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**'Ornament, Monument and Gender in German Sculpture, 1910-1930: Milly Steger and Renée Sintenis'**

**for:**

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Target: 5,000-6,000 words. 10 images.[[1]](#endnote-1)

In a 1914 article, the German critic and socialist Robert Breuer argued that 'modern decorative sculpture' had developed along two strands: as small sculpture, and as monumental decoration of architecture.[[2]](#endnote-2) Breuer attributed both impulses to people's psychological response to the functionality of modern buildings and interiors. This chapter explores the two notions of the decorative, situated at the opposite ends of Robert Breuer's spectrum and exemplified by the works of two of the most successful German sculptors of the period between 1910 and 1930: Milly Steger's monumental stone figures for the Municipal Theatre in Hagen of 1911, and Renée Sintenis' small-scale bronze figurines, sought after as commodities by private buyers in the 1920s.

While both Steger and Sintenis enjoyed extensive critical commentary in the 1910s and 20s, relatively little scholarly attention has been devoted to these two sculptors since 1945. Both figure in surveys and exhibitions of German women artists, and either one or both appears in the -- itself sparse -- literature on Expressionist sculpture. However, their relationship to notions of the decorative has not been considered in detail. While scholars note the monumentality of Steger's Hagen work and the miniature applied-art character of Sintenis' figurines, nobody has yet analyses the two together as the book-ends of two notions of the decorative, notions that shifted historically from pre- to post-war Germany. While the idea of architectural sculpture was prevalent throughout the Wilhelmine period, the advent of World War One shifted the focus away from sculpture applied to buildings to free-standing sculpture. In terms of the decorative, this meant a shift from large-scale public commissions to small-scale objects and private buyers. Steger's and Sintenis' career trajectories illustrate and shape this shift.

*between applied art or Kunstgewerbe (literally 'art industry' or 'art trade') and autonomous art or freie Kunst (literally 'free art').*

The theoretical issues at stake around decorative sculpture in Germany during the time are complex and multi-layered. Some commentators pondered on the possibilities of a revived *Gesamtkunstwerk* as in the days of the Gothic or the Baroque, but noted the challenges presented to this unification of the arts by the nineteenth-century heritage and by modern functionalism. A.E. Brinckmann wrote in 1922 that architecture without sculpture was a failure but also that buildings continued to present as blocks with affixed sculpture, a kind of sculpture that was merely a 'decorative additive'.[[3]](#endnote-3) In 1924, Marxist art historian Lu Märten defined sculpture in architectural terms, as inseparably linked with building and wall and 'grown out of the wall'.[[4]](#endnote-4) How this type of 'wall-grown' sculpture was to interact with the new sleek modernist architecture, bereft of the traditional trappings of friezes, pilasters and pediments, represented a challenge. At first glance, discussions of monumental sculpture would seem to be far removed from small-scale objects but Robert Breuer was not the only one to consider these two dimensions in the one breath. Märten, too, posited two directions in sculpture: the abovementioned 'wall-grown' sculpture and small-scale artefacts that go back to 'primitive' prehistoric forms invented by women.[[5]](#endnote-5) However, in recent times this kind of *Kleinplastik* had deteriorated into commercial shop-window tat because it was made to serve intimate bourgeois desires: 'Sculpture attempts to incorporate its monumental effect into small-scale sculptural forms. The needed background for monumental tasks is missing...'[[6]](#endnote-6)

Finally, there was a lively debate around the architectural quality of sculpture in general which has a direct bearing on the issues of monumental versus small-scale objects. Writers like Carl Einstein, Wilhelm Hausenstein and Willi Wolfradt employed formalist analyses of Oceanic, African and European sculpture in order to find their way towards a theoretical understanding of contemporary explorations of abstract autonomous form as a kind of universal artistic value.[[7]](#endnote-7) Dealer Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, art historian Wilhelm Worringer, and Einstein proposed the 'cubic' and the 'tectonic' as means of thinking of sculpture in three dimensions.[[8]](#endnote-8) After the War, when large-scale architectural sculpture was no longer *en vogue*, the appellation 'architectural' was transferred from sculpture's context to the actual sculptural object itself. It now was no longer the ensemble of edifice and statue that constituted *Bauplastik* but the autonomy of the expressive sculpture that exemplified the essential tectonic values of sculpture. Sculpture, according to these writers and others, *was* architectural -- or, in their turn of phrase: architectonic. All of these writers were reacting against sculptor Adolf Hildebrand whose assertion that sculpture was an optical relief-life form of art had been the guiding principle for the previous generation of German sculptors. Sintenis' figurines were not called architectural but reviewers' foregrounding of the statuettes' haptic qualities essentially formed a round rejection of Hildebrandesque notions of optical sculpture.

**Milly Steger**

 In 1911, Milly Steger completed four monumental larger-than-life semi-draped female stone figures for the façade of the newly-built Municipal Theatre in the city of Hagen (the *Hagener Stadttheater*). The Hagen statues have the authority of monumental scale, regarded as appropriate for commissions in the public sphere. Unlike free-standing monuments, however, Steger's figures were integrated into the architectural structure of the theatre's façade. Not much has been written on German architectural sculpture before 1914 but the combination of public architecture and statuary was quite *comme il faut* in the Wilhelmine period.[[9]](#endnote-11) Steger's work differed from other architectural statues mainly in its formal qualities and the fact that it generated a minor controversy among Hagen residents. What was disputed was the way the sculptures looked; the need for decorative sculpture on a representative municipal building as such was taken as self-evident.

Steger was employed in the unique role of 'town sculptor' for the city of Hagen where she lived from 1910 to 1917/18 and where she enjoyed the patronage of Germany's most avant-garde art curator and patron, Ernst Karl Osthaus. Osthaus was the director of the Folkwang Museum, which he had founded as the world's first museum of contemporary art in 1902. During her sojourn in Hagen, Steger worked on a number of public commissions, nearly all of them associated with the decoration of architecture. [[10]](#endnote-12) The commissions included two figures for the entrance portal of the Altenhagen school (c.1911-14), two over-life-size female nudes for the façade of the Folkwang Museum (never cast in bronze; the plaster casts of 1910 are lost but a photo survives), a woman's head for the Folkwang Museum's entrance (1912), a caryatid for her own residence in the Hohenhof estate (1912-17), an oval relief with dancers, installed in the architect Jan Thorn Prikker's house (1912), and six monumental panthers on the roof of the newly-built City Hall (1914, survived bombing in World War Two but were mysteriously lost after the building was torn down in 1954). [[11]](#endnote-14) Steger's most famous commission and the one which propelled her into the public eye, was the set of figures for the theatre façade.

