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# NELL WALDEN, DER STURM, AND THE COLLABORATIVE CULTURES OF MODERN ART

JESSICA SJÖHOLM SKRUBBE



# Nell Walden, Der Sturm, and the Collaborative Cultures of Modern Art

Based on hitherto overlooked archival material, this book reveals Nell Walden's significant impact on the Sturm organisation through a feminist reading of supportive labour that highlights the centrality of collaborative work within the modern art world.

This book introduces Walden as an ardent collector of modern and indigenous art and critically contextualises her own art production in relation to expressionist concepts of art and to gendered ideas on abstraction and decoration. Visual analyses highlight how she collaborated with professional and experimental women photographers during the Weimar era and how the circulation of these photographs served as a means to intervene in the public sphere of culture in interwar Germany. Finally, the book provides an analysis of Walden's continuing work for Der Sturm after her voluntary exile from Germany to Switzerland in 1933 and highlights the importance of women's supportive labour for the canonisation and institutionalisation of modern art in museums and archives.

The book will be of interest to scholars working in art history, visual studies, and gender studies.

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Jessica Sjöholm Skrubbe

Cover image: Yva (Else Neulaender), Photograph of Nell Walden and sculpture by William Wauer in double exposure, late 1920s/early 1930s.  
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# Introduction

## In the Margins of the Centre

A 1916 portrait photograph taken by an unknown photographer shows the Swedish-born artist and art collector Nell Walden (b. Nelly Roslund, 1887–1975) seated at the table in the dining room (*Speisezimmer*) of her apartment at Potsdamer Straße 134a in Berlin (Figure 0.1). At the other side of the table is her husband, the musician, writer, and editor Herwarth Walden (1879–1941), at the time one of Europe’s most influential critics and dealers of modern art. The photograph, obviously staged, presents an apparently ordinary scene in the Walden couple’s everyday life. On the wall behind the Waldens are two large paintings by Marc Chagall, *Half-Past Three (The Poet)* (*Halb vier Uhr*, 1911) and *The Flying Carriage (Die fliegende Kutsche*, 1913), stylistically radical, even as black and white reproductions and, at least for the present-day beholder, slightly in discord with the otherwise rather conventional furnishing. The spatial context of the private apartment is a significant feature of the image; the conspicuous display of modern art in the domestic interior is as prominently emphasised as the individuals portrayed. The Waldens, however, pay no attention to the paintings on the wall but direct their gazes at each other. Herwarth Walden leans forward and looks intensely at his partner and wife. Nell Walden, smiling, returns his gaze with a tender look. In other words, the portrait presents them looking at each other in an act of mutual recognition.

Six years prior to this photograph, Herwarth Walden had founded the arts journal *Der Sturm*, distributed through his own publishing house. During the 1910s, *Der Sturm* gradually expanded its business and *Der Sturm* became a collective term for a diversity of activities.<sup>1</sup> In 1912, Nelly Roslund joined the *Sturm* enterprise, and following their marriage in November that same year, she became Herwarth Walden’s professional and private partner. Eventually, *Der Sturm* encompassed, among other things, a leading gallery for modern art that produced monthly exhibitions in Berlin as well as travelling exhibitions in Germany and abroad, a major collection of international modern art, an art school, a varying programme of music and theatre performances, lectures, and literature readings as well as social events such as balls and receptions.<sup>2</sup> The importance of *Der Sturm* for the dissemination and successful establishment of modern art—such as the expressionist art of the *Blaue Reiter* group, the Italian futurists, and individual artists such as Oskar Kokoschka, Marc Chagall, and Paul Klee—in Germany and beyond, can hardly be overestimated.

In 1916, in spite of the obstacles and hazards caused by the ongoing First World War, *Der Sturm* was paradoxically approaching the peak of its success as a major European promoter and disseminator of international modern art. To those initiated in the modern art world of the time, it would have been apparent that the Walden couple

## 2 Introduction



Figure 0.1 Unknown photographer, Herwarth and Nell Walden in their dining room, 1916. Photo © Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

had boldly chosen to present themselves and the Sturm organisation by promoting the “enemy artist” Chagall during wartime. From 1917 onwards, *Der Sturm*, aiming to advance the interests of avant-garde art, reproduced and distributed the photograph as part of the postcard series “Sammlung Walden”. Along with the portrait of the Walden couple in their dining room, the series included reproductions of 24 artworks from Nell Walden’s extensive art collection.

