading.

In contrast to the Molls' distinction between public and private, of Anton Räderscheidt and his realms in their artistic production, a striking and telling example of the reality of these new, seemingly

In his renowned series '*Das Jahrhundert*', the Cologne section to portraits of several Hegemann.¹⁷ Very clearly, the art work. Räderscheidt appears in form of *Neue Sachlichkeit*. The portrait of Hegemann is equally fantastically whimsical for that she favoured in her own

Such conscious construction of modernity in their culture, described as the epitome of tomboyish 'Bubikopf', she, the movies in the evening – cliché of the emancipated woman (1992 pp.85–90). Indeed, modern costumed groups at Faschings always with a cigarette in hand, hangout, the Café Monopole, tune, 'La Paloma', whenever (n.42).

All of these examples of pleasures mark Hegemann in private circles, she appears in temporary sources – including exhibition – she is referred to as a woman of the time, would be the efforts of the Lucy Stone Society the right of married women known to the modern German women to take on their husbands

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 Detlev Peukert (1991 pp.275–82). Their artworks, then, were not meant to
 reveal anything of their biographies, with no conscious revelations about
 their personal life or everyday existence. One can reconstruct aspects of their
 relationship through the textual facts of their marriage, but their works, as
 objects of high modern art, yield little that could contribute to any personal
 reading.

In contrast to the Molls' modernist aesthetic imagery, which maintains a
 distinction between public and personal spheres, one confronts in the works
 of Anton Räderscheidt and Marta Hegemann a conscious merging of these
 realms in their artistic production. The couple also serves as one of the most
 striking and telling examples of the discrepancy between the ideal and
 reality of these new, seemingly equal artist-partnerships.

In his renowned series of photographs for his book *Menschen des 20.
 Jahrhunderts*, the Cologne photographer August Sander devotes an entire
 section to portraits of several *Künstlerehepaare*, including Räderscheidt and
 Hegemann.¹⁷ Very clearly, their poses mirror the aesthetic leitmotifs of their
 art work. Räderscheidt appears as the 'man with the stiff hat', a very specific
 form of *Neue Sachlichkeit* that characterizes all of his paintings. A single
 portrait of Hegemann is equally telling: one half of her face is painted with
 fantastically whimsical forms, evoking the imagery of the Magic Realism
 that she favoured in her own work.

Such conscious constructions of image identify the couple as exemplars of
 modernity in their culture and place. Indeed, Marta Hegemann has been
 described as the epitome of the *neue Frau*: 'She cut off the braids, wore a
 tomboyish "Bubikopf", she smoked, wore make-up, practised sports, went to
 the movies in the evening – in other words she epitomized the widespread
 cliché of the emancipated woman of the 20s' (Gerster 1990 p.40; Osborne
 1992 pp.85–90). Indeed, most photographs of Hegemann show her either in
 costumed groups at Fasching balls or in the act of painting, and almost
 always with a cigarette in hand. She was such a regular client of the artists'
 hangout, the Café Monopol, that the orchestra there would play her favourite
 tune, 'La Paloma', whenever she arrived (Marta Hegemann 1989 p.44,
 n.42).

All of these examples of participation in contemporary life and urban
 pleasures mark Hegemann as the most modern of married women. While in
 private circles, she apparently retained her maiden name, in many contem-
 porary sources – including the printed brochure of their own group's
 exhibition – she is referred to as Marta Räderscheidt, which, as a married
 woman of the time, would have been her only legally accepted name.¹⁸ The
 efforts of the Lucy Stone Society, which in the United States struggled for
 the right of married women to maintain their maiden name, were no doubt
 known to the modern German woman, but the law still required married
 women to take on their husband's name.