The Municipal Theatre building was designed by the Darmstadt architect Ernst Vetterlein (husband of the Strasbourg newspaper editor's daughter Milla David). Birgit Schulte writes that the building has a 'simple, classicist character with a pilaster articulation structuring the portal zone vertically.'[[12]](#endnote-15) The public-limited corporation that managed the theatre project decided to add figurative sculptures to the otherwise unornamented façade[[13]](#endnote-16)

Steger's figures are integrated into the façade's geometric matrix. The statues are placed on plinths in front of each column; the plinths are in turn placed on top of a corniced ledge, each plinth situated above the continuation of the columns in the form of a jamb-like buttress. This placement is especially evident in the two central figures whose vertical columnar aspect is somewhat enlivened by their contrapposto poses which, however, do not translate into a corresponding S-curve in the rest of the body. The figures' torsos are erect, with horizontal lines demarcating chest and belly, and two breasts pointing straight ahead. Their faces are frontal; their arms arranged by their sides. The figures hold draperies that curve behind them in a sort of half-mandorla shape. The two outermost figures incline their heads toward the centre and hug their arms around their chests. Together, the four sculptures form a unified ensemble but each woman is characterised by subtle differences: the left-most woman touches one hand to her collar bone; the centre-left one has a face that is slightly more rounded than the strong-jawed woman's to her left, and her hand position appears to be different; the right-hand woman clutches at her elbows with her hands. The figures are placed above the entrance to the building, about half-way up the façade, and are thus seen by the public foreshortened and *di sotto in sù*. They interact with the public space of the urban fabric around the theatre.

The authors of the pamphlet published on the occasion of the theatre's opening in 1911 (who included architect Ernst Vetterlein) wrote:

'Any kind of realistic banality has been avoided on purpose so that the figures don't seem just to have been dropped in front of the façade and so to appear lonely and rejected, but instead they seem to have grown up out of the material, out of the architecture and to connect harmoniously to it. In this way, the idealised figures do not want to be experienced as transfigured but as part of the whole as ornament! (*mit dem Ganzen als Ornament empfunden*) In their poses they follow the flexed columns that rise up behind them but their refined, well-balanced movements betray their inner life [...] Those who understand the task and the problem of monumental architectural sculpture (*das Problem der monumentalen Bauplastik*) will appreciate in these figures an outstanding achievement of modern sculpture.'[[14]](#endnote-17)

The authors did not enumerate what in fact they thought was the 'task and the problem of monumental architectural sculpture' but it is noteworthy that he points to the experience of the figures as 'part of the whole as ornament.' They praise the statues for being integrated into the overall ensemble of the façade. In 1926, art writer and editor Otto Grautoff (husband of the novelist Erna Grautoff) described Steger's figure in a similar vein as being inserted into the building's body (*Baukörper*) in the shape of subservient limbs in a strictly architectural way (*streng architektonisch*).[[15]](#endnote-18) However, between 1911 and 1926, a decisive shift had occurred in the evaluation of what was architectural about sculpture.

The 1911 authors had talked of the figures integrated into the architecture; for them, this constituted their architectural character. The figures were not autonomous, and they presented a visual, almost relief-like aspect to the viewing gaze; they were not to be apprehended in the round. By themid-1920s, the meaning of the term 'architectural' had undergone a subtle but fundamental change. Critics and reviewers now used it to describe particular properties they found in autonomous three-dimensional sculpture that was not intended to be attached to any actual architecture. For example, the Dresden sculptures of Gela Forster were overwhelmingly characterised as 'architectural' by contemporary writers and critics.[[16]](#endnote-19) In 1923, art critic, editor and collector of Expressionist art Paul Westheim (later husband of the translator and poet Mariana Frenk-Westheim), published a book entitled *Architektonik des Plastischen* (literally: 'The Architectural of the Sculptural').[[17]](#endnote-20) The concept of the 'architectural' was for Westheim, as it was for other writers on sculpture, a useful way of counteracting Adolf von Hildebrand's pronouncements on the opticality of sculpture.[[18]](#endnote-21) The sculptor Hildebrand had been the most influential thinker on sculpture for the previous generation of late Wilhelmine sculptors. The key principle behind Hildebrand's approach was the idea of the visuality of sculpture; sculpture should be 'planar' and relief-like; it should have one main viewpoint and a clearly defined silhouette so that it could be apprehended optically from afar without any resulting ambivalence. However, after 1910, every German writer on sculpture in one way or another rejected Hildebrand's idea of the opticality of sculpture. Westheim himself stressed the haptic and tactile properties of the medium. In place of Hildebrand's concept of the 'planar', Westheim, along with others, extolled the concept of the 'cubic'.[[19]](#endnote-22) Sculpture was tension of the mass from the inside; it extended mass as volume into space, and it was this that made it monumental (not its size).[[20]](#endnote-23) In Paul Westheim's words:

 'This process of building (*Bauen*) that is at the same time a process of imaging (*Bilden*), this making-into-something-bodily or corporation (*Körperlichmachen*) of sculptural (*bildnerisch*) energies we can recognise as the architectural of the sculptural (*die Architektonik des Plastischen*). (10)

Public controversy followed upon the installation of Steger's statues. Local Hagen citizens criticised the figures for being inappropriate for this communal building. Museum director Karl Ernst Osthaus spoke of a 'storm of indignation'.[[21]](#endnote-24) It appears that some members of the Hagen public objected to the 'purely functional character of the figures without allegorical attributes'.[[22]](#endnote-25) Petitions to remove them were submitted; teachers were reportedly exhorted not to take school pupils on field trips to the theatre.[[23]](#endnote-26) Steger was referred to as 'an obscene artist [who] has created filth and shocking ugliness'.[[24]](#endnote-27) Locals collected funds to have the sculptures removed and replaced with alternative figures. It was argued that Steger's figures were more suited to a museum than to a public building.[[25]](#endnote-28)

Architect Ernst Vetterlein contributed to the debate in a local newspaper:

'If they should fulfill this higher, artistic aim, they [the sculptures] must be stripped of all naturalistic attributes. Any true-to-nature attribute or form of dress would make the body, that is supposed to have its artistic effect as stone, into flesh. That is the greatest artistic achievement of the artist here, to have kept at bay any lustful thought. These figures initially have an alienating effect on many people, but not on any respectable, inwardly pure person, as lustful or crude. And the artist has managed this by taking her distance from any individual features, so that the faces appear strangely exotic, so that the hands and the swing of the drapery has not been taken from the living model but appear strangely interesting and to not lead the viewer's gaze back to memory where experiences in the boudoir are kept, but away into the distance, in which we are governed by higher ideas. Not 'people' are represented there, no theatre puppets, no ballet girls done up à la Reinhardt, but people who are permitted to show their body without shame or coquetry, without fear, their body that is noble and pure as their soul.'[[26]](#endnote-30)

Vetterlein's defense of the sculptures give us an insight into the kinds of criticisms levelled at them by some Hagen residents: those of inciting lust, of being 'impure', of lacking attributes. Modernist art history has condemned the burghers of Hagen as retrograde and conventional, wishing for kitsch rather than art. Two points may be made in an effort to understand better what they were getting at: firstly, a view from below, which is the view of most visitors to the theatre, reveals the prominence of the breasts and the way in which one 'looks up under the women's skirts', as it were. Their slightly inclined faces appear to be looking straight down at the pedestrian below. Secondly, Hagen citizens, nor most European citizens for that matter, were not used to seeing such statuary in their urban environments.

