Nina Lübbren

'Resistance is Futile: Three Sculptors in Nazi Germany'

Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge

GSA 2017

This paper examines the creative practice of a handful of sculptors in Germany during the National Socialist administration, and asks if there was an oppositional potential in the making of sculpture.

Sculpture is particularly susceptible to co-optation by totalitarian systems because of its potential as propaganda in the form of monuments in the public sphere.[[1]](#footnote-1) Alfred Hentzen, in his 1934 book on contemporary German sculptors, wrote that sculpture should 'be a public matter'.[[2]](#footnote-2) In its public address, sculpture differed from painting, and indeed, as James van Dyke and others have noted, in the Third Reich, sculpture was increasingly treated as the pre-eminent medium, superior to the 'hyper-refined' products of modern painting. [[3]](#footnote-3) In 1942, the art historian Hans Weigert formulated the difference thus:

'Easel painting is appropriate inside a room, sculpture in the public square. In the room lives the individual, the square absorbs the crowd... Sculpture radiates out into a space and can thereby dominate many people.'[[4]](#footnote-4)

With regard to Germany, this kind of totalitarian art is most often associated today with the large-scale public monuments of Josef Thorak and Arno Breker. PIC The monumental, public and state-sponsored character of National Socialist sculpture would seem to make it particularly difficult to use this medium in order to 'resist' the establishment in any way. Sculpture, one might say, resists resistance. For this very reason, however, it is especially interesting to study sculpture in the context of the Third Reich.

The questions I would like to explore today are to what extent it was possible for sculptors to engage at all in any kind of political resistance to, confrontation with, or mockery of the fascist state. More often than not, it was a matter of accommodation to circumstances, and in the case of the arbitrary policy shifts among National Socialist cultural authorities, artists' strategies could sometimes pay off and, at other times, unpredictably back-fire.[[5]](#footnote-5) Using the careers and formal choices of a handful of selected professional practitioners, I trace the contradictions and ambiguities inherent in individual sculptors' career trajectories from the Weimar Republic into totalitarianism. As I go through my case study examples, I will also raise questions about the limits of resistance in a totalitarian environment, and about the peculiar function of the modern, autonomous, non-political artist within a discursive economy of 'aestheticised politics' (to borrow a term from Walter Benjamin).

The literature has tended to dichotomise artists' practices in totalitarian regimes into two distinct camps: conformism and collusion versus opposition and resistance. Scholars have probed political and ethical allegiances by scrutinising artists' biographies and also by trying to identify a certain fascist 'style'.[[6]](#footnote-6) However, recently this dichotomised view has been critiqued as too reductive of the complexities of the historical situation.[[7]](#footnote-7)

There is a problem with the dichotomy 'good/oppositional' versus 'bad/Nazi' in an environment where artists were persecuted and their livelihoods -- indeed, their lives -- were under threat.

In a totalitarian dictatorship, resistance can only occur in one of three ways: either one leaves (emigration, exile, refugee status), or one resists (or is suspected of resisting) and dies, or one stays and adapts, negotiates and comes to terms with the political givens. The majority of artists took the latter path. I say 'path' as I hesitate to call it a 'choice'; 'choice' is only possible in democracies.

In some sense, resistance and death can, I suppose, be seen as a kind of choice. However, a resistance that ends in death is 'futile'. One could of course argue that such resistance represents a moral triumph and that it was not futile at an ethical level. Indeed, much of the art historical writing post-1945 takes this stance implicitly or explicitly.

**Hanna Cauer**

Let me start with a brief look at an artist who would seem to furnish a benchmark for non-resistance.

Hanna Cauer (1902-1989) was just thirty years old when the NSDAP was elected in 1933. She had not yet had a successful career at that point. In fact, in a letter to the minister for Culture Bernhard Rust, dated 20 April 1933, Cauer claimed that she had not done well at all during the Weimar years:

'After my return to Germany I couldn't get a foothold anywhere, as the reigning Jewish-Marxist circles were absolutely hostile to my German approach to art. Therefore I now appeal to you with renewed hopes in our national government with the firm trust that I will find the necessary appreciation and support.'[[8]](#footnote-8)

Cauer's letter was calculated to appeal to the new authorities with its reference to 'Jewish-Marxist circles' contrasted with her own 'German' art. There is no reason to suppose that Cauer did not herself believe this justification. The amalgam 'Jewish-Marxist' connoted 'avant-garde', and hence possibly, in Cauer's view, 'anti-classical'. The sculptor's own practice drew on a heritage of classical sculpture, part of a long family tradition reaching back to the early nineteenth century.[[9]](#footnote-9) Cauer's work was indebted to antiquity as filtered through the nineteenth-century academy, a style of sculpture much in favour in the pre-World-War-One 'statuemania' of the Wilhelmine Imperial Reich. This kind of public commission dried up during the Weimar era, and Cauer may well have aligned her own experience with the racist and anti-avant-garde cultural paradigms of National Socialism. Magdalena Bushart notes that Cauer's traditionalism paid off after 1933.[[10]](#footnote-10)

Cauer's style fitted in with the new aesthetics and tasks. The artist was awarded a string of public commissions, was commended by the minister for propaganda, Joseph Goebbels, visited by the chancellor Adolf Hitler and in reception of personal favours via the state secretary Hans Hinkel.[[11]](#footnote-11)

In 1935, Cauer completed two bronze statues of female nudes for niches in the upper foyer of the refurbished Nuremberg Opera House, an *Allegretto* and a *Moderato*. Both statues were placed in niches in the newly-refurbished Nuremberg opera house, to both sides of the Führer's box *Loge*. As such, they were officially sanctioned expressions of the new cultural dispensation and in no way 'resistant'.