Hegemann and Räderscheidt met at the Kunstgewerbeschule in Cologne, where they studied from 1911 to 1913. This school was one of the most progressive art schools in the country, and had admitted women from the early 1900s, and even employed several women as teachers.¹⁹ They were married in 1918, and had two sons (the ideal number under the recommendations of those promoting the rationalization of sexuality and family life) (Usborne 1992 pp.14–15). In 1919 they formed 'Gruppe Stupid' along with Heinrich Hoerle, Angelika Fick-Hoerle, Richard Seiwert, and Max Ernst. The group maintained a standing exhibition in the Räderscheidt-Hegemann apartment. While an exhibition at home may have been determined to a large extent by financial exigencies, this activity raises important considerations: that their living space became quite consciously the stage for the presentation of their public identity provides an intriguing example of the conscious integration of private and aesthetic life as an intentional attempt to break down the traditionally defined distinctions between intimate and public spheres (Habermas 1974). The important fact, and the one that distinguishes their presentation from that of the Molls, is that they consciously labelled the display as an 'exhibition', connoting public function rather than simply the decoration of private space.²⁰ The couple were involved with concepts of Dada, and later, through Ernst's work in Paris, with Surrealism. Both Räderscheidt and Hegemann manifested a fascination with Freudian theory, with concepts of the unconscious, and symbolism. They were involved with the most advanced artistic movements in Cologne of the time, although they eventually shunned those artists associated with the more politically radical elements such as the *Kölner Progressiven* and were most closely aligned with the activities of the Magic Realists such as Heinrich Campendonk and Heinrich Davringhausen.

From the beginning, then, they expressed a sense of combined purpose, a shared aesthetic which also determined their lifestyle, and the image they presented to the world. Aside from the fact that they exhibited their works and that of their friends in their living room, the apartment itself mirrored their artwork. Its decor was described by one contemporary as 'exactly the kind of New Objectivity practised by Räderscheidt in his painting':²¹ little furniture, bare lightbulbs, no ornamentation, windows covered with opaque coloured paper. Within this sphere, Marta also painted a mural in the children's bedroom, one that was highly praised by contemporary critics as an example of a practical adaptation of artistic skill.²² They had a conscious awareness of 'image', of projecting one's aesthetic commitment in one's lifestyle; their aesthetic was integral to their entire *Weltanschauung*, just as it was for the Molls. Unlike the Molls, however, their iconography was intentionally self-referential. Not surprisingly, then, a comparison of Räderscheidt's and Hegemann's creative production provides obvious insights into the nature not only of their aesthetic life but of their intimate relationship.

Räderscheidt characterized readily identifiable images manifested most commonly describes the themes of his work portrayed as hardened with. Something of the eternal (p.11). The term 'einsame' iconographic obsession (He

Räderscheidt's figurative notions of sexuality, revealed intentions. In most of his work portray Marta Hegemann, a many depictions of her in a certified sport teacher, an fundamental aspect of the athletes comprise a major embracing of popular culture contemporaneity and urban (pp.102–3).

What is most striking in his characteristic emphasis between the pair, while eroticized. She is presented he appears as voyeur, fully of eroticism and health, while the shadows. While Räderscheidt he chooses for her, she is gaze (Gerster 1990 pp.51– considered these images 'hundertprozentige Frau' – more contemporary terms, concerned not only with biographical expressions; as the obviously tense relationship colleague, carried out by a convinced of the animosity loner' (*Marta Hegemann* statements reveals aspects of relationship with an indepe

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Räderscheidt characterized himself as the 'man with the stiff hat'; his readily identifiable images were famous as representations of isolation, as manifested most commonly in a specific iconography of the pair. Franz Roh describes the themes of his work rather poetically: 'People, usually pairs, are portrayed as hardened within one's self, even here no coalescing movement. Something of the eternal bondage of human existence itself' (Roh 1952 p.11). The term '*einsame Paare*' – lonely pairs – defines Räderscheidt's iconographic obsession (Heusinger von Waldegg 1979).

Räderscheidt's figurative imagery manifests as well a confrontation with notions of sexuality, revealing both metaphorical and self-referential intentions. In most of his images of women, the figure is clearly meant to portray Marta Hegemann, a fact that is most startling when one confronts his many depictions of her in scenes of sport. Significantly, Hegemann was a certified sport teacher, an activity that clearly links her to yet another fundamental aspect of the 'liberated woman' in 1920s Germany. Women as athletes comprise a major element in Weimar imagery, evidence of an embracing of popular culture in which sport became emblematic of contemporaneity and urban life (Willett 1984 pp.134–5; Willett 1978 pp.102–3).