Vetterlein's emphasis on 'modern art' as opposed to 'lustfulness' speaks to the alignment of art with modernity and of both with values that transcend reality, and in particular the reality of sexuality. 'Lustfulness', that is, sexuality was leached from the figures whose nudity became irrelevant and was, in fact, an emblem of their 'purity' (rather than of any eroticism).

09(MofATI)[[27]](#endnote-31)[[28]](#endnote-32) He was a passionate advocate for Steger's art. Of Steger, he wrote in 1913:

'Milly Steger owes the well-known burlesque of the Hagen Municipal Theatre figure a popularity which her large, wholly monumental art would otherwise not have enjoyed quite so soon. ... In Berlin she emerged as a portrait artists; a female nude that she exhibited three years ago at the Secession revealed her talent for the monumental. She then took up the call from Hagen and took over the execution of the sculptural decoration for municipal buildings. Many charming details, like capitals and keystones, lead us to the greatest hopes for her larger works that she is carrying out at the moment.'[[29]](#endnote-33)

If we look at other public sculpture in Hagen and in Germany, we may come to understand how Steger's figures could be viewed as unusual. At the time of their erection, Hagen did not possess many other examples of public sculpture. One of the few examples is the *Three-Emperor Fountain* of 1902 by Emil Cauer (uncle of the Nazi sculptor Hanna Cauer) which replaced an older monument commemorating the Franco-Prussian War and the unification of Germany of 1871. Emil Cauer's bronze figures are naturalistically conceived, draped and clothed, and furnished with clear attributes: the smith, emblematic of Hagen's iron industry, rests a hammer on an anvil; the god Hermes holds the requisite *caduceus* and sports a winged helmet. A similarly allegorical fountain can be found in nearby Düsseldorf, the *Father Rhine* of 1897, completed by Karl Janssen who, as it happens, was also Steger's first teacher. This is the kind of public sculpture late Wilhelmine audiences were used to.

If we have a look at architectural sculpture specifically, we encounter a similar trend towards vaguely classicising, naturalistic figures, furnished with attributes and drapery and adorning historicist classicising or Neo-Renaissance edifices. In Germany, Wilhelm Haverkamp (later the teacher of Sintenis), contributed the allegories of *Religion* and *Administration* to the façade decoration of the Charlottenburg town hall in Berlin. Eduard Beyrer and Arthur Storch designed statues for the exterior of a girls' secondary school in Bavaria (Dalberg School in Aschaffenburg, around 1906). The contrast with the Hagen theatre sculptures, executed five years later, is marked: the Dalberg School's *Empress Kunigunde*, for example, is chastely draped and displays signs of her office (crown and church model). Steger's statues are not identified as anybody: they are neither historical nor mythical figures nor are they allegories or classical muses. What both types share, however, is their attachment to the façade. Each work appears to have been fashioned in the studio and installed later; they display differences in material and texture from their surrounds. And they are positioned on plinths and vertically placed against pilasters. The same goes for the Charlottenburg town hall, and to name another example, for the façade of the New Town Hall in Bremen of 1913. adorned with nude stone allegories by Julius Seidler.

For a while, Steger's Hagen sojourn left an imprint on her reception. Poet Else Lasker-Schüler published a poem about her friend, entitled 'Milly Steger', in 1916; it contained the lines:

'Milly Steger is a tamer,

Hews lions and panthers in stone.

In front of Hagen's theatre

Stand her large creatures. [Großgestalten]

Wicked dolts [böse Tollpatsche], carnival figures turned serious [ernst gewordene Hännesken],

Clowns who sway with their bleeding souls.[[30]](#endnote-34)

Steger did not produce any further architectural sculpture after her sojourn in Hagen. She went on to make 'standard-size' sculptures. BLAH and BLAH, DIMENSIONS. During the First World War, her style changed. The torsos become elongated, the facial expressions ascetic and remote, with closed eyes or open-eyed troubled miens. The vertical calm of the theatre figures is replaced with an agile, attenuated dynamics: the geometric architecture of the Dancer, the twisted scaffolding of the Youth Ascending. It is as if, detached from the architectural frame, the sculpture itself becomes architecture. Indeed, 'architectural' or 'architectonic' is a recurring critical trope in the literature on sculpture between 1918 and 1928, mostly said in praise. EXAMPLES

The public commissions of the Wilhelmine era gave way to a more fractured, privatised art scene, and sculptors could no longer rely on federal- or municipal-sponsored projects. Steger's Hagen theatre figures are one among the last great architectural sculpture schemes of the pre-war period. The figure who best exemplifies the following era, the Weimar shift to a private market for sculpture, was Renée Sintenis, and with her also the shift from the very large to the quite small.

**Renée Sintenis**

Renée Sintenis was the favourite artist of dealer, publisher and gallery owner Alfred Flechtheim and, in terms of sales, arguably the most successful German sculptor of the 1920s.[[31]](#endnote-35) Sintenis had studied decorative sculpture (*'Dekorative Bildhauerei*') with sculptor Wilhem Haverkamp at the college of the Applied Arts Museum in Berlin.[[32]](#endnote-36) By 1932, her work was to be found in fourteen German, twelve European and three American museums, and that's not even taking into account the large number of works in private collections.[[33]](#endnote-37) Sintenis produced small-scale, table-top bronze figurines, depicting sportsmen, horses, deer and other animals that were sought after as commodities by private buyers. Sintenis' sculptural oeuvre is almost exclusively small in scale. An example is the bronze sculpture *Young Deer*.

was produced around 1916 and [[34]](#endnote-38)In 1916, t and published [[35]](#endnote-39) PLACEMENT

The small scale of Sintenis' works combined with her choice of animal subjects generated a quite different set of associations from Steger's Hagen statues. The diminutive size led viewers to see them as 'cute', and it also meant that these objects were portable and, crucially, touchable. Let me discuss these aspects in turn and start with a brief consideration of the notion of *Kleinplastik*.

