CUT FROM AN ETHNOGRAPHIC MUSEUM:

COLLAGING THE OTHER FROM WEIMAR MASS MEDIA

by

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(Under the Direction of Nell Andrew)

ABSTRACT

From 1924 to 1934, Hannah Höch created a series, *From an Ethnographic Museum,* which features photomontages that collage together images of modern figures with so-called 'primitive' objects from Western ethnographic collections. Scholarship on the series has focused on Höch's biographical relationship to her imagery, arguing for her critique of the ostracized placement of the New Woman in Weimar Germany and her similar standing to the black body in postcolonial Germany. This thesis forwards the postcolonial discussion of the *Ethnographic Museum* series by contextualizing through identifying its source material to analyze the unique context in which she first came across the imagery, which in turn reveals a distinct historical moment in German culture. I look to the specific journals from which Höch pulled images and the newly postcolonial climate in Germany after WWI to read Höch's keen use of the ethnographic object.

INDEX WORDS: Weimar Germany, Postcolonialism, Race, Gender, Mass Media

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Introduction

From 1924 to 1934, Hannah Höch (1889-1978) created a series, *From an Ethnographic Museum,* which features photomontages that collage together images of modern figures with so-called 'primitive' objects from Western ethnographic collections. Predominating criticism of the series can be divided into two discrete readings of Höch's intent; one argues for her focus on the New Woman and the other for her critique of Weimar Germany's postcolonial culture. Maud Lavin's thesis, first presented in 1993, is the leading text behind the first reading, and her argument is reiterated throughout the majority of critical studies on Höch.[1] Following Lavin, these scholars maintain that the series only marginally attends to the idea that race was socially coded in ethnographic museums in Germany, as they are more invested in revealing how images of the New Woman were commodified in the same manner as the exotic in print media.[2] This conclusion may be accurate, but it is also ultimately unsatisfying because it ignores Höch's

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[1] Lavin introduced "Hannah Höch's *From an Ethnographic Museum*" in her book *Cut with the Kitchen Knif*e (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993, revised it in Naomni Sawelson-Gorse's anthology *Women in Dada: Essays on Sex, Gender, and identity* (Caimbridge: MIT Press, 1998) and then again revised it in "The Mess of History, or the Unclean Hannah Höch" in Iwona Blazwick, *Hannah Höch* (London: The Whitechape; Gallery, 2014).

[2] The New Woman emerged as a feminist ideal at the end of the nineteenth century. Less constrained by Wilhelmine norms of domesticity, the New Woman was more likely to hold a job outside the home, she spent (at least some) of her wages on leisure activities, and she was also apt to be sexually active, use contraceptives, and have abortions. She often presented herself directly, bobbing her hair in a short boyish style to suit her active lifestyle, smoking in public, shaving her legs, and wore makeup. Maria Makela gives a concise reiteration on how the New Woman relates to Höch's oeuvre in her catalogue, *The Photomontages of Hannah Höch*, (Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 1996). For more on the New Woman, mass media, and photomontage, see Maud Lavin, "Representing the New Woman" in *Cut with the Kitchen Knife,* 1993. For more on the New Woman and Germany see "Part II. New Citizen/New Subjectivities" in *Weimar Publics, Weimar Subjects: Rethinking the Political Culture of Germany in the 1920s* eds. Kathleen Cannin, Kerstin Barndt and Kristen McGuire (Berlin: Berghahn Books, 2010). I will be using the term New Woman to generally discuss Höch's female figures throughout this essay because, based on what was prevalent in the illustrated press, images of women in advertisements were dominantly women that fit this type. Lavin argues that Höch only used the New Woman because she relates to her biography. I partially agree with this, but think it has more to do with the source material.

numerous photomontages that do not focus on women, such as *Mit Mütze, Hörner,* or *Der Heilige Berg* to name a few (Figures 1, 2, and 3 respectively).

There is, however, another group of scholars who have begun to analyze the racial implications of the *Ethnographic Museum* series. This group aligns with Brett Van Hoesen's essay from 2010 that the series inherently warrants a race-centered reading because of when it was made, its source material, the medium of photomontage, and the fantasized idea of the 'Other' that prevailed in Weimar Germany.[3] Scholars such as Maria Makela, Elza Adamowicz, and Ralf Burmeister have argued that Höch was aware of her ethnographic imagery and created a poignant critique of the exclusion of both the New Woman and the black body from Weimar politics and society.[4] Despite the welcome revision of these readings, they remain firmly grounded in Höch's biographical timeline and in trying to define her artistic intention.

I do not claim to uncover Höch's singular intent in this essay. In fact, I would argue that Höch was both challenging and perpetuating racist stereotypes in Weimar Germany and that her ambivalence is partly what makes this series so compelling. My thesis seeks to push the

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[3] Van Hoesen's original argument appears in her essay "Weimar Revisions of Germany's Colonial Past: Photomontages of Hannah Höch and Laszlo Maholy-Nagy" and was revised in "Performing the Culture of Weimar Postcolonialism; Hannah Höch's *From and Ethnographic Museum*" in 2014. In reference to other scholar's interpretations, Elza Adamowicz wrote "Between Museum and Fashion Journal: Hybrid Identities in the Photomontages of Hannah Höch" in Dada and Beyond: Volume 1, which funneled both sides into a discussion of hybrid identities, the abject/grotesque, primitiveness, and how those factors affected the conception of the New Woman in the post-Weimar era. Matthew Biro in *The Dada Cyborg: Visions of the New Human in Weimar Berlin* addresses more the racial aspect of the debate, developing Höch's work as a sophisticated view of primitivism which, still used accepted stereotypes but drew attention to the excluded and similar relationship of women and 'the primitive'. Lavin and Van Hoesen have debated back and forth, critiquing each other, both revising, but not necessarily changing their arguments. Their most recent essays on the series were published in the same exhibition catalogue by Whitechapel Gallery in 2014; "Performing the Culture of Weimar Postcolonialism: Hannah Höch's *From an Ethnographic Museum* and its Legacy" by Van Hoesen and "The Mess of History, or the Unclean Hannah Höch" by Lavin.

[4] These ideas were most recently picked up by Ralf Burmeister, curator of the Hannah Höch archive at the Berlinische Galerie in Berlin, in the recent exhibition "Dada Africa: Dialogue with the Other" at the Berlinische Galerie and Museum Reitberg in Zürich. Burmeister acknowledges the connection between Höch and her African source imagery and centers a reading of the series around the grotesque. He argues that "Through the distorted mirror of her collages, the artist reflects and counters purposed (self-) certainties, and undermines social stereotypes and norms conveyed by mass print media and film." // Burmeister, *Dada Africa: Dialogue with the Other,* (Berlin: Berlinische Galerie, 2016) 185-187.

postcolonial discussion of the *Ethnographic Museum* series forward by closely contextualizing it with its source material in popular magazines in order to demonstrate how her interaction with visual popular culture affects the possible interpretations and historical resonances of Höch's final compositions. What comes through by looking at Höch's source material is the unique context in which she first came across the imagery, which in turn reveals a distinct historical moment in Germany's cultural timeline. I look to the specific journals from which Höch pulled images and the newly postcolonial climate in Germany after World War One to read Höch's keen use of the ethnographic object, placing the series in the postcolonial climate, rather than Höch's biographical timeline.

There are three key historical moments that inevitably influenced the creation of the *Ethnographic Museum* series. First, in 1924 Höch had just left the tight-knit Dada circle, but she was still living in Berlin and active in the political art community. Second, Germany was in a period of rebuilding and coping with the strict terms of the Treaty of Versailles—it was especially struggling to establish national identity without the continuation of its colonial empire. And third, print culture was flourishing in the form of illustrated magazines. Höch's source material came directly from such magazines. Printed periodicals directly reflected the fears, goals, and societal norms of the Weimar era, disseminating new conceptions of modernity to the German public. Furthermore, the popular press was arguably the main forum for the presentation of artistic, political, and social beliefs.

Paralleling modernist and avant-garde attitudes toward the encounter with the colonial Other, popular journals often presented examples of 'primitive' culture as a source of modernity and rejuvenation. Adding to such popular attitudes toward the Other was the rise of the field of

ethnography and the burgeoning phenomenon of the public ethnographic museum.[5]

Ethnographic museums experienced tremendous growth in the early twentieth century. These collections were intended first as source material for ethnologists and were presented secondarily as public spaces for people to interact with non-European cultures. Therefore they were not originally organized in a manner that would have been intuitive or informational for the average viewer.[6] As the field of ethnography became more popular around the turn of the century, there was a push to reorganize these collections to be more accessible for the public. For example, the Ethnological Museum of Berlin (originally opened in 1886) was revamped and reopened in 1921.[7] However, this reorganization did not necessarily make the displays more informative, instead curators sought to show the vastness of the quickly growing collections. For example, the Africa collection in Berlin grew from 7,000 to 55,000 objects from 1884 to 1904, of which more than 20,000 were exhibited within barely 470 square meters.[8] The result was a dizzying and cramped amalgamation of various and often unrelated cultures in one condensed space. These objects were also displayed with minimal accompanying texts on context or use. The intention was not for visitors to learn about the individual cultures, but to more generally grasp the vastness and variations of human societies.[9]

Suzanne Zantop in *The Imperialist Imagination: German Colonialism and Its Legacy* argues that ethnographic study emerged in the nineteenth century as a scientific justification for

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[5] For more on the ethnographic museum in Berlin, see a short overview in Rainer Metzger, *Berlin: The Twenties* (New York: Abrams, 2007) or for a more detailed account, see Sara Friedrichsmeyer, Sara Lennox, and Susanne Zantop, *The Imperialist Imagination: German Colonialism and Its Legacy*. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998).
[6] Nanina Guyer, "Inspiring Chaos: Africa in Ethnological museums in the early twentieth century" in *Dada Africa* (Berlin, Berlinische Gallerie, 2016) 104
[7] For a short history on the formation of German ethnographic museums see H. Glenn Penny, "The Civic Uses of Science: Ethnology and Civil Society in Imperial Germany", *Osiris* 2nd Series, Vol.17, (2002) 249.
[8] Guyer, "Inspiring Chaos,"105.
[9] Ibid, 106.

and an assertion of hegemonic and racial dominance—later justifying a form of colonialism that did not violate the Treaty of Versailles yet allowed Germany to conceive of a unified sense of nationhood through the delineation of the Other.[10] In Weimar Germany, and consequently in Höch's *Ethnographic Museum* series, the Other represented anything that allowed the German people to define German culture in terms of what it was not—uncivilized, primitive, feminine, weak etc.