Artur Kreiner wrote a review of the statues in *Kunst und Volk* the official organ of the National Socialist cultural community:

'They [Cauer's figures] are classic -- without being classicist -- and avoid cloying sweetness and academic coldness; they appear not mighty but are equally distant from Doric squatness as they are from that exaggerated twisting and turning of human limbs that in days of yore stood for art among those now happily "past" creators of all "never-been-there-before".'[[12]](#footnote-12)

Kreiner evoked the recent past, the art world of the Weimar Republic. This is several months before the Degenerate Art exhibition of 1937 was juxtaposed with the official Great German Art Exhibition in Munich, and before Hitler, the newly-elected chancellor of Germany, inveighed against the decadent cultural bolshevism of Weimar. It is as if Kreiner needed to evoke what the sculptures were *not* in order properly to understand what they *were*. The invocation of the classical fits in with the recently hardened political line: until 1934, it had not been evident which style would prevail.

Ironically, although Cauer's sculpture looks very conformist, the artist did not do much in the way of accommodation or negotiation. Cauer remained true to her own tradition, in the footsteps of her father, uncle and grandfather, without adapting to the new demands -- indeed, without needing to adapt. Her strategy was mostly one of exploitation: she worked to get the most out of her environment to support something she was already doing. There seemed, as far as one can tell, to be no friction between her personal predilections and the official line as her practice matched what was expected.

**Milly Steger**

Milly Steger (1881-1948) was aged fifty-one years old when Hitler was elected in January 1933. [[13]](#footnote-13) Unlike Cauer, she was at that point a celebrated artist with an established career who was best-known for her controversial life-size public sculptures commissioned for the Municipal Theatre of Hagen in 1911. A number of further commissions in Hagen followed, including a keystone for the Karl-Ernst-Osthaus Museum in 1912, a female semin-nude for the cashier hall of the Hagen Municipal Hall and two figures for the Secondary School Altenhagen, all around 1913, a bronze smith in the Hagen Volkspark in 1914, a set of colossal panthers for the Municipal Hall in 1917, and a relief frieze for the Savings Bank in 1920.[[14]](#footnote-14) PICs Steger's career began with public monuments. However, in the wake of the First World War and after Steger's move to Berlin in 1917, public commissions dried up. The lack of state- and municipality-sponsored projects was partly a factor of the economic situation during the Weimar Republic, and partly a result of the changing architectural situation in the 1920s. Building projects tended to be modernist in style, without the columns, entablatures and pediments of classically-inflected architecture which invited sculptural ornamentation.

In response to the lack of large-scale commissions, Steger's post-First-World-War work became smaller and more inward-turning; it also started to look more 'Expressionist'. PICS (*Resurrecting Youth* 1919; *Dancers*). Steger herself, however, remained committed to a public monumental sculpture. The renewed emphasis on classical architecture and public sculpture in the Third Reich seemed to promise a revival of public commissions. In a 1936 interview, Steger said:

'It's a delight that we sculptors are in recent times again increasingly invited to contribute by architects, and so we can hope that soon we will experience once again the unified, great work of art, the work of art of our time, a harmonious combination of the three sister arts: architecture, painting and sculpture.'[[15]](#footnote-15)

This position is, as Birgit Schulte has pointed out, reminiscent of the policies of the Workers' Council of Art (Arbeitsrat für Kunst), a socialist revolutionary group with which Steger had worked in 1919.[[16]](#footnote-16) As it happens, Steger did not receive any of the kind of large-scale high-profile public commissions she had enjoyed in the 1910s but her remark is indicative of the predicament of sculptors in the 1920s and early 1930s, and in the hopes that some could pin on a new government keen to promote public sculpture. However, Steger did receive a number of smaller-scale commissions and awards. The artists received a state commission for a stallion for the town of Insterburg in East Prussia in 1936, and she won awards for her entries to the Olympic Art Competitions in 1936 and 1940.[[17]](#footnote-17) In addition, Steger was awarded the Villa-Romana-Prize of the German Artists' Union in 1938 for a one-year residency in Rome.[[18]](#footnote-18)

