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BECOMING ARTISTS
CARINA RECH

Becoming Artists

Self-Portraits, Friendship Images and Studio Scenes
by Nordic Women Painters in the 1880s
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Becoming Artists: Self-Portraits, Friendship Images and Studio Scenes by
Nordic Women Painters in the 1880s
Academic dissertation for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in
Art History at Stockholm University, to be publicly defended on
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Cover image: Bertha Wegmann, The Artist Jeanna Bauck, 1881,
detail of fig. 60. Photo: Nationalmuseum.
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Carina Rech
Stockholm, March 2021
Introduction

In 1911, Axel Romdahl (1880–1951), the curator responsible for the art department at the Gothenburg Museum, visited the Swedish artist Hanna Hirsch-Pauli (1864–1940) in her villa in Storängen on the outskirts of Stockholm. He had come to purchase a painting for the collection of the museum, and his first intention was to acquire her genre painting *By Lamplight* from 1885.¹ However, when Romdahl saw the portrait of the Finnish artist Venny Soldan-Brofeldt (1863–1945), which Hirsch-Pauli had exhibited in the Salon of 1887, he changed his mind.

At the time of their Paris sojourn, the two artist friends Hanna Hirsch and Venny Soldan were not yet married.² In the portrait, Soldan is represented seated on the wooden floor of their shared studio in Montparnasse, which is rendered in striking simplicity: Nothing to distract from the artistic activity displayed, nothing to call into question the professionalism of the represented artist. The interior is not a home, but a workshop. Soldan is modeling in clay and addressing her colleague with a concentrated gaze and a slightly opened mouth, as if she is about to speak. The composition is entirely focused on the artistic and intellectual exchange between the artist-painter and the sitter-sculptor. The making of art is staged as a dialogic endeavor rather than an individualist pursuit.

In a hitherto unpublished memo, Romdahl emphasized the significance of the acquisition of the portrait of Soldan-Brofeldt, praising its “perky representation of the woman of the eighties and its solid, skillful painting”.³ The museum’s representative Carl Lagerberg (1859–1922) commented on the purchase in similarly laudatory terms in the museum yearbook the following year, calling the portrait of Venny Soldan-Brofeldt “an image
characteristic of the decade of emancipation and realism”. According to Lagerberg, the composition of the painting was “almost provocatively uninhibited” and the execution “powerful and solid”. In the aftermath of Romdahl’s visit, Hirsch-Pauli wrote to Soldan-Brofeldt, informing her friend about the museum’s offer to purchase the likeness. The sitter replied that the painting was “a true museum piece” and that she would gladly accept the offer to share the remuneration with the painter. In the 1910s, with twenty-five years of historical distance, both Romdahl and Lagerberg described the portrait of Venny Soldan-Brofeldt as a representative image for the 1880s – a decade shaped by emancipation and realism. Romdahl even called the portrait a truthful representation of the “woman of the eighties”, as if Soldan-Brofeldt personified the woman of her time.

More than seventy years later, in 1988, Liljevalchs konsthall, an art museum in Stockholm, organized the groundbreaking exhibition De drogo till Paris: Nordiska konstnärinnor på 1880-talet (They Moved to Paris: Nordic Women Artists in the 1880s) and the curators Lollo Fogelström and Louise Robbert used the portrait of Soldan-Brofeldt as the key visual, reproducing it prominently on the cover of the catalog. In the wake of feminist interventions in art history, this exhibition brought late-nineteenth-century Nordic women artists to renewed public attention, and, once more, the portrait by Hirsch-Pauli seemed best to visualize the essence of the artists’ liberating experiences abroad.

Today, the portrait of Venny Soldan-Brofeldt is still considered an epoch-making image, because it seems to capture the profes-
sional self-confidence that Nordic women artists acquired in the 1880s. However, when studying the artworks that they produced during this decade, one soon begins to notice that this portrait is not exceptional. In the 1880s, Nordic women artists were exploring new ways of fashioning artistic identity in painting, not only by portraying themselves, but also by depicting their artist friends and their studio spaces. This study sets out to examine the artists’ strategies of self-fashioning in painting and to analyze how they inscribed themselves in the visual history of their profession.

Aim and Research Questions

The aim of this study is to analyze how Nordic women painters negotiated their professional identity in painting during the 1880s, focusing on the genres of the self-portrait, the friendship image and the studio interior. It explores how artistic identity is fashioned in painting through self-representation, through collaboration with a colleague and in interaction with the interior of the studio as a constitutive space of artistic professionalism.

The analysis distinguishes between the occupation of the artist and the idea of the artist, meaning the cultural figure and its appertaining symbolic implications and narrative tropes, the most powerful of which is the myth of the artist-genius. The focus of the following investigation will be on the idea of the artist, which means that it will not primarily analyze the social reality of being an artist, but its imagination in painting. In her historiographic study about the social construction of the artist, Catherine M. Soussloff has argued that the concept of the artist was gendered male unless explicitly called “the woman artist.” Since every artistic self-representation reacts in some ways to the idea that is culturally held about the artist, this gendered distinction has crucial implications for women artists’ self-fashioning as professionals and it thus raises the question: How did Nordic women painters relate to this discriminatory narrative and appropriate the persona of the artist in painting in the 1880s?

This study is guided by the following set of questions that proceed from the above: What representational strategies did Nordic women painters employ in order to appropriate the idea of the artist, traditionally conceived as male? How did they resolve the historical and cultural incompatibility between the role of woman and
that of the artist? How did Nordic women painters come to terms with the iconographic conventions and pictorial tropes of a profession from which they had largely been excluded? How did they not only adopt these conventions and tropes, but eventually even subvert or circumvent the idea of the artist by offering alternative modes of self-representation?

When studying how Nordic women painters represented themselves in their professional role, it becomes clear that portraits of artist friends as well as depictions of studio spaces were at least as important as self-portraiture for the artists’ self-fashioning in painting in the period under consideration. From this observation derives the tripartite division of the analytical chapters into Self-Portrait, Friendship Image and Studio Scene. Further, this structure has prompted two research questions that focus on the social, dialogic and spatial dimensions of (self-) representation: What impact did networks, friendship and mutual portrayal have on the construction of a professional identity in painting? How did women painters integrate the studio space into their self-fashioning in painting?

The study of the paintings is complemented by an analysis of the artists’ correspondence, which has led to the following additional questions: How did the artists conceive of their relationship in writing? What impact did their epistolary exchange have on the construction of their professional identity as individual artists or as members of a larger occupational community?

By combining the detailed analysis of a selection of paintings by women artists from the Nordic countries with a close reading of the artists’ correspondence and other written sources, this study investigates the manifold ways by which the painters fashioned artistic identity during a period of rapid professionalization and increased public visibility. In short, this book is about women who used painting to stage interventions into the representation of the artist. These representations are more than images of individual women artists; together they form and negotiate a discourse around the idea of the artist. By imagining themselves and one another, Nordic women painters repeatedly crossed the boundaries between the genre categories of self-portrait, portrait, genre scene and interior. Their work raises questions about the collaborative potential of portraiture, about individual authorship and the concept of the artist as a solitary entity, as well as the relationality of (artistic) identity as moving between subjects and spaces.
Artists, Locations and Social Fabric

The central protagonists of this book are the Swedish artists Jeanna Bauck (1840–1926), Julia Beck (1853–1935), Eva Bonnier (1857–1909), Hanna Hirsch-Pauli (1864–1940) and Hildegard Thorell (1850–1930), as well as the Danish painter Bertha Wegmann (1847–1926), the Norwegian painter Asta Nørregaard (1853–1933) and the Finnish artist Venny (Vendla) Soldan-Brofeldt (1863–1945).

The majority of artists are of Swedish nationality, which is justified by the fact that the country had the most professionalized art education available to women of the Nordic countries, and therefore Swedish women artists gained a pioneering role during the second half of the nineteenth century. All Swedish artists, with the exception of Bauck, studied at the women’s department of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Stockholm. The geographic focal point of this study, however, is Paris, because the above artists all studied in the French capital for formative periods of varying duration in the 1880s. In Paris, they built artistic networks, laid the crucial foundations for their careers and painted the majority of the works that are analyzed here. Besides Paris, Munich played an often overlooked, but considerable role as a training ground for Nordic women artists. Four out of eight artists studied at some point in Munich, Wegmann and Bauck launched their careers in the Bavarian capital in the 1870s and the latter even spent the majority of her life there. The relocation of artistic interest from Germany to France around the year 1880 and the concomitant stylistic development constitutes a frequently described paradigm shift in the history of Nordic art, which has led to the relative neglect of Munich as an important site for the professionalization of Nordic women artists. While all artists covered in this study were relatively mobile, Bauck and Beck were the only ones who spent a greater part of their lives abroad, in Germany and France respectively. The remaining artists returned to their home countries after a temporary sojourn abroad.

Concerning their social background, the eight artists represent a relatively homogenous group, all roughly belonging to the middle classes. More precisely, these women came from the lower middle classes to upper middle classes, with fathers working as bookbinders, wholesalers, musical composers or publishers. Eva Bonnier’s family eventually accumulated a considerable fortune, which at the turn of the century came to assign her an exceptional position as both artist and patron.
Fig. 2. Jeanna Bauck (1840–1926).
Fig. 3. Julia Beck (1853–1935).
Fig. 4. Eva Bonnier (1857–1909).
Fig. 5. Hanna Hirsch-Pauli (1864–1940).

Fig. 6. Asta Nørregaard (1853–1933).
Fig. 7. Venny Soldan-Brofeldt (1863–1945).

Fig. 8. Hildegard Thorell (1850–1930).
Fig. 9. Bertha Wegmann (1847–1926).
The importance of the artists’ class background for the context of this study cannot be overstated. The combination of their families’ relative affluence and affinity to culture and arts were vital preconditions for them to gain access to qualitative artistic training at home and abroad. At the same time, the artists’ middle-class background, with its ideals about feminine decorum and conduct, were limiting factors when it came to the appropriation of the idea of the artist in painting. This class paradox of liberating and limiting factors is a recurring theme in this study.

Bertha Wegmann’s artistic career was initially based on the support of the affluent Jewish families of Melchior and Trier in Copenhagen, who owned a successful trading house and were well acquainted with the artist’s father Eberhard Wegmann (1810–1869), himself a Protestant. The financial support of her Jewish patrons allowed Wegmann to move to Munich in 1867 to study art. The portrait of her patron, the wholesaler Moritz Gerson Melchior (1816–1884), which Wegmann exhibited in the annual Charlottenborg exhibition of 1884, eventually marked her breakthrough as a portraitist in Denmark and turned her, according to a later
Especially, the Jewish cultural and financial elite in the Danish capital belonged to Wegmann’s most important commissioners. Wegmann herself remarked in a letter to her friend and colleague Hildegard Thorell from April 1884 that the portrait of Melchior had made a “tremendous success” among the visitors to the Charlottenborg exhibition, adding: “everyone was charmed by it, and all people want to be painted, so I have enough to do with keeping them at arm’s length.”

The Swedish painters Eva Bonnier and Hanna Hirsch-Pauli both came from Jewish families in Stockholm that belonged to the capital’s cultured elite. In 1939, the year before Hirsch-Pauli passed away, the art historian Sixten Strömbom (1888–1983) conducted an interview with the artist, the protocol of which is preserved in the archives of Nationalmuseum. When talking about her most famous painting Breakfast Time from 1887, Hirsch-Pauli remembered that the Swedish critics rejected the painting due to the colorful reflections of light on the tablecloth, and she recalled: “One wrote: ‘You only have such dirty tablecloths in some families.’ He meant
Jewish.” The interpretation of this source is difficult in several respects. While the protocol is typewritten, certain crucial alterations were made in pencil. The negative adjective “worse” or “inferior” was replaced with the more neutral formulation “some” families. Also, the following explanation “He meant Jewish” is an addition. It remains uncertain whether Hirsch-Pauli interpreted the critique of her work as implicitly antisemitic or if Strömbohm understood it that way and later added these clarifications to the transcript of the interview. There is also an immense temporal difference between the contemporary review of the painting from 1887 and the interview, which was conducted the year of the outbreak of the Second World War. Nevertheless, the interview renders visible the impact of the artist’s Jewish identity on the critical reception of her work.