There is no definitive agreement on what defines the size of a sculpture in order for it to be *Kleinplastik* or small-scale sculpture. Certainly, a work would need to be smaller than life-size although one could argue that this depends on the object to be modelled. As Heinz Fuchs, the curator of the triennale of *Kleinplastik* in Fellbach points out: a 30-cm sculpture of a louse would be 'colossal sculpture' but the same size sculpture representing a human would be small-scale.[[36]](#endnote-40)

Gerhard Gerkens suggests that questions of scale are only ever relative, and that small-scale sculpture is sculpture that has been conceived by its maker as such. [[37]](#endnote-41) Crucially, Gerkens points to the different relationship of viewers to small-scale sculpture as opposed to monumental sculpture: '*Kleinplastik* wants to be taken into one's hand; it does not aim for distance. And it requires from the viewer or collector a personal engagement with it.'[[38]](#endnote-42) According to Gerkens, monumental sculpture is characterised by distance, dignity, seriousness and uniqueness whereas small-scale sculpture is all about dialogue, charm and trivia, and it addresses the individual, not the multitude. Frequently, small-scale sculpture is available serially, in a number of mass-produced versions.[[39]](#endnote-43)

Two points deserve to be noted here. Firstly, there is Gerkens' point that 'handling' small-scale sculpture is important. Commentators noted how Sintenis' small-scale works invited a particular type of touch and handling, a haptic interaction with the object, not just a modernist gaze, not just the purely visual, and an engagement with the artefact that was fundamentally different from Hildebrand's principle of the 'optical' sculpture. Writer and editor Moritz Heimann wrote in 1916:

'You can set these figures before you on the table, you can take them in your hand, you can enjoy them, they have a function. [[40]](#endnote-44)

Czech art historian and painter Ignaz Beth wrote in 1917/1918:

'You can comfortably take these little things in your hand and are then able to contemplate them from all sides as in them lives a concentrated expression that seems to have been conditioned by the format.'[[41]](#endnote-45)

Finally, critic and publicist Karl Scheffler noted in 1924 that Sintenis' sculpture was 'quite small' and to be be found among other art objects on the tables and the tops of cupboards in art lovers' homes.[[42]](#endnote-46) Sintenis' small-scale sculpture was aligned with decorative objects that adorned domestic interiors.

Indeed, private collections and domestic interiors were among the prime recipients for Sintenis' art. For example, a photograph of the art dealer Alfred Flechtheim's apartment reveals at least five figurines by Sintenis arranged on top of a dresser. On the wall nearby hangs a painting by Sintenis' husband, Emil Rudolf Weiß who was an artist in his own right, showing Sintenis at work modelling an animal. Collector Edith Rosenheim owned at least five animal figurines by Sintenis, displayed on top of a chest of drawers, as attested by a photograph. The aforementioned Moritz Heimann owned three works himself and wrote in 1916: 'On a low shelf in my study there have been standing, for about two years, ... between flowers, books and stones three little figures, two plaster and one bronze.'[[43]](#endnote-47) This was the ultimate milieu for Sintenis' figures: book shelves, chests of drawers, side tables, domestic pieces of furniture. This type of display was commensurate with the way other artists' small-scale sculpture was placed; for example, one room of Dresden steam-mill owner and art patron Ida Bienert's villa sports two sculptures by Alexander Archipenko, husband of the sculptor Gela Forster, on a table with some books, all of this in a room that also includes paintings by Paul Klee and some minimalist lamps.[[44]](#endnote-48) Curator Ursel Berger points out that in a modernist villa like the Villa Lange in Krefeld, designed by Mies van der Rohe, Sintenis' sculptures were kept in a specially-made built-in glass case.[[45]](#endnote-49)

Two points may be made about this mode of displaying Sintenis' sculptures. Firstly, there is a tendency to display the figurines as ensembles. As Berger has suggested, collectors tended to buy several of these works, -- 'one along would have looked lonely', -- and this was of course a lucrative business for Sintenis and her dealers.[[46]](#endnote-50) In 1917, poet Rainer Maria Rilke, himself married to a sculptor, Clara Westhoff, and the author of a book on Auguste Rodin, recommended Sintenis' works to the banker Karl von der Heydt who went on to purchase three of them; according to Rilke, they included the figurine of an ibex and, 'as a very fitting counterpart ... a jolly little goat.'[[47]](#endnote-51) Rilke's choice of the word counterpart (*Gegenstück*) is telling; it shows that Rilke, and probably von der Heydt, thought of these statuettes as part of an ensemble.

Secondly, the mode of arranging Sintenis' sculptures on furniture in domestic interiors was part of a well-established haut-bourgeois mode of engaging with art. Carol Duncan has argued that collectors of avant-garde art precariously lived the bohemian lives that they imagined 'their' artists to be enjoying.[[48]](#endnote-52) The small scale went hand in hand with the ability to touch and handle these objects, and with their ability to be integrated into a middle-class home.

The emphasis of writers and owners on the haptic quality of Sintenis' sculpture aligns these discussions firmly with debates around the nature of the new sculpture in Germany. ELABORATE This links to the focus on the figurines inviting being handled, a desire that Sintenis played to by chiselling the undersides of many of her sculptures and by doing away with pedestals and plinths for many of them.

Alfred Flechtheim advertised her works as 'charming things', and the artist herself did not want her sculpture to have a 'monumental effect'.[[49]](#endnote-53) A rejection of the monumental, public character of sculpture brought these three-dimensional objects within the purview of the decorative arts and crafts but Sintenis' critics always emphasised that her work did not 'sink' to the level of 'applied art'.[[50]](#endnote-54) Socialist critic, writer and homosexual rights activist Hans Siemsen wrote:

'In my hand lies Renée Sintenis' little bronze foal that stretches out its front foot so coquettishly and innocently. ... It is dumb and noble, like a young Greek god. Shy and tender. It is made in such a way (of bronze) that, once you have taken it into your hand, you can't decide to give it up again. It makes you tender. One has to touch it! And nobody remembers that that which you hold in your hand is just a piece of metal, just a piece of bronze.' [[51]](#endnote-55)

Anja Cherdron has argued that Sintenis was praised for not producing decorative or applied art (*Kunstgewerbe*). Cherdron's main source is the aforementioned Karl Scheffler. In his book on women artists of 1908, Scheffler contended that women could not create monuments of stone, wood or bronze as they lacked an artistic sense of space and a conception of dynamic form. Cherdron glosses Scheffler: 'woman' moved the artistic achievements of men into daily use, as when she chose an outfit or laid the table. This kind of sensibility was suited to 'decorative, inferior ornamental, applied art taste values.'[[52]](#endnote-56) For Scheffler, the decorative was allied with consumer culture which he derided as inferior to fine art. In 1924, Scheffler published an essay about Sintenis in which he asserted that women were suited to *Kleinplastik*. However, here Scheffler encountered a small dilemma: *Kleinplastik* was associated with the decorative, and he vehemently denied this quality in Sintenis: he praised Sintenis for never succumbing to the applied arts.[[53]](#endnote-57) Sintenis, Scheffler alleges, prefers 'to remain primitive rather than become ornamental'.[[54]](#endnote-58) Furthermore, Scheffler associated Sintenis with the maternal or the child-like by saying that her sculptures occupied a middle ground between 'a child's toy Expressionism and well-trained Classicism'.[[55]](#endnote-59) Sintenis, according to Scheffler, was naive, innocent, humble -- and *not* decorative.