This image, then, served *Der Sturm*’s propaganda for international modern art in general by promoting the Walden art collection in particular. The postcard’s essential function was to circulate, and the image it reproduced was fundamentally intended for widespread display, in public and private spaces alike. Thus, the portrait of Nell and Herwarth Walden was not just any image. It was a means for the couple to perform and present their ideal selves for a broader public. In sum, the image served both *Der Sturm*’s commercial advertising and promotion of international modern art and the Waldens’ social self-presentation.

The printed text on the back of the postcard offered the recipients further information about the art collection:

The Walden Collection. Berlin/Potsdamer Straße 134a. 1: Corner of the dining room. Visitors of the art exhibition *Der Sturm* are permitted a visit to the Walden collection every Monday and Thursday at 4 o’clock. The collection is housed

in the private apartment of Herwarth Walden and contains over three hundred paintings, drawings and sculptures of new art.<sup>3</sup>

Despite her presence in the image, the name of the collector, Nell Walden, is conspicuously absent in the promotional text of the postcard. This is only one of many examples of the way “Herwarth Walden” operated as a subtitle to the trademark *Der Sturm*. The name of the founder and director was on most printed material that left *Der Sturm*’s publishing house, and Herwarth Walden’s name and persona soon became synonymous with the *Sturm* business as a whole. However, through the distribution and circulation of this image, the Walden couple undeniably performed a public persona together, indicating their mutual work in *Der Sturm*—irrespective of the sparsely worded information on the back of the postcard.

A statement by the poet and *Sturm* collaborator August Stramm has often served to naturalise the idea of Herwarth Walden as the solitary embodiment of *Der Sturm*.<sup>4</sup> Allegedly, Stramm was once asked, “Who is *Der Sturm*?” and is said to have replied, “*Der Sturm* is Herwarth Walden!”. The statement was notably part of the self-image fostered by the *Sturm* organisation from the 1920s onwards.<sup>5</sup> Nell Walden and her former *Sturm* colleague Lothar Schreyer repeated the quotation in several publications on Herwarth Walden and *Der Sturm*, published in the 1950s and 1960s, and thus consolidated the mythologisation of Herwarth Walden.<sup>6</sup> Undeniably, as founder of *Der Sturm* magazine and director of most of the *Sturm* activities, Herwarth Walden was an essential figure for the breakthrough of modern art, literature, and drama in Germany and beyond. The exclusive focus on Herwarth Walden, though, has reduced the *Sturm* organisation into a single authorial position and thus simplified the extensive collaborative work that enabled its success.<sup>7</sup>

Eventually, the equation of the individual with the organisation came to dictate the historiography of *Der Sturm*. Herwarth Walden has figured as the personification of the *Sturm* business in research literature, exhibitions, and catalogues. In these contexts, the portrait photograph of the Walden couple has frequently served as an illustration.<sup>8</sup> Curiously, though, the photograph itself has not been analysed in depth.<sup>9</sup> Neither has anyone questioned the inconsistent assertions of the image and the text on the back of the postcard and, indeed, Stramm’s oft-repeated statement.

In contrast, this particular photograph—and its afterlife in archives and publications—has helped generate several of the topics around which this book is structured. First, it refers to the collaborative work that inevitably constitutes any large-scale enterprise, *Der Sturm* included. It also indicates that Nell Walden’s art collection and its display in the Waldens’ private home served as an essential resource for *Der Sturm*. Furthermore, the photograph reproduced on postcards and in publications materialises practices of social self-presentation and points to its gendered implications in imperial and Weimar Germany and beyond. Finally, photographs in general not only offer “traces of the subjects producing and being produced by them” but are also “particularly useful to the feminist art historian wishing to recover the lost narratives on women as embodied subjects hidden within the existing frameworks of canonical art histories”.<sup>10</sup> In other words, if photographs such as this one perform and present social selves that have been marginalised in the histories of modern art, they may offer ways of speaking back to canonical art history.

The photograph of the Waldens in their dining room showing off Nell Walden’s art collection has thus been a pivotal image in writing this book.<sup>11</sup> In fact, the discrepancy between the narratives on individual male authorship that have dominated

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the Sturm historiography and the collaborative partnership that this image clearly suggests was what prompted me to start a research project on Nell Walden and Der Sturm in the first place. The main objective of this book is to address such contradictory statements and to recuperate a history that has lingered at the margins of the centre, as it were. Even though I limit myself to Nell Walden and Der Sturm, this discrepancy is indicative of a broader inconsistency in the historiography of the European avant-garde, and hence the general argument in the book will be of relevance to a wider field of modernist and avant-garde historiography.