In his biography of Eva Bonnier’s brother, the influential publisher and head of the family Karl Otto Bonnier (1856–1941), Per I. Gedin has demonstrated that the Jewish elite was constantly exposed to antisemitism, which grew stronger towards the end of the nineteenth century, when it was displayed openly in the press and in cartoons. Since the Bonnier and Hirsch families were assimilated, it can still be argued that their affiliation to the upper middle classes and their cultural capital were more decisive for the artists’ careers and their appropriation of an artistic persona, in particular...
during their Paris years, than their Jewish identity. While it is, nevertheless, important to be aware of the effects of antisemitism, a deeper analysis of the impact of the artists’ Jewish identity on their self-representation and their artistic production would extend beyond the scope of this study.

When it comes to civic status, five out of eight artists covered in this study remained unmarried, two married a fellow artist and one of them married a civil servant. Hildegard Bergendal, who in 1872 married the military lawyer and lawspeaker Reinhold Thorell (1839–1914), is the exception. Reinhold Thorell supported his wife in her professional ambitions and allowed her to travel to Paris and Munich alone to pursue her artistic education. This decision was considered unusual enough for the Swedish press to report on it, mocking the left-behind husband by renaming the couple’s villa Solhem on Djurgården to Solohem. The majority of unmarried women among the artists in this study are representative of the period, because marriage imposed practical and legal limits on a woman’s exercise of occupation. Instead, women artists often formed households with family members or long-lasting partnerships with female colleagues or other emancipated women. This applies to Bauck and Wegmann, and the impact of their partnership on their work will be discussed in detail in the second chapter.

Material

Paintings and Photographs

After a systematic search of museum collections, previous literature, auction catalogs and databases, seven paintings were selected, in which artistic identity is addressed and renegotiated and selves fashioned in innovative and challenging ways. These artworks are the central objects of study and they include, in order of appearance: Julia Beck’s self-portrait from 1880, Jeanna Bauck’s undated genre scene depicting Bertha Wegmann painting the portrait of the physician Peter Dethlefsen (1855–1937), probably from 1889, Bertha Wegmann’s portraits of Jeanna Bauck from 1881 and 1885, Hanna Hirsch-Pauli’s portrait of Venny Soldan-Brofeldt from 1886–87, Eva Bonnier’s studio interior from 1886 and finally Asta Nørregaard’s self-portrait from 1883. The selection covers a variety of genres – self-portraits, portraits, interiors, genre scenes – and it is supposed to mirror the diversity of the pictorial strategies by
means of which Nordic women artists fashioned their selves in painting throughout the decade. The relatively limited number of paintings allows for a thorough analysis of each work and its painterly strategies of self-fashioning.

The selection includes works that were made by or represent Danish, Norwegian, Swedish and Finnish artists, offering a broad Nordic focus, even though Swedish artists represent the majority. The regional focus is on the Nordic countries because in the work of Nordic women painters artistic identity is negotiated in a pronounced manner, unparalleled by artists from other regional contexts in the period. In that sense, Nordic women artists were forerunners. This study argues that their unusually high degree of professionalization in terms of academic training and public visibility in exhibitions, as well as their international mobility and networking, facilitated a more courageous exploration of their professional roles.

When it comes to the chosen artworks, an important criterion for selection was that the majority of the paintings figured as exhibition pieces that were put on display in major exhibitions at the time, most importantly the Salon in Paris. Thereby, paintings were selected that had a fundamental role in shaping the artist’s reputation both abroad and at home. This consideration was, for instance, important for the selection of Julia Beck’s self-portrait from 1880, which served both as her introduction piece at the Salon the same year and was eventually donated by the artist to the collection of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Stockholm in 1930, thereby decisively shaping the artist’s legacy. Furthermore, Beck’s career is an interesting yet rather unexplored case that allows us to study how the artist simultaneously promoted her art in France and in Sweden. Therefore, the first chapter of this study is dedicated to Beck’s self-portrait from 1880 and her strategies of self-promotion.

The research questions outlined above have further led to a special focus on friendship, networking and collaborative practices. The previously unpublished and comprehensive correspondence of Bauck and Wegmann with their friend Thorell emerged during the course of this research project. Since this material provided exceptionally detailed information about the collaborative painting practice of these artists, who both painted and exhibited several portraits of one another, the second chapter is dedicated to their artistic community. Finally, the role of the studio and its representation in painting was an important consideration. For
the final chapter, a self-portrait, a friendship image and an interior were each selected in order to analyze how the studio space affected the representation of the artist’s professionalism in all three genres.

The seven key paintings will not be studied in ahistorical, peripheral or gendered isolation, but will be placed in a historical and international context by means of relevant comparisons with works by other artists, male and female alike. The aim is to examine the key paintings in relation to the wider artistic discourse of their time. Apart from comparisons with other Nordic artists, French art is the dominant point of reference, as it was what the eight artists were obviously most exposed to during their stays in Paris. In order to understand how the chosen artists related to the idea of the artist, it is further necessary to confront their paintings with works by those predecessors and contemporaries who shaped the idea of the artist in the past and in their present. General tendencies in the period are explored by means of comparisons with works by other Nordic women artists, including Jenny Nyström (1854–1946), Lotten (Charlotta) Rönquist (1864–1912) and Mina (Wilhelmina) Carlson-Bredberg (1857–1943) among others. The lifelong partnership of the Norwegian artists Harriet Backer (1845–1932) and Kitty (Christiane) Lange Kielland (1843–1914) is the central comparative example in the second chapter, since their relationship shows many parallels to the partnership of Jeanna Bauck and Bertha Wegmann.

Occasionally, photographs will be included in the analyses as documentary material, but it is crucial to always bear in mind the fundamental differences between the visual sources employed in this study and their contrasting contexts of origin and making. For instance, a private photograph representing the artist in her studio serves a completely different purpose than an official Salon painting representing the same artist in her studio space. Consequently, there will never exist any absolute congruence between the two.

**Letters and Other Written Sources**

This study is both object- and archive-based. Besides the paintings and photographs, it utilizes a diverse range of written sources, comprising letters, diaries, official documents, such as estate or donation records, as well as contemporary art criticism and newspaper articles. This comprehensive source material has been collected in private and public archives and libraries in Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Norway and, most importantly, Sweden.
direct quotations from these sources in the body text are translated into English, while the sources are included in their original orthography in the footnotes. In the following, an overview of the most important written source material will be provided. The complete list of all the public and private archives consulted can be found in the appendix.

The artists’ letters constitute the central written source material, the most important being the previously unpublished literary estate of the artist Hildegard Thorell in the archives of Nordiska museet (Sweden’s leading museum of cultural history) and Kungliga akademien för de fria konsterna (The Royal Academy of Fine Arts) in Stockholm, which is here presented in depth for the first time. Thorell received letters from Jeanna Bauck, Julia Beck, Asta Nørregaard and Bertha Wegmann, and her correspondence is therefore crucial for the reconstruction of the artistic network analyzed in this study. In Nørregaard’s case, the 18 letters in Thorell’s estate form the central source on her Parisian study period and her work on the self-portrait from 1883. Bauck’s and Wegmann’s epistolary exchange with Thorell, comprising 52 letters, allows us to study the communal spirit, the exchange of views on artistic and private matters, as well as the collaborative practices of the artists. Since the letters by Bauck and Wegmann span over a period of forty years, from the 1880s to the 1920s, they allow a reconstruction of the course of a lifelong friendship.

Due to its focus on artistic matters and its intimate and trustful tone, Thorell’s correspondence is a vital source that dramatically extends our understanding of the professionalization and sense of community among women artists in the late nineteenth century. Further, the letters by Wegmann form a crucial supplement to the more formal correspondence between the artist and her Danish patrons and acquaintances in the archive collections of the Det Kongelige Bibliotek (The Royal Library) and Den Hirschsprungske Samling (The Hirschsprung Collection) in Copenhagen. Towards the end of this dissertation project, it came to my attention that Bertha Wegmann’s estate is preserved in private ownership in Denmark, but it had not yet been made accessible to scholarship by the time this study was finished. I sincerely hope that these additional sources will be analyzed and published in the near future.

Correspondence from the artist friends in Thorell’s literary estate are complemented by the significantly more extensive correspondence between Hildegard Thorell and her husband Reinhold
from her educational journeys to Paris and Munich. The letters from her two stays in Paris in 1879–80 and 1881 alone comprise more than 800 pages. They offer detailed, often daily accounts of Thorell’s experiences and studies in the French capital and include regular comments about her colleagues and their joint artistic progress. These letters further provide an onlooker’s view on the relationship between Bauck and Wegmann. Even though Thorell’s artistic production only plays a subordinate role in this study, her position as the central networker in the artistic community and as the recipient of the artists’ letters makes her a key figure, particularly in the second chapter.

Besides Thorell’s literary estate, selected parts of the equally extensive correspondence of Eva Bonnier with her family have been examined. The original letters from Bonnier to her family during the seven years she resided in Paris have been studied in the archives of Centrum för näringslivshistoria (Centre for Business History) in Stockholm. Bonnier’s Paris letters from 1883 to 1889 have previously been published in an annotated edition by Margareta Gynning. Letters to Bonnier from artist friends have further been examined in their original, in particular Hanna Hirsch’s letters from 1881 to 1885, which offer an insightful account of student life at the academy in Stockholm. Furthermore, the previously unpublished

Fig. 13. Hildegard and Reinhold Thorell in the Artist’s Studio in Villa Solhem on Djurgården, Stockholm, 1890s.
letters from Venny Soldan-Brofeldt to Hanna Hirsch-Pauli provide crucial insights into their artistic collaboration and the reception of the Salon portrait of Venny Soldan-Brofeldt from 1886–87 discussed in detail in the final chapter.36

As with any historical investigation, this study depends on the empirical evidence that has survived over time and is available to research, either as part of public collections and archives, or in the collections of private owners, who can be identified and are willing to share their possessions and knowledge with scholarship. The production of Nordic women artists from the period under consideration is still underrepresented in museums. Initially, their work entered museum collections mostly in the form of donations, either by the artists themselves or their female colleagues, friends or relatives.37 In recent years, Nationalmuseum in Stockholm, Sweden’s National Museum of Art and Design, has systematically acquired works by women artists, including Eva Bonnier, Hanna Hirsch-Pauli and Hildegard Thorell.38 At the same time, Den Hirschsprungske Samling in Copenhagen, an art museum built around the personal collection of the Danish tobacco manufacturer Heinrich Hirschprung (1836–1908) focusing on Danish art of the “Golden Age” and “Modern Breakthrough”, has complemented its collection with works by Bertha Wegmann.39 Only recently has Wegmann’s Portrait of Marie Triepcke from 1885 been added to the Hirschsprung Collection, depicting Marie Triepcke (1867–1940), the painter’s student and later wife of the Danish artist Peder Severin Krøyer (1851–1909), in a scene of refined leisure, fashionably dressed and seated in a boat on a sunny day. The museum acquired the portrait in December 2020 for the highest price paid to date at a Danish auction for a work by a woman artist.40 Despite such remarkable efforts, the majority of the production of the key artists in this study remains in private ownership, still making it difficult to gain an overview of their oeuvre in its entirety.

Similar problems occur in the archives. The attempts to trace primary sources on these artists have tellingly exposed the “archival practices of exclusion” that have led to the omission or even erasure of the memory of the life and work of women artists.41 In 1975, the writer and women’s rights activist Märta Tamm-Götlind (1888–1982), who was the niece of Hildegard Thorell, offered to donate correspondence of the artist to Nationalmuseum, but the museum refused to accept the donation.42 Eventually Thorell’s estate was split, with the great majority of the correspondence being donated

Fig. 14. Bertha Wegmann, Portrait of Marie Triepcke, 1885.
to Nordiska museet, which has a broader cultural-historical acquisition policy and apparently regarded the material as worth preserving. In contrast to Thorell, Jeanna Bauck left no relatives behind who could have secured her estate for posterity. The Swedish artist died in Munich in 1926, where she had spent the greater part of her life. Bauck’s estate records in the Staatsarchiv (The State Archive) in Munich meticulously document the sale and destruction of the entire estate of the artist, from furniture, sketchbooks and paintings to personal documents, most likely including the letters from her artist friends.