All of Scheffler's attributes are freighted with gendered ideology, and the writer has been criticised for this by feminist scholars.

('little figure')'','','' and ''.'[[56]](#endnote-61) Cute, pretty, charming -- these are gendered words, culturally and ideologically associated with femininity. In them, an appreciation of the small scale is conflated with a delineation of the works as indexical of the woman who created them. The conflation of works with their producers is of course familiar to feminist scholars. In Sintenis' case, however, there was a disjuncture between the so-called 'pretty' works and the artist's own rather more severe persona.

Sintenis was frequently photographed and her image illustrated in the popular press. She was of a striking appearance; at 180 cm tall, she towered over most women and men.[[57]](#endnote-62) She also seemed to embody the ideal of the Weimar *Neue Frau*, the New Woman of the 1920s who was stylish, independent, had a page-boy haircut and drove her own car (the purchase itself an indicator of the money she made from her sculptures) and who liked to go horse-riding in Berlin's central park, the *Tiergarten*.[[58]](#endnote-63) Sintenis performed an androgynous persona that incorporated aspects connoted as masculine. As such, this kind of image would appear to fit with the profession of sculptor, a profession that, it is averred, tended to be historically associated with men. Sintenis performed this persona, and it was arguably a self-conscious performance that enhanced her professional reputation. After her morning ride, Sintenis often went to a café in her riding outfit to read the English daily papers or to do a crossword puzzle. Her friend Dr Maria Lex noted: 'All this certainly serves the publicity of the artist.'[[59]](#endnote-64)

The androgynous ideal reappears with regard to Steger. Lasker-Schüler called Steger a 'charming guy' ('*reizender Kerl'*).[[60]](#endnote-65)

It was arguably modernism that enabled these sculptors to develop their art, and certainly both Steger and Sintenis positioned themselves within the avant-garde in various ways. Rosemary Betterton and Griselda Pollock have both suggested that women artists of the first decades of the twentieth century benefitted from modernist discourse and practice. Pollock argues that artistic liberation was empowered by 'experimentation with the potentialities of radical modernism'.[[61]](#endnote-66) Betterton contends that the alliance between women and modernity did furnish a sense of agency and the ability to participate in cultural change.[[62]](#endnote-67) However, others have pointed to the obstacles that women encountered in the German art world where they were branded as suited to only certain 'feminine' pursuits, in particular applied and decorative arts but not large-scale monumental sculpture.[[63]](#endnote-68) Upon closer inspection, the two texts that scholars who argue this latter point cite repeatedly are the books by Karl Scheffler (1908) and Hans Hildebrandt (1928). Carola Muysers has shown how a blinkered focus on only these two writers has obscured what was actually a lively, rich and feminist field of debate throughout the 1910s to early 1930s. Scheffler's and Hildebrandt's seemingly misogynist remarks will therefore have to be taken as minority voices in a larger concert of practice and discussion, and the works of Steger and Sintenis placed into this wider context. I would instead like to contend that neither of these two sculptors was hampered by their associations with the 'feminine' or the 'decorative'; indeed, both successfully positioned themselves, and were positioned by patrons and critics, as women and sculptors with regard to particular concepts of the decorative. Both pursued successful careers, were discussed by contemporary critics and patronised by the leading curators of their time. [[64]](#endnote-69) The concept of the decorative did not hamper these scultpors but instead enabled and, indeed, empowered them.[[65]](#endnote-70)

Doris Hahn decried her boyfriend, the poet Gottfried Benn's, taste when she found that he had replaced George Grosz's engraving Night Café in his apartment with postcards of the 'little horses' of Sintenis. Hahn exclaimed, 'I was gobsmacked! What differences!'[[66]](#endnote-74)

Martina Droth (2004) traces the beginnings of small-scale sculpture in nineteenth-century France and Britain and argued that statuettes were integrated into the domestic decor with little sense that they were aesthetic objects. Nor were statuettes critically reviewed. She notes that by the early twentieth century there was a conflict regarding the statuette's dual function as 'household object' and as 'sculpture in its own right' (Droth 150-1). She notes that statuettes have at times been seen as lacking in those qualities that characterise sculpture (152). However, this was not so in the case of the reception of Sintenis satuettes.

Ladenbronzen (Berger and Ladewig)

The poet Moritz Heimann wrote in an article on Sintenis in 1916: (Because to put sculpture once again in the service of architecture has not yet succeeded, despite many worthy attempts; some succumb to mere decoration, the others continue to explode the architecture.)[[67]](#endnote-76)'

In 1926, Hans Siemsen claimed to hear the epithets 'reizend, niedlich, allerliebst' applied everywhere to Sintenis's sculptures.[[68]](#endnote-77) '"Charming, cute, so very darling!" -- this is what one hears all around. But for that matter "cute" -- this is what these small sculptures that are really only "small" in format are very rarely.'[[69]](#endnote-78)

1. theoretical issues at stake during the time; why these two; politics of their sculpture; placing the objects (plinths, mounts); interaction with surrounding environment *[- develop the argument to analyse in more depth the* ***theoretical issues at stake*** *in the negotiation of rel between sc' and the decorative in the particular historical circumstances of my case studies*

*- elaborate on* ***my choice of these two particular artists*** *as a pair*

*- the politics of their sculptures in the context of Weimar*

*- the placing and display of the objects in specific spaces, incl. use of plinths or mounts, and interaction with surrounding environment*

*The volume:*

*- will discuss sc and the deco arts together, giving both equal weight*

*-aims to make two distinct contribs*

*- will analyse critically the theoretical issues at stake in examining the rel sc and deco*

*- hist of sc been largely written w emphasis of free-standing, monumental, figurative, single-authored works created by named sculptors, primarily in bronze, plaster or marble*

*- deco scholarship predom concerned with works created by named manufacturers, and w impact of industrialisation on craft; mass production, taste, labour and commerce*

*yet cross-fertilisations: materials, makers, techniques, forms, colours, ornament, scales, styles, patrons, audiences, subject matter*

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*Claire Jones claire.jones@gmail.com*