#### Nell Walden and the Historiography of Der Sturm

The first major works to offer comprehensive histories of Der Sturm were Georg Brühl's *Herwarth Walden und "Der Sturm"* (1983) and Volker Pirsich's published dissertation *Der Sturm. Eine Monographie* (1985). Brühl dedicates a separate chapter to Nell Walden, but does not elucidate on her work for Der Sturm in any detail. Instead, he points to her decisive influence on Herwarth Walden's demeanour in terms of representation and suggests that her flair for bourgeois elegance had an impact on his social conduct and self-presentation.<sup>12</sup> Pirsich, however, clearly posits her as a key figure of the Sturm organisation and as a vital part of the international network of avant-garde artists that the Waldens tried to establish before the outbreak of war.<sup>13</sup> He does not hesitate to ascribe her work as a writer and translator during the First World War as the true reason for Der Sturm's economic consolidation in the middle of the 1910s.<sup>14</sup> Finally, he implies her importance as he states that the Walden couple's divorce in 1924 was symptomatic of the collapse of the Sturm business in its entirety.<sup>15</sup>

In many subsequent exhibition catalogues and scholarly works on Der Sturm, Nell Walden's position within the enterprise has been, at the best, briefly mentioned or, at the worst, completely ignored or blatantly diminished. It is only recently that scholarship on Der Sturm has been revitalised and urgent questions of gender, geographies, and the avant-garde as a complex transnational network have come to the forefront in academic writing. During the last decades, this renewed interest in Der Sturm has brought with it both critical revisions of and crucial addenda to the established Sturm historiography, including reassessments of Nell Walden's role.<sup>16</sup> However, within this recent research effort, an extensive art historical study of Nell Walden is still missing and thus the assessment of her position in the Sturm organisation varies considerably.<sup>17</sup>

This book, then, is simultaneously an effort to meet the research desideratum as regards Nell Walden and a contribution to the ongoing rereading of the Sturm organisation in a broader sense. In doing so, I focus on two aspects, already touched upon in Brühl's and Pirsich's seminal publications: Nell Walden's contributions to and involvement in the collaborative work of the Sturm organisation and its transnational network, and her practices of self-presentation and their implications within and beyond Sturm.

#### Networks and Collaborations

In line with the most recent research on Der Sturm, I argue that Der Sturm is best conceived of as a vast and complex transnational network.<sup>18</sup> The focus here, though, is not so much on the Sturm organisation's networked structure in terms of international exhibitions and social networks, but on Nell Walden's operations within this

context. Describing a historical situation in terms of relations within a network foregrounds a social field of interdependency and reciprocity rather than a hierarchical structure defined in terms of centre–periphery. Importantly, the transformation of one actor—or of the understanding of one actor—inevitably entails an alteration of the network in its entirety.<sup>19</sup> Thus, clarifying and analysing Nell Walden’s collaborations with Herwarth Walden in *Der Sturm* is not simply a matter of adding her operations to an established narrative; it is rather an endeavour that necessarily alters our understanding of *Der Sturm* as a whole.

As pointed out by Howard S. Becker in his seminal publication *Art Worlds*, any artwork is a collective activity that “rests on an extensive division of labor”, perhaps most clearly illustrated in the list of credits that appears at the end of a feature film.<sup>20</sup> In this book, I have adapted Becker’s theory of art as *collective activity* to *Der Sturm* as an art organisation. Obviously, *Der Sturm*—including the magazine, publishing house, gallery, art collection, art school, bookstore, and so on—heavily depended on a wide-ranging division of labour among those involved with various aspects of the business. Thus, like any artist, Herwarth Walden, as founder and director of *Der Sturm*, “work[ed] in a center of a network of cooperating people, all of whose work [was] essential to the final outcome”.<sup>21</sup> In light of Becker’s theory, it is imperative to recognise that it was not only *Der Sturm*’s radical and daring practices in the art world but also the routine and mundane means of doing things within the organisation that enabled its extraordinary achievements. The organisational, supportive, and social labour of Nell Walden as well as the work of many other collaborators is thus paramount in understanding the rapid success of *Der Sturm*.

The Waldens’ professional partnership is of particular importance. The essential features of the work of these two individuals were a joint agenda and a profound interdependence. In the discussions that situate Nell Walden’s art and art collection at the core of the *Sturm* enterprise, collaborative work serves as a key concept. Indeed, without it, the accomplishments of both the *Sturm* organisation and Herwarth and Nell Walden individually would have been decidedly different.