What is most striking in Räderscheidt's images of Hegemann as athlete is his characteristic emphasis on a lack of communication, a lack of contact between the pair, while at the same time the mood is self-consciously eroticized. She is presented as blatantly nude, frozen in the gestures of sport; he appears as voyeur, fully clothed, indifferent, elegant. She is emblematic of eroticism and health, while he looks on, sometimes hidden and furtive in the shadows. While Räderscheidt emphasizes her 'modernity' in the poses he chooses for her, she is still represented as a sexual object for the male gaze (Gerster 1990 pp.51–5; Willett 1978 p.102). Clearly, Räderscheidt considered these images as representing what he referred to as '*die hundertprozentige Frau*' – literally, the 'hundred per cent woman', or in more contemporary terms, the 'total woman'. His iconography, then, is concerned not only with everyman's isolation, but with quite specific biographical expressions; as Hildegard Reinhardt points out, 'they visualize the obviously tense relationship to a talented, independent wife and colleague, carried out by an eminently critical solipsistic artist, who was convinced of the animosity of the sexes and considered himself a decided loner' (Marta Hegemann 1989 p.11). One of Räderscheidt's best-known statements reveals aspects of his psychology which undoubtedly affected his relationship with an independent wife:

Man is a loner. His ego is so strong that he can hardly imagine a second man. I and the world! Everything is for his use or it is destroyed. Friendship is impossible for a man, because he cannot recognize another as his equal. The opinion of another is false . . . He cannot understand that a woman could fall in love with another man. In conversation he tries to convince her of her error (quoted in Richter 1972 p.17).

In contrast to Räderscheidt's emphasis on heterosexual pairs, Hegemann's imagery is concerned almost entirely with references to women; in only one known painting does she include a male figure. Her paintings depict 'the theme of woman paraphrased in single or doubled variations whereby the characteristic professional attributes of the exclusively young women are fitted out with such disparate emblematic pictorial elements as hands, legs, houses, windmills, birds, cats, sail-boats, etc. which are brought together in an additive method of formulation' (Marta Hegemann 1989 p.8). Her images centre on what Berents calls her 'iconography of liberation', in which a variety of symbolic attributes evoke a narrative about women as erotic, active, professional beings; they are also self-referential, as they represent 'a mirror of her ambivalent disposition' as artist/intellectual and wife/mother (Berents 1990).

In a GEDOK lecture in the 1930s, Hegemann explained her choice of imagery: 'I discovered the umbrella, the lamp, the book, the kitchen, the pigeon, small horse, ship, dancer, letter, hands, mouths and all in a mild light. All of them are insignia. I believed indeed by means of such focal points to have hit the nail right on the head. I was completely convinced of that' (Marta Hegemann 1989 p.33). Steeped in Freudian interpretation, Hegemann's images are ultimately as autobiographical as Räderscheidt's.

A most revealing glimpse into the reality of their domestic life – or at least into reality as they chose to interpret it – is evident in a comparison of their only known paintings of family: Räderscheidt's *Familie am Fenster* (1929; private collection) and Hegemann's *Familienbildnis* (date and location unknown). Räderscheidt's interpretation is uncharacteristically benign, presenting himself as a calm, patriarchal head of the family. Hegemann's view is quite different; she mocks the traditional idea of the patriarchal family, presenting the young father as rather ridiculous in his role. Little angels float above his head, holding his stiff hat as if it were a halo. The wife and mother is portrayed with the attributes of the housewife, holding Hegemann's favoured emblem of motherhood and domesticity, a small lamp.²³

Throughout the 1920s, the couple often appeared in the same exhibitions, at which Hegemann was especially well received critically. Indeed, she was often considered the more important artist by the reviewers. In writing about her works in a 1926 exhibition, for example, Alfred Salmony, critic of *Cicerone*, compared her work to Max Ernst, and called her 'the most radical and therefore most sensitive artist in western Germany'.²⁴ Luise Straus-Ernst, Max Ernst's first wife and a prominent art critic, considered her work as superior to Räderscheidt's and central to the development of a specifically feminine imagery.²⁵ Such reception and comparison, rife with the possibilities for competitive feelings, no doubt exacerbated the already strained relations between the couple.