The majority of images used in Höch's *Ethnographic Museum* series came from the illustrated magazine *Der Querschnitt* (The Cross Section; 1921-1936).[11] *Der Querschnitt* was no exception to popular trends and was deeply rooted in the ethnographic, postcolonial, and nationalistic climate of the illustrated press. It emanated from one of Germany's leading art dealers, Alfred Flechtheim, well known for his collection of international art, and began as a printed pamphlet to accompany his international art shows. *Der Querschnitt* therefore prominently featured ethnographic objects and cultural commentary in each edition, including influential essays on ethnography like Carl Einstein's *Negro-Sculpture* (1915), which was Germany's first scholarly study of African sculpture.[12] Höch herself worked for the printing press that produced *Der Querschnitt*, Ullstein Verlag, from 1916 to 1926 and had access to old publications, off prints, and source images.[13]

The evidence of Höch's close relationship with popular magazines in her *Ethnographic Museum* series, which in turn helps us read the visual language of journals such as *Der*

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[10] Zantop, *The Imperialist Imagination*, 20

[11] For example, of the 26 objects Maria Makela identified in 1996 as in the *Ethnographic Museum* series, 20 are from *Der Querschnitt*. The other sources include *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung, Die Dame, Die Koralle*, and *Die Praktische Berlinerin.*

[12] For more on Einstein see Nicola Creightom and Andreas Kramer, *Carl Einstein and the European Avant-Garde* (Boston: Hubert & Co., 2012).

[13] Höch worked for *Die Dame, Die Praktische Berlinerin*, and *Stickerei-und Spitzen Rundshau*. For more on her work at these magazines, see Maud Lavin, *Cut with the Kitchen Knife.*

Querschnitt with more discernment. For instance, when the source material for an untitled work from 1930 (Figure 4)—which depicts a torso-less figure made from a large mask, pasted over a pair of extended, back muscular legs—is discovered in situ, it underscores and parodies the common practice of publishing disparate photographs of non-European cultures, contemporary events, women, and animals, all together without accompanying articles or with minimal captions that explicate the images and their relationships. In figure 4, the collaged head was taken from a 1925 issue of *Der Querschnitt* where it was labeled as one of three "Ivory Sculptures from the Congo." The legs come from the same magazine in 1929, cut from a photograph of a man labeled as "The Jumping Negro Bill."[14] When Höch found them, the ivory sculptures were originally situated on the first of a four-page photographic spread at the end of an unrelated text, "On the Possibilities of Painting" written by Spanish painter, Juan Gris (1887-1927). The sculpted heads appear directly below a reproduction of the painting *Othello* by Anselm Feuerbach (Figure 5) and are followed by a section labeled "Toros bravos" ("Brave Bulls" Figure 6), which features six reproductions: a photograph of a bull fighter from Lima; another labeled "Algabeno's Ende (Seville)" depicting the famous bullfighter Algabeno (later featured in Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* (1926)) doubled over dramatically in the ring; a scientific photograph of a bull; an impressionist painting of bulls by Rudolf Tewes (1879-1964); a photograph of two naked men wrestling with a calf; and Gris's cubist collage *El torero* (1912).[15] Gris's article is also illustrated by a section coyly labeled "Lamas" which contrasts

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[14] Found in *Der Querschnitt*, No. 10. (October 1929) 734-735.
[15] This edition of *Der Querschnitt* was designed to coincide with the Running of the Bulls in Paloma in 1925 and therefore various articles and images, recurring throughout the June and July issues featured bulls. For more on this see Erika Esau, "The Magazine of Enduring Value; Der Querschnitt (1921-1936) and the World of Illustrated Magazines", *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines,* Volume III (2009)

images of old Tibetan Lamas from Ti-foh-ssu and Ku-ling with a bronze sculpture of a young

llama by Renée Sintenis with photographs of "Llamas in Bolivia" (Figure 7).

The "Toros bravos" section seems to have no relation to the *Othello*/"Ivory Sculptures"

pairing, and the "Lamas" have no apparent bearing on Gris' article. This seemingly random

compilation of illustrations, only marginally related to surrounding content by the inclusion of

Gris' painting at the end, reflects (both intentional and unintentional) modern conflations and

associations between the images. The Tibetan Lamas are ironically paired with their Bolivian

counterparts, lumped together as homonyms, but also grouped as 'Other.' Othello, a man

doomed to succumb to the subtle racism that surrounds him, is paired with African masks

proudly displayed during the height of decolonization. *Othello* is also a story about the fear of

miscegenation, which is then paired with a fetish object representing the culture responsible for

the Black Horror—Germany's interwar manifestation of this same fear.[16] The dying bullfighter

is contrasted with a bucolic pasture and a comedic naked battle with a calf. All of the images are

presented as a witty juxtaposition, neither fully critiquing nor accepting their implied

associations.[17]

Höch is using the same tactic as *Der Querschnitt*, but in her re-contextualization of

disparate objects, we see a more critical juxtaposition. By combining the images into one body

rather than a side by side comparison, the African mask and the African-American legs in figure

4 highlight the highly fetishized conflation of African culture prevalent in modern German

culture. The mask represents the fetishization of the ethnographic as it manifests in art, the legs

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[16] For more on the Black Horror on the Rhine, see Sally Marks, "Black Watch on the Rhine: A Study in Propaganda, Prejudice, and Prurience", *European Studies Review* 13 no. 3 (July 1983).
[17] *Der Querschnitt's* humor is most often compared (now and then) to that of *The New Yorker's*.

are the same fetishization as manifest in modern (American) entertainment.[18] This conflation is both symptomatic and revealing of a controlled means through which images of the 'Other' were used to reconstruct a national identity and assert hegemonic power despite Germany's (recently forced) postcolonial society. Höch, as a member of this same culture, fused two fetish symbols into one frankensteined image of Germany's Other, revealing how unnatural *Der Querschnitt*'s juxtaposition really is. She then placed it into her personal ethnographic museum, making explicit its connection to the postcolonial. Despite the dominant sense of Höch's interest in the image and status of the New Woman, in this work, by using a male body and furthermore by portraying the black body and fetish object in one hybrid form, Höch was addressing the larger cultural phenomenon of what she later described as an "unscrupulous and simplistic" absorption of ethnographic imagery[19]—imagery that when read through its source material, reveals a delineation of power over any non-hegemonic 'Other'.

Overview of the *Ethnographic Museum* series

The *Ethnographic Museum* series was said to have been inspired by a trip Höch made in 1926 to the Rijks Etnografische Museum in Leiden with Til Brugman. According to Matthew Brio, she may have actually started the series as early as 1924 when *Der Querschnitt* (a subsidiary of Ullstein Verlag) began print.[20] Maria Makela points out that some of the works can be dated to as early as 1920, when she was still working with the Dadaists.[21] Höch told often

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[18] Throughout this paper, I use the term fetish. I am pulling from the Marxist/Freudian fetish first of all, but in my specific usage I look more to Franz Fanon's delineation of the racial fetish in his book *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952). I especially use his idea of the black man (body) as doomed to objecthood by white culture and pulled from his demarcation of the racial fetish as a reflector of a perverse relationship to difference where the fetish acts as a defense against forms of (white) cultural anxiety.

[19] Hannah Höch, quoted by Heinz Ohff for his introduction to the exhibition *Hannah Höch* at the Kasseler Kunstverein 1969. (Berlin: Berlinische Galerie, 2001) 281.

[20] Mathew Biro, *The Dada Cyborg: Visions of the New Human in Weimar Berlin* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 2009) 226.

[21] For more on this see Maria Makela, Peter Boswell and Kristen Makholm, *The Photomontages of Hannah Höch* (Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 1996)

conflicting creation stories for the series much later in the 20th century, thus making a precise dating nearly impossible. Additionally, many of the *Ethnographic Museum* works have dates that are crossed out, altered, or illogical. She also frequently used images that were not publically produced until much after the date physically written on the work. For example, the photomontage, *Hörner* (Figure 2), has 1924 written in the bottom right corner, but the number appears to have been rewritten multiple times. The source photo she used for the photomontage comes from a copy of *Der Querschnitt* that was published later in 1925. The number of images in the series fluctuates from scholar to scholar because of this ambiguity; some scholars argue that there are only eighteen delineated by a pamphlet from the first time the series was exhibited as part of an exhibition in Brno, Czechoslovakia in 1934.[22] But the pamphlet too is imprecise because the works documented were not titled accurately, just with descriptive titles, which could apply to multiple works.