## Self-Presentation and Liminal Spaces

The concept of self-presentation figures as a structuring theoretical framework in discussions on Nell Walden’s efforts to socially enact herself as *Sturm* collaborator, collector, and artist. In this book, self-presentation refers to the construction and performance of social identities and public personas through visual and verbal means, but also to the implicit or explicit function of spaces and objects to enact an individual’s social pretensions. The concept of self-presentation aligns to the widely accepted idea that identities are the effect of performative actions. However, the emphasis on linguistic and discursive features that dominate established theories on (gender) performativity only partially reflects the focus on situated social practices and the agency of objects and spaces in this book. Instead, Erving Goffman’s theory on the presentation of self in everyday life has proved more fruitful for my approach.<sup>22</sup>

Throughout the book, the concept of liminality—or liminal spaces—serves to highlight Nell Walden’s position at the margins of the centre. Her supportive labour and networking for the *Sturm* organisation as well as her art collecting and journalistic work could conveniently be conducted from within the confines of the domestic sphere. Thus, her premises at Potsdamer Straße 134a in Berlin were liminal spaces where notions of the public and private realms intersected and where gendered

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notions of cultural practices and agency were renegotiated and transgressed through her diligent work for the *Sturm* organisation. Nell Walden's artistic practices represent liminality in another sense, hovering between amateurism and professionalism, the decorative and the abstract. In a similar way, her practices of self-presentation, particularly during the latter half of the 1920s, are situated on the threshold between avant-garde photography, the fashion press, and popular visual culture. Finally, her migration, from Sweden to Germany and later to Switzerland, has positioned her in a liminal space in between national histories of modern art. Her case thus demonstrates that established practices of art history writing are not compatible with the truly transnational character of the modern art world.

### Writing Deviating Histories of Art

It should be stated that the nature of Nell Walden's work for *Der Sturm* has been difficult to trace, since there are few contemporary sources to substantiate her efforts or clarify the details of her undertakings within the business. Obviously, Nell Walden shares this fate with many other women whose main tasks have been supportive and/or social labour, the outcome of which is ephemeral in comparison to the productive labour that is materialised in books, articles, artworks, official correspondence, and so on. The materiality of productive labour has served as a prerequisite for its preservation in archives, libraries, and museums—those pivotal institutions that offer solid ground for (art) history writing and cultural memory. It is clear that the productive work of the vast majority of men and women never reaches the institutions of cultural memory. The important point here is that the ephemeral character of the organisational work and social networking within *Der Sturm*—ephemeral in the sense that it is not materialised in objects or artefacts that are easily consecrated into valuable commodities—does not preclude this work as an essential part of the collective activity of the organisation. The gendered division of labour that (still) tends to structure women's and men's work in separate spheres thus underpins the omission of women from historical narratives and cultural memory.<sup>23</sup>

The lack of historical sources institutionalised in museums and archives is surely a familiar methodological challenge to any art historian committed to researching cultural pasts beyond the histories of already established cultural elites. Substantiating Nell Walden's ephemeral work and position in *Der Sturm* has therefore been a troublesome endeavour, as traditional archive materials do not offer extensive traces or insights. I have therefore gathered bits and pieces of diverse empirical data together in order to create a fuller understanding of the nature of her position within *Der Sturm*. Original materials, such as her guestbooks from *Der Sturm*, provide rudimentary documentation on the social "flow" but do not offer any insights on the everyday practices and collaborations of the Walden couple. Her personal almanac from 1913 is a rare primary source that offers valuable information on her daily businesses during that particular year, but unfortunately lacks detailed descriptions of her undertakings. Only in exceptional cases have parts of her correspondence from the 1910s through the 1930s found its way into archival institutions.

Material that documents the *Sturm* enterprise is equally scarce, as the business papers and archive have not survived. In light of this, the importance of artworks, photographs, and other visual material as historical sources in their own right have proved crucial. The portraits of Nell Walden by fellow *Sturm* artists and prominent

photographers situate her presence and agency in a specific cultural sphere from the 1910s through the 1930s. Thus, if the textual material is lacking, the visual sources offer crucial points of access to her practices and social positions during those years. Most importantly, it is not only the visual material but also Nell Walden's continuous deployment of these paintings and photographs that directed the research process towards the topic of self-presentation that is an essential part of this book.