By the early 1930s, political events also began to affect the couple's personal circumstances. Cologne had never provided good support for local

artists, and the situation at and Hegemann were as he required them to trade a coincidental small inheritance to leave Germany. They were successful one, and they 1933.

In 1934, Räderscheidt became one of their only patrons. Anton had diabetes, a situation which required a special pair. Räderscheidt was appointed for his family. At this stage, Ilse, avowing at the separation misrepresented by the family (Hegemann 1989 p.45, n.7) Switzerland. The separation contact between them was

Marta had to support frequently from city to city members. Artistically her work from galleries and museums required to go into 'inner emigration' that experienced by the M

Hegemann persevered as to make batik or other craft prominence before the war. In the 1980s was there any acknowledgment during this period, much did remain was kept alive by Räderscheidt, who returned much earlier along with other the early histories of this era not included in any of the. The bitterness surrounding the fact continued to have an effect retrospective of Räderscheidt the animosities and legal battles children from his marriage.

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artists, and the situation at this time became particularly acute. Räderscheidt and Hegemann were as hard hit as others; their financial situation eventually required them to trade art for goods. With the rise of the Nazis and a coincidental small inheritance from Hegemann's family, they decided to leave Germany. They went to Italy, but apparently the decision was not a successful one, and they returned to Cologne in the ominous year of 1933.

In 1934, Räderscheidt began a relationship with Ilse Metzger, the wife of one of their only patrons. At the same time, the couple learned that their son Anton had diabetes, a situation which caused additional tensions between the pair. Räderscheidt was apparently incapable of handling the responsibility for his family. At this stage, he left them in Cologne and went to Berlin with Ilse, avowing at the separation that he knew his decision would be misrepresented by the family: 'wenn ich das tue, bin ich verzeichnet' (Marta Hegemann 1989 p.45, n.78). He eventually made it to Paris and finally to Switzerland. The separation was a grievous blow to the family, and all contact between them was severed.

Marta had to support the family alone, which forced her to move frequently from city to city and to depend on the support of her family members. Artistically her works as well as Räderscheidt's were removed from galleries and museums and labelled as 'degenerate', and she was required to go into 'inner exile' – an exile more profoundly imprisoning than that experienced by the Molls.

Hegemann persevered as an artist – in the 1950s, she was often compelled to make batik or other craft objects to support herself – but recognition of her prominence before the war was entirely forgotten. Not until the late 1970s and 1980s was there any acknowledgment of German women artists of this time; during this period, much of Hegemann's art disappeared and what did remain was kept alive by her granddaughters, themselves artists. Räderscheidt, who returned to Germany after the war, was rediscovered much earlier along with other artists of the Neue Sachlichkeit.²⁶ In none of the early histories of this era is Hegemann mentioned, and her works were not included in any of the exhibitions in which Räderscheidt was shown. The bitterness surrounding this neglect and perceived rewriting of historical fact continued to have an effect on artistic life even 50 years later: a planned retrospective of Räderscheidt's work in 1983 had to be cancelled because of the animosities and legal battles between Räderscheidt's widow and the children from his marriage to Hegemann.²⁷

