

Zimmerman has created a great deal of sympathy for Piłsudski—but without idolizing him or turning him into an unproblematic national hero.

This book should be read widely by historians of modern Europe, and not just historians of Poland. Zimmerman's account of Piłsudski's life and legacy helps make sense of modern Poland, to be sure, but it also makes a case for his relevance far beyond Poland's borders. It elucidates broad subject areas with European-wide resonance—like the relationship between socialism and nationalism, the uses of political violence, and the nature of interwar authoritarian regimes—while it also offers narrower regional perspectives on many specific subjects. One of these is Piłsudski's evolving relationship with Jews in the Polish lands—this forms a thread that runs throughout the biography—and another is the role of Russia in the region.

Piłsudski maintained a belief throughout this life that both the Russian tsars and the Bolsheviks posed a profound threat to the area's non-Russian peoples, and it was for this reason, among others, that from his earliest days he advocated for the separation of Poland, Ukraine, and Lithuania from Russia. Piłsudski believed that an independent Ukraine was essential to securing the territorial integrity of a Polish state and, beyond that, the stability and security of all of Europe. It is difficult not to think about the ongoing Russian invasion of Ukraine when reading Zimmerman's book.

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Magnetic Woman: Toyen and the Surrealist Exotic. By Karla Huebner. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2020. xx, 408 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Illustrations. Plates. Photographs. \$100.00, hard bound.

Toyen: The Dreaming Rebel, 1902–1980. Ed. Anna Pravdová, Annie Le Brun, and Annabelle Görgen-Lammers. Prague: National Gallery Prague, 2021. v, 333 pp. Appendixes. Notes. Bibliography. Illustrations. Figures. €46.00, hard bound.
doi: 10.1017/slr.2023.108

Widely recognized as one of the most important Czech painters of the last century, the artist Toyen is the subject of two revelatory and richly illustrated new books, one a monograph focused on her exploration of Surrealism and the erotic, and the other a catalogue published to accompany an expansive, traveling retrospective of her career. Some two decades have passed since the last substantive study was published on her art, which until the appearance of Karla Huebner's monograph had not previously received a book-length treatment in English. Together these two publications mark a significant shift in scholarship on Toyen and Czech modernism more broadly, as they seek to reconcile her contributions to the visual culture of central Europe with the extensive work she produced over the roughly three decades she spent in France.

Toyen came of age during the fertile period of Czech nationalism as a member of the generation that entered the professional arena at the moment the First Republic was inaugurated. She established herself as a painter and illustrator of surreal and highly charged erotic imagery, only some of which she shared publicly. Born Marie Čermínová to a middle-class family in a cosmopolitan Prague suburb at the turn of the century, she adopted an opaque pseudonym upon leaving her parents that may derive from *citoyen*, the French word for citizen. The masculine gender of that spelling appears to be relevant, but to this day nobody is certain what precisely to make of it, for although she regularly appeared in public dressed in men's clothing, she

remained steadfastly secretive throughout her life about her gender identity and sexuality. She left behind no written corpus for scholars to scrutinize, consenting instead to having friends and peers write about her artistic ambitions. Her interest in eroticism and identity—although clearly central to her art—thus remains at something of a distant remove for scholars, to be gleaned largely from the androgynous bodies, fragmented genitalia, and transgressive sexual imagery that populate her work.

Beyond her cultivation of an inscrutable public persona, what makes Toyen engaging was her uncanny ability to navigate some of the most treacherous and consequential historical developments in Czechoslovakia, all of which took place within three dramatic decades: the concurrent emergence of Czech nationalism, modernism, and women's suffrage; the subsequent German occupation and division of the new nation; and its postwar transformation into a Soviet satellite state. Initially a painter, she became a prolific illustrator of books, contributing to 570 of them over the course of her career. Under the watchful eyes of a succession of repressive regimes, she strategically shifted her efforts from graphic design to drawing and collage from 1939 until 1948, when she finally abandoned Prague and emigrated permanently to Paris, where she took up painting once again.

Both publications stress that Toyen's professional reputation flourished as a direct result of the close relationships she fostered both at home and abroad. She entered the public arena initially by joining the Czech modernist group Devětsil, which came into being in the 1920s under the direction of Karel Teige, one of her earliest and most fervent champions. She subsequently participated in Czech and French Surrealism, which she remained committed to until her death. In so doing, she cultivated close artistic partnerships with compatriots and fellow Surrealists Jindřich Štyrský and Jindřich Heisler, the latter of whom she hid in her apartment bathroom during the German Occupation of Prague. Following a well-publicized visit to Prague in 1935, the French Surrealist poets André Breton and Paul Eluard began including her paintings in the group's large, international exhibitions and featuring them in their journals. Finally, toward the end of her career, she befriended Annie Le Brun, the French Surrealist writer and one of the editors of the exhibition catalogue, who has spent half a century writing about Toyen's life and work.