The two examples raise awareness of the relatively limited availability of sources on these women artists compared to their male contemporaries, such as the Swedish artists Richard Bergh (1858–1919), Carl Larsson (1853–1919) or Anders Zorn (1860–1920), whose legacy has been canonized and painstakingly preserved for posterity. Maria Tamboukou has described the feelings of frustration that the feminist scholar faces in the archives when conducting research on lesser-known artists, making one’s way through “complex archival geographies” in search of “nomadic documents” that make up the life story of those non-canonical artists. A central task in the course of this research project has been to unveil the hidden structures of the archives, collect nomadic documents and create meaningful assemblages from the preserved material.

After having introduced the empirical material, the following section will provide some remarks on the chosen timeframe: the dynamic decade of the 1880s. Furthermore, it will offer a brief historical outline of the period under consideration, with a special focus on the changing status of women artists in the Nordic countries in the late nineteenth century.

The 1880s in Nordic Art – Professionalization, Mobility and Transnational Encounters

In Nordic cultural history, the 1880s tend to be described as a period of transition towards modernism. Especially in literary history, the decade is often referred to as the “Modern Breakthrough” based on the aesthetics of realism and naturalism developed by the Danish scholar and critic Georg Brandes (1842–1927). In the catalog of the 1985 exhibition 1880-tal i nordiskt måleri at Nationalmuseum, Sixten Ringbom claimed that the 1880s were an “epoch
of its own” in Nordic painting. He argued that it was the decade during which Nordic artists received unprecedented international acclaim and revolted against the dictate of the academies and other conservative art institutions. In Sweden, this movement was led by the secessionist Opponenterna (The Opponents), consisting of 84 expatriate artists scattered across Europe with Paris as their center. They demanded a reformation of the institutional framework, exhibition regulations and teaching methods of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Stockholm. In 1886, these artists founded an organization, Konstnärsförbundet (The Artists’ Union), which held its own exhibitions, becoming highly influential in the Swedish art scene throughout the 1890s. In the last twenty years, critical perspectives on the historiography of Swedish art of the late nineteenth century have nuanced this heroic story and revised the polarizing narrative of the Opponents versus the academy, resulting in a more complex understanding of the schism.

In his catalog essay, Ringbom further claimed that the 1880s were the decade during which realism and naturalism as stylistic movements reached their major breakthrough in Nordic art. Nordic painting was greatly influenced by these descriptive traditions throughout the entire decade, while impressionism wielded relatively little influence on those artists. This attitude is particularly evident in Eva Bonnier’s scathing critique of the first Salon des Indépendants in 1884: “On Sunday, Anna [Cramér] and I were at ‘les independants’ and I had never expected anything as dreadful – downright appalling. Then to the Salon, which on top of that was like a balm.” Bonnier’s attitude is representative for the majority of Nordic artists in the 1880s, for whom naturalism and the restrained modernism of the juste milieu constituted the dominant aesthetic ideals. In short, the artists of the juste milieu combined naturalism, thorough execution and finish with restrained stylistic facture and technical freedom in order to evoke sensory impressions, establishing a middle ground between impressionist avant-garde art and the academic or official art.

The major ambition of the Nordic artists was to be accepted to the annual Salon – the official exhibition initially held by the Académie des Beaux-Arts and from 1881 onwards by the Société des Artistes Français. The adaptation to juste milieu artistic ideals increased their chances to be allowed to participate in the prestigious exhibition. Being represented at the Salon, where several thousand artworks were exhibited each year, was tantamount to being rec-
ognized as an artist and instrumental in shaping one’s reputation, not least at home, where newspapers and journals eagerly covered the event.\footnote{57}

At least as important from the perspective of this study as Rück-bom’s arguments above, however, is the fact that the 1880s saw an unprecedented visibility of Nordic women artists. During that decade, Nordic women artists were better educated, more mobile, more networked, more visible in exhibitions and more publicly recognized than ever before. In fact, there are reasons to argue that they were never as present in the entire century as in the 1880s, given the cultural “backlash” in the 1890s, which led to the relative disappearance of women artists from the public sphere in the course of the male-dominated movements of national romanticism and symbolism.\footnote{58} The 1880s were also the point in time when male artists seriously began to notice and reflect upon the presence of female artists in the art field. This is evident in a peculiar anecdote from 1885 recalled by the Swedish artist and writer Georg Pauli (1855–1935) in his book Opponenterna from 1927. Pauli was wandering the streets of Paris together with his friend and colleague Robert Thegerström (1857–1919) who called attention to two women walking a few feet ahead of them, one of them Pauli’s future wife Hanna Hirsch:

“Look, there is Hanna Hirsch!” my comrade said.
“Who is that?” I asked.
“Don’t you know Hanna Hirsch? She is a painter, you know. She has talent – unfortunately,” added Bob.\footnote{59}

The pause followed by an expression of regret implies that these male artists began to regard their fellow women professionals as potential rivals. However, Thegerström’s comment about Hirsch’s “talent” must be understood as a backhanded compliment, as it implies that her abilities were limited and that she did not possess the genius of the “great artist” after all.

The culmination of the professionalization of women artists in Sweden in the 1880s had been preceded by a gradual improvement of the social situation and civil rights of women during the second half of the century. Sweden, where most of the artists in this study came from, experienced a population growth that coincided with changes in society brought about by industrialization and urbanization, eventually resulting in a growing number of unmarried
women. Debates intensified regarding how to provide women with opportunities to support themselves and as a consequence more professions were gradually opened to women. A quick succession in reforms in women’s rights followed: in 1846 women gained equal rights within trade and commerce, in 1853 the profession of teacher in the public school system was opened to women, in 1858 unmarried women were granted legal majority at the age of 25 and in 1873 women were allowed to attend university.60

In the context of art education in Sweden, the year 1864 marked a turning point: The so-called Fruntimmers-Afdelningen (The Women’s Department) opened at Konstakademien, short for Kungliga akademien för de fria konsterna (Royal Academy of Fine Arts), and Swedish women artists won the right to train under similar conditions as their male peers.61 In Edvard Forsström’s (1854–1934) drawing Nyckelhålet (The Keyhole), published in the academy’s student newspaper Palett-Skrap, the women’s department is depicted as an enclosed sphere of artistic endeavor. The female students do not answer the male student’s voyeuristic gaze through the keyhole, but are busy focusing on their work. To better understand the exceptional position of women artists in Sweden, a comparison to the situation in other European countries is revealing: the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris admitted women in 1897 and the art academies in Germany excluded them even until 1919. In France, the Union des femmes peintres et sculpteurs was founded in 1881 as a society for
the promotion of women artists, aiming to improve their exhibition opportunities and public visibility.\textsuperscript{62}

While the women’s movement in the Nordic countries grew in strength during the second half of the nineteenth century, the central artists in this study were not involved in any outspoken political activism.\textsuperscript{63} The Norwegian painter Harriet Backer was quoted by her first biographer and former student Else Christie Kielland (1903–1993) as saying: “I think I serve the women’s cause best by focusing like a man.”\textsuperscript{64} By this she meant focusing seriously on her work as a painter in order to become recognized as an artist like any male colleague. A similar attitude appears to have been shared by the majority of the artists represented in this study. They chose to put all their energy into their work, which was supposed to speak for itself.

By the end of the 1870s, enough women were active as professional artists in Sweden to turn the arts into an acceptable field of work for women.\textsuperscript{65} By 1880, the year that marks the starting point for this study, the hundredth female student had enrolled at Konstakademien. Three years later, the French journal La Gazette des Femmes reported that private schools of drawing in Paris counted no less than 6370 women among their students.\textsuperscript{66} Obviously, the accelerating professionalization of Nordic women painters in the 1880s had a huge impact on how these artists represented themselves, one another and their work spaces in painting, which makes this eventful decade worthy of a focused analysis.

Besides the timeframe, a few additional remarks are in order regarding the regional focus on artists from the Nordic countries, artists who were very mobile in the 1880s, moving back and forth between their home countries and the artistic centers in central Europe. As Øystein Sjåstad has pointed out with regard to the 1880s, “Nordic art is an interesting example of an art that moves between the local and the cosmopolitan”, and accordingly this study will move back and forth between the regional and international art scenes, between Northern and Central Europe.\textsuperscript{67} As noted above, the great majority of artworks analyzed in this study were created during study periods in Paris, which makes the French capital the actual topographic center. According to Lena Holger’s calculations, 121 women artists from the Nordic countries studied in Paris between the International Expositions of 1867 and 1889, with Sweden representing the majority of 59 artists.\textsuperscript{68}

This cosmopolitanism, however, was more limited in reality
than these numbers might suggest: The majority of the Nordic artists, male and female, who lived in Paris in the 1880s socialized primarily with their compatriots and only few of them moved in French art circles.\textsuperscript{69} Male and female artists from the Nordic countries interacted regularly and their correspondence bears witness to frequent gatherings in cafés or restaurants, excursions to the countryside and mutual studio visits. Nordic artists created their own urban artists’ colony in alignment with other lingual, regional or national circles, such as the American community in Paris, which likewise avoided transnational assimilation.\textsuperscript{70} The more established artists tended to settle in Montmartre whereas the younger or less experienced artists preferred Montparnasse, where housing and studios were cheaper. As Alexandra Herlitz has remarked, the Nordic community was still far from homogenous and conflicts concerning age, class and gender unfolded under the surface of artistic comradery and exuberant sociability.\textsuperscript{71}

The lure of the Parisian metropolis was based on the professional possibilities that it offered. Nordic women artists who came to Paris in the 1880s were “career migrants” with a rigorous work ethic.\textsuperscript{72} They embraced the city’s established art institutions, the private academies and the Salon, and pursued their training with great commitment within these regulated spaces. The eight artists in this study were all enrolled for shorter or longer periods at one or more of the three leading private academies that offered classes for women: Académie Julian, Académie Colarossi and the École de dessin et peinture pour femmes, better known as Académie Trélat.\textsuperscript{73} After having enrolled at Académie Julian in April 1881, Hildegard Thorell commented on the dominance of foreign and more precisely Scandinavian artists at the academy: “We are a whole lot of students, three-quarters are Scandinavians, so I hear no French during the whole day.”\textsuperscript{74} The great majority of these foreign art students sought a temporary sojourn rather than expatriation and they wanted to acquire the skill, technique and reputation that would allow them to succeed in the domestic art market. Back home, they emphasized their cosmopolitanism and enjoyed the distinction afforded by their international experience.\textsuperscript{75}

During their sojourn abroad, Nordic women artists were able to escape their domestic obligations and the rigid social control exercised by their families. This “voluntary exile” brought about an exceptionally high degree of personal freedom and independence, which set them apart from their French peers.\textsuperscript{76}
ists had control over their own leisure activities, studied relatively undisturbed and rented their own working and living spaces. Consequently, throughout the 1880s they formed a relatively consistent and interconnected community with Paris as its center. They distinguished themselves by their high degree of professionalism, mobility and personal independence, which in turn facilitated the exploration of new modes of self-fashioning in painting.

Theories and Methods

**Self-Fashioning**

The theoretical framework of this study proceeds from the concept of self-fashioning. As stated above, the aim is to explore how Nordic women painters negotiated their professional identity in painting, or in other words, how they fashioned their selves in and through painting in the 1880s. Self-fashioning denotes both how the artists stage their selves in painting and how they instrumentalize their artworks in the context of their professional self-promotion, their positioning in public life and on the art scene. Consequently, self-fashioning in painting involves aesthetic and social aspects as well as the painting’s object history.