Furthermore, in discussing the series, Höch describes it as a long-standing work-in-progress that she edited, added to, and moved around throughout her prolific artistic career.[23] I argue that there could be as many as 33 images in the series based on subject matter, source materials, and her later discussions of the works.[24] For the scope of this paper, however, I have selected four case studies that I believe are representative of the larger series: *Untitled*, 1930 (figure 4); *Negerplastik*, 1929 (figure 8); *Mischling*; 1924 (figure 9); and *Entführung*, 1924

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[22] The 18 typically included are: *Masken* (1924), *Mit Mütze* (1924), *Hörner* (1924), *Trauer* (1925), *Denkmal* I (1924), *Denkmal II: Eitelkeit* (1926), *Die Süße* (1926), *Nummer IX (Zwei)* (1926), *Der Heilige Berg* (1927), *Entführung* (1925), *Fremde Schönheit* (1929), *Negerplastik* (1929), *Untitled* (1929), *Untitled* (1930), *Untitled* (1930 *Indische Tänzerin* (1930), *Mutter* (1930) and *Buddha* (1930).
[23] For more information on this see Makela, *The Photomontages of Hannah Höch*.
[24] The other 15 images I include are: *Mischling (*1924), *Leibe im Busch* (1925), *Die Kokette I* (1923-1925), *Die Kokette II* (1925), *J.B. und sein Engel* (1925), *Dame Mit Fächer* (1926), *Englische Tänzerin* (1928), *Russische Tänzerin (Mein Double)* (1928), *Modenschau* (1925-1935), *Die Ewigen Schuhplattler* (1933), *nur nicht mit Beiden Beinen auf der Erde Stehen* (1940), *Am Nil. II* (1940), *Liebe Leute vom Berg* (1940), *Ungarische Rhapsodie* (1940), and *Streit* (1940).

(figure 12). These four works show her engagement with various marginalized sectors of

Weimar Germany, including but not limited to the black male, the colonial person and object, the

New Woman, the black female, and the interracial German.

In the late 1910s and early 1920s, Höch was part of the Dada movement in Berlin.

Höch's tumultuous relationship with the Berlin Dadaists is important to note in the context of her

Ethnographic Museum series because it shows the climate in which she developed her personal

photomontage practice and the highly critical and political mindset in which she was working.

She was introduced to the group by Raoul Hausmann and exhibited with the group in almost

every exhibition during Dada's earlier years, including at the First International Dada Fair in

Berlin.[25] Dada photomontage is often characterized by a sense of duplicity in its images, where

the artists showed multiple sides and representations of their subjects. According to Matthew

Biro, in his book *The Dada Cyborg*, "They produced representations… that despite their

photographic source materials, did not suggest clear mirrors of reality, but conceptual

reformations of that reality."[26] Höch's work certainly fits this vein. She was also heavily

involved in the political climate of the Dada circle, was actively involved with the November

Group, hosting intellectual salons in her Berlin apartment, and published articles in *Die Dame*,

Die Praktische Berlinerin, and *Stickerei-und Spitzen Rundshau* calling for a revolution in the

'feminine arts' throughout her career.[27] Although Dada's ideals were highly influential on her

creative output, because of the inherent sexism within the group, her relationship with the Berlin

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[25]*Cut with the Kitchen Knife Through the Last Weimar Beer-Belly Epoch in Germany* (1919-1920) was one of her exhibited works, although George Grosz and John Heartfield tried to stop her from being included in the fair and it was supposedly only through her relationship with Hausmann and his threatening to pull his own work from the show that she was finally able to exhibit. For further analysis and description of this work see Maud Lavin, *Cut with the Kitchen Knife.*

[26] Biro, *The Dada Cyborg,* 212.

[27] For more on this, see Kristen Makhohlm's detailed biographical timeline on Höch in Makela, *The Photomontages of Hannah Höch*, 185-210. These articles are one of the leading forces for why Höch's work has been read discretely through a biographical lens.

Dadaists was peripheral and did not last. In 1922 she ended her relationship with Raoul Hausmann and officially split from the core group, but she did not stop creating photomontages after breaking away. She did however change her subject matter slightly, moving away from directed political critiques to character types.

Many of Höch's 'ironic' compositions in the *Ethnographic Museum* series can be interpreted as a censure of interwar Europe's fetishization of the exotic, but they also buy into fetishized stereotypes, heightening the 'otherness' of her subjects and displaying them through an accepted, ostracized context. Maud Lavin argues in her monograph, *Cut with the Kitchen Knife* that, whether it was intentional or not, Höch's compositions did in fact perpetuate a derogatory trend of romanticizing negrophilia in the interwar years.[28] She cites the photomontage, *Negerplastik* (Figure 8, 1929; also sometimes called *Kinderkörper* or *Negerplastikköpf*) as an example. In *Negerplastik* Höch pasted an image of a carved African head over an infant's body. The head is an ivory pendant mask from the court of Benin, most likely one now at the British Museum.[29] The exaggerated size of the head and its cocked, wondering position, contrasted with the softness of the body give it child-like disposition and proportions. As Lavin points out, the African mask head and the infant body suggests the equation of infantilism with primitivism and Africanness, reiterating a familiar stereotype in Weimar Germany's illustrated press.[30]

The *Ethnographic Museum* series places its subjects in a museum setting firstly through its title. Höch's compositions then heighten the exhibitionist state of her subjects. By nature of being in a popular cultural magazine, her source images were meant to be looked at and as points

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[28] Maud Lavin, *Cut with the Kitchen Knife,* 160.
[29] Makela, *The Photomontages of Hannah Höch*, 72.
[30] Lavin, *Cut with the Kitchen Knife*, 163.

of discussion. Höch recognized this fact, playing with their performative settings. For example, looking again at *Negerplastik*: Höch undeniably represents an infantilizing and derogatory stereotype, but her composition is also critical in subtext, seen especially through her collaged composition and positioning of the figure. Firstly, she has altered the ivory mask, replacing its eye with a fragment of a woman's batting eye. In doing so Höch equates the female with ethnographic object and is also infantilizing it by attaching it to the child's body. By including a feminine, made-up eye, Höch is using the same tropes prevalent in popular press, aestheticizing, feminizing, and sexualizing the colonial subject. Furthermore, the female eye also looks directly back at the viewer, as if to say "I see you watching me". By directly looking at the viewer, the eye implicates the viewer in the composition's unscrupulous use of disparate imagery, as if to argue that it is the viewer who has forced her (eye) into this grotesque composition.

Secondly, Höch created a base for the collaged figure from pictorial fragments of a miniature stool and a small claw. Her imagined base produces a frame within a frame, a composition deployed throughout the *Ethnographic Museum* series. By reframing the subject, Höch is making a comment on the categorization and display of people as objects. The majority of images in the series include some kind of base, which traditionally presents the wholeness and perfection of an object on display; here the base is used by Höch as what Lavin describes as "a pedestal for her grotesque montages of multi-cultural fragments."[31] Furthermore, by reframing subjects as objects of spectacle, Höch further ostracizes her subject. Her figures become indices of objects (and peoples) that have been categorized, aestheticized, and denied agency in modern German culture. Making this connection more explicit, Höch did not disguise the origins of her images but rather often called attention to them, leaving original captions in her final

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[31] Lavin, *Cut with the Kitchen Knife*, 163.

compositions, or later identifying them herself. By highlighting their mainstream sources, she was implicitly referencing the press and its representations of non-European cultures, presenting what Maria Makela posits as a "sophisticated" understanding of primitivism that stresses its entwinement with the forces of modernism.[32]

Postcolonialism in Weimar Germany

In the early 1900s, the entirety of Europe perpetuated and disseminated a colonial fantasy, fetishizing the primitive 'exotic.' Before the First World War, this was manifested in the rejuvenation of the avant-garde through Primitivism, which connected the artist back to the pure, untainted, un-modernized, anti-technological, root of the individual. This concept is directly linked to the fact that all of the great European powers had colonial territories at this time, which were seen as declarations of a country's political and military power, but more pointedly as venues for Western powers to exert their control and explore colonial fantasies. In Germany, colonial conquest helped emphasize that the country had reached true nationhood after its late unification in 1871 and was an indicator that Germany could finally compete with its modern counterparts.[33] By 1885, Germany had acquired four African territories (Southwest Africa, Togo, Cameroon, and German East Africa) as well as a few territories in the Pacific (northeastern New Guinea, part of Samoa, the Bismark, Marshall, Caroline, Marina Islands, and Kiachow on the Shantung Peninsula in China).[34] It is important to recognize the power structures set in place and enforced in the colonies. Colonialism allowed for and justified racist ideologies that had been subtly engrained in the European psyche. Visual culture popularized and integrated these

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[32] Makela *The Photomontages of Hannah Höch,* 147.
[33] Joachim Zeller "Harmless 'Kolonialbiedermeier'? Colonial Exotic Trading Cards", in *German Colonialism, Visual Culture, and Modern Memory*, ed. Volker Langbehn (New York: Routledge, 2010), 349.
[34] For a precise history of the acquisition of German Empire, see Susanne Zantop, The Imperialist Imagination: German Colonialism and Its Legacy (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2001), 33-51.

ideologies into daily life, displaying the inherently racist agenda of colonialism as well-founded and just.

The birth of mass media at the end of the nineteenth century further brought these racist ideologies into the spotlight, insidiously allowing for colonial attitudes to spread into popular culture. For the first time there was a possibility of communicating to the public through mass visual media such as magazines, advertisements, post cards, colonial trading cards, and mass-produced picture books.[35] And because this proliferation coincided with the so-called 'scramble for Africa' and the European fetishization of the exotic, mass print imagery was founded on colonialist ideologies.[36] In the interwar years, the materialization of colonialism on the home front became a bit more complicated, particularly for Germany, because it lost control of its colonies after the ratification of paragraph 119 in the Treaty of Versailles in June of 1919. Although there was a distinct societal awareness of what had happened in WWI and a sense of shame associated with Germany's defeat after the war, many groups worked throughout the 1920s to restore the German nation's interest in acquiring new (or reacquiring old) colonies, efforts which manifested in specialized organizations, political platforms, mass media, and pop culture.[37]

Lora Wildenthal in her essay "Gender and Colonial Politics after the Versailles Treaty" describes this climate as "inflicted with a profound sense of victimhood."[38] With the help of the

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[35] Suzanne Zantop has argued that the "imperialist imagination" was also spread through popular literature. Stories such as Heinrich Campe's *Robinson der Jüngere* (Robinson the Younger, 1779) were reiterated throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries. They diepicted the colony as an idealized version of the home, "perfect miniature fatherlands in exotic settings" Zantop, *The Imperialist Imagination*, 21.

[36] This type of racism was not unique to Germany but was definitely heightened because of the traumatic loss of the First World War and its subsequent instability for the first half of the 20th century.