As well as primary textual and visual sources from this period, I have also consulted Nell Walden's extensive correspondence with former *Sturm* artists, art collectors, museum professionals, and family members during the post-war era and, where useful, memoirs and autobiographies of other key figures of *Der Sturm*. Moreover, I have considered the transformations of *Der Sturm*'s practices precisely at those moments when Nell Walden entered the organisation in 1912 and when she left in 1925 not simply as coincidences but as material traces that suggest her importance for the collective activity that constituted *Der Sturm*.<sup>24</sup> In 1912, *Der Sturm* transformed from an art magazine with a clear focus on literature into a vast enterprise with a stronger emphasis on the visual arts. After Nell Walden left *Der Sturm* in 1925, the continuity that had characterised the gallery exhibitions in Berlin immediately collapsed.

Nell Walden's publications on *Der Sturm* and Herwarth Walden, the first one co-edited with Lothar Schreyer, represent the official version of her memories of her collaboration with Herwarth Walden.<sup>25</sup> In her correspondence with family members and former *Sturm* collaborators, this idealised narrative is less polished, and she explicitly stated that the ambition with her publications was to hand down the story of the *Sturm* business and not least Herwarth Walden's pioneering work for avant-garde art in as favourable a light as possible to posterity.<sup>26</sup> Thus, the correspondence is sometimes more informative when it comes to the hard collaborative work and occasional inner conflicts behind the successful story of *Der Sturm* as presented in her books. It also makes clear that when it comes to the couple's collaborations, it is impossible to draw clear lines between their professional and private partnership. During more than a decade, *Der Sturm* was quite simply their mutual life project.

Obviously, this does not necessarily mean that the correspondence comes closer to some kind of truth of past events. Both the private correspondence and the published works were written in retrospect, and thus represent selective reconstructions and explanations after the events and from the point of view of one, even if particularly crucial, of many *Sturm* collaborators. Also, Nell Walden was most certainly clear about the fact that she was corresponding not only with former and current friends in her letters, but also writing for posterity, as she intended to donate her collections and archives, including the correspondence, to museums for future research. She therefore destroyed letters from time to time in order to avoid the risk that someone might create "mischief" out of "any scrap of paper".<sup>27</sup> She also urgently requested Lothar Schreyer to destroy correspondence relating to their collaborative work with the book on *Der Sturm*.<sup>28</sup>

However, for at least three reasons, the correspondence is important as source material. For one, the letters from the 1940s onwards form the principal empirical data on Nell Walden, and rather than ignoring this extensive material—like previous research on *Der Sturm*, without exception—I wish to make careful use of it. Second, I maintain that even if it is selective and biased, Nell Walden's reconstructions of past events in private letters are valuable per se, as they convey how one of the key figures of *Der Sturm* not only assessed past events but also positioned herself in that context.

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As will become clear, this is also aligned to her manner of social self-presentation from the 1910s onwards. Third, the archive material on Nell Walden from the late 1940s onwards evidence the extent to which she continued her work for *Der Sturm*—as spokesperson, historiographer, and archivist—throughout her life. Following Bruno Latour’s theorisation of group formations, this material has enabled me to trace how she performatively maintained and justified *Der Sturm* as a group formation long after its discontinuation as a formal organisation.<sup>29</sup>

Finally, it should be noted that privileging early primary sources, that is, material from the 1910s and 1920s, while simultaneously ignoring primary sources of a later date, implies a (misleading) belief in the neutrality and originality of contemporary archival documents. All primary sources are retrospectively processed and arranged in the procedures of institutionalisation in archives, museums, and libraries, whose holdings will always represent selective fragments of the materialised traces of past events. Thus, whether the empirical material is “original”, retrospective, or even fictional is not of relevance per se. More important is a critical reflection on what kind of arguments and assertions different sources make possible. In the end, as we all know, history never equals the past.

This is not to say that historical narratives cannot offer objective accounts of the past. On the contrary, it has been convincingly argued that objectivity even requires a “partial perspective” that is specifically located.<sup>30</sup> It should therefore be stressed that this study is explicitly dedicated to a feminist agenda of writing art history. The methodological implication of the feminist perspective has been a deliberate shift in focus from an established key (male) figure to a conceived marginal (female) participant, thus an insistence on the continuing importance of “reclaiming female agency”.<sup>31</sup> In exploring the situated agency of Nell Walden, this book represents a partial perspective that seeks to avoid both universalism and relativism—the one usually associated with modernist and the other with postmodernist approaches to history writing and knowledge production. It thus ascribes to the assertion of many feminist scholars that “multiple, positioned knowledges refute precisely the forms of totalizing grand narrative which render historical, cultural and economic differences unreadable through gross generalisation and over-simplification”.<sup>32</sup> In other words, recovering and researching marginalised subject positions inevitably shift our understanding of canonical modernism and shed light on how established narratives fall short of, for instance, women’s diverse practices within the field of modern art.