In March 1934, Steger asked the chair of the Reich Culture Chamber (Reichskulturkammer), state secretary Hans Hinkel, if Adolf Hitler would sit for a portait bust for the German Lyceum Club in Berlin.[[19]](#footnote-19) Steger's *Brunnenfigur* was illustrated in the official National Socialist art journal *Die Kunst im Deutschen Reich* as well as in other periodicals.[[20]](#footnote-20)

In 1937, Steger's sculpture *Great Musing Woman / Große Sinnende* was chosen for inclusion in the first annual Great German Art Exhibition, [PIC] the principal official art show, sponsored by Hitler himself and hosted in the newly-built Haus der Deutschen Kunst*~~, completed by Ludwig Troost in 1935 and the first large-scale building to propagate the new classical revival of National Socialism~~*. This was a for-sale exhibition, with Hitler and other party functionaries as the main buyers.[[21]](#footnote-21) The exhibition was part of a general spectacle hosted in Munich, with festive carnival marches, theatre, opera, and inaugural speeches as part of a German Day of Art to celebrate 1000 years of art and culture in Germany.  *Musing Woman* (also known as *Great Musing Woman* or *Große Sinnende*) was exhibited in Gallery 9 of the Haus der deutschen Kunst, along a wall with three small-scale busts, including Richard Klein's bust of the German leader (*Führerbüste*), a large plaster *Awakening* by Ferdinand Liebermann, and Franz Bernhard's high-relief in stone, *Our Youth*. PICS The catalogue mistakenly listed the artist under a male name, 'Willy' Steger.

The *Große Sinnende* consists of a slightly larger than life-size female nude, crouching on a plinth that is suggestive of uneven ground. Her feet are together, her knees drawn up close to her chest; she leans forward slightly, with her right elbow resting on the outside of her right shin, and her other arm stretched on the inside of the legs. The figure does not look like the angular, tectonic and dynamic figures produced by Steger during the Weimar Republic. Nor does it look like the polished upright female nudes associated with the National Socialist sculpture of Arno Breker or Fritz Klimsch. It looks a little like Georg Kolbe's figures of the 1930s, or Hermann Blumenthal's *Star Gazer* / *Sterngucker.* PIC

The Great German Art Exhibition was conceived in direct contrast to the Degenerate Art Exhibition, held at the same time in Munich in 1937. Steger's work was not included in the Degenerate Art exhibition but eight works by Steger had been confiscated as part of the project to 'cleanse' the German 'temples of art', carried out on behalf of the Reich Ministry of Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda (Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda).[[22]](#footnote-22) PIC The confiscated works included six drawings and prints, and two sculptures: *Kneeling Woman* (confiscated from the Municipal Museum in Hagen) and *Walking Girl* (confiscated from National Gallery in Berlin in the Kronprinzenpalais).⁠[[23]](#footnote-23)

Steger was engaged in strategies of accommodation and negotiation in order to continue her artistic practice after 1933. Whether her style changed in response to the new aesthetic framework or as part of personal development, is up for debate.

Steger found a way to work within a different framework of expectation. She was already a mature artist in 1933 and accommodated her developing style to what promised success in terms of exhibition opportunities, and tried to negotiate with the institutions when she asked about a Hitler bust or hoped for public commissions. It is tempting to equate inclusion in the National Socialist art confiscation campaigns with resistance but this is a misleading conclusion. Artists whose work was confiscated and/or exhibited in the Entartete Kunst exhibition had not necessarily 'resisted' in any way. Most of the confiscated works had been produced before the National Socialist take-over in 1933, in a context where resistance meant something else entirely. And if 'resistance' is to have any meaning, it needs surely to be something actively chosen and undertaken by the resisting person. The choice to include works in the confiscation project was entirely outside of the control of the artists involved.

**Oda Schottmüller**

One artist who would seem to come closest to the idea of participating in a 'resistance' would be Oda Schottmüller (1905-1943). In August 1943, Schottmüller was executed by decapitation, having been condemned to death for 'assisting in the preparation of activities of high treason and favouring of the enemy'.[[24]](#footnote-24) Schottmüller was also accused of having been affiliated with the communist resistance group of the Rote Kapelle in Berlin. Little pointed to any subversive activities on the part of Schottmüller throughout most of the period of the Third Reich.

Schottmüller studied sculpture with Steger in Berlin and also, in the early 1930s, began to design wooden masks and costumes. She integrated these masks and outfits into her own dance performances. Her first solo performance was in 1934 and throughout the 1930s she received favourable press reviews, including from official quarters. In 1937, the critic Fritz Böhme of the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* was asked to write a reference for the ministry of propaganda's dance caucus:

'I deem Oda Schottmüller to be a dancer of unusually intensive powers of experience, i.e. of a devotion to her interior felt visons, that seem to her elementary and necessary... Broad gestures, urgently questioning gestures and mighty steps always give in their attitude and movement monumental shapes and impressions.'[[25]](#footnote-25) '