[37] Brett Van Hoesen, "Performing the Culture of Weimar Postcolonialism; Hannah Höch's *From an Ethnographic Museum* and Its Legacy," *Hannah Höch* ed. Iwona Blazwick, (London; Prestel, 2014).

[38] Laura Wildenthal, "Gender and Colonial Politics after the Versailles Treaty" in Kathleen Canning, Kerstin Barndt, and Kristen McGuire, eds. *Weimar Publics/Weimar Subjects: Rethinking the Political Culture of Germany in the 1920s (*Berlin*: Berghahn Books 2010)*, 340.

nation's most influential colonialist lobbying group, the Deutsche Kolonialverein (German

Colonial Society), Germany launched a large-scale propaganda campaign, sparking colonialist

activism rather than abandoning the colonial project. Public opinion during the Weimar Era was

shaped by an argument that the German people (without colonies) were without *Lebensraum*

(space to live). Furthermore, Germany had a natural right to the colonies and it was the duty of

civilized white German culture to help the 'undeveloped' races.[39] The colonies were seen as a

symbol of national honor, carrying cultural and national importance. Further complicating this

relationship, in 1923 Germany defaulted on its reparation payments and as a result, the

Rhineland was occupied by nonwhite French troops, sparking outrage in the German press.

Magazines, newspapers, pamphlets, and even movies repeatedly told of the supposed "Black

Horror on the Rhine" where hordes of savages allegedly roamed the countryside, raping women,

infecting the population with tropical diseases, and polluting native German blood with

Mischlingskinder (children of mixed race).[40]

Höch's *Mischling* (*Half-Breed*, Figure 9) from 1924 directly engages with the Black

Horror. *Mischling* depicts three-quarter view portrait of a young, black (presumably African)

woman with either tears or scars running down her cheeks. Superimposed over her mouth is a cut

out section of a contrastingly pink (presumably European) woman's rouged and tightly pursed

lips. There is also a distinct razor cut around her chin that emphasizes her jawline and violently

reveals the backing of the paper underneath the figure. The original image of the African woman

is duplicated in Höch's 1933 mass media scrapbook on page 58 (Figure 10).[41] In the scrapbook,

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[39] For more on this and other discussions on German colonialism, see Helmuth Stoecker, ed. *German Imperialism in Africa: From the Beginnings until the Second World War*, trans, Bernd Zölner (London C. Hurst & Company, 1986).
[40] Makela *The Photomontages of Hannah Höch,* 70.
[41] Brought to my attention in Lavin, *Cut with the Kitchen Knife*, 119.

the woman is part of a two-page spread that presents a series of African women and children, most of whom are nude. From this original image we can see that Höch precisely cut out the woman's long black hair, which has been replaced with sepia toned marks that resemble blonde hair. Matthew Biro, in his book *The Dada Cyborg*, gives an excellent reading of this image, arguing that it evokes sadness, ethnic mixing, violence, and eroticism, which highlights the subject's identity as a woman, but more pointedly her identity as a hybrid, mixed race image of German society.[42]

According to Biro, because the source imagery comes from preexisting images that were appropriated from illustrated books and magazines, it points out how German mass media was used to disseminate and reify racist ideas and stereotypes.[43] *Half-Breed* evokes both the colonial fantasy and fear of ethnic mixing, but also highlights the longstanding tradition in European culture of connecting women with the primitive[44]—thus the collage highlights the female's hybrid identity as mixed race, but also her identity as a modern woman.[45] The figure is humanized through her tangible, readable emotion. The documentary associations the viewer makes with the photographic medium makes us relate to her and further empathize with her. But she is also presented as a monstrous hybrid, separate from the German ideal. For example, the tears (or scars) and the sharp cut underneath her chin evoke the darker side of colonialism, referencing its violent history. More pointedly, the figure's superimposed white mouth is tightly closed, suggesting how colonialism may suppress the voices of indigenous peoples—a suggestion reinforced by the fact that in the original image that the white mouth pasted over, the

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[42] Biro, *The Dada Cyborg*, 225.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Suzanne Zantop in her text *Colonial Fantasies: Conquest, Family, and Nation in Precolonial Germany, 1770-1870* (North Carolina: Duke University Press 1997) 13, points out the long-standing prehistory of colonial fantasies from the 16th century onward, which were narratives through which German's reified their desire for power and foreign conquest in through both sexual and paternalistic scenarios and manifestations.
[45] Biro, *The Dada Cyborg*, 224.

mouth is half open.[46] In this image, again we see that Höch was explicitly critical of Weimar colonial race attitudes, but also that she was ambiguous in her stance; a concept, which in this case is manifested in the title. *Mischling*, connotes a sense of impurity—that there is a better 'whole breed' that was tainted by racial impurity—buying into eugenic ideologies circulating in Germany in the first half of the 20th century. Furthermore, *Mischling's* monstrous, Frankenstein-like appearance shows the inescapable, horrific reality of being biracial in Weimar society, and her sad expression suggests that the sexualized lure of the exotic, which could lead to racial mixing, can only lead to unhappiness.

The Weimar Illustrated Press

In Berlin, the proliferation of racist ideologies manifested in and was disseminated to the public through the mass publication of illustrated magazines. In the early twentieth century, hundreds of magazines, print portfolios, and illustrated newspapers flooded the news-stands and book shops of Berlin and Germany. In 1929, about 2,600 magazines and newspapers were published in Berlin alone, of which at least 147 daily newspapers appeared in the city that year.[47] Three companies dominated this market: Ullstein Verlag (*Vossiche Zeitung* and *Berliner Morgenpost)*, Mosse (*Berliner Tageblatt*) and Scherl (*Berlin am Morgen* and *Berliner Nachtausgabe*). A new genre of photo-journalism was also developing, led in particular by *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung*, also published by Ullstein Verlag.[48] Magazines became the main forum of presentation for culture, political beliefs, and the construction of modernity and new ways of living in the 20th century.

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[46] Biro, *The Dada Cyborg*, 225.
[47] Esau, "The Magazine of Enduring Value", 869.
[48] Rainer Metzger, et al. *Berlin: The Twenties* (New York: Abrams, 2006), 317-318.

Erika Esau in her article "The Magazine of Enduring Value: *Der Querschnitt* and the World of Illustrated Magazines" argues that Berlin cultural battles of the 1920s divided most convulsively over the question of art versus politics, which was manifest in the illustrated magazines.[49] Esau speculates: "Was modern art, both visual and literary, meant to serve political goals or did art offer its own *raison d'être*?"[50] This question is also at the heart of the politically activated (anti-) art of the Berlin Dadaists, manifest in their invention and use of photomontage. The publication *Der Querschnitt* epitomized this push and pull between politics and art culture. Recall that *Der Querschnitt* emanated from Germany's leading dealer in international art, Alfred Flechtheim, first as a brochure to promote his exhibitions and works for sale.[51] Under the leadership of Flechtheim's close associate, Hermann von Wedderkop, *Der Querschnitt* became internationally known as an icon of the culturally urbane, defining what was aesthetically important for the German sophisticate. Popular journals like *Der Querschnitt*, were catered specifically to female consumers. Notably, illustrated/photographic renditions of women from around the world were used to sell products reliant on colonial imports that were targeted at a young, female audience, playing into art historian Brett Van Hoesen's idea of the "global arena of New Womanhood."[52]

Maria Makela has made enormous progress in identifying the source material for Höch's *Ethnographic Museum* series, which reveals that the majority originated from Flechtheim's *Der Querschnitt* in issues dating from 1924-1926.[53] Höch specifically used the January 1925 issue of *Der Querschnitt* as a major source for the series. The leading article for that issue was Albert C.

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[49] Erika Esau, "The Magazine of Enduring Value", 869-887.
[50] Ibid.
[51] On Flechtheim and his milieu, see Stephan Weise, *Alfred Flechtheim: Sammler Kunsthändler, Verleger* (Düsseldorf: Kunstmuseum, 1987).
[52] Van Hoesen, "Performing the Culture of Weimar Postcolonialism," 81.
[53] Maria Makela, "*From an Ethnographic Museum*: Race and Ethnography in 1920s Germany" in Makela *The Photomontages of Hannah Höch*, 70-72.

Barnes's "Die Negerkunst und Amerika" (Negro Art and America, 1925), which linked the evolution of Negro spirituals to the history of black slavery. Barnes argues the African's "subjugation" within an Anglo-Saxon environment was a "soul-stirring experience" which helped give way to great, expressive art.[54] Barnes praises the rhythms and harmonies of African-American spirituals, but he reveals prejudices typical of the time in his description of the "Average Negro" who is tied to his "primitive ancestors", "rooted in nature," and thus able to produce more "soulful" spirituals than civilized white man.[55] Barnes' essay was not illustrated with images related to Negro spirituals, but rather with primitive sketches from Spain, cubist sketches, and unrelated African sculptures from the collection of Paul Guillaume in Paris.[56] Thus, readers were left to draw their own connections between the tribal art, modern revitalized art, and (the author's characterization of) American Negro composers as "simple", "natural", and "uncivilized". Vast differences between black American culture and black African culture were thus conflated into one amalgamation of the Other delineated through black skin color and a perceived heritage from Africa, a reoccurring conflation in *Der Querschnitt*. Furthermore, a relationship between Germany, America, and the black Other appears throughout the illustrated press, often incorporating the image of the New Woman into this hierarchy.