*For Bloomsbury, with Margaret Michniewicz]*

8/8/17 [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Rob. Breuer, 'Dekorative Plastik', *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration*, 34, 1914, 38-40. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. A.E. Brinckmann, *Plastik und Raum als Grundformen künstlerischer Gestaltung*, Munich: R. Piper, 1924 [1st edn 1922], pp.90, 85. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Lu Märten, *Wesen und Veränderung der Formen und Künste: Resultate historisch-materialistischer Untersuchungen*, Weimar: Verlag Werden und Wirken, 1949 [1st edn 1924), p.209. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Märten 1949, p.210. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Märten 1949, p.216. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Wilhelm Hausenstein, *Der nackte Mensch in der Kunst aller Zeiten*, Munich: Piper, 6th rev. edn, 1924 [1st edn 1911]; Carl Einstein, *Negerplastik*, Leipzig: Verlag der weißen Bücher, 1915, trans. Joachim Neugroschel and excerpted as 'African Sculpture' in Wood, Hulks and Potts 2007, 44-55; Willi Wolfradt, 'Das Dingtum der Plastik', *Der Cicerone*, 12:24, 1920, pp. 879-883. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Wilhelm Worringer, *Abstraktion und Einfühlung*, 1908, trans. Michael Bullock; excerpted in Wood, Hulks and Potts, pp.81-90; Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, 'Das Wesen der Bildhauerei', in Dr. Bagier (ed.) *Feuer*, Düsseldorf, 1, 1920, pp.145-56, trans. Deborah Shannon and excerpted in Wood, Hulks and Potts 2007, pp.71-79; Einstein in Wood, Hulks and Potts 2007, p.53. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Historian Eric Hobsbawm notes: '...the mass of masonry and statuary which went up in Germany in this [Wilhelmine] period was remarkably large...'; Eric Hobsbawm, 'Mass-Producing Traditions: Europe, 1870-1914', in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds), *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 263-307; here: p.275. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
10. Schulte 1998, Steger in Hagen; Schulte, Grenzen des Frauseins; for a list of Steger's Hagen works see Schulte 1998 and Fehr 2001. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
11. The Hohenhof estate consisted of three houses and three semi-attached houses along the street called Stirnband, all designed by the Dutch architect Jan Ludovicus Mathieu Lauweriks and commissioned by Karl Ernst Osthaus as a kind of artists' collective. Steger lived in one house, the Dutch artist Thorn Prikker in another. Stonge 1994. p.5; 101 historische Schätze Hagens, n.p, Elisabeth May, 'Hagen-Ernst: Keimzelle des architektonischen Wandels in Hagen' 116-47 in Belgin, Tayfun, ed., Zwischen Tradition und Moderne: Jugendstil und mehr in Hagen, Hagen: Ardenkuverlag, 2011 [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
12. (Schulte 1998, n.p.) [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
13. A relief showing a mask flanked by cherubs was made by Franz Vlasdeck; Steger received the commission for the figures (Schulte 1998) [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
14. **Birgit Schulte 1998:**

**cit. Ernst Vetterlein in der Festschrift zur Einweihung des Hagener Theaters am 5. Oktober 1911**, Hagen 1911:

Auf diese Eigenart wiesen die Erläuterungen des Architekten in der Festschrift anläßlich der Theatereröffnung im Oktober 1911 explizit hin:

"Abweichend von der sonst üblichen Art, idealisierte Musen mit den dazu gehörigen Attributen aufzustellen, wurde hier der künstlerische Reiz in der eigenartigen Verteilung von Körper und Stoffbekleidung erzielt. Mit bewußter Absicht wurde dabei alles realistisch Banale vermieden, damit die Figuren nicht vor die Front hingestellt und einsam verlassen erscheinen, sondern wie aus dem Stoff, aus der Baukunst herausgewachsen und sich mit dieser harmonisch verbindend. Dadurch wollen diese Idealgestalten nicht verklärt, sondern mit dem Ganzen als Ornament empfunden werden!. In ihrer Haltung folgen sie den dahinter aufstrebenden straffen Säulen, aber in feinen, wohlabgewogenen Bewegungen verraten sie ein inneres Leben, welches sich bei häufigerer Betrachtung immer mehr erschließt. Wer die Aufgabe und das Problem der monumentalen Bauplastik versteht, wird in diesen Figuren eine hervorragende Leistung moderner Bildhauerkunst zu würdigen wissen." [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
15. Grautoff 1926, p.324 [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
16. For more on this, see Nina Lübbren, ' Gela Forster's Radical New Sculpture: Feminism, War and Revolution', *Art History*, forthcoming June 2019. [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
17. Westheim [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
18. Adolf von Hildebrand, *Das Problem der Form in der bildenden Kunst*, Strasbourg: Heitz, 1893; excerpted in Hildebrand Adolf von Hildebrand, excerpt of *The Problem of Form in the Fine Arts* [1893] from *The Modern Sculpture Reader*, J. Wood, D. Hulks, and A. Potts, eds. (Leeds: Henry Moore Institute, 2007), 1-12. [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
19. (Westheim 7) [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
20. Westheim 9 [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
21. Osthaus, Reden und Schriften, cit. 1911, p.54. [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
22. Grautoff 1926 p.324. [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
23. Stonge 1994, p.5 [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
24. Letter Karl Ernst Osthaus, to Hugo von Tschudi, director of the Pinakothek in Munich, 1911, quoted in Stonge 1994, p.5 [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
25. Letter Karl Ernst Osthaus, to Hugo von Tschudi, director of the Pinakothek in Munich, 1911, quoted in Stonge 1994, p.5; also in German in Schulte 1998, Von der Skandalkünstlerin zur Stadtbildhauerin'. [↑](#endnote-ref-28)
26. Fehr 2001, cit. in http://www.keom02.de/KEOM%202001/raum/hagen/gesch\_ha.html 'Kunst im öffentlichen Raum in Hagen', Teil von Karl Ernst Osthaus Museum; E. Vetterlein, "Die Figuren am Stadttheater", in: *Hagener Zeitung* vom 20. 9. 1911. Vgl. dazu auch A. Ch. Funk, "Die Bildhauerin Milly Steger in Hagen", a.a.O., S. 121f. Reinhardt refers to the theatre director Max Reinhardt. [↑](#endnote-ref-30)
27. Belgin, Tayfun, ed., Zwischen Tradition und Moderne: Jugendstil und mehr in Hagen, Hagen: Ardenkuverlag, 2011