Böhme recommended Schottmüller to the ministry as of above average talent and 'in view of the reputation of the "New German Expressive Dance" in our time as desirable.'[[26]](#footnote-26) The artist's sculpted works were also positively reviewed.[[27]](#footnote-27) Indeed, only a few weeks before her arrest in September 1942, a full-page spread in *Die junge Dame* was full of fulsome praise and noted how the artist had gone on a tour of the army 'to delight our field grey soliders ... with her art.'[[28]](#footnote-28)

So in the case of Schottmüller there was nothing particular about her art that could be said overtly to 'resist' dominant discourse. In the case of Schottmüller it was not her art that ran counter to the authorities but her political activities. Schottmüller was arrested in September 1942, along with over 120 other persons, for illegal broadcasts to the Soviet Union and for distributing rebel leaflets. The police records of the interrogations do not survive, and at any rate, we would need to read the accused's responses with great caution as to their truth value. As far as can be reconstructed, Schottmüller claimed not to have known half the people she was accused of consorting with, not to have known the rest were Communists and not to have been aware of broadcasts being made. In a letter to her father she wrote:

'I was so glad that my stupidity and cluelessness about political things was proof enough that I could not qualified for drawing other people in or anything like that -- whatever else there might be in the way of conspirative activities -- I'm totally not aware of these things. And now they suspect that I know something or other + will fetch me in - and I just want to be left in peace + that all of this is over as quickly as possible. - I did want to tell you about my interrogation. [...] I was too worn out after these interrogations which always last a whole day to refuse to sign the record.'[[29]](#footnote-29)

One of Schottmüller's last letters was to her mother:

'Now we haven't been able to see each other one last time + I have to say goodbye to you in this way. Be brave ... It's up my street that everything is now over - I have never wanted to become old ... The last months have been quite hard for me - especially being cut off from real work became ever more unbearable - '[[30]](#footnote-30)

We may never know if Schottmüller was a member of any resisting movement or not. The record is equivocal. As Jost Hermand pointed out, resistance among visual artists in the Third Reich was very rare.[[31]](#footnote-31) The Rote Kapelle is such a rare organisation that even an artist like the sculptor Fritz Cremer who had nothing to do with it could be associated with it in post-fascist communist Germany.[[32]](#footnote-32) Cremer later said that the National Socialist era had forced him to retreat completely into his sculptural work, a compulsion which 'removed the contradiction within myself to be an "artist" or politically responsible.'[[33]](#footnote-33)

Cremer's contention resonates with Schottmüller's assertion from prison that she had been stupid and clueless about politics. It is a familiar refrain: that art is apolitical.

**Art as resistance**

Jacques Rancière has argued that art is ascribed the 'virtue of resistance'.[[34]](#footnote-34) Rancière writes that '[w]hatever resists both time and concept is presumed also to be capable of resisting forms of power'.[[35]](#footnote-35) Rancière gestures towards Immanuel Kant's category of the 'beautiful' which is that which resists conceptual determination (the object of knowledge) and the lure of consumable goods (the object of desire).[[36]](#footnote-36) The notion of resistance therefore structures and informs what Rancière calls the 'aesthetic regime of art'.[[37]](#footnote-37)

Considering how and whether artists could 'resist' a political system is thereby also asking how and whether works of art could resist. The two are bound up with one another in the critical discussion of the fascist era in German history. Inevitably, we leave the realm of the purely aesthetic and enter the arena of the moral and the ethical. But, as Rancière suggests, the realm of the aesthetic is itself already bound up with notions of resistance. Art is that which resists.

The role of art in bourgeois liberal modernism is non-political. Art resists being co-opted; it is autonomous. By not co-opting, by resisting the outer world, art becomes, paradoxically, also non-resisting. There is a special relation between non-resistance (in the political sense) and autonomous art. Art is not compatible with politics in the liberal modernist discursive regime. In this way, art becomes a way to negotiate the intrusion of fascism in daily and professional life. Art can be seen as a 'way out'; which could be regarded as opportunist or collaborationist, as self-justifying or a lying excuse, but the concept of art as autonomous is also built into the very notion of art as autonomous that dominated Western discourse, and that continued to be propagated in the NATO countries during the Cold War. This notion of art shaped artists' self-understanding during the 1930s and their reception in the West post-1945.

Ideas of resistance operated differently in the DDR. Here, resistance became bound up with Communism. To resist was to be Communist. To be Communist was to resist.[[38]](#footnote-38)

**Conclusion**

This session is called 'Cultures of Resistance to Political Oppression' and its convenors enouraged us 'to investigate ways in which ... cultural producers have sought to resist, confront, confound, mock, or call out situations of political oppression.'

My contention is that cultural (and arguably any form of) resistance really is impossible in a fascist dictatorship. Resistance is possible in a democratic environment *before* the imposition of totalitarian political rule. Once totalitarianism has been imposed, resistance is futile.