For example, a spread from 1926 (Figure 11), which juxtaposes an "American Bathing Beauty," "Rin-tin-tin," and a "Woman from Cameroon," illustrates a typical manner through which Höch would have interacted with her source material while also revealing an internalized relationship between American popular culture the German illustrated press. The three-image spread is tucked between two entirely unrelated articles; one on Jack London and one on a

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[54] Quotes from Albert C. Barnes, "Negro Art and America," *The New Negro*, (1925), 19-25.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Four of which Höch used in the *Ethnographic Museum* series.

festival in Heidelberg. The first image in the triptych shows an "American Bathing Beauty from Los Angeles"—a confident, accepted version of Germany's New Woman. Imaging and imagining the New Woman coincided with the bourgeoning illustrated press. In newspapers, films, magazines, and fine art, a radically new societal role for women was projected—and soon distorted as a means to combat her perceived threat to patriarchal norms.[57] Stereotypes of the New Woman presented in the media were complex and contradictory; messages of female empowerment and liberation were mixed with domestic campaigns of dependence.[58] Furthermore, the new consumer culture of the interwar years positioned women as both commodities and consumers.

In the "American Bathing Beauty" we see this same back and forth between feminine agency and patriarchal restrictions. The woman stands empowered, flaunting her womanhood, interacting directly with the viewer, but her demarcation as a "Beauty" and furthermore as American complicates her powerful presence. Many advertisements in Weimar women's magazines used American or pseudo-American names when depicting the New Woman, describing them as young, graceful, slender, animated, healthy, athletic, fresh, supple, sun-tanned, youthful, etc.[59] Consumers came to associate American with a modern, aesthetic ideal because advertisers used photographs of fashionable women with masculine objects such as sports cars and skyscrapers, accompanied by texts like: "She is American. In matters of beauty she is the most discerning woman in the world. For her, HUTNUT crème is the epitome of perfection."[60] The image of a liberated and independent German New Woman and her American

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[57] Lavin concisely reads popular 'distortions' of the New Woman in the illustrated press in her first chapter of *Cut with the Kitchen Knife*.

[58] Lavin presents this flipping back and forth as a fragmentation and reassembly of feminine stereotypes, which in turn Höch picks up on in her depictions of the New Woman.

[59] More examples given in Günther Berghaus' essay "Girlkultur: Feminism, Americanism, and Popular Entertainment in Weimar Germany," *Journal of Design History*, Vol. 1 No. ¾ (1988) 193-219.

[60] Advertisement for Richard Hutnut A.G., Berlin, 1930 . Günter Berghaus "Girlkultur".

flapper counterpart littered both visual and artistic media of the 1920s in both America and Germany. Andreas Huyssen in "Mass Culture as Woman: Modernism's Other" argues that "The fear of the masses in this age of declining liberalism is always also a fear of woman, a fear of nature out of control, a fear of the unconscious, of sexuality, of the loss of identity and stable ego boundaries in the mass."[61] This conflation of the feminine with the mass signifies the New Woman as a unique creation of modernity but also points to a specific desire to control her, which in this case is through masculinized imagery.

In the 1920s Germany enthusiastically embraced America as an economic and social model.[62] Jonathan Wipplinger in his chapter "Syncopating the Mass Ornament: Race and *Girlkultur*" looks to Fritz Giese's 1925 work *Girlkultur: Vergleiche zwischen amerikanischem und europäischem Rhythmus- und Lebensgefühl*[63] and pulls out a similar spread to the Bathing Beauty, Rin-tin-tin, Cameroonian triptych from *Der Querschnitt* (Figure 1). Geise's spread contrasts a photograph of the Tiller Girls, a depiction of the *Chocolate Kiddies* revue,[64] and a caricatured image of a Black jazz band with the words "USA made in Germany" visible in the background. Through the image, Wipplinger orients a structure where America and Germany in the interwar period were growing closer culturally and politically rather than farther apart, emphasizing race and gender issues as a parallel in both countries. For example, Germany's 'Black Horror' and America's 'Negro Question' grow simultaneously; these modern nations existing in a new area of (post)colonialism share fundamental similarities concerning the

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[61] Andreas Huyssen, "Mass Culture as Woman: Modernism's Other," After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, and Postmodernism (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 52.
[62] Katharina von Ankum argues that Taylorism and Fordism made the United Stated shine as a prototype of a democratic, economically stable, and technologically advanced consumer society in which labor and capital were no longer on opposing sides.
[63] Jonathan Wipplinger, "Syncopating the Mass Ornament: Race and Girlkultur" *The Jazz Republic: Music, Race, and American Culture in Weimar Germany* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2017).
[64] For more on the *Chocolate Kiddies*, see Chapter 2 of Wipplinger, *The Jazz Republic.*

relationship between black and white. Wipplinger also argues that print culture mediated images of the New Women similarly to images of blackness, conflating, sexualizing, and infantilizing them as fashionable behavior. He delineates a triadic relationship between European male settlers, African slaves, and European women.[65] Returning to the "American Bathing Beauty" as emblem of the American New Woman, her pairing with Rin-tin-tin and a woman from Cameroon illustrates a similar triadic relationship.

Rin-tin-tin was a German Shepherd that was rescued from a WWI battlefield by an American soldier. He was a show dog, silent movie star, and war hero, known for his human-like ability to obey command. In this image, Rin-tin-tin, directly to the Bathing Beauty's left, stands at attention with human-like posture, complete with a small top hat. He is an exemplar of Western society's ability to domesticate something 'wild.' He is the masculine ideal combatting and mitigating the New Woman to his right and the 'primitive' black body to his left. The Bathing Beauty's autonomy, when seen next to Rin-tin-tin, inherently humanizes his figure and places him in same hierarchal strata as the Bathing Beauty. But this seemingly benign and leveled arrangement goes both ways; paired with a dog that emulates a productive citizen and the same masculine ideal, the power implied by the Bathing Beauty's status as a New Woman is diminished. This kind of unexamined visual elision can reinforce the idea that the New Woman's improved status could only go so far.

The comparison is even starker when you move to the third image in the triptych, which moves from most 'civilized' to least as you read it left to right. The photograph depicts a Cameroonian woman, bare chested with ornate jewelry, looking skeptically at the photographer. Published beside the two Western counterparts, her image adheres to the colonial agenda, which

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[65] Wipplinger, "Syncopating the Mass Ornament", 119.

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would place the racial 'Other' into the same controlled hierarchy with the New Woman. Lora Wildenthal argues that Germany's racialized (post)colonialist space became a site for the articulation of German women's political aspirations at home, a space in which "self-defined colonialist women used ideas of race and gender in the context of formal empire both to gain new freedoms as women and to assert German superiority over 'backward' societies."[66] Here, we have the assertive feminine ideal, starkly contrasted with the helpless primitive, revealing them as one and the same and mediated through the centrally located masculine ideal, Rin-tin-tin. Showing the three images together inherently relates the figures, as if showing three distinct animalistic, primitive, but controlled aspects of Western society in one modern triptych.

Carl Einstein's *Negerplastik*

Uwe Fleckner in "'Drunk, I dance the feather bright electric': Carl Einstein and the African Vitalism of Dadaist Art" argues that Dada (anti)art was permeated by the reception of African and pseudo-African forms of expression, especially by "Negro rhythm."[67] In Berlin Dada, there was one figure driving the dissemination of knowledge on African art forms, Carl Einstein. Einstein quickly aligned himself with the Berlin Dadaists, contributing political proclamations and manifestos.[68] Einstein published his groundbreaking work of art theory, *Negerplastik*, in 1915, which is a monograph comprised of an introductory text and about 120 images of objects from various regions and historical periods across Africa. *Negerplastik* argues firstly that "Negro art" is not "undeveloped" but, African sculpture as a form of high art that deserves to be collected and judged similarly to Western art.[69] Einstein also argues that Western

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[66] Lora Wildenthal, *German Women for Empire, 1884–1945* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 9.
[67] Uwe Fleckner "Drunk I dance the feather-bright fantastic." Carl Einstein and the African vitalism of Dadaist art", *Dada Africa*, 158.
[68] Einstein published in *Pleite* (1919-1924), edited by George Grosz, Weiland Herzefelde, and John Heartfield and also edited and wrote for *Der Blutige Ernst* in 1919.
[69] Carl Einstein, translated by Charles Haxthausen and Sebastian Zeidler, "Negro Sculpture", *October* Vol. 107 (2004), 124.

viewers know little to nothing about African art. In attempting to explain why, he argues that anthropological knowledge is not important to appreciating African art; since Europeans don't speak their visual and cultural language, they should not subject art to European anthropological terminology.[70] Placing African sculpture in the same timeline as Western sculpture, Einstein ultimately argues that African sculpture is more connected to what it represents; it "cultivates pure sculptural forms."[71] For example, African "idols" do not symbolize or represent but rather *are* gods (using what Einstein calls "unadulterated realism" to reify the African figures);[72] African sculpture thus is entirely self-sufficient (for the 1915 Western viewer), not relying on art historical canons or iconography.[73]

Raoul Hausmann had a personal copy of *Negerplastik*, which he hand-decorated and to which he added a new cover featuring one of his woodcuts; he later gave this copy to Höch.[74] Hausmann annotated several images, marking well known sculptures that were missing and made notes on aspects of the collection not noted in Einstein's text, thus showing how intensely he must have engaged with both Einstein's material and the African works. *Negerplastik* was published in various illustrated journals including *Der Querschnitt.*[75] The question here is not whether or not Höch was influenced by Einstein's writing—his essay undeniably bears out in her *Ethnographic Museum* series, as I will show—but rather how his writing shows what artists and the illustrated press were interested in when it came to African sculpture. The fact that Einstein was so entwined with the Dada (and consequently with Höch's) circle, is telling of the relationship between artists and the ethnographic. *Negerplastik* generated a unanimous response

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[70] Haxthausen, "Negro Sculpture", 125.
[71] Ibid, 128.
[72] Ibid, 135.
[73] Ibid, pp. 129-130.
[74] Now housed at the Berlinische Gallerie .
[75] "Negerplastik" was published in *Der Querschnitt* in 1916 and 1920.

amongst artists and was quickly absorbed and widely discussed in the Dada circle;[76] his writing not only responded to pressing artistic problems, but also responded directly to social and political problems of the Weimar era regarding race and empire. They adhered to Einstein's language against a scientific or anthropological classification of African art, to his descriptions of African art as natural and rejuvenating, and to his idealized premise of the self-sufficient sculpture.