As a term, self-fashioning was introduced to the humanities by the literary historian Stephen Greenblatt. In his seminal study *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* from 1980, he examined the structures of selfhood as expressed in the literature of major sixteenth-century writers, such as Thomas More (1478–1535), Christopher Marlowe (1564–1593) and William Shakespeare (1564–1616). Greenblatt’s analysis is based on the observation that the Elizabethan era was characterized by an “increased self-consciousness about the fashioning of human identity as a manipulable, artful process.” Greenblatt employs self-fashioning to describe the process of constructing one’s identity and public persona according to a set of standards accepted by society. Fashioning describes the achievement of a “distinctive personality, a characteristic address to the world, a consistent mode of perceiving and behaving.” Greenblatt’s concept of self-fashioning negates the sharp distinction between literature and social life, between the creation of literary characters and the shaping of the writer’s identity. Drawing on Clifford Geertz’s anthropological theory, Greenblatt understands both author and work as interacting “cultural artifacts”, which are
shaped by the symbolic structure of culture understood as “a set of control mechanisms – plans, recipes, rules, instructions … – for the governing of behavior.” In other words, the self that is fashioned is shaped by social, economic and political influences. Greenblatt thus understands the early modern person not as an autonomous entity or willful agent, but rather as an equivalent to the post-modern self, meaning fragmented, divided and even fictitious.

Greenblatt’s concept has been broadly received in the humanities, especially in art history, where it has helped to conceptualize the portrait and in particular the self-portrait as a conscious act of self-promotion and self-staging. The concept of self-fashioning, as it is employed in this study, allows one to approach paintings as aesthetic objects rather than as psycho-biographical documents and to study them in dialogue with the wider artistic concerns of their time in light of their public role as art. By using self-fashioning as a theoretical starting point, the aim is to explore the artists’ self-staging without attempting to excavate the artist’s personality from inside the work. This study follows Richard Meyer’s criticism of those art historical approaches, which misunderstand the artists as “transcribers of their own identity” and employ the analysis of artworks as a means to uncover the psyche of their makers. Consequently, it rejects any analysis that aims to conceptualize the artist and the artwork as two sides of the same coin, or that reads the artwork as an expression of the personality or biography of the artist.

Whereas Stephen Greenblatt adopts a limiting paradigm of identity formation, reading subjectification mainly in terms of subjection, this study conceptualizes self-fashioning in painting and letter writing as an artful process by means of which the artist gains a prerogative of interpretation over her self. In other words, painting, posing and writing are here understood as acts of autonomy over one’s self-constitution, meaning “a capacity […] to define or create or invent oneself”. The concept of self-fashioning helps to avoid the common pitfall of overemphasizing obstacles and discrimination to the detriment of professional development and success. Carola Muysers, Frances Borzello and Rachel Mader among others have observed that negative lines of argument that
see women artists mainly as victims have turned into efficacious
tropes in the historiography of women artists, which thereby fails to
acknowledge the artists’ professional achievements. Muysers even
claimed that “the marginalized woman artist” has become a trope
in art history as powerful as that of the “male artistic genius”.89 Ex-
ploring the artist’s self-fashioning can break this narrative pattern
because it redirects attention from historical constraints to artist-
ic practice. However, this does not mean ignoring the fact that
the artists’ acts of self-assertion in painting are influenced by the
governing patriarchal power structures or by discrimination and
complicated by social norms and conventions.90 As the fashion
scholar Joanne Entwistle has eloquently pointed out: “The options
open for the performance of identity are not unconstrained. How
we perform our identity has something to do with our location in
the social world as members of particular groups, classes, cultural
communities.”91 Employing Entwistle’s argument, self-fashioning
in painting thus represents a compromise between social expecta-
tions or demands linked to gender, class and cultural identity and
the artist’s individual desire to fashion herself as professional.

In the context of this study, the present continuous in self-fash-
ioning denotes a performative understanding of identity construc-
tion. The artist is not understood as an essentialist category of pro-
fessional identity but a concept that is continuously in a state of
becoming or fashioning. Fashion as a verb form means to do or to
make, but here it is also used discursively as a means to examine the
artist as both a “fashioned and fashioning subject”.92

Sociology and fashion studies provide useful theoretical per-
spectives that help to conceptualize self-fashioning in relation to
visual rather than literary representation. In these research fields,
the body has been studied as a contingency that is treated as mal-
leable and that can be made aesthetic or fashioned according to
prevailing customs and the governing social order.93 According to
Finkelstein, the shaping and adorning of the body can be under-
stood as a means for a person to present her or his desired self-im-
age to others.94 Finkelstein has drawn attention to the paradox
between authenticity and artifice in self-representation, between
the idea that character is immanent in appearance and the human
desire to fashion and manipulate appearance.95 In the nineteenth
century, the reading of character from physical features was still
popular among the middle classes, who at the same time strongly
believed in the cultivation of personal appearance and manner of
conduct. Applied to this study, appearance, pose, expression and
dress are instruments for the artists’ self-fashioning in painting and
codes of communication with the beholder. These elements can be
approached like a “vocabulary, complete with evocative subtext”
that needs to be deciphered when studying the paintings.

Mediatization, Celebrity Culture and the Exhibition Artist
The closing decades of the nineteenth century saw an unprecedented
mediatization of the artist and a growing celebrity culture, which
turned the art of self-fashioning into a key to professional success.
Rachel Esner and Sandra Kisters have defined the mediatization
of the artist as “the presence of visual artists in the mass media
and the active usage of those media, from the written word to the
moving image, by various agents in the cultural field – including
the artists themselves – with the overarching goal of producing a
certain image of the artist.” In order to prevail in the liberalized
art market, the artist needed to craft a public persona in combina-
tion with an individualized oeuvre and a recognizable style. As
Nicholas Green has argued, the market in contemporary art was
reoriented in the second half of the nineteenth century towards the
purchasing and selling of individual artists, with emphasis increas-
ingly being placed on the “uniqueness of the artist” and her/his
personality and biography. In this shifting climate, a thriving art
journalism and criticism was instrumental in promoting individual
artists and serving the public’s growing interest in their allegedly
eccentric personalities.

In order to grasp the changing status of the artist in the nine-
teenth century, Oskar Bätschmann has coined the concept of the
exhibition artist as opposed to the early modern court artist. Bätsch-
mann identified a “change in the career pattern of the professional
artist from a post at court to work for public exhibitions” that be-
gan to take place in the second half of the eighteenth century and
intensified during the following century. As exhibitions became
institutionalized and the public (most notably the growing middle
classes) emerged as influential consumers of art and art criticism,
the artists began to produce for the market and to paint “exhibition
work” that would help them build their reputation. The concept
of the exhibition artist pays tribute to the enormous importance of
public exhibitions in the making of the artist and her/his profes-
sonal success. In the context of this study, it allows an exploration
of how Nordic women painters navigated the art world of their
time and built a public persona by displaying their self-portraits, friendship images and studio interiors in exhibitions.

As noted above, in the 1880s, the annual Salon in Paris still occupied a central position among the numerous exhibitions taking place each year in terms of its reputation and impact on the artists’ career. Bätschmann has argued that the exhibition was a “forum for rivalry and an arena where artists fought for recognition”.106 At the Salon, the degree of recognition manifested itself in the hanging of the artworks. The hanging hierarchy was determined by the number of votes a work had received from the jury: the higher the approval, the closer the painting came to the “cimaise”, a wall molding that corresponded to the beholder’s eye level.107 The position of a painting in the exhibition was extremely important, given the fact that several thousand artworks were exhibited each year, some of them high up on the walls, practically inaccessible to the beholder’s eye. This practice fueled the competition among the artists, which is shown in a letter by Bertha Wegmann to Hildegard Thorell, in which she commented on the placement of works by her colleagues Jeanna Bauck, Asta Nørregaard and Harriet Backer at the Salon of 1882: “Jeanna’s painting is supposed to hang excel-
lently at the Salon, but poor Nørregaard is again hung very high up, Backer by the way as well, but you have probably already heard about this, as you may be better informed than I am."

How well the concept of the *exhibition artist* applies to the Nordic artists in Paris in the 1880s is best exemplified by Hugo Birger’s (1854–1887) large-scale group portrait *The Scandinavian Artists’ Lunch at Café Ledoyen, Paris: Varnishing Day 1886* that depicts members of the Nordic colony in Paris celebrating their successful participation in the Salon. Women (artists) are absent from the scene, apart from the models and wives of the male artists. Herlitz has argued that the painting programmatically showcases the self-perception of the Opponents, who fashioned themselves “as liberated and carefree spirits, but at the same time not as bohemian libertines. They are moderately lively and decent.” This self-fashioning as moderate rebels corresponds to their adaptation of a *juste milieu* painting style, reconciling academic and avant-garde tendencies. Birger has staged his colleagues and comrades as accomplished *exhibition artists*, who are celebrating their success alongside journalists and critics. The focus of attention on the varnishing day of 1886 was the Finnish sculptor Ville Vallgren (1855–1940), who had just received an honorable mention at the Salon. Vallgren is depicted in an elevated position in the center of the group, putting his arm around the gentleman to his left, the journalist and art critic Johan Christian Janzon (1853–1910), alias “Spada”, who was the foreign correspondent for *Stockholms Dagblad* in Paris and a friend and advocate of the Opponents. “Spada” is pointing at Vallgren and thereby enhancing the sculptor’s presence, while at the same time raising a glass filled with champagne above all the other attendees of this lively gathering. Birger’s group portrait renders strikingly visible the fruitful alliance of artists and art critics in the mediatization and fashioning of the artist. While women artists are largely absent from the scene, they were present in the Salon and it is their strategies of self-promotion in this important public arena that will be explored in this study.

*(Women) Artists: Rethinking the Artist through a Feminist-Performative Perspective*

As Marsha Meskimmon has pointed out, “writing about women’s art practices, historical or contemporary, is not a simple task; indeed, it is a dangerous one.” It might be just as dangerous to subtitle, once again, an art historical dissertation with the undoubt-
edly questionable term “women painters”. Writing about women artists is dangerous, because such an investigation risks to produce an alternative canon, instead of providing a critical approach to the prevailing norms by which women have been excluded from the histories of art in the first place. The challenge is, as Meskimmon has pointed out, not merely to recognize that art histories need to be rewritten, but to understand how this can be accomplished without writing separate art histories about women and their art.113

In the context of the current study, the dangerous task is further to challenge the established idea of the artist without simply splitting this idea into two distinct categories of “the (great) artist” and “the woman artist”.114 It is imperative to be aware that “woman artist” is anything but an innocent term, simply denoting an artist of the female sex. As Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock have pointed out, the term rather implies that the woman artist is “distinct and clearly different from the great artist”.115 How can one, then, prevent the work of women artists from being placed in a linguistically and sociologically gendered, separate sphere and still talk about “women artists”?116

One solution to this problem is to apply a feminist-performative approach that allows a rethinking of the idea of the artist. This is done, first, by acknowledging the gendered implications inherent in the idea of the artist and, secondly, by confronting the essentialist with a performative idea of the artist. This means conceptualizing the artist not as a given entity, but as constantly in the making and fashioned in relation to social norms, institutional frameworks, public reception, iconographic conventions, other artists and colleagues as well as spatial settings. The feminist-performative approach is highlighted in the title of this book: *Becoming Artists*.

Consequently, artistic identity is not understood as a condition, but as a process, which needs to be constantly upheld by the artist through her/his actions. Women who fashion themselves as artists and who do this as a collaborative project go against the still prevalent idea of the artist as a solitary (male) genius. The title of the book uses the plural *artists* to capture the collaborative and social aspects in self-fashioning. The self-representations of Nordic women painters in the 1880s render strikingly visible the multifaceted mechanisms that are at work in the construction and continuous appropriation of the idea of the artist, which makes it particularly fruitful to choose them as a group through which to study issues of artistic identity.
Whereas pioneering scholars like Linda Nochlin, Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock and others have highlighted the historical and institutional constraints as well as social inequalities under which women have labored as artists, this study aims to draw attention to the performative potential in the artworks themselves. In order to rethink the idea of artist, it introduces the concept of the friendship image as a deconstructive tool. The friendship image – in short: an artist representing another artist – is used as a means to approach artistic identity not as essentialist or unitary, but as performatively fashioned in collaboration.

