

shows, aimed at visualising professional, scientific knowledge to create a more informed and engaged citizenry. Like many photographers who found government support and greater public interest during the 1930s, Abbott briefly turned to magazine work during the postwar period, serving as the photography editor at *Science Illustrated* from 1944 to 1945. Abbott went on to found the company *House of Photography* in 1947 and patented the 'supersight' camera, before working for the Physical Science Study Committee and producing photographs for a new physics textbook. Abbott described this work as 'in the public interest', fulfilling photography's democratic mission. Unfortunately, Weissman does not explore how Abbott's lifelong commitment to pedagogy and public forms of knowledge was indebted to the previous generation of Progressive Era reformers, educators, philosophers, and photographers as well as similar democratic impulses during the 1930s. In many ways, Weissman's conceptualisation of photography marks a return to the photographic practices of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century reform movements, which utilised photography for both pedagogical and political purposes. Such an analysis would have placed Abbott and her collaborators, particularly McCausland, within a broader historical and cultural context.

Aside from such criticisms, Weissman's book is an invaluable addition to the growing scholarship over the past decade on individual documentary photographers. These studies have sought to rethink the now dominant histories and critiques of documentary since the 1970s. Rather than broad reception-based historical analyses, scholars such as Miles Orvell, Linda Gordon, John Raeburn, and even Tagg have written in-depth studies on single photographers that have showcased diverse personal and often political motivations. By calling attention to questions of the responsibility of spectators and the engagement of citizenship through representation, Weissman's book highlights the continued relevancy of Abbott's mode of photography and is sure to provide a model for future scholarship on both historical and contemporary photography.

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Francesca Woodman and the Kantian Sublime

Claire Raymond. Ashgate, Burlington, 2010. 156 pages, with 19 black & white illustrations. Hardcover £60.00, ISBN 978-0-754-66344-7.

The body of literature that examines Francesca Woodman's photographs has been growing since 1986 when a solo show of her work travelled to several US galleries. Rosalind Krauss, Abigail Solomon-Godeau, Peggy Phelan and Mieke Bal, amongst others, have written essays about Woodman's photographs, and Chris Townsend published a monograph on Woodman's work which included more than two hundred photographs (Chris Townsend, *Francesca Woodman: Scattered in Space and Time*, London: Phaidon 2006). While there has been a steady accumulation of critical responses to Woodman's work since the 1980s, Claire Raymond's *Francesca Woodman and the Kantian Sublime* is the first book length work which attends to the complexity of Woodman's project with the nuance and careful attention that the photographs deserve.

Woodman's body of work is largely composed of black and white photographs which almost always include representations of herself. Woodman's photographs were made in the period of her life between age thirteen and twenty-two, the age of her death. Raymond departs from readings of Woodman's photographs that place emphasis on Woodman's personal history and her suicide, and that focus on her status as a young photographic genius at the expense of engaging rigorously with her work. As Raymond writes, 'critical and cultural discomfort with the idea of a female prodigy is the engine that too often drives responses to Woodman's art' (13). For readers new to the critical reception of Woodman's photographs, Raymond's introduction 'Geometry of Time' provides an excellent overview – and critique – of how Woodman's work has been received and theorised thus far.

Shifting focus from Woodman's history, her reception as a female prodigy and her position within photographic history (although Raymond does attend to all of these), Raymond offers a refreshing approach to Woodman's work through an engagement with feminist aesthetics and a revisiting of Immanuel Kant's sublime. Raymond makes the case – borrowing from Bal's work on art objects as theory producing – that Woodman's photographs themselves offer a way of interrogating the Kantian sublime. Rather than simply using Kant's understanding of the sublime to interpret Woodman's work, Raymond positions Woodman's work as generating new ways of thinking about the Kantian sublime. This thinking about, through and with the Kantian sublime is done with careful attention to the question of gender. As such, *Francesca Woodman and the Kantian Sublime* will be of interest not only to scholars of photography and those already invested in Woodman's work, but also to those interested in feminist rethinking of Kant.

Chapter One, 'Mistresses', begins by outlining the shared aesthetic between Woodman and nineteenth-century photographers Clementina Hawarden and Julia Margaret Cameron.