1. Jost Hermand, *Kultur in finsteren Zeiten: Nazifaschismus, Innere Emigration, Exil*, Köln, Weimar, Wien: Böhlau Verlag 2010. Hermand points out that Nazi fascism could assert itself much more extensively in sculpture than in painting as sculpture could be placed in squares and sports stadia and in front of ministries and other public buildings and thereby already always had a social dimension, 87-88. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. '...eine öffentliche Angelegenheit.' Alfred Hentzen, *Deutsche Bildhauer der Gegenwart*, Berlin 1934, p.7; quoted in Magdalena Bushart, 'Bauplastik im Dritten Reich', in Magdalena Bushart, Bernd Nicolai and Wolfgang Schuster (eds), *Entmachtung der Kunst: Architektur, Bildhauerei und ihre Institutionalisierung 1920 bis 1960*, Berlin: Frölich & Kaufmann, 1985, p.104. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Eg. James A. van Dyke, 'Zur Geschichte der Staatlichen Kunstakademie Düsseldorf zwischen den Weltkriegen', in Wolfgang Ruppert, ed., *Künstler im Nationalsozialismus: Die 'Deutsche Kunst', die Kunstpolitik und die Berliner Kunsthochschule*, Cologne, Weimar, Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2015, 148-165, here 156. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. 'Dem Tafelbild ist ein Zimmer gemäß, der Skulptur der Platz. Im Zimmer wohnt der Einzelne, der Platz nimmt die Menge auf... Die Plastik strahlt aus in einen Raum und kann dadurch viele Menschen beherrschen.' Hans Weigert, *Geschichte der deutschen Kunst von der Vorzeit bis zur Gegenwart*, Berlin 1942, p.506; quoted in Magdalena Bushart, Bernd Nicolai and Wolfgang Schuster (eds), *Entmachtung der Kunst: Architektur, Bildhauerei und ihre Institutionalisierung 1920 bis 1960*, Berlin: Frölich & Kaufmann, 1985, p. 105. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. On NS policy shifts, see for example, Josephine Gabler, 'Conformity in Dissent: Sc'ors in the Third Reich / Anpassung im Dissens: Die Bildhauer im Dritten Reich', in *Taking Positions: Figurative Sculpture and the Third Reich*, intro Penelope Curtis / *Untergang einer Tradition: Figürliche Bildhauerei und das Dritte Reich*, exh. Leeds, Henry Moore Insti 2001; Georg-Kolbe-Mus, Bln 2001-2002, Gerhard Marcks-Haus, Bremen 2002; cat. Henry Moore Institute, 42-59. Josephine Gabler, '"Das Monumentale [hat] nicht erst von bestimmten Größenmaßen an Geltung": Großplastik im Nationalsozialismus', in Wolfgang Ruppert, ed., *Künstler im Nationalsozialismus: Die 'Deutsche Kunst', die Kunstpolitik und die Berliner Kunsthochschule*, Cologne, Weimar, Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2015, 231-243 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. *Skulptur und Macht: Figurative Plastik im Deutschland der 30er und 40er Jahre*, ed. Arbeitsgruppe of ten scholars, co-ordinated by Jörn Merkert, exh.cat. Akademie der Künste, Berlin, 1983; see esp. Susanne Deicher, Dirk Luckow and Michael Schulz, 'Künstler ohne Staatsaufträge', 95-102, who ask if there was an 'art of resistance' among artists without state commissions.

   Max Imdahl, 'Pose und Indoktrination: Zu Werken der Plastik und Malerei im Dritten Reich', in Klaus Staeck, ed, *Nazi-Kunst ins Museum?* Göttingen 1988, 87-99. Imdahl argues that NS sculpture fixed human individual gesture into the impersonal language of the congealed and forced pose as an instrument of political indoctrination and a visible expression of the destruction of freedom and individuality.

   Silke Wenk argues that National Socialist sculptures of female allegories were distinctive because they presented their bodies as 'whole', opened out frontally, with erect breasts and delineated pubic triangle; this differs from earlier nude sculptures that showed women with bowed heads, turned away or covering their breasts. Silke Wenk, 'Aufgerichtete weibliche Körper: Zur allegorischen Skulpture im deutschen Faschismus', in *Inszenierung der Macht: Ästhetische Faszination im Faschismus*, Berlin: Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst and Dirk Nishen Verlag, 1987, 103-118, here 116.

   Wilma van Giersbergen interpets Hermann Blumenthal's sculpture as emphasising tectonic values instead of the anecdotal, and this could be interpreted as the artist distancing himself from official art politics. Cat.entry on Blumenthal, *Römischer Mann*, 1936/7, in *Deutsche Bildhauer 1900-1945: Entartet*, Zwolle: Waanders, 1992, 181.