Part biography, part art historical study, Carla Huebner's *Magnetic Woman: Toyen and the Surrealist Exotic* aspires to make sense of Toyen's imagery by examining her artistic development in the critical and intellectual milieus in which she operated. This approach offers a particularly useful way to gauge the stakes associated with the emergence of interwar modernism and Surrealism in Czechoslovakia and France and Toyen's place within these developments. Concurrently, Huebner explores Toyen's lifelong preoccupation with eroticism and her rejection of normative gendering by mapping her self-presentation and art onto the discourses on sexuality and psychology against which her work appeared.

Huebner's first three chapters address Toyen's formation as an artist, initially in the new Czech Republic and culminating in her lengthy stay with Štyrský in Paris, during which time she was painting and making collages while associated with Devětsil. Huebner sees Toyen—who enjoyed considerable success exhibiting abroad—as increasingly distancing herself from the Czech art world and its predilection for abstraction in favor of figural painting, which by the early 1930s offered her a ready vehicle for erotic content.

In Chapters 4 and 5, arguably the book's core, Huebner introduces the nascent disciplines of Czech sexuality and psychoanalysis (engaging in a sustained fashion with Bohuslav Brouk), in an effort to contextualize Toyen's illustrations of erotic literature, both historical and contemporary, for privately distributed imprints. Here, Huebner also grapples with Toyen's gender ambiguous self-presentation, ultimately

concluding that we possess insufficient evidence to draw any firm conclusions about her sexual identity.

In the final three chapters of her book, Huebner directs her attention to Toyen's turn to Surrealism, both at home and internationally. She strives to make sense of the artist's iconography of fragmented bodies visited by violence primarily by way of the Prague Linguistic Circle. When Toyen fully embraces Breton's surrealism following the war, with its emphasis on occultation and utopian socialism, the Bulgarian Nora Mitrani serves as her point of reference. Some effort to reconcile these different discourses would be of value here, but Toyen's myriad intersections with contemporaries across the continent seem unavoidable.

Toyen: The Dreaming Rebel, 1902–1980—the exhibition curated by Anna Pravdová, Annie Le Brun, and Annabelle Görgen-Lammer—presents no less detailed a view of the artist. The catalogue features over 500 reproductions of Toyen's art, documents pertaining to her career, and photographs of her and her circle, the majority of which are in private collections and have long been unavailable to the public. Contributions by over a dozen different writers—some scholars, others friends—provide a rich array of vantagepoints from which to consider its subject.

For Le Brun, Toyen's life and work is best understood as marking what the utopian socialist philosopher Charles Fourier called an “absolute divergence” (13), a trajectory that deviates from previously charted paths. This model, embraced by the postwar Surrealists, underwrites many of the approaches in the catalogue, in Le Brun's case leading her to conclude that Toyen was the first woman artist to have made eroticism and desire her work's overriding occupation.

Karel Šrp, who has published extensively on Toyen, provides a tightly researched examination of her pre-Surrealist painting and persona, arguing that her artistic independence from the fashionable poles of geometric abstraction and synthetic Cubism becomes apparent at roughly the same moment she rejects both women's clothing and feminine pronouns when referring to herself. In the wake of her first exposure to Surrealism, Toyen experimented wildly with her art, dripping her paints and mixing them with sand on some canvases, airbrushing others (Klára Velíšková's enlightening essay on Toyen's varied painting techniques from this period appears at the end of the catalogue).

Anna Pravdová notes in her chapter that despite Toyen's early success in exhibiting her paintings in Paris, critics continuously conflated her with either abstraction or Cubism. She countered, with Štyrský, by designing a method she called Artificialism, through which she linked her painting to memory, dreams, and poetry. As Françoise Caille argues in her contribution to the catalogue, this inward orientation put Toyen on a crash course with Surrealism. Two years later, the Czechoslovak Surrealist Group formed, announced in a manifesto signed by Toyen, Štyrský, and poet Vítězslav Nezval, among others (the leaflet is also notably signed by Brouk). Eluard and Breton spoke at the group's first exhibition in Prague in 1935, and from this moment on Toyen would operate at the very center of Surrealism.

By the early 1930s, as Annabelle Görgen-Lammers proposes in her two contributions to the catalogue, Toyen's formal transition to Surrealism is underway, as the focus of her paintings shifts to spectral presences. This iconography aligns her with Salvador Dalí and Yves Tanguy, the latter with whom she will develop a close professional bond upon her return to Paris. Among the most valuable contributions the catalogue provides is an informative assortment of previously unpublished correspondence to and from Toyen and dedications to her by her supporters.

The catalogue is fleshed out with illuminating essays by Jindřich Toman on Toyen's highly flexible approach to graphic design; Barbora Bartůňková on her equivocating relationship to interwar communism; Fabrice Hergott on her clandestine

wartime portfolios of graphic drawings and photomontages; Bertrand Schmitt on the new friendships she made and the lush postwar paintings she produced upon emigrating to France; and Anna Pravdová on her contributions to various collective editions following the death of Breton.

With the exception of the frustrating absence of any illustration numbers embedded in either text, these two publications provide insightful and in-depth analyses of the work of a remarkable, long-neglected artist and its place within the rapidly changing cultural fabric of modern central and western Europe.

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