While the more privileged situation of the Molls allowed for a degree of equality and realization of the possibilities inherent in the ideal of the *Künstlerehepaar*, the personal history and subsequent experience of Marta Hegemann and Anton Räderscheidt represent an intriguingly common pattern for many artist-couples of this period. Although at the time their art was considered on an equal footing – indeed, as here, often the female partner's was more highly praised – the woman's contributions were almost

entirely ignored and their later recognition was virtually extinguished. Many women's artistic lives were undermined initially by the exigencies of their own existence – caring for children, coping with the losses of war, and the struggle for survival – circumstances which made it nearly impossible for them to continue as artists. In the subsequent establishment of the art-historical canon, their contributions were entirely neglected. Women artists, then, suffered on several levels – personal abandonment, necessity to maintain family, loss of artistic identity, even when they continued to produce, as Hegemann did into the 1960s. The social construct of the artist, then, did not easily coincide with the reality of being a married woman and mother, a dilemma exacerbated by the realities of German life after 1930. Despite a conscious embracing of 'modern' concepts of marital and artistic equality, women married to artists were ultimately required to fulfil, if even unwillingly, the traditional female roles in terms of family and the responsibilities of private life to the detriment of their public existence. As with the supposed reform and liberation of sexuality in the Weimar years, artistic conceptions were still formulated by males, and subsequent art-historical interpretation simply substantiated this gendered view of the period. In reality, then, their 'liberation' was as tenuous and as controlled by men as it had been during the Romantic era. The realization of this reality was for most women artists of this modern age particularly profound.

Notes

1. I would like to thank the staff of the Archiv für Bildende Kunst for their generous assistance during my visit there. I am particularly grateful to Fr. Dr Irtraut Freifrau von Andrian-Werburg, Director of the Archiv; Herr Dr Claus Pese, Curator; and the many assistants in the Archiv and Library.
2. See, for example, August Sander's section with such a heading in his *Menschen des 20. Jahrhunderts*, discussed above on p.35.
3. Hong (1992) points out that the First World War itself contributed to this desire to regulate all aspects of German life, including 'sexual and familial spheres'.
4. Van de Velde 1967. The first English edition was *Ideal Marriage, Its Physiology and Technique*, New York: W. Heinemann, 1926.
5. See Osborne 1992 pp.90–101. A humorous description of the popular impact of the Judge's theories in the United States appears in Schulberg (1981) pp.171–2. For more about Judge Lindsey himself and his many muckraking causes, see his autobiography (1931), *The Dangerous Life*, New York: Arno Press.
6. For a controversial examination of the development of German concepts of social welfare and its consequences in the Weimar period, as well as a definition of 'classical modernity', see Peukert 1991; and an insightful review of Peukert by David F. Crew (1992), 'The Pathologies of Modernity: Detlev Peukert on Germany's Twentieth Century', *Social History*, 17 (2), pp.319–28.
7. For Nerlinger and Lex-Nerlinger, see Hoffmeister 1978.
8. His reminiscences appear in *zum Grüngürtel*, Cologne.
9. For an insightful discussion see Würtz 1982 pp.104–48.
10. Typescript in Moll-Archiv, Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg.
11. In an article of which I am a part, see Library Artists File, Joffe, Moll in *The Bulletin*, 24 (1971), the hostess role. Margarete Moll, New York Public Library Archives.
12. Moll-Archiv, Archiv für Bildende Kunst, Berlin.
13. Quoted in Brigitte Würtz 'Margarete Moll', in *Bibliothek der Kunst*, 93/v.30.6.1971, p.9.
14. Charlotte Berend-Corinth 'being an artist's wife, as I am fed by me'.
15. The only reference to this is the statement that, after the war, she lived in London; see Würtz, 'Margarete Moll'.
16. When German television showed a film on their shared life, with Moll as the hostess.
17. Other artists included Otto Dix, architect Hans Lüttgen (individually identified.) Some early versions of Sander's work do not appear in the most recent edition for this ambitious public exhibition, *ohne Maske*, Frankfurt: Kunstverein, 1982.
18. In Vollmer 1953 a reference to the separation; see vol.4, p.10.
19. For an extensive discussion see Würtz 1982.
20. The Molls would certainly have had their artworks hanging in their home decoration.
21. See Hildegard Reinhardt 'Margarete Moll'.
22. See Luise Straus-Ernst 'Margarete Moll', *Kunst und Dekoration*, 1989 p.40.
23. In her memories of her mother, see Hegemann's avowed hat.
24. Alfred Salmons (1926), p.810; quoted in *Maria Moll*, p.810.
25. On the relationship of Sander and Moll, see pp.39–40; on the tragic end of the exhibition catalogue, Cologne.
26. Hegemann had refused to marry a young Frenchman, but she married a young Frenchman, Hegemann and Rädersch.
27. For a blow-by-blow account of the exhibition, see pp.135–6.