Many of Höch's *Ethnographic Museum* series can be read directly through the theories presented in Einstein's *Negerplastik*. For example, returning to Höch's untitled work from 1930, discussed in the introduction (Figure 4), which depicts an ivory head from the Congo placed like a mask over an African American dancer's extended legs. Höch's montaged figure can be read through Einstein's discussion of African masks. Einstein argues that masks give the wearer the power of transformation to become the incarnation of the represented being.[77] If we apply this same ideology to the dancing figure, the African American man is transformed into and thus conflated with a literal African deity, connected both through his mask and the seemingly primitive moment in which the image has captured him. Through his placement in Höch's ethnographic museum on a contained pedestal, the man is forced into a fetishized objecthood as ethnographic object rather than African deity. Throughout the series, Höch used the same concept of metamorphosis, placing masks on Western bodies, thus revealing inherent conflations between black bodies and African culture. But she also illustrated the reverse, placing Western figures (most often images of the New Woman) onto African sculptures.

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[76] Uwe Fleckner, "Drunk I dance the feather-bright fantastic," *Dada Africa*, 159 // Fleckner cited that *Negerplastik* had undeniable impact on artists like Karl Schmidt-Rutluff, Fernand Lèger, Sophie Taeuber-Arp, Jean Börlin. For an overview on the specific artworks and artists it had impact on see Fleckner, "Drunk I dance the feather-bright fantastic," 159-161.
[77] Haxthausen, "Negro Sculpture", 125.

For example, her work *Entführung* (Abduction, Figure 12) from 1925 depicts a reproduction of a wood sculpture from the Congo, which was published in BIZ in 1924. The sculpture is identified in its original context as "Raub der Jungfrauen" (Abduction of the Virgins)[78] and shows four figures riding on a large animal. The two outer figures are male and enclosed between them are two easily identifiable female figures with exaggerated breasts. The first female figure's head has been replaced by the head of a New Woman, turned eerily backwards facing the other (African) female figure, shouting something into the distance. The New Woman is identified by her short haircut, a popular German style, the *Bubikopf*, that paralleled the New Woman's more masculine lifestyle.[79] The tribal sculpture has been placed on a plain navy-blue background, which Höch has sparsely populated with three bright red tree-like figures.[80]

In *Entführung*, the New Woman's head has been hybridized with an African object, taken against her will to be carried off by her supposed primitive, uncivilized, biological heritage. If we read this image through the same theory of masks presented by Einstein in *Negerplastik*, the Congolese sculpture is thus transformed into a New Woman. Therefore, *Entführung* could firstly be read as a commentary on how the New Woman's image has been transformed into a tribal object and placed in an ethnographic museum of sorts as a means of mitigating social agency. In this case, the New Woman is, just like the period's colonial artifacts, put under the control of a more civilized (male dominated) German society. However, the composition is not just a

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[78] The term Raub can also, but less often, be translated directly to mean 'rape', in which case does not change my later analysis of the work, but does add a more sinister layer.

[79] *Bubikopf* translates literally to boy-head but is also often called a *Herrnschnitt* (man's cut).

[80] The 'trees' come from an issue of Die Koralle from late November of 1926. This is another instance where the date of her work might be wrong or altered because the red trees were published more than a year after the image was supposedly created. This disconnect in dates may be attributed to the fact that Höch went back to some of the series and added the dates in 1934 when the series was exhibited in her show in Brno, Czechoslovakia. See Maria Makela, Plate 45 in *The Photomontages of Hannah H*öch, 1996.

seemingly straightforward equation of woman with Other but could also be read as a commentary on the incorporation of African sculpture into Western culture. In this case, the fetishized African object, standing in for colonial loss, has been thrust into the Western social hierarchy. As a perceived threat, the African sculpture is paired with the female form through the beheaded image of the shouting New Woman—who is also historically referred to for her relationship to nature, just as we saw in both Barnes and Einstein's characterizations of the African. Furthermore, the New Woman and African primitive were equally feared (as previously noted by Andreas Huyssen) as "nature out of control."[81] It is also notable that the lead rider and spear-wielding guard at the back are noticeably male, as if this societal abduction is being led and guarded by men, lead proprietors of this fear. The title of the piece itself, "Abduction," taken from the source image's original caption, makes the composition even more sinister. The European woman's image was abducted into this composition, forced back to her controlled place in German culture just as the African object has been abducted from its original home thus decontextualized through the ethnographic museum.

Höch, Dada, and the Medium of Photomontage

As a way of conclusion, I want to discuss medium of photomontage and the Dadaist practice in which Höch came into her own. Höch's compositions, while using modes of representation similar to the popular print culture from which she sourced her imagery, paint an entirely different view of Weimar culture than the magazines do on their own. The medium of photomontage breaks down into two parts: its photographic source material and the artist's creative arranging. Photomontage is at base a product of photographic components, which directly implicates it in early twentieth century associations of photography as a documentary

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[81] Andreas Huyssen, "Mass Culture as Woman: Modernism's Other," After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, and Postmodernism (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 52.

medium. Höch's arrangements expose the falsity of the photograph as a strict documentary medium, recognizing how constructed and unnatural many images in the illustrated press were.

Patrizia McBride in her book *The Chatter of the Visible: Montage and Narrative in Weimar Germany* presents the photomontage as a sort of puzzle, "whose fragments promise to make sense if properly matched."[82] By presenting objects in physically close proximity within an anti-illusionistic space, McBride argues that the image forces the viewer to actively attribute meaning to objects that have been separated from their original environments.[83] In the context of the Dada movement, photomontage fostered practices of disarticulation and re-composition that defied established canons of representation and media boundaries while registering the transformative impact that photography and film exerted on the media landscape of the early 1920s. According to McBride, "Photomontage embodied a new way of seeing…one that actively reshuffled the orders of the real rather than passively registering its hierarchies."[84]

There are two competing creation stories for when the term photomontage was officially coined and for when (and by whom) the practice was established within the Berlin Dadaists.[85] Both creation stories—one involving Raoul Hausmann and Höch, the other involving Georgre Grosz and John Heartfield—are recounted in detail in Hans Richter's memoir, *Dada: Art and Anti-Art* (1965). Richter paints the invention as inevitable explosion of artistic, revolutionary

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[82] Patrizia McBride in *The Chatter of the Visible: Montage and Narrative in Weimar Germany* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press 2016), 3.

[83] McBride, *The Chatter of the Visible,* 3 // This practice also applied to combination printing practices Such as Oscar G, Rejlander's combination print *Two Ways of Life* (1857), who used combination printing to combat the inadequacies of early cameras, but also as a means of creating photographs that better replicated academic paintings. It should be noted that Rejlander was heavily criticized for this attempt to elevate photography to an academic standard, and in 1863 he ended up writing "An Apology for Art-Photography" where he argued that combination printing is in fact not a legitimate use of photography and it rather would serve better as a 'handmaid' to art as a reference for paintings. The fact that Rejlander apologized for his attempt to elevate photography to the status of 'fine art' is a telling precursor to the Dadaists later picking up a similar method as their pinnacle of anti-art.

[84] McBride, *The Chatter of the Visible,* 5.

[85] One camp follows Raoul Hausmann and Hannah Höch's invention story and the other follows George Grosz and John Heartfield's; both date to around 1919 // Hans Richter, *Dada: Art and Anti-Art,* (New York and Toronto: McGraw Hill, 1965), 114-117.

genius, bursting from the Dada desire to create the anti-art painting. For the Berlin Dadaists, the photo(montage) became a manner through which they could move away from the limitations of abstraction without returning to figural drawing and all its 'high art' connotations as a source of meaning. They could instead create a provocative dismembering of reality, embedding it with poignant societal critique in a manner that was readable by the public.

In German, the word *Montage* means a 'fitting' or 'assembly line', the verb *montierien* 'to assemble', and *Monteur* 'mechanic' or 'engineer.'[86] Hausmann stated that the combination of *Photo* and *Montage* "translates our [Berlin Dada's] aversion at playing the artist and thinking of ourselves as engineers… We meant to construct, to assemble [*montieren*] our works."[87] Hannah Höch also weighed in on this, stating: "Our whole photographic purpose was to integrate objects from the world of machines and industry in the world of art."[88] Höch and Hausmann both point to the relationship between the mechanical materials of the photomontage (the photographic image) and the Dadaists' equally mechanical process as a means to critique their fragmented, modern, industrialized world.

If the invention of photomontage is placed strictly within Dada's historical moment, a perfect storm of various factors emerges to stimulate an interest and readiness for photomontage as an (anti)artistic medium. For example, 1919 was the first year of the postwar republic in Germany, the Weimar Republic. The beginning of this period has been characterized by Suzanne Zantop as the "years of turmoil" for the German people;[89] Germany had just lost 2.5 million citizens in WWI; the Kaiser was forced to abdicate, leaving an unorganized and highly critiqued

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[86] Furthermore, *Monteur* can be translated to 'Editor', 'Fitter', or 'Cutter' in French, a fact that Richter highlights in his memoir, *Dada: Art and Anti-Art*, 118.
[87] Ades, *Photomontage*, 12.
[88] Ades, *Photomontage*, 13.
[89] Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies,* 7.

governmental regime, there were serious economic problems including major inflation due to continued allied blockades; and Germany was faced with the harsh conditions of the Treaty of Versailles.[90] At the same time, the Weimar republic saw a unique flourishing of art and culture heavily influenced by the Expressionist art movement and the rapid advancement of technology spreading throughout Europe. In sum, the German public was uneasy with the government, concerned about money, and struggling to create a new German identity (specifically in government, art, and culture) after it was stripped in WWI. The Dadaists were looking for new ways to express these growing societal concerns, and thus the Dada concept of photomontage is inherently linked to the politics and mindset of a post-war society and emerged out of an amalgamation of political and cultural distress.

