

## Pioneering Women in the Circle of Sonia Delaunay (New York, 19 Apr 24)

Bard Graduate Center, New York, Apr 19, 2024

Waleria Dorogova

Collaboration and Camaraderie: Pioneering Women in the Circle of Sonia Delaunay.

The symposium is held in conjunction with the exhibition SONIA DELAUNAY: LIVING ART, on view at the Bard Graduate Center Gallery through July 7, 2024.

Artists, photographers, gallerists, entrepreneurs, and collectors—Sonia Delaunay’s universe was studded with women who gave rise to lasting innovations throughout the art world. They reshaped the way the international art market developed, expanded the potential of self-promotion, and redefined the role of fashion and photography on the global artistic stage. This symposium will present new research on important, underemphasized figures from Delaunay’s personal and professional milieu—Germaine Krull, Thérèse Bonney, Marie Cuttoli, and Nelly van Doesburg—each of whom proved essential in different ways at key moments in the artist’s life. Through their bold initiative and a deep commitment to art, Sonia Delaunay and the women around her created new opportunities for their contemporaries and changed the course of modern art and design for the century ahead.

Schedule:

1:30 pm Welcome and Introduction from exhibition curators Waleria Dorogova and Laura Microulis

2 pm Panel I

Rachel Silveri (University of Florida)

Fashioning the Body, Fashioning the Self:

The Collaboration between Germaine Krull & Sonia Delaunay

This talk explores the photographic portraits that Germaine Krull took of Sonia and Robert Delaunay, as well as of the various models wearing Sonia’s Simultaneous fashions in the mid-1920s. Providing a brief introduction to the multinational photographer Germaine Krull (1897–1985), it highlights Krull’s similarities to Sonia, as both were women who worked to find a place within the masculinist Parisian avant-garde while producing different types of experimental and commercial art. Looking closely at Krull’s collaborations with the Delaunay couple, it ultimately argues that Krull’s images of Sonia reveal the artist in the act of fashioning different identities—that of the modern painter, the designer, the fashion model, and the business entrepreneur. Rather than having herself and her designs simply documented, Sonia actively and creatively used her sittings

with Krull to shape her overall image as an artist.

Emilie Hammen (Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne)

Pictures and ideas: Thérèse Bonney and the circulation of modernity

To define Thérèse Bonney (1874-1978) as solely a photographer can be limiting, despite the thousands of images she has produced over the course of her life. Scholar, journalist, collector, or, yet more decisively, conveyor of both pictures and ideas would be a more fitting title for her multifaceted professional endeavors. This talk focuses on the early decades of Bonney's career, when Sonia Delaunay and her husband Robert became part of her circle of friends and frequent collaborators. Just a few months apart, both women founded their businesses in Paris; indeed, the opening of the Atelier Simultané in 1924 coincided with the establishment of Bonney Service, an illustrated press service which would become one of the biggest exporters of images of Parisian modern life and design for the international—mostly American—market. By retracing their parallel careers and considering the different moments when Thérèse Bonney and Sonia Delaunay connected, this talk aims to reposition the contribution of the two women not just as makers and creatives, but as orchestrators of collective works and original communicators—two aspects of modernist art and design that they equally conceived as inseparable.

3:15 pm Break

3:45 pm Panel II

Lilien Lisbeth Feledy (University of Applied Arts, Vienna)

Marie Cuttoli and Sonia Delaunay: A Friendship Crossing Boundaries between Art and Fashion

Marie Cuttoli (1879–1973) and Sonia Delaunay were united by their friendship as well as their dedication to promoting textile-based art. Cuttoli's gallery Myrbor opened in Paris in 1922, while Delaunay established her Parisian enterprise in 1924. Delaunay disseminated and exhibited her transdisciplinary art and fashion, as did Cuttoli, who featured the works of many contemporary artists like Sarah Lipska (1882–1973) and Natalia Goncharova (1881–1962). Drawing on previously unpublished archival material, this presentation provides insights into their shared network and areas of activity, putting light on two women's pioneering contributions to changing the art market and practice at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Cécile Bargues (Institut national d'histoire de l'art, Paris)

Nelly van Doesburg, Sonia Delaunay and the New Realities of Abstract Art

This paper explores Sonia Delaunay's network in France on the eve of the Second World War and in wartime, and, in particular, Delaunay's involvement in the efforts of other women artists and collectors to promote abstract art. In this context, Nelly van Doesburg (1899-1975) played an outstanding role. This subject is approached through the lens of the *Réalités nouvelles* exhibition that took place at Galerie Charpentier in Paris in the summer of 1939. Though little-known today, *Réalités nouvelles* was without doubt one of the most comprehensive exhibitions dedicated to abstract art in France before the war. Nelly van Doesburg played a major part in its organization, alongside Delaunay, despite the credited curators being critic Yvanhoé Rambosson and art dealer Frédo Sidès.

A participant in Dada soirées, a dancer and musician, and, since 1931, the widow of Theo van Doesburg, Nelly van Doesburg had worked with the Stedelijk museum in Amsterdam and was an acclaimed curator in Sonia Delaunay's circle by 1939. Delaunay's unpublished journals at the Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, and van Doesburg's archives in the Rijksbureau voor Kunsthistorische Documentatie, The Hague, shed light on their collaboration and unrealized projects (including plans for a museum and a book about abstract art), all of which involved other notable individuals such as Peggy Guggenheim, Hilla Rebay, and Sophie Taeuber-Arp.

5 pm Concluding Remarks

Registration:

<https://www.bgc.bard.edu/events/1513/19-apr-2024-collaboration-and>

Reference:

CONF: Pioneering Women in the Circle of Sonia Delaunay (New York, 19 Apr 24). In: ArtHist.net, Mar 25, 2024 (accessed May 2, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/41495>>.