However, feminist art history has faced problems owing to its disciplinary alignment to both feminism and art history, whose theoretical and methodological traditions diverge. The necessary compromises stemming from this paradoxical situation have often favoured traditional art historical concepts. As a result, feminist art history has unintentionally reinforced the norms of canonical art history, while at the same time neglecting divergent biographies that would have helped demonstrate that “gender norms do not have omnipotence”.<sup>33</sup> In this book, both canonical art history’s lingering norms of quality, originality, and individuality and feminist art history’s persistent preference for narratives of resistance to and subversion of gender norms—also in historical and visual terms—have proved inadequate as methodological frameworks. Instead, only by focusing on aspects such as collaboration, loyalty, interdependency, and even gender conformism has it been possible to analyse Nell Walden’s professional tactics and social self-presentation. Hers is thus a deviating history that problematises the canons of both traditional and feminist art history.

## Nell Walden in *Der Sturm* and Beyond

The focus in this book is Nell Walden's contributions to the *Sturm* enterprise and how she positioned herself within and beyond it through different means of self-presentation. This book offers neither a comprehensive analysis of *Der Sturm* nor a complete biography of Nell Walden; as she once drily commented herself, her involvement with *Der Sturm* was just *one* part of the story of her life.<sup>34</sup> In other words, I have tried to read *Der Sturm* *through* Nell Walden while at the same time reading her endeavours within *and beyond* *Der Sturm*. Thus, I do not follow the chronology of the magazine *Der Sturm* between 1910 and 1932 or consider all the activities that *Der Sturm* as a trademark assembled. Nor do I put equal emphasis on Nell Walden's diverse entanglements with the art world from the 1910s until her death in 1975. The focus is on her active years in *Der Sturm* 1912–1925, her practices as an independent artist and collector and her collaborations with women professional photographers during the latter part of the Weimar era, and her continuous work for *Der Sturm* in the post-war period.

The first chapters of the book set out to clarify and substantiate Nell Walden's contributions to the collaborative work of the *Sturm* enterprise during the 1910s and 1920s. Chapter 1 focuses on her elusive status as “companion, friend and fellow combatant” to Herwarth Walden and elaborates on her supportive labour and role as an essential organising node within *Der Sturm*'s international network, including her lucrative work as a translator and political correspondent during the First World War.<sup>35</sup> It also discusses her teamwork and loyalty to Herwarth Walden and *Der Sturm* and clarifies the indispensability of collective activities for the *Sturm* enterprise in its entirety. Chapter 2 is dedicated to Nell Walden's art collection, deceitfully labelled “Sammlung Walden” during her years in *Der Sturm*. It offers a characterisation of the collection and an analysis of its essential function within the broader *Sturm* enterprise. It theorises the art collection as a provisional institution and elaborates on its domestic display as a social space that answered to the structure of the modern art market. The chapter concludes with a discussion on the continuing effects of her belated claims to the collection. Chapter 3 introduces Nell Walden as one of the most prominently promoted artists of *Der Sturm* and situates her artistic oeuvre within the specific context of *Der Sturm*'s art theory. It argues that the construction of the artist Nell Walden is yet another example of the Walden couple's collaborative partnership and elucidates on how she positioned and developed her artistic practices beyond the framework of *Der Sturm*. It further discusses the difficulties of assessing a painterly production that hovers between amateurism and professionalism, the abstract and the decorative, thus it elaborates on the gendered rhetoric of art criticism and on the problem of canonical art history's double alignment to both aesthetic judgements and historical scholarship.

Chapter 4 analyses how Nell Walden presented and positioned herself in a broader social and cultural sphere in Weimar Germany. It elaborates on how she remodelled her social and professional network in the 1920s and 1930s and details on her continuing efforts as a collector, thus expanding the narrative on her collection beyond the context of *Der Sturm*. The discussion focuses on Walden's visually mediated self-presentation in photographic portraits. It details on how she employed the interior of her home, her extensive ethnographic collection, or sartorial detail as expressive means in her visual self-articulation. The circulation of the photographs, not least in

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the illustrated press, speaks about how she sought to secure visibility and maintain presence in the public sphere of culture after she had left the Sturm enterprise. The analysis pays special attention to her collaborations with women professional photographers, which resulted in several series of photographs that position her visual self-presentation at the intersection of avant-garde art photography and popular visual culture. These collaborations are theorised as expressions of an affirmative women's culture, *Frauenkultur*, thus as part of a broader phenomenon that permeated public life in Weimar Germany.