**Becoming Artists**

This study builds on a performative understanding of identity that is informed by Judith Butler’s gender theory as outlined in the essay “Performative Acts and Gender Constitution” from 1988. Butler argues that identity is not an expression of an inner essence or some pre-existing condition and substance; rather, it is performed, meaning constantly and repeatedly “done”. It is performative in the sense that the act brings into effect what it names. By applying the processual to questions of identity and identity formation, Butler conceptualizes gender identity as an effect that is generated through repetitive acts:

In this sense, gender is in no way a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts proceed; rather it is an identity tenuously constituted in time – an identity instituted through a stylized repetition of acts. Further, gender is instituted through a stylization of the body and, hence, must be understood as the mundane way in which bodily gestures, movements, and enactments of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self.

Butler’s concept of performative acts involves a potential to overcome dichotomies. Even though society can impose performative acts on subjects, a subversive potential is inherent in them, which eventually can enable individuals to embody themselves and challenge dominant norms.

Butler’s performative approach to gender identity can be applied to other categories of identity formation, such as professional identity or more precisely artistic identity. To paraphrase Butler, to be an artist is to have become an artist, to compel the body to
conform to a historical idea of artist, to induce the body to become a cultural sign, to materialize oneself in obedience to a historically delimited possibility, and to do this as a sustained and repeated corporeal project. Artists adopt iconographic conventions in their self-representations: they take on specific poses and gazes, they hold palette and brush in certain manners, they position themselves in the studio at the easel, they dress themselves in painter’s smocks and so forth. Thereby they compel their bodies to conform to a historical idea of artist and they become the cultural sign of the artist. When it comes to women artists, becoming the cultural sign of the artist has subversive potential, since this sign is gendered male. Consequently, if a woman portrays herself or is portrayed as artist, she does not reaffirm but she rather subverts and reinterprets the cultural sign of the artist.

From the perspective of a painter, portraying oneself or being portrayed by a colleague can be conceptualized as a performative act. Even though most artists produce only a few self-portraits and sit only for a limited number of friendship images, the production of a painting is a repetitive process. The making of a portrait often involves preparatory sketches and usually requires numerous, at times long sittings. It is created by means of the repeated application of paint to the canvas and the continuous touch of the brush. On the part of the sitter, the act of posing – finding and adopting a pose, maintaining it throughout the session and re-adopting it for the next sitting – can be understood as a stylized repetition of the act of posing. From the perspective of both parties, portrayal thus involves repetitive, performative acts. By depicting oneself as the artist or by posing as the artist, one constitutes one’s professional identity as artist.

Proceeding from Butler’s theory, the friendship image is understood as the material result of the repetitive bodily acts performed by the painter and the sitter in the act of painting and posing. In the context of the friendship image, both painter and sitter simultaneously induce the body to become the cultural sign of the artists in an act of collaboration.

In an interview with Artforum from 1992, Butler noted that one should not misunderstand gender performativity as a radical and voluntary choice or even as a commodity. Instead, Butler argued: “Performativity has to do with repetition, very often with the repetition of oppressive and painful gender norms to force them to re-signify. This is not freedom, but a question of how to work the trap
that one is inevitably in.” This clarification is important when it comes to women’s performative appropriation of the idea of the artist. Paraphrasing Butler, appropriation does not simply mean getting up in the morning, looking into one’s closet, taking out the painter’s smock, starting to paint and turning into an artist. As the analyses of the paintings will demonstrate, the process of becoming artists is much more complicated than that and, in fact, it is a tension-filled process. It means adopting the dominant visual codes, but using them in alternative ways.

The Presentation of Self
When it comes to studying how the painters fashioned themselves as artists in their work, Erving Goffman’s sociological study The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life from 1956 provides useful theoretical tools and terminology. Goffman uses a dramaturgical analogy in order to study social interactions, comparing people in everyday situations to actors playing a role on stage. Similar to Butler, Goffman sees identity as done rather than owned and emphasizes the notion of identity in process. Even though Goffman uses the metaphor of the theater, he does not imply that individuals adopt characters at will or that there is a true “self” apart from the performance. As the sociologist Steph Lawler has pointed out, Goffman “is arguing for something much more profound than the idea that we play roles: he is arguing that roles, or performances, far from masking the ‘true person’ (as is commonly assumed) are what makes us persons.” Applied to this study, to be an artist, then, is to perform being an artist.

According to Goffman, to make a performance trustworthy, the performer has to make sure to use the right expressive equipment, consisting of setting, appearance and manner. Applied to the performance of being an artist in painting, expressive equipment can involve the architecture and furnishing of the studio, the clothing of the artist, the attributes, the pose and the bodily or facial expression.

What makes Goffman’s approach particularly useful in the context of this study is that he draws special attention to the importance of space and community for the successful presentation of self. Goffman argues that spatial settings have an impact on how a person presents her-/himself to others. He distinguishes between a front region, where the performer is aware of her/his audience and plays to them, and a back region, where the performer can act in
contradiction to a given performance.127 The conceptual pair of front and back region will be discussed further in the final chapter of this study, in which it is applied to the studio space and its distinct liminality.

When it comes to aspects of community and collaboration, Goffman introduces the performance team or, in short, team as a set of individuals who cooperate in staging a single routine.128 Goffman remarks that persons who are members of the same team inevitably find themselves in an important relationship to one another and develop a sense of familiarity.129 Applied to this study, the team can be two or more artists who work closely together, who paint one another, teach one another, correspond with one another, share a studio and so forth. The notion of the team is of particular importance for the second chapter that deals with the friendship image, in which two artists create a team impression in painting. Goffman argues that team-mates are initiates and accomplices in the maintenance of the same performance, which means that “they are forced to define one another as persons ‘in the know’, as persons before whom a particular front cannot be maintained.”130 He further suggests that the team and the team-performance are particularly suited for the analysis of the techniques and contingencies of impression management.131 Goffman’s idea of complicity in team-performances will be applied in the final chapter that addresses the conflicts that can arise in the team-performance of the friendship image when it is confronted with the public. Finally, Goffman makes a noteworthy distinction between team-mates and colleagues: “Colleagues may be defined as persons who present the same routine to the same kind of audience but who do not participate together, as team-mates do, at the same time and place before the same particular audience.”132 In that sense, artists who collaborate in the making of a friendship image are more than just colleagues, they are team-mates, or friends, who fashion themselves as professionals in collaboration.

**Act of Portrayal and Mediated Self-Representation**

To better grasp the sitter’s share in the making of the friendship image, the analyses of the paintings draw on Harry Berger Jr.’s concept of the act of portrayal, which he first outlined in the essay “Fictions of the Pose: Facing the Gaze of Early Modern Portraiture” from 1994.133 Berger begins by criticizing fellow art historians whose approach to portraiture is based on a “physiognomic
"construal", according to which character is inferred from physiognomy and, as a consequence, a portrait is said to unveil the sitter’s mind or soul. According to Berger, the art historian’s reading of the artwork is overdetermined by the archive, understood as the inherited knowledge about a person’s biography or character, to such an extent that the portrait turns into a mere “index of the archive”. On the basis of the “physiognomic construal”, the painter is expected to extract the predefined character of his sitter in the likeness, while the sitter in turn is granted very limited agency in the making of the portrait. From today’s perspective, Berger’s criticism is outdated in its generalizing terms, but research on women artists still shows a greater reliance on biography than comparable inquiries on male artists tend to do.

More important than Berger’s criticism, however, is his consequent proposal to “reverse the emphasis of the physiognomic story and concentrate on the portrait as an index – an effect and representation – solely of the sitter’s and painter’s performance in the act of portrayal.” Instead of reading the painted face as an “index of the sitter’s mind”, Berger suggests conceptualizing the portrait as “an index of what sitter and painter have in mind”. Rather than focusing solely on the painter, he suggests paying greater attention to the sitter’s share in the act of portrayal and studying the pose as a bodily act.

Berger’s approach to portraiture as a collaborative performance between the painter and the sitter is central to the understanding of the friendship image in this study. The friendship image is conceptualized as a joint effort of two painters, in which artistic identity is fashioned in dialogue in an act of portrayal. This approach has a profound impact on how the analyses of the paintings will be conducted: They will pay particular attention to dialogic aspects of the composition, the pose and the gaze of the sitter, which only become discernible when one approaches both artist and sitter as autonomous agents in the making of the painting.

However, whereas Berger conceptualizes the act of portrayal as an image-immanent act, this study approaches the act of portrayal also as a social act. Following Marcia Pointon, “portraiture is a question of the relationship between the self as art and the self in art”. This means conceptualizing the portrait as both an aesthetic and a social object. Applied to the friendship image, this means understanding the collaboration between artist painter and artist sitter as both an aesthetic and a social dialogue.
Berger’s performative approach to portrayal highlights the fiction and stagedness of any representation in painting: “The act of portrayal represented by the image is a fiction; it needn’t have occurred in that manner; the portrait only pretends to represent the manner in which it was produced.”¹⁴¹ This theoretical stipulation is crucial to the understanding of self-fashioning as a manipulable artful process. However, fiction is not tantamount to untrue or even false. As the literary theorist Paul John Eakin has pointed out in his study of autobiographical writing, “autobiographical truth is not a fixed but an evolving content in an intricate process of self-discovery and self-creation, and […] the self that is the center of all autobiographical narrative is necessarily a fictive structure.”¹⁴² Eakin proposes that both fiction and the process of fiction-making are integral to “the truth of any life as it is lived and of any art devoted to the presentation of that life.”¹⁴³ Applying this understanding of fiction to the paintings means acknowledging the stagedness of (self-)representation beyond ideas of authenticity, essence, provability or dichotomic notions of true or false, real or fictitious.

In the article “Pompadour’s Touch: Difference in Representation” from 2001, Ewa Lajer-Burcharth developed Harry Berger Jr.’s approach further from a materiality perspective, studying a series of portraits of the Marquise de Pompadour (1721–1764) by the Rococo painter François Boucher (1703–1770).¹⁴⁴ Similar to Berger, Lajer-Burcharth aims to explore the “impact a person who commissioned a likeness has on how he or she actually figures in it”.¹⁴⁵ Lajer-Burcharth suggests conceptualizing the portrait as the “aesthetic and material effect” of the encounter between painter and sitter. She considers the patron an “internal, pictorial effect” and introduces touch as an “instrument of a quasi-simultaneous self-recognition of two selves coinciding in one form of representation.”¹⁴⁶ She defines touch as the formal effect of the sitter’s “intervention as a modifier of the painter’s vision”, analyzing how the sitter’s conception of her-/himself materializes in the painting.¹⁴⁷

Using the case of Boucher and his patron, the Marquise de Pompadour, as a methodological testing ground for the analysis of the portrait as a form of a “sitter’s mediated self-representation”, Lajer-Burcharth proposes tracing the sitter’s imprint or effect in the material qualities of the artwork.¹⁴⁸ From this perspective, Boucher’s painting *The Marquise de Pompadour at Her Toilette* from 1758 interlaces the painter’s and the sitter’s touch in the trope of the makeup.¹⁴⁹ As the sitter applies the makeup to her face, the depic-
tion of feminine toilette transforms into a pictorial situation and the painter repeats the sitter’s action in the act of painting: The sitter is being painted while she paints herself.\textsuperscript{150}

As with Berger, Lajer-Burcharth’s approach provides useful theoretical approaches that help address the sitter’s impact on her representation in the portrait, an impact that has specific implications when the sitter herself is an artist, too. While the concept of mediated self-representation will be brought to bear on the friendship image throughout this study, the notion of touch will particularly inform the analysis of Hanna Hirsch’s portrait of Venny Soldan in the final chapter. Paraphrasing Lajer-Burcharth, the friendship image is a way for the artist to realize herself through a colleague’s touch.\textsuperscript{151}

**Ekphrasis and Art Historical Hermeneutics as Object-Based Methods**

As mentioned before, this study is object- and archive-based and the methodology reflects the richness and complexity of the empirical material. The methods of ekphrasis or the meticulous description of paintings and art historical hermeneutics are combined with a source-critical and twofold approach to the artists’ letters as both empirical material and sites of self-fashioning.