Hans Richter claims Hausmann's use of Photomontage was the juxtaposition "of photographic banalities in order to produce abstruseness of his own,"[91] and points to Hausmann's article "Definition der Foto-Montage" to define the medium:

> The Dadaists, who had 'invented' static, simultaneous and phonetic poetry, applied the same principles to visual representation. They were the first to use photography to create, from often totally disparate spatial and material elements, a new unity in which was revealed a visually and conceptually *new* image of the chaos of an age of war and revolution. And they were aware that that their method possessed a power for propaganda purposes which their contemporaries had not the courage to exploit… Photomontage in its earliest form was an explosive mixture of different points of view and levels.[92]

Richter firmly plants the medium within the postwar Dada moment and distinguishes two distinct montage styles: Heartfield's satirical surrealism and propagandistic critiques, and Haussmann's abstracted, 'uninhibited', 'simultaneous' statements/works. Höch's photomontages

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[90] Patrizia McBride in *The Chatter of the Visible* gives a concise overview of the Weimar Republic's political and social climate in relation to the Dadaists. See her Introduction and Chapter 1: "Weimar Era Montage: Perception, Expression, Story-telling."
[91] Richter, *Dada: Art and Anti-Art*, 117.
[92] Ibid, 116.

fall somewhat between these two classifications. She used witty and satirical elements to represent abstracted cultural allegories, creating what many scholars have deemed as a more sophisticated method of montage.[93]

In his 1918 *Dada Manifesto,* Richard Huelsenbeck directly situates Dada art within its surrounding political climate arguing, "The highest art will be that which in its conscious content presents the thousandfold problems of the day."[94] Both Dada creation stories are undoubtedly tied up in this mindset, relating the image back to a distinct societal moment. Grosz in his retelling of his and Heartfield's experiments with montage said, "What did happen was that Heartfield was moved to develop what started as an inflammatory political joke into a conscious artistic technique."[95] Höch and Hausmann's story is also rooted in the desire to represent something political; they recall coming across a stock image of a soldier, about which Höch stated, "To make this military memento more personal, a photographic portrait had been stuck on in place of the head."[96] The aims of Berlin Dada coupled with the political environment in which the artists lived, called for a distinctly political medium.

Lastly, let us return to the fact that photomontage would not exist without photography. Thus, photomontage carries many of the inherent assumptions and discussions circling around the photographic medium. For example, photography was (and is) often discussed for its mimetic qualities, as a 'window of nature'—though contemporary viewers know all too well that there can be nothing quite as manipulated and fake as a photograph.[97] As John Berger proposes in his 1969 essay, "The Political Uses of Photomontage",

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[93] For more on the critical reception of Höch's work, including that of her peers see Maud Lavin "The Berlin Photomontages" in *Cut with the Kitchen Knife* and Dawn Ades, *Photomontage.*
[94] Richter, *Dada: Art and Anti-Art*, 104.
[95] Ibid, 117.
[96] Ades, *Photomontage*, 13.
[97] For a discussion on photography as a 'window of nature' see Mary Warner Marien, *Photography and Its Critics: A Cultural History, 1839-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 47-84.

> The peculiar advantage of photomontage lies in the fact that everything which has been cut out keeps its familiar photographic appearance. We are still looking first at *things* and only afterwards at symbols. But because these things have been shifted… we are made conscious of the arbitrariness of their continuous normal message… Appearances themselves are suddenly showing us how they deceive us.[98]

Photomontage is powerful because, while the effect is symbolic, the point is driven home by grounding the symbol in 'real' objects faithfully reproduced by photographs.

Berger, in his short discussion of photomontage, points out numerous key aspects of the medium. He first and foremost acknowledges the political and propagandistic tendencies of the medium, using Heartfield as his case study. What is perhaps most interesting is that he likens Heartfield's style to that of Honoré Daumier's 19th century political cartoons, arguing that both artists represent the deepest universal reaction to modern politics.[99] Berger argues that these satirical statements are products of a distinctly modern cultural moment as a political and historical phenomenon, which would not have been possible in a theocracy or "secure feudal society," and rather "must await the principle of modern democracy and then the cynical manipulating of that principle."[100] Indeed there is a parallel between the cultural moment in which Daumier, Heartfield, and Höch were working, which can be extended to other moments marked by a sudden interest in the photomontage such as Tatlin's Soviet Russian Constructivism. Daumier and Heartfield were both critiquing a corrupt political system, marking a turn towards a democratic state, and were later marked as enemies of the government for their critiques. The perfect storm, which allowed for the Berlin Dadaists to invent a modern method of

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[98] John Berger, "The Political Uses of Photomontage," *Understanding a Photograph*, ed. Geoff Dyer (New York: Aperture 2013), 30. Berger firmly argues that Heartfield and Grosz invented photomontage because of its political and satirical possibilities, arguing that Heartfield was more invested in the politics of the medium.
[99] Berger, "The Political Uses of Photomontage," 29.
[100] Ibid.

depiction, is thus more a marking of a cultural trend delineating an innate desire to critique the faults of both the democratic and Marxist ideals.

The medium of photomontage becomes a product of its mechanical process and its photographic components rather than an artist specific, genius-based creation. Going back to a simple definition of photomontage, one can envision a point by point artistic process for the creation of a photomontage; the artist locates, separates, then repurposes the photographic image. This process highlights the connection between the artist and their source material as well as the conscious thought put into the manipulation of a photograph by the artist, directly connecting the artist and her source material.

In the 1960s, Höch said of the *Ethnographic Museum* series "I wanted to shine a light on the unscrupulous and simplistic use of Negro sculpture from Africa that was flooding Europe at the time. In my view, it was assimilated too simply into the working processes of certain groups, and so I amalgamated Negro sculpture elements and our 'demimonde cultural assets' at the time."[101] Although she made this statement much after the heart of her *Ethnographic Museum* series was created, it reveals an ambivalent yet similar perspective on mass media, stating that she too tapped into the same visual rhetoric. The word demimonde has specific implications. It could be referencing a class of women on the outskirts of respectable society, which in this case could stand for the New Woman. It could also more generally reference a social group that is isolated from its surrounding culture, thus referencing the Other, or could be used as a stand in for artists and bohemians, thus directly implicating her peers. Furthermore, 'demi-monde' translates to 'half-world', directly recalling Höch's own fragmented figures, half of a German world, half ethnographic object. By calling attention to "demimonde cultural assets" she is

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[101] This quotation comes from a manuscript by Heinz Ohff for his introduction to the exhibition *Hannah Höch* at the Kasseler Kunstverein 1969. (Berlin: Berlinische Galerie, 2001), 281.

making a witty acknowledgement: that which is on the fringes of society is (perhaps too often) absorbed, fetishized, and amalgamated into popular culture.

As I have pointed out throughout this paper, Höch's *Ethnographic Museum* series is decidedly ambivalent; her subjects and their re-contextualized settings buy into Weimar specific stereotypes but at the same time reveal them as unnatural and awkward conflations. This could simply be explained by the fact that most of the series was created after she left the tight-knit political think-tank of Berlin Dada, but I think there is more going on here. In one way, her ambivalence directly reflects the illustrated press from which she pulled her original images. These magazines produced an apathetic and clever presentation of fashionable trends, which in turn reveal direct prejudices and social issues of the Weimar era; the seemingly benign compositions grasp at a visual hierarchy where Germany is restored as a true, modern nation. Höch's final product is an observation of how the conflations of the illustrated press were unnatural, or funny, or at times insidious. By combining disparate images into one body, Höch's work mirrors her environment, using the same techniques to reflect conflations back to an audience already trained to read stark juxtapositions.

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FIGURES

Figure 1:*Mit Mütze*, 1924

Figure 2: *Hörner*,1924

Figure 3: *Der Heilige Berg*, 1924
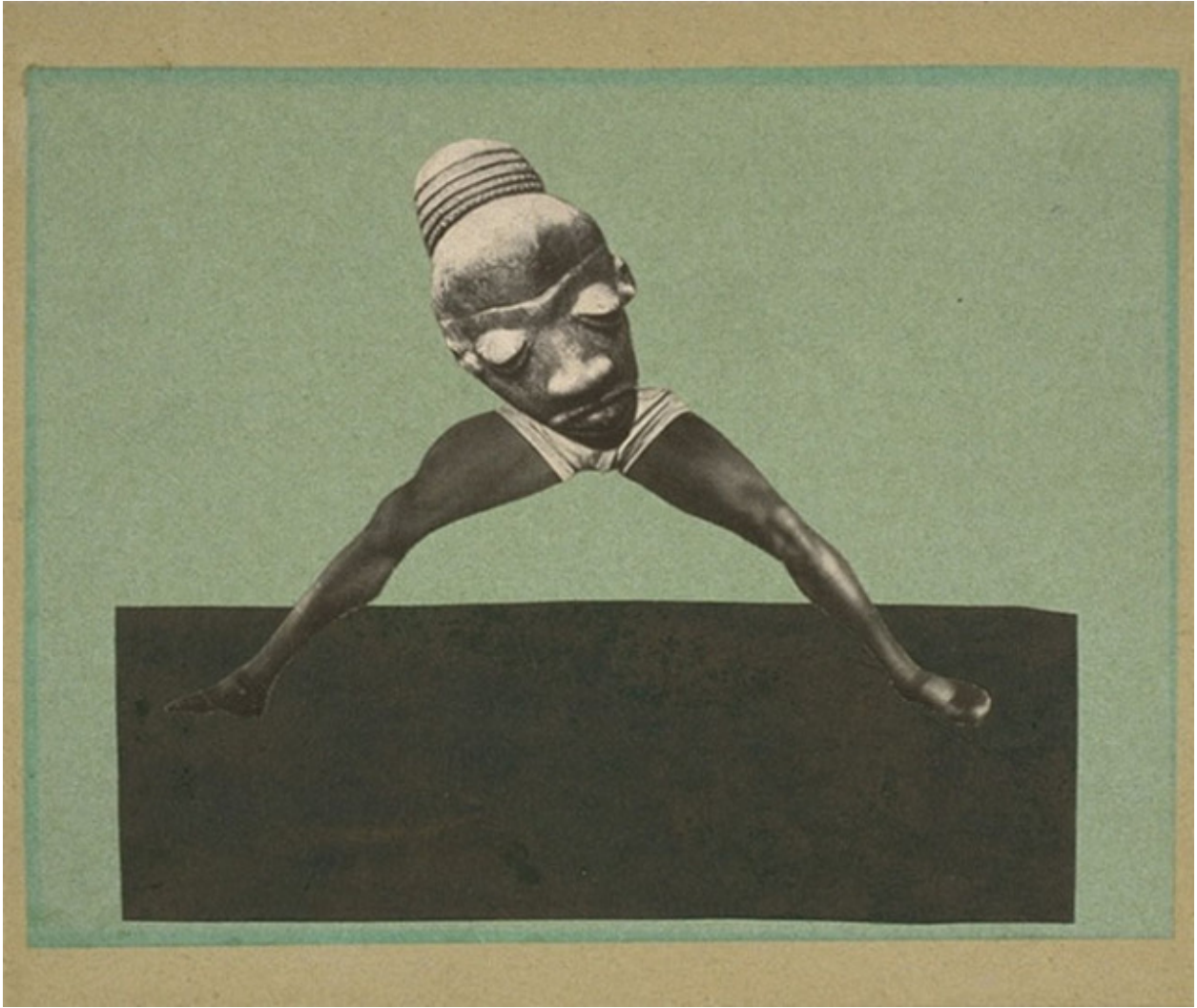
Figure 4: Hannah Höch, *Untitled, From an Ethnographic Museum*, 1930