Birgit Schulte, 'Den Wandel gestalten: Karl Ernst Osthaus und der Hagener Impuls' 10-21, p.14. [↑](#endnote-ref-31)
28. Karl Ernst Osthaus, *Reden und Schriften. Folkwang, Werkbund, Arbeitsrat.* ed. by Rainer Stamm. Cologne: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2002l 1909 'Gründung eines deutschen Museums für Kunst in Handel und Gewerbe in Hagen', Hagener Zeitung, Nr.184, 3. Blatt, 9 Aug. 1909; Düsseldorfer Tageblatt, n.d. = Karl Ernst Osthaus-Archiv: Z 100,8; 68-69 [↑](#endnote-ref-32)
29. Karl Ernst Osthaus, Reden und Schriften: Folkwang, Werkbund, Arbeitsrat, ed. Rainer Stamm, Cologne: Buchhandlung Walther König, 2002, 'Westfalen (1913)', pp.55-58. in Wilhelm Schäfer, ed., *Bildhauer und Maler in den Ländern am Rhein, Jubiläumsausgabe des Verbandes der Kunstfreunde in den Ländern am Rhein*, Düss 1913, pp.141-6.

p.57:

'Milly Steger verdankt der sattsam bekannten Burleske der Hagener Stadttheaterfiguren eine Popularität, die ihrer großen, ganz monumentalen Kunst sonst kaum so bald beschieden gewesen wäre. ... In Berlin trat sie als Porträtkünstlerin hervor; ein weiblicher Akt, den sie vor drei Jahren in der Sezession ausstellte, erwies ihre Begabung für das Monumentale. Sie folgte dann einem Rufe, der von Hagen aus an sie erging, und übernahm die Ausführung des plastischen Schmuckes and den städtischen Bauten. Viele reizvolle Details, wie Kapitelle und Schlußsteine, berechtigen zu den schönsten Hoffnungen für die größeren Arbeiten, die augenblicklich unter ihrer Hand entstehen.' [↑](#endnote-ref-33)
30. Else Lasker-Schüler, 'Milly Steger', first publ. in the Berlin Schaubühne, 15 June 1916; quotedin Schulte 2001. My translation. 'Milly Steger ist eine Bändigerin, /Haut Löwen und Panther in Stein. // Vor dem Theater in Hagen / Stehen ihre Großgestalten. // Böse Tollpatsche, ernst gewordene Hännesken, / Clowne, die mit ihren blutenden Seelen wehen. // Aber auch Brunnen, verschwiegene Weibsmopse / Zwingt Milly rätselhaft nieder.' At least two Hagen sculptures are alluded to: the theatre sculptures and the panthers on the City Hall. It is unclear to which sculptures the 'wicked dolts' or the carnival clowns refer, or if these are even actual sculptures or works imagined by the poet as characteristic of Steger's artistic personality. [↑](#endnote-ref-34)
31. Cherdron, Anja,‘”Ein Vorzug ist, daß die Künstlerin nie ins Kunstgewerbliche gerät”: Renée Sintenis in der Kunstkritik’,in Cordula Bischoff and Christina Threuter (eds) Um-Ordnung: Angewandte Künste und Geschlecht in der Moderne, Marburg: Jonas Verlag, 1999, pp.44-55 [↑](#endnote-ref-35)
32. has studied dekorative Bildh berger ladewig 2013 Unterrichtsanstalt des Kunsgewerbemuseums; (Berger Ladewig 2013) [↑](#endnote-ref-36)
33. Ursel Berger, 'Kunst für Sammler: Die Plastiken von Renée Sintenis' 13-20, in Ursel Berger and Günter Ladewig, eds, Renée Sintenis: Das plastische Werk, im Auftrag von Kal H. Knauf, Berlin: Sammlung Karl H. Knauf u.a., 2013, pp.15-16. Berger cites the *Reichshandbuch der deutschen Gesellschaft* of 1932. [↑](#endnote-ref-37)
34. There are several versions of this. [↑](#endnote-ref-38)
35. Moritz Heimann, 'Renée Sintenis', *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration,* 38, 1916, 191-194 [↑](#endnote-ref-39)
36. Heinz Fuchs, preface to exh.cat. Fellbach, cited in Gerkens 1981, n.p. H. Fuchs, cat. 1. Triennale Fellbach: Kleinplastik in Deutschland, July-Aug. 1980 [↑](#endnote-ref-40)
37. Gerkens 1981, n.p. [↑](#endnote-ref-41)
38. Gerkens [↑](#endnote-ref-42)
39. Mönig 1998, p.20. Roland Mönig, editor of the exhibition catalogue Kleinplastik of the 20th C (Kleve 1998) noted that small-scale sculpture has a certain 'intimacy'. [↑](#endnote-ref-43)
40. 'Man kann diese Figuren vor sich auf den Tisch stellen, man kann sie in die Hand nehmen, man kann sich daran freuen, sie haben einen Zweck. (Denn die Plastik wieder in den Dienst der Architektur zu stellen, ist trotz vieler achtungswerter Versuche noch nicht geglückt; die einen verfallen in die bloße Dekoration, die andern sprengen immer noch die Architektur.)' Heimann 1916, p.193. [↑](#endnote-ref-44)
41. Ignaz Beth, 'Renée Sintenis', Kunst für Alle, 288-291

(text: p.289)