The three analytical chapters are organized along in-depth analyses of seven key paintings, which constitute the central empirical material of this study. As Jaš Elsner has argued in his 2010 article “Art History as Ekphrasis”, “art history is ultimately grounded in a method founded on and inextricable from the description of objects”.\textsuperscript{152} Every analysis proceeds from the ekphratic description of the painting in question, which means approaching the artwork by means of thorough and meticulous viewing and describing. Such an approach is not without risks. As Øystein Sjåstad has pointed out, visual analysis involves the challenge of finding a balance between “overlooking and over-looking”, between looking too little and looking too much, between missing ambiguous but crucial details in the work and over-interpretation.\textsuperscript{153}

To find a balance between “overlooking and over-looking”, the analysis of the artworks is guided by Oskar Bätschmann’s art historical hermeneutics, a method built on ekphrasis in the sense of careful looking, combined with a thorough validation of the resulting interpretation.\textsuperscript{154} In one sentence, art historical hermeneutics “comprises the theory of interpreting visual artworks, the development of methods of interpretation and their validity, and the praxis of interpretation.”\textsuperscript{155} The advantage of Bätschmann’s approach is its
focus on the object, approaching it from various but distinct perspectives and angles. Viewing, describing and studying the paintings in light of their media-specific properties and conditions of making lies at the heart of this approach: In the act of interpretation works of art should be considered as themselves.156 This means distinguishing between the artwork as itself and its contextual, historical or biographical explanations. These two concerns must be linked up with each other in the act of interpretation, but they must not dissolve into one another. They have to remain recognizable as two separate levels of analysis. Applied to this study, art historical hermeneutics allows one to address the self-portraits, friendship images and studio scenes as aesthetic objects in their entire complexity, rather than reducing them, for instance, to the unidimensional evidence of the artists’ biographies.

The description of the artwork is followed by an analysis based on the study of the available scholarly literature and additional primary sources, such as the artists’ own commentary on their work, which in the case of this study is primarily the artists’ correspondence. Bätschmann recommends exercising caution when using artists’ comments, studying the meaning of a specific comment closely and analyzing its relationship with the work. Most importantly, one has to bear in mind the differences between painting and writing, between images and texts as well as between artistic production and the artist's self-interpretation.157 Even though artworks and artists’ statements are intertwined in the analytical chapters of this study, they are considered separate concerns and necessarily incongruent.

Besides the artists’ letters and statements, contemporary art criticism is included in the analysis in order to study the contemporary reception of the paintings. When considering late-nineteenth-century art criticism, it is imperative to bear in mind that the genre is fraught with ideology, reflecting the gendered norms of the day that considered woman a creature of sympathy and feeling. As numerous scholars have highlighted, the gendered ideology of art criticism characterized the production of women artists as emotionally driven and shaped by personal sentiment, as opposed to the intellectual approach and universal validity of the work of male artists.158 As Andrea Kollnitz has pointed out, art criticism has to be understood as a “linguistic power instrument”, which “by means of rhetorically presented interpretations and normative value judgments creates and affirms images and ideas about different forms
of identity.” Consequently, art criticism is vital in creating and affirming the idea of the artist as distinct from the woman artist and, therefore, it has to be approached source-critically and should not be misread as factual evidence about the artwork.

Additionally, an iconographic analysis is incorporated in the analyses of the paintings in order to elucidate whether they refer to certain pictorial traditions. It is combined with the examination of the artwork’s genre, style and mode of expression and followed by the identification of visual or literary references. This means exploring similarities and correspondences and considering the possibility whether the artist in question might have been familiar with specific works by other artists or certain texts. Bätschmann chooses the term “reference” because he aims to replace the notion of influence with interaction. This distinction will become important in the very first chapter, in which Julia Beck’s self-portrait from 1880 will be studied in light of its visual references. In order to provide a historical explanation of the artwork, its purpose needs to be considered. In the context of this study, this means: Was the painting intended to be exhibited? Was it specifically painted for the Salon or was it a commissioned work and, if so, who commissioned it and for what purpose?

Although Bätschmann discusses the various aspects of analysis in the order given above, he explicitly points out that the process of interpretation may start with any activity, move in different directions and proceed in a recursive manner. Applied to the analyses of the paintings in this study, art historical hermeneutics allows one to choose individual approaches for every painting and to rearrange the succession of the analytical elements accordingly. Bätschmann concludes the presentation of his method by stating that the argumentative interpretation of an artwork establishes the preconditions for other scholars and beholders to contribute support for the argument or to reject it based on well-founded reasons or new evidence. This is, in short, also the purpose of his method in the present study: Art historical hermeneutics does not enclose the artwork in a single explanation, it rather allows for the acknowledgment of other valid interpretations of the same artwork and invites for a fruitful dialogue between them.

**Epistolary Self-Fashioning**

As noted above, the artists’ letters constitute the central written empirical material in this study. The in-depth analysis of the artists’
correspondence will explore the role of epistolary practices in Nordic women painters’ networking across national borders. As mentioned above, the literary estate of Hildegard Thorell constitutes a unique source that makes it possible to explore the artist’s epistolary network, while providing crucial insights into the painters’ working practice, their view of art, the reception of their work and their self-conception. While the letters offer important evidence about the life and work of Thorell and her artist friends, the aim is to study the letters as sites of self-fashioning in their own right. This means considering them as modes of expression parallel to but distinct from the paintings. By exploring the relationship between artist painter and artist sitter as well as between artist sender and artist addressee, the aim is to study the performative and dialogic construction of community and group identity.

Even though artists’ letters have a privileged status in much art historical writing, the discipline tends to lack a source-critical approach to the genre. As Natalie Adamson and Linda Goddard have pointed out, the artist’s statement is not only “an unmatched and irreplaceable companion to the work, but in many cases it becomes a proxy for, or even generative of, the artwork’s very substance.”162 According to John House, artists’ letters are often attributed an unquestionable authority that guides the analysis of artworks.163 He argues that artists’ letters need to be treated critically and strategically, in relation to their addressees and their contexts.164 This is easier said than done. A letter exchanged between friends tends to be written in an intimate and seemingly uncontrived tone that can easily mislead the reader into believing that it constitutes an authentic utterance that can be taken at face value. Engaging with the original documents over longer periods in the archives can easily lure the scholar into believing that s/he comes closer to the subjects that s/he is studying with every page s/he turns. As Meritxell Simon-Martin has pointed out, at the end of the day in the archive it is easy to misunderstand the letters as “recordings of factual information about a person’s life, as if the raw experiences and true emotions of letter-writers were captured in them”.165 Therefore, it is crucial to develop a historical and media-specific awareness of the artists’ letters and conceptualize them not only as sources but also as verbal constructs.166

Caution is particularly called for when studying letters from the late nineteenth century, and this is for several reasons. One is related to the growing celebrity cult and mediatization of the art-
ists in the period, as outlined above. Artists’ letters and diaries, as well as biographies of artists, were increasingly being published towards the end of the century. When it comes to artists who figure in this study, a well-known example are the diaries of the French-Ukrainian painter Marie Bashkirtseff (1858–1884), which were published shortly after the painter’s early death. The correspondence of Jeanna Bauck and Bertha Wegmann proves that they knew Bashkirtseff’s diary, reading it aloud to one another and recommending it to their friend Hildegard Thorell.

In her study of the intimate friendship between the famous Swedish author Selma Lagerlöf (1858–1940) and her colleague Sophie Elkan (1853–1921), Eva Helen Ulvros has pointed out that the two writers repeatedly, and not without some irony, discussed a future publication of their correspondence. They even reflected upon which writing material to use to make their epistolary exchange more lasting and to facilitate its transcription by future scholars. In light of some suspicious gaps in the preserved correspondence, Ulvros has suggested that Lagerlöf and Elkan deliberately destroyed some of their letters and thereby erased periods and aspects of their friendship, including the most intimate and passionate, eventually shaping the future reception of their relationship. As a consequence, there are reasonable grounds to suspect that some of the artists in this study might have toyed with the idea that their epistolary writing might one day become public. Of course, this is not the same as to claim that they expected their letters to be published or examined by scholars, or that these letters were even written with such considerations constantly in mind.

In fact, letters were never private in the nineteenth century in the sense that we might expect them to be from a contemporary point of view. It was common to read letters aloud or to forward them by including a personal note. Wegmann used to forward Thorell’s letters to Bauck to have them translated. As Margareta Gynning has remarked in her annotated edition of Eva Bonnier’s correspondence, the artist addressed her letters from Paris often to the whole family and she intended them to be read aloud or distributed among the closest family members. In 1883, Hanna Hirsch mentioned in a letter to Bonnier that she shared the content of the friend’s letters from Paris with her fellow students at the academy in Stockholm: “I read your Paris letters aloud to the girls, that is to say, as much as I considered appropriate.” Against this backdrop, one has to conceive of the letter as neither a wholly
private nor a wholly public document. As the literary scholar Catharine R. Stimpson remarked, the letter occupies a “psychological and rhetorical middle space” between what we write for ourselves and what we write for an audience.176

Apart from its liminal position as a private-public document, it is important to consider that the letter had its own particular cultural status and gendered connotations, which emerged in the eighteenth century but remained formative during the entire nineteenth century. Letter writing represented a highly regarded cultural practice among the middle and upper classes and formed an integral part of children’s education.177 Due to its natural style and spontaneous expressiveness, letter writing was conceived as a genre in which women in particular were supposed to excel due to their presupposed emotional temperament.178 The letter is a genre of writing with certain conventions, meant to evoke specific emotions through formalized expressions. Intimate women friends used to constantly express affection in their correspondence, often characterized by a romantic and emotionally-charged language unfamiliar to the contemporary reader.179 The ritualized motif of “longing for the friend” served to secure and confirm the continuity of the relationship.180 Even though longing was a convention in epistolary writing, it stands in for the deeper importance of the medium of the letter in the context of Nordic women painters’ networking across national borders. As a “ritual of attachment”, letter writing helped artist friends to maintain a sense of community and to cultivate their intellectual and artistic exchange, even after they had returned to their respective home countries after joint study periods abroad.181

Further, strategies of self-management and -censorship have to be examined when critically analyzing the artists’ letters. Analyzing the family correspondence of a French bourgeois woman in the late nineteenth century, the historian Susan Foley has illuminated the processes by which girls and young women learned to control their emotions in their epistolary practices and fashioned selves that harmonized with their assigned social role. Foley has demonstrated how middle-class women in their correspondence constituted the self into acceptable channels, using self-effacing as a central strategy in their epistolary writing.182 The same strategy can be traced in Eva Bonnier’s letters to her family in which self-denial is an omnipresent motif. Similar self-effacing patterns also characterize Hildegard Thorell’s letters to her husband, written in a naïve
and submissive tone, expressive of her dependent position in the marriage as the self-described *hustrubarn* (child-wife) to Reinhold Thorell, who was eleven years her senior.\textsuperscript{183}

Besides self-management, self-censorship is another aspect that complicates the analysis of the artists’ letters, and this is particularly relevant in a period during which intimate same-sex friendships were met with increasingly skeptical and partly even hostile attitudes.\textsuperscript{184} Inspired by the queer theorist Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick’s reparative approach, gender scholar Ulla Manns has discussed moments of silence in the sources on the Swedish women’s movement and suggested approaching them by means of queer readings that consider the heteronormative context in which they were written.\textsuperscript{185} This means sensitizing oneself for small details and occasional comments that counteract the heteronormative ideology, and paying attention to silences, gaps or discontinuities in the texts. When studying the correspondence of Bauck, Thorell and Wegmann, particular attention was paid to such epistolary frictions.