Anselm Feuerbach, Othello (1871)
Dortmund, Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe

Elfenbeinskulpturen vom Kongo

Köln, Galerie Flechtheim

Figure 5: *Der Querschnitt.* No. 6 (January 1925), pp. 40

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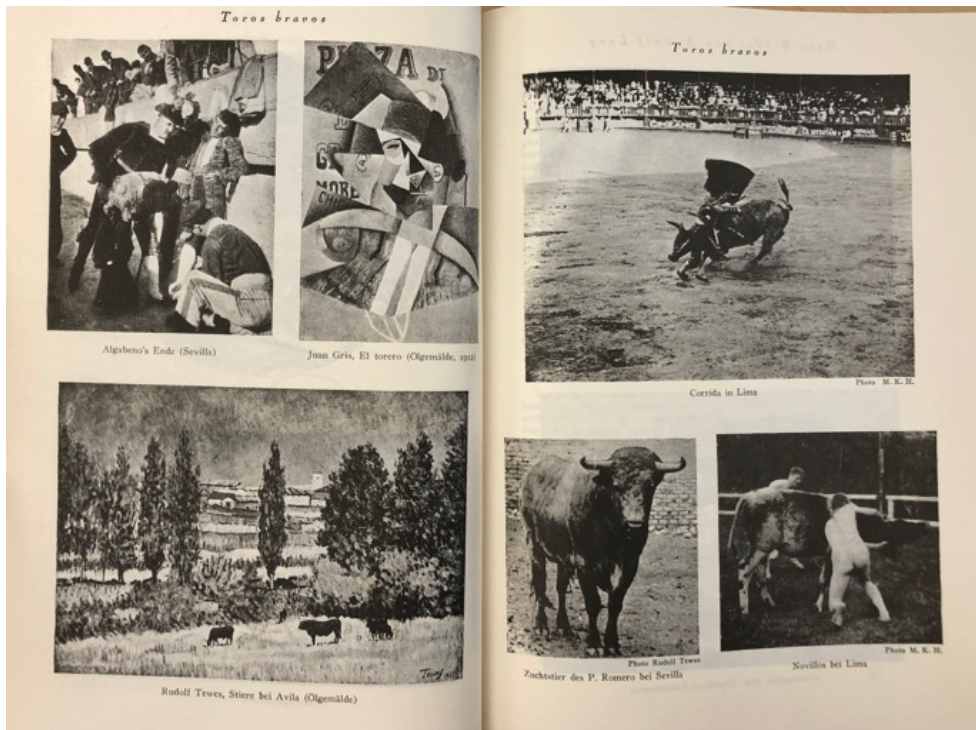
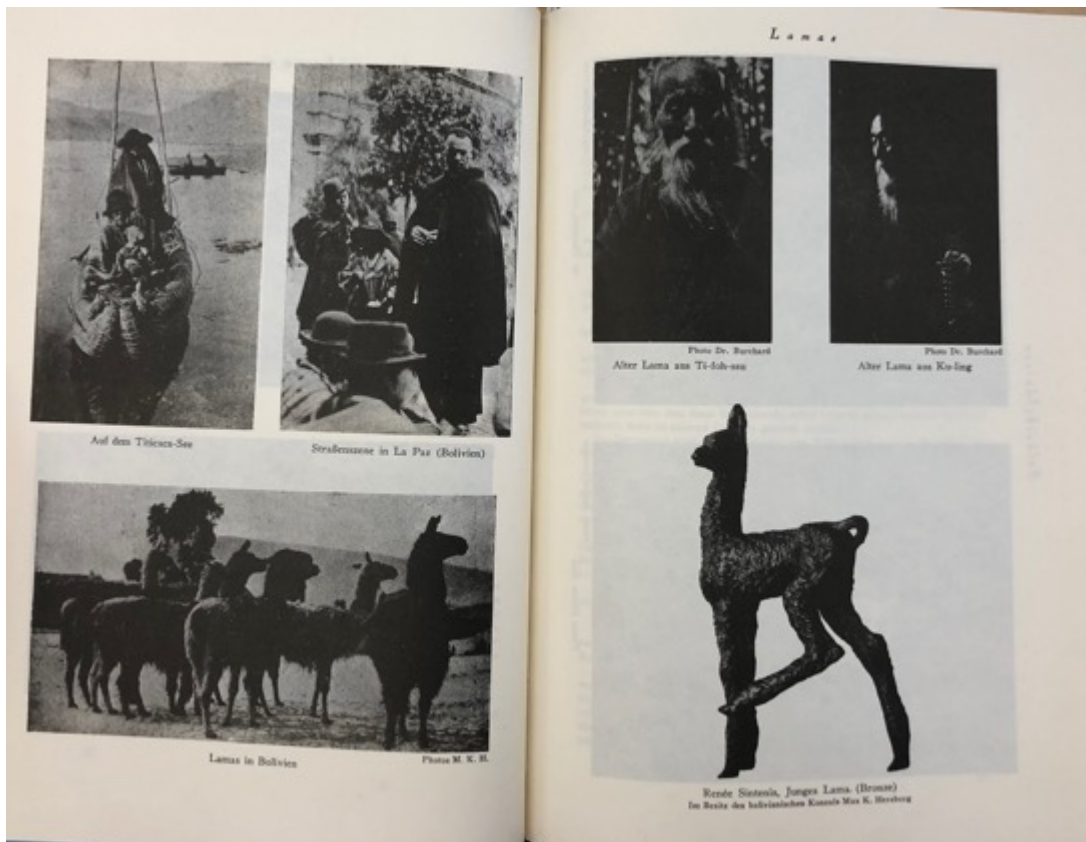Figure 6: "Toros Bravos" *Der Querschnitt.* No. 6 (January 1925), pp. 41-42

Figure 7: "Lamas" *Der Querschnitt.* No. 6 (January 1925), pp. 33

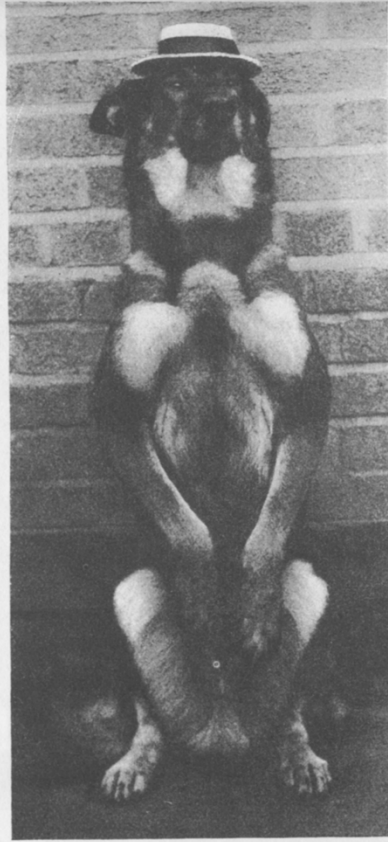Figure 8: Hannah Höch, *Negerplastik*, 1929

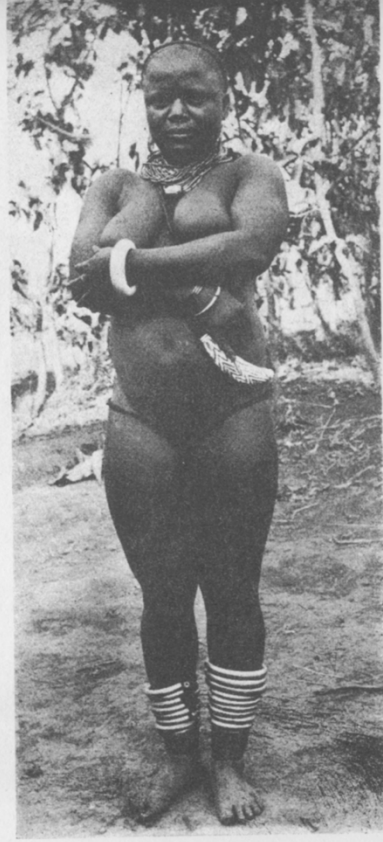Figure 9: Hannah Höch, *Mischling* 1924

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Wide World Photo
Amerikanische Badeschönheit in
Los Angeles

Wide World Photo
Rin-tin-tin

Frau aus Kamerun

Figure 11: *Der Querschnitt* 6, no 9 (September 1926) P. 891

Figure 12: Hannah Höch, *Entführung*, 1924