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8. His reminiscences appeared in the exhibition catalogue (1975), *Vom Dadamax zum Grüngürtel*, Cologne: Kunstverein, p.78.
9. For an insightful discussion of the matrix of artist-teacher-model, see Berger 1982 pp.104-48.
10. Typescript in Moll-Archiv, Archiv für bildende Kunst, Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg, Nr. I. 14d.
11. In an article of which only a partial page was found in the New York Public Library Artists File, John Anthony Thwaites comments in an interview with Moll in *The Bulletin*, 24 March 1964: 'Another woman might have retired into the hostess role. Marg Moll worked more intensely than before'. See New York Public Library Artists File, Cambridge, 1987-, microfiche no. M703.
12. Moll-Archiv, Archiv für bildende Kunst, No. I. 14e.
13. Quoted in Brigitte Würtz, 'Die Bildhauerin und Malerin Marg Moll', in *Bibliothek der Germanisches Nationalmuseum*, Nuremberg, nr. KK 93/v.30.6.1971, p.9.
14. Charlotte Berend-Corinth (1958 p.144) constantly stressed the pressures of being an artist's wife, as well as a mother: 'All of them were supposed to be fed by me'.
15. The only reference to this fact among the documents in Marg's own writings is the statement that, after Oskar's death in 1947, she went to live with her daughter in London; see Würtz, 'Die Bildhauerin und Malerin', cited in n.13 above.
16. When German television interviewed her in 1967 in Munich, the emphasis was on their shared life, with very little discussion of her own sculpture.
17. Other artists included Otto Dix and his wife; Peter Abelen and his wife; and the architect Hans Lüttgen and his wife. (Note that none of the wives are individually identified.) The photo of Räderscheidt and Hegemann appears in some early versions of Sander's work, along with other artist-couples who do not appear in the most popular version of the book, but were part of his series for this ambitious publication. See Sander 1980 or *August Sander - Menschen ohne Maske*, Frankfurt, 1973, Eng. trans. *August Sander: Photographer Extraordinary*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1973.
18. In Vollmer 1953 a reference under Hegemann leads one to Martha Räderscheidt; see vol.4, p.10.
19. For an extensive discussion of the school during the 1920s, see Joppien 1982.
20. The Molls would certainly not have produced a catalogue, with prices, of the artworks they had hanging on their living-room walls as part of their interior decoration.
21. See Hildegard Reinhardt in *Marta Hegemann* 1989 p.12.
22. See Luise Straus-Ernst (1929), 'Raum und Wandbild-Köln 1929', *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration*, 32 (7), June, pp.194-7; quoted in *Marta Hegemann* 1989 p.40.
23. In her memories of her grandmother, Angela Räderscheidt comments on Hegemann's avowed hatred of housework (*Marta Hegemann* 1989 p.85).
24. Alfred Salmony (1926), 'Richmond-Galerie Köln, 1926', *Cicerone*, 17 (24), p.810; quoted in *Marta Hegemann* 1989 p.22.
25. On the relationship of Straus-Ernst and Hegemann, see *Marta Hegemann* 1989 pp.39-40; on the tragic story of Straus-Ernst herself, see *Max Ernst in Köln*, exhibition catalogue, Cologne: Kölnischer Kunstverein, 1980.
26. Hegemann had refused to give him a divorce until 1961, at which time he married a young Frenchwoman - Ilse died in 1947 - who became his sole heir. Hegemann and Räderscheidt died within five weeks of each other in 1970.
27. For a blow-by-blow account of this wrangle, see *Der Spiegel*, Issue 28, 1985, pp.135-6.

Visions of the 'Neue Frau':
Women and the Visual Arts in
Weimar Germany

Edited by
Marsha Meskimmon and Shearer West

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