   Arie Hartog suggests that there was an NS interpretation of the naked human body in sculpture which was oriented towards nationalist and racial ideological premises; the view of humanity found in Gerhard Marcks's sculptures did not fit into this NS culture whereas that of Georg Kolbe did, according to Hartog; Arie Hartog, 'Bemerkungen zur Plastik im Dritten Reich', in Christian Tümpel and K. Universität Nimwegen, eds, *Deutsche Bildhauer 1900-1945: Entartet*, Zwolle: Waanders, 1992, 83-91, here 88. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. For example, Arie Hartog, 'Bemerkungen zur Plastik im Dritten Reich', in Christian Tümpel and K. Universität Nimwegen, eds, *Deutsche Bildhauer 1900-1945: Entartet*, Zwolle: Waanders, 1992, 83-91; Jonathan Petropoulos, *Artists under Hitler: Collaboration and Survival in Nazi Germany*, New Haven and Lo: Yale UP, 2014; Christian Fuhrmeister, 'Die Große Deutsche Kunstausstellung 1937-1944', in Wolfgang Ruppert, ed., *Künstler im Nationalsozialismus: Die 'Deutsche Kunst', die Kunstpolitik und die Berliner Kunsthochschule*, Cologne, Weimar, Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2015, 96-105. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Cierpalkowski and Keil no footnote; bushart formsinn Berlin Document Center, Akte Cauer. 'Nach meiner Rückkehr nach Deutschland [1932, after Rompreis 1930, then Ascona and Paris] konnte ich nirgends Fuß fassen, da die regierenden jüdisch-marxistischen Kreise meiner deutschen Kunstauffassung absolut ablehnend gegenüberstanden. Ich wende mich deswegen jetzt mit neuen Hoffnungen an unsere nationale Regierung mit dem festen Vertrauen, die nötige Anerkennung und Förderung zu finden.' [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. For the Cauer family dynasty of sculptors, see Anne Tesch, *Die Bildhauerfamiie Cauer,* Bad Kreuznach 1977; Elke, Masa,[*Die Bildhauerfamilie Cauer im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert  : neun Bildhauer aus vier Generationen - Emil Cauer d.Ä., Carl Cauer, Robert Cauer d.Ä., Robert Cauer d.J., Hugo Cauer, Ludwig Cauer, Emil Cauer d.J., Stanislaus Cauer, Hanna Cauer.*](https://aleph.mpg.de:443/F/3IE6IC42BEAFVC5GS5VPSUIEIGFSHC22F93GU26X6ILC9VXY9B-12566?func=full-set-set&set_number=096425&set_entry=000006&format=999)Berlin Mann:  1989; Angela Nestler-Zapp, *Die Bildhauerfamilie Cauer: Küische Gestaltgen u gesellschaftl Vorgaben*, Bonn: Rheinland-Verlag in Kommission bei R. Habelt, 2000. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. bushart [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. including a bust of Wilhelm Frick, Minister of the Interior for the German parliament, the Reichstag in 1933; two statues for niches in the upper foyer of the Nuremberg Opera House in 1934-5; a public fountain as part of the Olympic celebrations in 1936, placed prominently in front of Berlin's Red Town Hall; a marble Pallas Athena for the Ministry of the Interior; and another fountain group for the Prussian ministry of culture. In all this, she enjoyed the direct support of Wilhelm Frick as her personal mentor and sponsor. In 1937, Adolf Hitler gave her a one-off payment of 5000 Reichsmark, and into the war years she could continue to rely on special subsidies for working materials. Joseph Goebbels called the Olympia fountain 'wonderful'. He and Hitler visited Cauer's studio in December 1937. Goebbels wrote in his diary: 'Hanna Cauer has created marvellous female sculptures. She has great talent. I'm giving her a whole series of commissions. The Leader (*Führer*), too, who joined us a little later, is giving her commissions and advances. She is very happy.' 'HC hat herrliche Frauenpl'en geschaffen. Sie kann sehr viel. Ich gebe ihr eine ganze Reihe von Aufträgen. Auch der Führer, der etwas später noch hinzukommt, gibt ihr Auftrage und Vorschüsse. Sie ist ganz glücklich.' The support Cauer sought in her 1933 letter was the provision of studio space at the Berlin United State Schools of Fine and Applied Arts which the director Max Kutschmann had refused her. A handwritten comment scribbled onto the letter by the State Secretary Hans Hinkel makes clear the extent of official support for Cauer: ' 'Kutschmann! Hanna Cauer must be provided for! Dr Frick once again asks for this. Rust / Father Cauer!!!' letter 5 May 1933 in the BDC, Akte Cauer (bushart) Dr Frick was the Reich's Minister of the Interior Wilhelm Frick who had started the first purification campaign against modern art in 1930 in his then role as minister of the interior and for popular education of Thuringia. (bushart) Rust was Bernhard Rust, the minister of culture. The reference to 'Father Cauer' is also interesting. All members of the family exhibited at the Great German Art Exhibitions. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Artur Kreiner, 'Neue Bildhauerwerke im Nürnberger Opernhaus', *Kunst und Volk*, 4:9, Sept. 1936, pp.318-319; here 318. 