Chapter 5 traces Nell Walden's efforts to secure her collections from the impending threat of the Nazi's iconoclast politics and locate her endeavours in the context of flight assets in the Swiss art world during the 1930s and 1940s. It shows how her continuing efforts after the Second World War to secure Herwarth Walden and Der Sturm a place in modernist art history prolonged her collaborative work with and for Herwarth Walden, while at the same time presenting an opportunity to implicitly inscribe herself in the narrative of Der Sturm. In other words, her work as Sturm historiographer and archivist was also a means of self-presentation. The overall argument of this last chapter concerns women artists and collectors' contributions to the canonisation of modern art and the importance of the situated materiality of writing art history. In a broader sense, it highlights how the migration and mobility of artists, artworks, and archival material impact art historiography and how national narratives on art's histories inadequately represent the truly transnational contexts of modern art.

## Notes

- 1 In the following, *Der Sturm* refers exclusively to the magazine, whereas Der Sturm (without italics) is used as a label for the broader scope of activities organised by and/or connected to the magazine. The magazine is available online: Blue Mountain Project. Historic Avant-Garde Periodicals for Digital Research, <http://bluemountain.princeton.edu/exist/apps/bluemountain/index.html>
- 2 On Der Sturm's vast span of cultural as well as social activities, see Volker Pirsich, *Der Sturm. Eine Monographie*, Traugott Bautz, Herzberg, 1985, 334–387. The catalogues of the gallery exhibitions and further material are available online: Kataloge der Galerie "Der Sturm", Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte, München, <https://www.zikg.eu/bibliothek/bestaende/bibliothek-herzog-franz-von-bayern/digitalisierung/kataloge-sturm>
- 3 "Sammlung Walden. Berlin/Potsdamer Straße 134a. 1: Ecke im Speisezimmer. Eine Besichtigung der Sammlung Walden wird den Besuchern der Kunstausstellung Der Sturm jeden Montag und Donnerstag um 4 Uhr gestattet. Die Sammlung befindet sich in der Privatwohnung von Herwarth Walden und enthält über dreihundert Gemälde, Zeichnungen und Bildwerke der neuen Kunst". "Sammlung Walden"-Postkarte 1: Ecke im Speisezimmer, Handschrift 125, Nachlaß Nell Walden, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin (StaaBi).
- 4 See, for example, M.S. Jones, *Der Sturm. A Focus of Expressionism*, Studies in German Literature, Linguistics, and Culture vol. 16, Camden House, Columbia, 1984, xviii; Barbara Alms, "DER STURM—Corporate Identity für die internationale Avantgarde", *Der Sturm. Chagall, Feininger, Jawlensky, Kandinsky, Klee, Kokoschka, Macke, Marc, Schwitters und viele andere im Berlin der zehner Jahre*, Barbara Alms and Wiebeke Steinmetz (eds), Städtische Galerie, Delmenhorst, 2000, 15; Freya Mühlhaupt, "Vad är der STURM? Der STURM är Herwarth Walden". En tysk särting inom modernismen/'Was ist der STURM? Der STURM ist Herwarth Walden'. Ein deutscher Sonderweg der Moderne", *Svenskt avant-garde och Der Sturm i Berlin/Schwedische Avantgarde und Der Sturm in Berlin*, Jan Torsten Ahlstrand et al. (eds), Verlag des Museums- und Kunstvereins Osnabrück, Kulturen, Lund, 2000, 169–196.