Finally, letters have genre-specific structural properties, which pose certain methodological challenges to the scholar. The letter is dialogical, perspectival and emergent, which means that it is addressed to a specific person, relates to a particular recipient and presupposes that they share a common social world and time.\textsuperscript{186} Hence, the letter is not occasioned or structured according to researcher-determined concerns, and losses will inevitably occur in the translation of its content.

All the above considerations in combination with the substantial scope of the consulted epistolary material were the major methodological challenges in studying the artists’ correspondence. Ultimately, it is imperative to be responsive to the letter’s genre-specific properties, to study what is mediated and what is not over time, and to pay due attention to blanks in the material as well as to mistranslations that can occur in the act of research.\textsuperscript{187}

As the historian Dena Goodman has argued, “writing allows a person to withdraw into him or herself, writing also facilitates the reflection through which personal autonomy is attained, or at least experienced”.\textsuperscript{188} Consequently, letter writing can be understood as a practice of self-fashioning through which “individuals produce themselves as subjects”.\textsuperscript{189} Beyond serving as a medium of communication between a sender and a recipient, the letter is a literary medium for self-expression and representation, which possesses a certain degree of fictionality.\textsuperscript{190} On the basis of recent auto-
biographical theory, letter writing can therefore be conceived as a “mediated act of self-projection”, which allows its author to negotiate different subject positions and construct multiple personae in exchanges with different recipients.\textsuperscript{[191]} As mentioned above, the aim is to take another step in the reading of the letters and to extract more from them than just evidence about the artists’ life and work, additionally studying them as genuine sites of self-fashioning. Both the painting and the letter have their individual conditionalities, but visual and epistolary narratives can nevertheless be treated as interlinked media of self-fashioning.\textsuperscript{[192]}

**Previous Research**

This study is based on extensive archival research on well-known and less well-known women artists from the Nordic countries. It is positioned at the intersection of feminist art history and recent reconsiderations of Nordic art in the late nineteenth century that question modernist narratives, the notion of one-sided influence and nationalist art historiographies. It aims to provide an alternative approach to the so-called academic art of the late nineteenth century and offers new perspectives on the artists’ international careers and networks. Furthermore, this study relates to critical inquiries regarding the idea and myth of the artist as well as the role and function of the studio space in the construction of artistic identity. Finally, it is connected to research on portraiture as both aesthetic and social practice, offering new perspectives on artistic self-representation. Besides introducing the concept of the friendship image, it also provides new methodological approaches to artists’ letters and epistolary practices.

The closing decades of the nineteenth century are considered a “golden age” in Nordic art history. There is no other period which has been subject to more scholarly inquiries, publications or exhibitions and which is more tightly embedded in the collective consciousness of the Nordic nations. In the Swedish context, the classic work and the publication to which all subsequent scholarship responds is Sixten Strömbom’s comprehensive publication on the history of the Artists’ Union, *Konstnärsförbundets historia*, which was published in two volumes in 1945 and 1965.\textsuperscript{[193]} Strömbom’s narrative is largely a heroic story that portrays the Opponents’ struggle for artistic freedom and self-expression against the reactionary and
backward-minded academy, eventually paving the way for modernism. In this linear history of artistic progress, women artists figure only in the form of marginal notes.

The 1970s marked the starting point for feminist interventions in the history of art, both internationally and in the Nordic countries. In the anglophone context, Linda Nochlin’s thought-provoking essay “Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?” from 1970 and the book-length study *Old Mistresses: Women, Art and Ideology* by Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock from 1981 have proven highly influential to this day.194 Around the same time in Sweden, Anna Lena Lindberg and Barbro Werkmäster conducted basic research on the lives and work of women artists, while highlighting the institutional and social preconditions and structural discrimination against women in the art field.195 In 1983, Anne Wichström published the survey book *Kvinner ved staffeliet: Kvinnelige malere i Norge før 1900*, which has become a standard work on women artists in Norway prior to 1900.196 In the Swedish context, Eva-Lena Bengtsson’s and Barbro Werkmäster’s *Kvinna och konstnär i 1800-talets Sverige* from 2004 has gained a similar status.197 When it comes to scholarship on women artists in Denmark and Finland with a temporal focus on the 1880s, pioneering research has been conducted by Lise Svanholm and Riitta Konttinen.198

Ingrid Ingelman’s doctoral dissertation *Kvinnliga konstnärer i Sverige: En undersökning av elever vid Konstakademin inskrivna 1864–1924, deras rekrytering, utbildning och verksamhet* at Uppsala University from 1982 was the first socio-historical inquiry about the artists who studied at the women’s department at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts during the first sixty years after its formation.199 The publication in conjunction with the exhibition *Från Amalia Lindegren till Julia Beck: Kvinnliga konstnärer på konstakademien 1847–1872* at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Stockholm from 1997 further explored the artistic training of women artists at the academy before and after the inception of the women’s department.200 Margareta Gynning’s doctoral dissertation *Det ambivalenta perspektivet: Eva Bonnier och Hanna Hirsch-Pauli i 1880-talets konstliv* from 1999, about Eva Bonnier’s and Hanna Hirsch-Pauli’s artistic production in the 1880s, is closely related to the current project, even though its psycho-biographical perspective clearly distinguishes it from the approach taken in this study.201 The same year, Gynning further published Eva Bonnier’s Paris letters from the years 1883 to 1889.202 This important contribution has made accessible a first-hand ac-
count by a woman artist of the artistic life of the 1880s, finally adding a female voice to the numerous anecdotes of male artists. Patrik Steorn’s doctoral dissertation *Nakna män: Maskulinitet och kreativitet i svensk bildkultur 1900–1915* from 2006 was a pioneering contribution to masculinity studies in Sweden. It applied queer theory to the representation of masculinity and the male nude around the turn of the century, analyzing its complex aesthetic, cultural, social and ideological implications.

Anna Lena Lindberg’s study *En mamsell i akademien* from 2010 on the artist Ulrica Fredrica Pasch (1735–1796) was not only the first monograph on the Swedish eighteenth-century portrait painter, but more importantly it has also been methodologically inspiring, as it has used Pasch’s case to discuss broader questions concerning the social position, working conditions and self-promotional strategies of women artists in the period. When it comes to monographs and single-artist studies, Anne Wichstrøm’s eminent research on Asta Nørregaard in the form of several articles and a comprehensive monograph published in 2011 has provided important perspectives, particularly with regard to the analysis of the artist’s self-portrait from 1883. Görel Cavalli-Björkman’s comprehensive biography of Eva Bonnier from 2013 also needs to be mentioned in this context.

Katarina Wadstein MacLeod has published two articles and a book-length study on the representation of the interior in the work of Hanna Hirsch-Pauli and Fanny Brate (1861–1940), among others, studying the complex relationship between the home as a female sphere and artistic identity. Wadstein MacLeod’s current research project focuses on the collaboration and cohabitation of the painter Elisabeth Barnekow (1874–1942) and the sculptor Ida Thoresen (1863–1937), whose biographies are positioned at the intersection of the upper-class milieu, artistic circles and women’s rights activism. Asking research questions akin to those posed by Wadstein MacLeod, Øystein Sjåstad has recently published an essay on the Norwegian painter Kitty Kielland, analyzing her artistic practice, writing, unconventional life choices and political activism from the perspective of queer theory.

Museum-based research has been extremely important in putting the life and work of Nordic women artists on the art historical map. The exhibition *Kvinnor som målat*, curated by Görel Cavalli-Björkman at Nationalmuseum in Stockholm in 1975, strategically presented works by women artists from the collections, which had
long been hidden away in the museum storages.\textsuperscript{210} In 1998, Lise Svanholm curated the first and only monographic exhibition on Bertha Wegmann to date at \textit{Øregaard Museum}, located on the outskirts of Copenhagen. On the occasion of the exhibition, Svanholm published a small catalog, including a short essay about the life and work of the artist.\textsuperscript{211} In conjunction with the groundbreaking exhibition project \textit{De drogo till Paris: Nordiska konstnärinnor på 1880-talet} at \textit{Liljevalchs konsthall} in Stockholm in 1988, a catalog was published that presented essential basic research on the life and work of selected women artists from the Nordic countries who studied in Paris during the 1880s.\textsuperscript{212} This exhibition has also decisively shaped the notion of Paris as a liberating space for Nordic women artists in the period under consideration.

The exhibition \textit{Når kvinder fortæller: Kvindelige malere i Norden 1880–1900} at \textit{Kunstforeningen} in Copenhagen in 2002 followed a similar approach, uniting a Nordic focus with an emphasis on Paris as a training ground.\textsuperscript{213} Anna Lena Lindberg’s essay on Hanna Hirsch-Pauli’s portrait of Venny Soldan-Brofeldt in the same catalog has informed my analysis of the work in the final chapter and inspired the development of new perspectives on the representation of the studio space and the dialogue between painting and sculpture enacted in the likeness.\textsuperscript{214} The traveling exhibition \textit{Women Artists in Paris, 1850–1900} organized by the American Federation of Arts in 2017 was the first major show to bring together Nordic women artists with their internationally better-known French and American peers, such as Rosa Bonheur (1822–1899), Berthe Morisot (1841–1895) and Mary Cassatt (1844–1926).\textsuperscript{215}

For the year 2022, \textit{Den Hirschsprungske Samling} is preparing a monographic show on Bertha Wegmann entitled \textit{Bertha Wegmann: At male på mange sprog} and Linda Hinners, curator of sculpture at \textit{Nationalmuseum}, is organizing the exhibition \textit{How Wonderful To Be A Sculptor} on Nordic women sculptors active between 1870 and 1920.\textsuperscript{216} These ongoing exhibition and research projects point towards a revitalized interest by Nordic museums in the production of turn-of-the-century women artists.

In parallel to the scholarship outlined above on women artists from the perspectives of feminist, gender and queer theory, the last twenty years have seen a trend towards revisionist approaches to Nordic late-nineteenth-century art that has nuanced and broadened the historiography of the period in various directions. In her 1999 doctoral dissertation \textit{Det sköna i verklighetens värld: Akade-
misk konstsyn i Sverige under senare delen av 1800-talet, Maria Görts has questioned the strict dichotomic notion of academic versus modernist artistic outlooks and nuanced the history of the presupposed schism between the Opponents and the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Stockholm. Görts’ study questioned the ideologically-motivated dismissal of academic art as second-rate and backward-looking, thereby facilitating the reconsideration of those artists who did not fit into the narrative of modernist progression.

Charlotta Nordström’s doctoral dissertation *Up the Stylish Staircase: Situating the Fürstenberg Gallery and Art Collection in a Late Nineteenth-Century Swedish Art World* from 2015 falls into the same category of critical historiography, reconsidering the role of the Gothenburg collectors Pontus (1827–1902) and Göthilda Fürstenberg (1837–1901) in the promotion of the art of the Opponents and the Artists’ Union in Sweden. Nordström has not only demonstrated that the couple’s collecting practice was more diverse and eclectic than previously assumed, but she has also highlighted the role of bourgeois collectors and the function of exhibitions in the making of artistic careers.

In recent years, one can identify a trend in the scholarship on Nordic art from the late nineteenth century towards globalization, replacing the notion of one-sided influence from center (Paris) to periphery (the North) with ideas about artistic exchange, migration and transnational encounters. In her doctoral dissertation *Grez-sur-Loing Revisited: The International Artists’ Colony in a Different Light* from Gothenburg University in 2013, Alexandra Herlitz has revised the historiography of the artists’ colony in Grez-sur-Loing in the Fontainebleau forest and highlighted the internationality of the artistic community there, studying artistic cross-fertilization and exchange between Scandinavian and anglophone artists. Traditionally, accounts of Nordic artists in Paris have emphasized how their exposure to French art, which culminated in the 1880s, eventually gave way to a return to their homelands and the development of national romanticism in the 1890s that focused on the depiction of Nordic nature and cultural traditions. In her doctoral dissertation *Le mythe du retour: Les artistes scandinaves en France de 1889 à 1908* from 2013, Vibeke Röstorp questioned this assumption and demonstrated that many Nordic artists who came to Paris never returned to their home countries and chose to pursue a career in France instead. In an article from 2019, Röstorp has developed this argument further and introduced the term *third culture artists,*
denoting those artists who were considered exotic and innovative by the French, while being condemned as “Frenchified” by their compatriots at home. Röstorp’s concept of the third culture artist and her observations regarding the double-edged reception of Nordic artists like Julia Beck can even be applied more broadly to those artists who migrated back and forth between their home countries and the artistic centers of Europe, such as Bertha Wegmann.