'Klassisch -- ohne klassizistisch zu sein -- vermeiden sie Süßlichkeit und akademische Kälte, wirken sie nicht wuchtig, sondern sind von dorischer Gedrungenheit gleich weit entfernt wie von jener Ueberdrehung und Verrenkung menschlicher Glieder, die den ja jetzt glücklich "vergangenen" Schöpfern alles "Noch-nicht-Dagewesene" dermaleinst als Kunst galt.' (amtliches Organ der NS-Kulturgemeinde) (Sept. 1936). The review is written in the newly stipulated stye of *Kunstbetrachtung* which was supposed to replace art criticism. Artur Kreiner was an independent art historian and lecturer at the Nuremberg Volkshochschule. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Carmen Stonge, 'Women and the Folkwang: Ida Gerhardi, Milly Steger, and Maria Slavona', Woman's Art Journal, 15:1 (Summer 1994, pp.3-10; Birgit Schulte, 'Von der Skandalkünstlerin zur Stadtbildhauerin: Milly Steger in Hagen', in Birgit Schulte in association with Erich Ranfft, *Die Grenzen des Frauseins aufheben: Die Bildhauerin Milly Steger 1881-1948*, Hagen: Neuer Folkwang Verlag im Karl Ernst Osthaus-Museum, 1998, 33-44, http://www.keom02.de/KEOM%202001/kuenstler/texte/steger\_skandal.html; Birgit Schulte, '"Die Grenzen des Frauseins aufheben": Die Bildhauerin Milly Steger 1881-1948', MS of a lecture for the FernUniversität Hagen, Frauenvorträge 29, 30 April 1999, https://www.fernuni-hagen.de/imperia/md/content/gleichstellung/heft29schulte.pdf; Gora Jain, *Die anthropologisch fundierte Werkidee im œuvre der Bildhauerin Milly Steger (1881-1948)*, Herbolzheim: Centaurus, 2002; Amy Dickson, 'Biology, Body and Sculpture: Milly Steger and Emy Roeder in the 1930s', MA Dissertation 2003, Courtauld Institute of Art; Christina Threuter, 'Die begehrten Körper der Bildhauerin Milly Steger', in Christel Baltes-Löhr and Karl Hölz, eds, *Gender-Perspektiven: interdisziplinär -- transversal -- aktuell*, Peter Lang, Frankfurt am Main, 2004, 79-99; Birgit Schulte, 'Milly Steger, *Kniende*, um 1914/20', in *Der Berliner Skulpturenfund: 'Entartete Kunst' im Bombenschutt. Entdeckung, Deutung, Perspektive*, ed. Matthias Wemhoff in association with Meike Hoffmann and Dieter Scholz, Berlin: Staatliche Museen zu Berlin / Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte and Schnell + Steiner, 2012, 113-121 (with further literature). [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Schulte 2012; Michael Fehr, 'Kunst im öffentlichen Raum in Hagen', 2001, http://www.keom02.de/KEOM%202001/raum/hagen/gesch\_ha.html [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. 'Erfreulicherweise werden wir Bildhauer in letzter Zeit wieder mehr von den Architekten zur Mitarbeit herangezogen, und so können wir hoffen, dass uns bald wieder das einige, große Kunstwerk erstehen wird, das Kunstwerk unserer Zeit, eine harmonische Verbindung der drei Schwesterkünste: Architektur, Malerei und Plastik.' n.24 in *Koralle* Jg.4, lf.5, 1936, p.157; quoted in Schulte, Grenzen des Frauseins [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. and within the context of which she had advocated the equality of men and women in art education; bushart [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. *Ballspielender Knabe*, 1936, and a work planned for Helsinki in 1940 [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. On the Villa Massimo during the Third Reich, see Jobst C. Knigge, 'Die Villa Massimo in Rom 1933-1943: Kampf um künstlerische Unabhängigkeit', PhD thesis, Humboldt-Universität Berlin, 2013, http://edoc.hu-berlin.de/oa/books/re2UkmvwWBcr/PDF/20tOx8KHwYc7.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. beloubek; bushart. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Bushart [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. See the excellent documentation in Peter-Klaus Schuster,ed., *Die 'Kunststadt' München 1937: Nationalsozialismus und 'Entartete Kunst'*, Munich: Prestel, 1987; and the complete database of all works in the Große Deutsche: GDK-Research, project by the Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte in co-operation with the Deutsches Historisches Museum and the Haus der Kunst, 2011, 'Grosse Deutsche Kunstausstellung 1937-1944', http://www.gdk-research.de/db/apsisa.dll/ete [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. on the Kunsttempelsäuberungsaktion, see Schuster [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Both sculptures were lost, believed to be destroyed, until recently. Source: the database Datenbank zum Beschlagnahmeinventar der Aktion 'Entartete Kunst', Forschungsstelle 'Entartete Kunst', Fachbereich Geschichts- und Kulturwissenschaften, Freie Universität Berlin, 'Datenbank "Entartete Kunst", 2010, http://www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/e/db\_entart\_kunst/index.html; a fragment of the *Kniende* was recovered as part of the Berliner Skulpturenfund of 2010. *Der Berliner Skulpturenfund* 2012. There is no extant photograph of Steger's *Kneeling Woman*. A ruined sculpture was discovered as part of the Berlin Sculpture Discovery of 2010 [check] Birgit Schulte, the then-acting director of the Karl Osthaus Museum in Hagen identified the recovered fragment with 98% certainty as Steger's lost *Kneeling Woman*. The Walking Girl / Schreitendes Mädchen (stone) is possibly the one illustrated in *Westermanns Monatshefte* 56:112, Part 2, 1912 (ebay). [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Beihilfe zur Vorbereitung eines hochverräterischen Unternehmens und zur Feindbegünstigung. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. (165-166 'Ich halte OS f eine Tänzerin von ungewöhnl intensiver Erlebniskraft, d.h. Hingabefähigk an die innerlich erlebten Visionen, die sich ihr elementar und zwingend scheinen. ... 'Weitgespannte Gesten, drängend fragende Gebärden und wuchtende Schritte geben in Haltung und Beweggsführung immer monumenthafte Formen und Eindrücke.; Geertje Andresen, *Die Tänzerin, Bildhauerin und Nazigegnerin Oda Schottmüller 1905-1943*, Lukas Verlag, Berlin 2005) [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. (167; in Anerkenng ihrer überdurchschnittlichen gestalterischen Gaben und in Hinsicht auf das Ansehen des "Neuen dten Ausdruckstanzes" in unserer Zeit für wünschenswert.') [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. (Andresen p.176, 180) [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. hz, 'Mädchen hiner Masken: Oda Schottmüller ist Tänzerin und Bildhauerin zugleich', *Die junge Dame*, 28 Jul 1942; reprod. in Andresen, fig.134. 'um unsere Feldgrauen ... mit ihere Kunst zu erfreuen.' [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. ''Ich war so froh, daß meine Dummheit + Ahnungslosigkeit über politische Dinge zur Genüge bewies, daß ich nicht dafür in Frage kommen könnte, meinerseits etwa andere Leute zu interessieren oder dergleichen - was es sonst noch so an konspirativen Tätigkeiten geben mag - ich bin ja darüber nicht so orientiert. Und nun vermuten sie wieder, daß ich irgend was weiss + werden mich ranholen - + ich möchte doch nur Ruhe haben + daß alles so schnell wie möglich vorbei ist. - Von meiner Vernehmung wollte ich Dir noch erzählen. [...] ich war zu mürbe nach diesen Verhnehmungen, die ja immer den ganzen Tag dauerten, noch die Unterschrift zu verweigern.' Andresen, p.279. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. 'Nun haben wir uns nicht mehr sehen können + ich muß Dir auf diese Weise Lebewohl sagen. Sei tapfer, denk dran, daß Du wieder eine gute Zeit erleben wirst. ... Daß jetzt alles aus [ist] - liegt eben in meiner Linie - ich hab' nie alt werden wollen - langsam Verkalken ist bestimmt nicht schön. Die letzten Monate waren recht schwierig für mich - besonders das Abgeschnittensein von der eigentlichen Arbeit wurde immer unerträglicher - aber das ist ja nun auch überstanden.' Andresen p.299. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Jost Hermand, *Kultur in finsteren Zeiten: Nazifaschismus, Innere Emigration, Exil*, Köln, Weimar, Wien: Böhlau Verlag 2010. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Gerd Brüne, ;Zw kü'ischer Professionalisierung und Zeitgenossenschaft: Der Bildhauer Fritz Cremer in der Zeit des Nat.soz' in Wolfgang Ruppert, ed., *Künstler im Nationalsozialismus: Die 'Deutsche Kunst', die Kunstpolitik und die Berliner Kunsthochschule*, Cologne, Weimar, Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2015, 305-324. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Quoted in Brüne 2015, p.305. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Jacques Rancière, 'The Monument and Its Confidences; or Deleuze and Art's Capacity of "Resistance", in *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*, ed. and transl. Steven Corcoran, London: Bloomsbury, 2015, p.177. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Rancière 2015, p.177. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. (Rancière 181) [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. (183 and elsewhere) [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. The curators of the 1980 exhibition *Widerstand statt Anpassung: Deutsche Kunst im Widerstand gegen den Faschismus* (in Karlsruhe) come from a position fundamentally opposed to Rancière's but reiterate the notion of the non-political bourgeois artist. They assumed that there *was* an art of resistance and that such an art sat securely on the political side of anti-fascism. The curators cite the Swiss writer Max Frisch: 'Wer sich nicht mit Politik befaßt, hat die politische Parteinahme, die er sich ersparen möchte, bereits vollzogen: er dient der herrschenden Partei.' (5) 'He [sic] who does not concern himself with politics has already effected the political partisanship that he would like to avoid: he serves the ruling party.' [my transl.] The curators dismiss the notion that the resisting [male] artist was the "free" artist who kept out of politics and often produced non-objective art; they assert that the "neutral" [male] artist was always the conformist, often the reactionary artist. (5) There is an assumption that the resisting, oppositional artist is of the left, ideally Communist; the idea that one could possibly be politically right-wing and conservative and anti-fascist does not occur. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)