- 5 The Sturm artist and collaborator Lothar Schreyer was the first to reference Stramm: “When August Stramm was asked: who is Der Sturm? He answered: Der Sturm is Herwarth Walden” (“Als August Stramm gefragt wurde: Wer ist Der Sturm? Antwortete er: Der Sturm ist Herwarth Walden”). Lothar Schreyer, “Zur Geschichte des Sturm”, *Einblick in Kunst*, 10th edn, Herwarth Walden (ed.), Der Sturm, Berlin, (1917) 1924, 168. The first edition of *Einblick in Kunst* (1917) did not include Schreyer’s text but a piece by L.H. Neitzel entitled “Was ist der Sturm”. Significantly, Neitzel, in the 1910s, emphasised the collective body of Der Sturm and its present and future importance: “One heart and many people. Many artists and one body, where you feel the same pulse beat in all limbs and in every part [...]. Because der Sturm is—above all—a belief. A belief that our future lives in us already today” (“Ein Herz und viele Menschen. Viele Künstler und ein Körper, wo man an allen Gliedern und in jedem Teile den gleichen Pulsschlag fühlt [...]. Denn—und vor allem—ist der Sturm ein Glaube. Der Glaube, daß unsere Zukunft schon heute in uns lebt”). L.H. Neitzel, “Was ist der Sturm”, *Einblick in Kunst*, Herwarth Walden (ed.), Der Sturm, Berlin, 1917, 153. Schreyer, in the 1920s, focused on Herwarth Walden as the solitary personification of Der Sturm and rather turned towards the past when he characterised Der Sturm as a phenomenon soon to be “legendary”. Schreyer, (1917) 1924, 168.
- 6 Nell Walden and Lothar Schreyer (eds), *Der Sturm. Ein Erinnerungsbuch an Herwarth Walden und die Künstler aus dem Sturmkreis*, Woldemar Klein, Baden-Baden, 1954, 59, 146; Lothar Schreyer, *Erinnerungen an Sturm und Bauhaus. Was ist des Menschen Bild?*, Albert Langen Georg Müller, München, 1956, 7; Nell Walden, *Herwarth Walden. Ein Lebensbild*, Florian Kupferberg, Berlin and Mainz, 1963, 32.
- 7 Obviously, this mythologisation of an individual echoes the basic template of canonical art history. For a discussion on canonical art history as a mythical structure, see Griselda Pollock, *Differencing the Canon. Feminist Desire and the Writing of Art’s Histories*, Routledge, London and New York, 1999, 6–9.
- 8 See, for example, Georg Brühl, *Herwarth Walden und “Der Sturm”*, DuMont, Köln, 1983; Freya Mühlhaupt (ed.), *Herwarth Walden 1878–1941. Wegbreiter der Moderne*, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin, 1991; Barbara Alms and Wiebeke Steinmetz (eds), *Der Sturm. Chagall, Feininger, Jawlensky, Kandinsky, Klee, Kokoschka, Macke, Marc, Schwitters und viele andere im Berlin der zehner Jahre*, Städtische Galerie, Delmenhorst, 2000.
- 9 To the best of my knowledge the only analysis of the image as such is my own brief discussion in Jessica Sjöholm Skrubbe, “The Most Effective Propaganda Stunt?”, *Nell Walden & Der Sturm*, Jessica Sjöholm Skrubbe et al., Mjellby konstmuseum, Halmstad and Carlsson, Stockholm, 2015.
- 10 Dorothy C. Rowe, *After Dada. Marta Hegemann and the Cologne avant-garde*, Manchester University Press, Manchester and New York, 2013, 3.
- 11 I have borrowed the concept of “pivotal images” from art historian Margareta Gynning; see Margareta Gynning, “Transformative Encounters. Prior and Current Strategies of a Feminist Pioneer”, *Curating Differently. Feminisms, Exhibitions and Curatorial Spaces*, Jessica Sjöholm Skrubbe (ed.), Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle upon Tyne, 2016, 66.
- 12 Brühl, 1983, 51.
- 13 See, for example, Pirsich, 1985, 18, 32, 123.
- 14 Pirsich highlights the fact that *Der Sturm* did not contain, thus did not economically depend upon, advertisements from March 1916 onwards. Pirsich, 1985, 82, 640.
- 15 Pirsich, 1985, 387.
- 16 In 2000, two exhibitions signalled a renewed interest in the history of Der Sturm: Barbara Alms and Wiebeke Steinmetz major exhibition and catalogue, *Der Sturm in Berlin der Zehner Jahre*, and the exhibition and catalogue *Svenskt Avantgarde och Der Sturm i Berlin/Schwedische Avantgarde und Der Sturm in Berlin*, which contributed with an attempt to reconstruct an exhibition of Swedish expressionist painters in the Sturm gallery in Berlin, but mainly drew upon and repeated established “truths” on Sturm as a whole. Alms and Steinmetz, 2000; Jan Torsten Ahlstrand et al., *Svenskt avant-garde och Der Sturm i Berlin/Schwedische Avantgarde und Der Sturm in Berlin*, Verlag des Museums- und Kunstvereins Osnabrück, Kulturen, Lund, 2000. Robert Hodonyi widened the scope of research to include architecture in his *Herwarth Waldens “Sturm” und die*