Is this: Ignaz Beth, 'RS', Ku f Alle, 1918, 288-296; p.289 [↑](#endnote-ref-45)
42. Karl Scheffler, '', Kunst und Künstler, 22, 1924, 260-262; here p.260 [↑](#endnote-ref-46)
43. Moritz Heimann: 'Auf einem niedrigen Bord in meinem Arbeitszimmer stehen seit etwa zwei Jahren ... zwischen Blumen, Büchern und Steinen drei Figürchen, zwei aus Gips und eine aus Bronze.' n.30 Heimann 1916; cf Diehl 1927 p.5 [↑](#endnote-ref-47)
44. source of Bienert [↑](#endnote-ref-48)
45. Berger and Ladewig 2013 [↑](#endnote-ref-49)
46. Berger [↑](#endnote-ref-50)
47. 'als sehr passendes Gegenstück ... eine lustige kleine Ziege.' n.8 Rilke 1986 pp.209, 211 [↑](#endnote-ref-51)
48. Carol Duncan, 'Virility and Domination in Early Twentieth-Century Vanguard Painting' (1982), reprinted in Carol Duncan, *The Aesthetics of Power: Essays in Critical Art History*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993. [↑](#endnote-ref-52)
49. [↑](#endnote-ref-53)
50. [↑](#endnote-ref-54)
51. Hans Siemsen, 'Renée Sintenis (1926/27)' aus *Veröffentlichungen des Kunstarchivs nr.27/28: Renée Sintenis*, Bln n.d. (1926/7), 10-14 [slightly shortened] here pp.121-122, in Britta Buhlmann, Renée Sintenis: Plastiken - Zeichnungen - Druckgraphik, Berlin: Georg-Kolbe-Museum / Frölich und Kaufmann oHG, 1983. p.121: In meiner Hand liegt das kleine Bronze-Fohlen von RS, das seinen Vorderfuß so kokett und unschuldig von sich streckt. ... Dumm und edel ist es wie ein junger Griechengott. Scheu und zärtlich. Es ist (aus Bronze) so gemacht, daß man, wenn man es in die Hand genommen hat, sich nicht entschließen kann, es wieder herzugeben. Es macht zärtlich. Man muß es anfassen! Und kein Mensch denkt daran, daß das, was er da in der Hand hält, nur ein Stück Metall, nur ein Stück Bronze ist.' [↑](#endnote-ref-55)
52. [Cherdron 1999, pp.62-3, cit. p.45; [also Ute Seiderer]] [↑](#endnote-ref-56)
53. ('nie ins Kunstgewerbliche gerät'.) Cherdron 1999 [↑](#endnote-ref-57)
54. (Scheffler 1924 p.262; cited in Cherdron 1999, p.48) [↑](#endnote-ref-58)
55. (here p.49; Scheffler p.262) [↑](#endnote-ref-59)
56. 'liebenswürdig' / charming (Siemsen 1925). 'niedlich' and 'drollig' / cute (Siemsen 1925; Kiel 1935). 'hübsch' / pretty (Siemsen 1925). 'reizend' (Kurth 1922 [Reiz]; Siemsen 1926; Scheffler 1924; Scheffler 1921; Biermann 1930); 'entzückend' / delightful (Kurth 1922; Biermann 1930); 'Es macht zärtlich.' / It makes you tender. (Siemsen 1927). [↑](#endnote-ref-61)
57. Ursel Berger, 'Renée Sintenis in der Kunst ihrer Zeit' 9-32, in Britta Buhlmann, Renée Sintenis: Plastiken - Zeichnungen - Druckgraphik, Berlin: Georg-Kolbe-Museum / Frölich und Kaufmann oHG, 1983, p.14. [↑](#endnote-ref-62)
58. Meike Baader, Doris Noell-Rumpeltes and Katharina Sykora, 'Aufbruchsphantasien: Eine Diskussion zum Thema "Neue Frau"', *FrauenKunstWissenschaft*, 9/10, 5-14. [↑](#endnote-ref-63)
59. all dies 'dient der Publicity der Künstlerin sicher' (memories her friend Dr Maria Lex; Karl-Heinz Krause; Gerd Betz 1963); cited in Buhlmann 1987 n.10 [↑](#endnote-ref-64)
60. Letter to Franz Marc, 1915, quoted in Birgit Schulte, 'Die Grenzen des Frauseins aufheben...' 2001. [↑](#endnote-ref-65)
61. Griselda Pollock, Encounters in the Virtual Feminist Museum: Time, Space and the Archive, London: Routledge, 2007, 106, 108 [↑](#endnote-ref-66)
62. Rosemary Betterton, 'Women Artists, Modernity and Suffrage Cultures in Britain and Germany 1890-1920' in Katy Deepwell (ed.), Women Artists and Modernism, Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1998, 32. [↑](#endnote-ref-67)
63. Karl Scheffler, Die Frau und die Kunst (1908); Hans Hildebrandt, Die Frau als Künstlerin (1928) and other writings by Scheffler and Hildebrandt are discussed by Bushart 1992, 135; Ranfft 1995, 43; Cherdron 2000, 60-65; Seiderer 1992; Birgit Schulte, ed. with Erich Ranfft, Die Grenzen des Frauseins aufheben: Die Bildhauerin Milly Steger, Hagen: Neuer Folkwang-Verlag im Karl-Ernst-Osthaus-Museum, 1998. [↑](#endnote-ref-68)
64. , interrupted by two world wars and dictatorship [↑](#endnote-ref-69)
65. *Steger's and Sintenis' work has largely been seen in either the context of German Expressionism, or in the context of the revalidation of women artists. Both artists were included in the seminal exhibition German Expressionist Sculpture, organised by curator Stephanie Barron in 1984. However, it seems that in this exhibition the sculptors' were not unequivocally Expressionist: Joachim Heusinger von Waldegg contends that Steger's pre-war sculptures were more Cubist than Expressionist and that it was not until 1918 that the artist's 'figures loosen under the influence of Expressionism'. p.198. And Stella Paul describes the work included in the exhibition as an exception in Sintenis's oeuvre which was otherwise 'not Expressionist in character' but instead consisted of 'sentimental animal figures'. Anita Beloubek-Hammer's comprehensive two-volume compendium of Expressionist sculpture inlcudes Steger, but not Sintenis. Sintenis and Steger have also been discussed as women artists. In her nuanced account of Berlin women sculptors in the 1920s and 30s, Magdalena Bushart situated the two artists within a context of masculinist prejudice against women's sculptural practice and notes that the 1920s constitute the first period in which women came into their own as professional sculptors. Erich Ranfft echoes this assessment and averred that German women sculptors were part of a new Weimar Frauenkunst that was enabling inasmuch as it associated women with the 'instinctive' and the 'primitive', attributes which were newly validated.*

In the 1930s, the emphasis would change back again to the monumental.

+++ In co-ordination with her dealer Alfred Flechtheim, she successfully positioned herself within the commercial and critical art worlds of Weimar Germany as a modern woman who combined sculpture (marked as 'masculine') and the decorative (marked as 'feminine') in her practice and her person.

By contrast,

The statues are made of a limestone that is (in their extant state) darker than the columns behind them.

Steger's figures were *Bauplastik* or 'building-sculpture'. Sintenis' figures, by contrast, exemplify the intimacy of the very small (*Kleinplastik* or 'small-sculpture'), suited to personal consumption and commercial exchange on the gallery circuit. Each type of sculpture, the monumental decoration of architecture and the small decoration of the home, necessitated negotiating the porous divide between applied art and fine art (in German: *Kunstgewerbe* ['art industry'] and *freie Kunst* ['free art']).

*Robert Breuer wrote about the psychological necessity for decorative sculpture within the context of modern functionality in 1914, before the War and before the decrease in*  [↑](#endnote-ref-70)
66. Doris Hahn, quoted in Joachim Dyck, Benn in Berlin, Transit Verlag; internet Leseprobe [↑](#endnote-ref-74)
67. (Denn die Plastik wieder in den Dienst der Architektur zu stellen, ist trotz vieler achtungswerter Versuche noch nicht geglückt; die einen verfallen in die bloße Dekoration, die andern sprengen immer noch die Architektur.)' Heimann 1916, p.193 [↑](#endnote-ref-76)
68. Siemsen 1926/27 in Buhlmann 1983 [↑](#endnote-ref-77)
69. '"**Reizend**, niedlich, allerliebst!" -- hört man rings im Kreise. Aber gerade "niedlich" -- das sind diese kleinen Plastiken, an denen wirklich nur das Format "klein" ist, sehr selten [↑](#endnote-ref-78)