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## Book Notices

Kathryn J. Abajian

Jesse D. Hurlbut

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*American Women Modernists: The Legacy of Robert Henri, 1910–1945*, edited by Marian Wardle (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Museum of Art; New Brunswick N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2005)

Robert Henri (1865–1929), painter and teacher, left a legacy of adventurous individualism. His women students carefully heeded his prescient and courageous advice to interpret the experiences of their personal lives in a national and characteristically American art. After studying with Henri, these women scattered away from his Philadelphia and New York City art schools to experiment. They filled canvases, sculpted clay, wove textiles, etched, printed, built furniture, and made photographs. They carved frames for their work, set tiles into haunting imagery, and designed sets and costumes, all the while grappling with the early-twentieth-century limitations placed on women. Through a series of seven essays and expansive illustrations, *American Women Modernists* illuminates the social and artistic challenges these pioneering women faced in a male-dominated art world and explains how the artists influenced modernism's evolution.

Painting their experiences in the West—in California, Utah, and Washington, for example—Henrietta Shore, Minerva Teichert, and Helen Loggie typified artists whose distinctive work honored Henri's philosophy. Henrietta Shore's stylized subjects—large cactuses and succulents filling a canvas, farm workers whose rhythmic picking appears animated—documented a colorful and vibrant West. Henri's prophetic advice to Minerva Teichert to paint her "'birthright'—the story of her Mormon west" (7) resulted in a treasured record revering the West's

strength and wildness. Helen Loggie etched her connection to the natural world in northwestern Washington in such detail that Henri's influence, as with so many of the artists represented here, sings in her renderings.

A charismatic and talented instructor who was gifted in stirring the imagination of his mostly women students, Robert Henri encouraged them at a time when other male artists and instructors disdained and marginalized them. He advised his students to pursue any subject they wished and pointed out that "it is not the subject that counts; but what you bring to it" (108), giving these women critical license to respect themselves and their individuality.

*American Women Modernists* fills a critical gap in early-twentieth-century American art history by crediting women artists whose bold, experimental industry has largely gone unrecorded until now. The book redefines the traditional characterization of modernism and in so doing clarifies its meaning to include more of the diversity it originally claimed. In her essay "Modernizing Women," Lois Palken Rudnick explains that these women artists, through their dedication to their work and their often independent lifestyles, "made themselves felt and heard by both working with and against male hegemony" (166). Continuously challenged with narrow definitions of "feminine" and "masculine" subjects, modern women artists took to heart Henri's instruction to "go down to the docks, to prize fights, to the slums, and paint what [you see] there" (118). In complying with Henri's direction, the women shaped and advanced American culture with lyricism, daring assertion, and confidence.

—Kathryn J. Abajian

*Mapping Paradise: A History of Heaven on Earth*, by Alessandro Scafi (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006)

Alessandro Scafi, who lectures at universities and museums in Bologna, Italy, and in London, England, draws upon his 1999 doctoral dissertation at the University of London for much of the content of this volume. In this thoroughly researched and beautifully illustrated book, Professor Scafi explores the cultural history of maps that attempt to represent the Garden of Eden as a location in space and time. He retraces the history of map-making from the very early Christian era through the modern period, with particular emphasis on medieval and early modern examples. Moreover, he clearly demonstrates how cultural attitudes about the function of maps have changed over time.

Most of the maps examined here made no attempts to display mathematically accurate relationships between landmarks and must be regarded as concept charts rather than as cartographic models of an objective geographic reality. This allowed early mapmakers to represent the known world as linked entities appearing in both space and time but also in a purely contemplative or allegorical arena. For instance, the *mappa mundi* displayed continents and bodies of water relative to each other and the four cardinal points (with east usually at the top). At the same time, the history of the world as it proceeded from Eden in the East toward Jerusalem, then to Rome in the West, was overlaid on the same map. In some cases, superposing the map onto the body of the crucified Christ allowed yet another layer of meaning for eschatological interpretations.

Scafi repeatedly points out that the question of whether the Garden

of Eden should appear on a map at all stemmed from a problematic translation from the Hebrew Bible. The ambiguous word מִקְדֶּם (*miqedem*) as a modifier of the name of paradise was translated in the Septuagint as “eastward” but in Jerome’s Vulgate as “from before the beginning.” Hence, the early interpreters of the Bible sought to represent Eden as both a place and a time.

In *Mapping Paradise*, the author also examines in detail the various theories over the centuries as to the location and accessibility of Eden. He mentions briefly the Jehovah’s Witnesses among the modern proponents of a literal Garden but makes reference to neither Joseph Smith nor Adam-ondi-Ahman. The unquestionable strength of the volume remains in the analysis of pre-Enlightenment representations of Eden in the world.

—Jesse D. Hurlbut