Engaging with work on photography and the female adolescent body – for example, Carol Mavor’s *Becoming* (1999) – Raymond teases out the relationship between the (often) maternal gaze of Hawarden’s and Cameron’s photographs and Woodman’s positioning of herself as a ‘femme-enfant’, as a daughter’s body, which effectively implicates ‘the viewer both in the child’s drama of being seen and in the mother’s point of view’ (32). While Raymond is insistent throughout the book on not letting Woodman’s suicide overdetermine readings of her photographs, she does not presume that Woodman’s art must be read as separate from or untouched by her personal history and relationships. For example, Raymond establishes Woodman’s work as part of (and speaking to) a lineage of woman artists who examine the maternal gaze and their own position within a history of woman artists. In doing so, Raymond frames Woodman’s exploration of photography’s ability to ‘flatten’ space as part of a ‘conversation’ with her mother Betty Woodman’s sculpture. She also pays attention to the appearance of Woodman’s grandmother’s objects in Woodman’s artists’ book *Some Disordered Interior Geometries* (1981) and leaves the reader to consider Woodman’s play with the problematic of feminine inheritance.

Despite the repetitive use of abandoned interiors, a focus on the material structures of buildings and, in the case of the *Temple Project* (1980), printing on architectural paper, critics have largely sidestepped the question of architectural space and interiors in Woodman’s work. Raymond takes seriously Woodman’s ‘concern with architectonics’ (41), and indeed suggests that ‘[i]t is in that terrain of an architectonic theorization of perception that [...] Woodman intervenes’ (4). It is this intervention which brings together Woodman’s attention to ‘interior geometries’ with Kant’s ‘architectonic imagination’ in his theorising of the sublime. This intersection of philosophy, architecture and photography comes together most clearly in Chapter Two, ‘Woodman’s Mirror Is an Enlightenment Mirror’. In this chapter Raymond reads Woodman’s self-portraits as an investigation of the nature of photography, space and perception, rather than as an autobiographical project. As Raymond puts it, “as she [Woodman] moves in the ruined interiors of postindustrial America or an abandoned factory in Rome, or as she disrobes to take her self-portrait before a bombed and only partially restored ancient Italian church, her figure is the figure of the viewer that ballasts the volatile, fragile architectural frame, and nothing else” (60). Rather than reading the appearance of Woodman’s body in her photographs as a statement about Woodman’s self, Raymond focuses our attention on how the artist uses her own body as a device to explore the perception of space in photography.

In Chapter Three, ‘Shaken Sublime’, Raymond maps out the sublime as a ‘fraught aesthetic space,’ (67) and again links Woodman to Cameron, focusing on their use of Venus figures. In this chapter, Raymond’s case that Woodman’s repetitive use of the self-portrait is about seeing – and what happens when you see yourself seeing – comes together. This thread of Raymond’s argument continues through the following chapter ‘Inner Force, or, the Revelatory Body’ where she further explores Woodman’s use of the blurred figure as part of Woodman’s engagement with the conditions of photography, visibility and seeing. In Woodman’s photographs the body’s inner force, referred to in the chapter’s title, is, in Raymond’s words, ‘the capacity to see’ (104).

The following two chapters, ‘Mechanics of Evanescence’ and ‘Among the Ruins: Vertigo, Philobats, and Statues’, include close discussions of Woodman’s *Angel Series* and *Temple Project*. These chapters lead Raymond to conclude, ‘Her [Woodman’s] revelation that photography disorders geometry, disorders time, points not to suicidal themes but rather to the theme of the mortal constraints of perception itself’ (136). Raymond’s emphasis on Woodman’s art as one concerned with the problematic of perception is evidence of Raymond’s concern to interpret Woodman’s photographic project with the seriousness it deserves. If Townsend is eager to remind us that we must always remember that Woodman produced much of her work as a ‘school girl’, a young person who ‘never understood herself as a fully realized artist’ (2006, 6), then Raymond’s book demonstrates the limitations to such an approach to Woodman’s work. *Francesca Woodman and the Kantian Sublime* is a book that should be valued for opening up possibilities in how we think about Woodman’s work, but also for how we think about self-portraiture, gender, the Kantian sublime and about photography itself.

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Brush & Shutter: Early Photography in China

Edited by Jeffrey W. Cody and Frances Terpak. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, 2011. 220 pages, with 59 colour plates and 76 colour illustrations. Hardcover £32.50 / \$45.00, ISBN 978-1-606-06054-4. 325

In the Introduction to this collection of essays, published to accompany an exhibition held at the J. Paul Getty Museum between 8 February and 1 May, 2011, we are reminded of the importance of the object as primary source. As Wu Hung explains in the context of the photograph, close viewing and physical examination can reveal a great deal about an object 330