In a recent case study of Anders Zorn’s painting The Ice Skater from 1898 and its preparatory drawings and watercolors, Elizabeth Doe Stone has demonstrated how the artist simultaneously incorporated memories from his stays in the Parisian metropolis and experiences from his home town of Mora in Dalarna into his work, pursuing a “career in transit”. Doe Stone’s argument that artistic careers are non-linear and that different experiences and impressions can be incorporated time-independently into a single work has been informative for this study. In her doctoral dissertation “Excentriske slægtskaber: En mobilitetsbevidst gentænkning af danske kvindelige kunstnere ca. 1880–1910” at the University of Copenhagen from 2020, Emilie Boe Bierlich has likewise studied the dynamics of transnationalism, migration and mobility in the life and work of Danish women artists, including the transnational career of Bertha Wegmann as a central case study. Bierlich’s conceptualization of mobility has helped to address the crucial importance of the dynamics of movement and travel for the construction of artistic identity, international networks and group affiliation.

A vast amount of scholarly literature exists on the self-portrait, but most investigations into artistic self-representation provide broad, often chronological surveys of the development of the genre, sometimes with a gender-specific focus on self-portraits by women artists. An important reference work has been Portraits of the Artist as a Young Woman: Painting and the Novel in France and Britain, 1800–1860 from 2011 by the scholar of French and comparative literature Alexandra K. Wettlauf, which explores the construction of artistic identity in the work of women painters and writers in the period directly preceding this study. Wettlauf has placed considerable emphasis on the importance of the studio space for the self-invention of women painters in the first half of the nineteenth century and her study has therefore been particularly inspiring for my analyses of studio scenes. Working at the intersection of art history, celebrity studies and fashion studies, Andrea Kollnitz has devoted a number of articles to developing innovative transdisci-
plinary and performative approaches to artistic self-representation that have informed the understanding of self-fashioning in this study. Tamar Garb has conducted relevant research on French portraiture in the nineteenth century, putting particular emphasis on the representation of the female sitter. Garb’s methodological approach, which builds on focused visual analyses of a limited number of paintings, has been particularly instructive.

The 2015 socio-historical inquiry Académie Royale: A History in Portraits by Hannah Williams has conceptualized the Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture not as a dehumanized institution but as a “community of people”, informing my understanding of the friendship image as a social practice. Williams has analyzed male artists’ social networks in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and discussed how portraits exchanged between artist friends embodied the relationship as “products of the maker’s personal investment, signs of the sitter’s implicit trust and celebration of times spent together.” Shortly before this manuscript went to print, Jessica L. Fripp published a book on portraiture and friendship in eighteenth-century France, exploring how ideas about friendship were enacted in the lives of artists in the era of Enlightenment. In Fellow Men: Fantin-Latour and the Problem of the Group in Nineteenth-Century French Painting from 2013, Bridget Alsdorf has studied the group portrait in late-nineteenth-century French art. Refusing to treat the painters’ social and intellectual affiliations as trivial and anecdotal background to their work, Alsdorf has studied how their works reimagined affiliation in representation. Scholarship that explicitly focuses on artist portraits in Nordic art is rare, and to the best of my knowledge only Sine Krogh, in an article from 2015, has thoroughly analyzed the meaning of the artist portrait in relation to concepts of friendship. This study shares with the above contributions that collectivity, sociability, emulation and collaboration are understood to be essential to the creative process. Interpersonal relationships are not simply conceived as anecdotal backdrops to the work, but actively shape the artists’ self-fashioning. Whereas the past ten years have seen an increase in studies exploring the creative sociability of male artists, contributions that focus on women’s artistic communities are still few, and it is this gap that the present study aims to fill.

When it comes to sociability as it plays out in the studio setting, Thomas Crow’s Emulation: Making Artists for Revolutionary France from 1995 is a classic study analyzing the complex interpersonal
dynamics and homo-social networks among artists working in Jacques-Louis David’s (1748–1825) studio.234 Sarah Betzer’s *Ingres and the Studio* from 2012 constitutes a challenge to the understanding of the nineteenth-century artist workshop as an exclusively male sphere.235 Here, Betzer claims that the women sitters in the *ingraste* studio “played decisive roles and emerged as vital interlocutors in a shared aesthetic project” and thereby she conceptualized the studio as an expansive space in which both artists and sitters jointly negotiate artistic identity in “charged studio relations”.236

The genre of the studio interior has been subject to extensive scholarly inquiry in the last two decades. The appeal of the studio space is premised on a renewed interest in the figure of the artist and its discursive formation in modernity.237 Of particular relevance for this study are those approaches by Phillipp Junod, Uwe Fleckner and Rachel Esner that read the studio interior as a spatialized self-portrait and investigate the spatial dimensions of identity formation.238 The studio interior in nineteenth-century Nordic art has hitherto only been discussed by Erik Mørstad in an article that focused primarily on its iconography.239

Besides Wettlaufer’s above-mentioned contribution, the role of the studio space for the professionalization of women painters in the nineteenth century has been addressed by Rachel Mader in her socio-historical inquiry on women artists in late-nineteenth-century Paris.240 Rather than telling the story of women artists solely through narratives of oppression and marginalization, Mader has suggested employing the professional sphere of the studio as a means to highlight how women artists overcame obstacles despite structural discrimination.241 Whereas Mader reads the studio as a site for sociability and commercial interests, she negates that it also functioned as a space in which artistic identity was actively negotiated.242 In contrast to Mader, who omits the Nordic artists active in Paris at the time, this study argues that the charged interaction between the artist and the studio space was crucial for Nordic women painters’ self-fashioning in painting in the 1880s.

My understanding of the spatial dimension of self-fashioning is indebted to Susan Sidlaukas’ analysis of the interrelationship between space and identity in nineteenth-century painting.243 Sidlaukas has not explicitly addressed the studio or the gendered implications of the interior. However, her conceptualization of spatial identity has shaped the analysis of the studio scenes in the final chapter.
To a greater extent than art historians, literary scholars have explored the potential of space in facilitating women’s creativity and professionalization in the nineteenth century. Finally, critical reconsiderations of the public-private divide, studies on gendered spaces and women in the public sphere in nineteenth-century visual culture, most notably the scholarship of Temma Balducci, have helped to conceptualize women artists’ studios as hybrid spaces that transgress the boundaries between the public and the private.

The starting point for this research project was my own unpublished master’s thesis “Selbstportraits und Freundschaftsbilder skandinavischer Künstlerinnen in Paris während der 1880er-Jahre” from Freie Universität in Berlin in 2015. During the past five years of conducting this dissertation project, initial findings have been presented in two peer-reviewed articles, both published in 2018: First results from the study of Hildegard Thorell’s correspondence and preliminary analyses of the friendship images of Jeanna Bauck and Bertha Wegmann discussed in the second chapter have been published in *RIHA Journal*. An initial and summarizing analysis of Asta Nørregaard’s self-portrait from 1883 from the final chapter has been published in *Kunst & Kultur*. Theoretical approaches and methodological challenges in the study of artists’ letters have been outlined in their initial stages in a contribution to the volume *Skrif om vad du målar: Breven från Anna Nordlander till Kerstin Cardon* from 2019.

**Outline**

This study is divided into three main chapters that are each dedicated to a genre of painterly self-fashioning: The first chapter is about the self-portrait, the second deals with the friendship image and the third chapter addresses the studio scene. The final chapter is most eclectic in structure and content, as it revitalizes some of the discussions and analytical concepts presented and outlined in the previous chapters. The study concludes with a summarizing discussion.

Chapter I is dedicated to Julia Beck’s strategies of self-promotion and it centers around her self-portrait from 1880. The analysis of the self-portrait focuses on the emulative strategies by means of which Beck inscribed her self-portrait into the iconographic tradition of artistic self-representation. The aesthetic concept of emu-
lation and its history is introduced, followed by a discussion of its
gendered implications. Thereafter, Beck’s artistic training both at
the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Stockholm and at the private
academies in Paris is outlined. Using the Swedish painters Hugo
Birger and Ernst Josephson (1851–1906) as comparative examples,
the chapter further studies how Nordic artists in Paris engaged in
a competitive dialogue with the old masters in their work, simulta-
neously expressing a sense of emulative rivalry among themselves.

The function of the self-portrait as an introduction piece at the
Salon and as a marketing instrument is highlighted by means of a
comparison with Jenny Nyström’s self-portrait from 1884. Beck’s
self-portrait is then placed in a broader art historical context through
comparisons with earlier artist portraits that likewise employed
strategies of emulation. Finally, Beck’s career following her Salon
debut will be examined and how she strategically tried to pursue
her career simultaneously on the Swedish and the French art scenes
will also be analyzed. Studying the object history of the self-portrait,
the first chapter further explores how Beck navigated her “career
in transit” and how she tried to reconcile her internationalism
with her Swedish heritage by organizing her artistic legacy in her
home country through the strategic donation of her own likeness.

Chapter II analyzes community, sociability, friendship and col-
laboration among Nordic women artists in the 1880s by focusing
on the artistic partnership of Jeanna Bauck and Bertha Wegmann.
It starts off with a detailed definition of the friendship image,
followed by an analysis of friendship in theoretical and historical
perspective that addresses the shifting attitudes towards intimate
friendships between women in the late nineteenth century. The
emotional and practical impact of friendship and community on the
professionalization of women artists in the late nineteenth century
is examined through an analysis of travel companionship, cohabi-
tation, collective study and networking. This studies how women
artists, internationally and in the Nordic countries, conceived of
their community in travel writing, memoirs, essays and articles, as
well as letters and diaries. Further, Barbara H. Rosenwein’s concept
of the emotional community is introduced as a means to analyze the
close ties of friendship that Nordic women painters developed in
the period. The epistolary exchange between Jeanna Bauck, Hilde-
gard Thorell and Bertha Wegmann is analyzed alongside a chrono-
logical outline that allows a study of the course of their lifelong
friendship. Thorell’s letters to her husband Reinhold are included
in the argument, as they provide an onlooker’s view of the relationship between Bauck and Wegmann. The core of the second chapter is then dedicated to an in-depth analysis of the friendship images of Bauck and Wegmann, which are placed in a historic context and discussed in comparison to similar partnerships, most notably that of the Norwegian artists Harriet Backer and Kitty Kielland. Finally, the analysis of the letters and paintings is brought together in an analysis of the collaborative practices and dual authorship of Bauck and Wegmann.

Chapter III explores the function of the studio space in self-portraits, friendship images and studio interiors, combining all the genre categories explored in this study. It brings together the central concerns of the previous chapters – emulation and collaboration – and connects them with the appropriation of the studio space. The final chapter begins with an analysis of Brita Ellström’s (1873–1945) photographic album from 1903 that portrays the artist’s studio in Paris from various angles. The album allows for an exploration of the multiple layers of meaning associated with the artist’s workshop as both an imagined and as lived-in space. The professionalization of women artists was closely intertwined with the spaces they inhabited. The access to (or lack of) a studio was decisive for their ability to develop their skills as artists on a practical level, and on a metaphorical level it was decisive for their ability to conceive of themselves as artists.

By studying representations of the studio in painting, journalism and epistolary writing, the conflicted position of the professional space in the lives of women artists in the late nineteenth century is explored, followed by an in-depth analysis of three key artworks, the most central of which is Hanna Hirsch-Pauli’s portrait of Venny Soldan-Brofeldt from 1886–87. The analysis of the painting focuses on the charged juxtaposition of artist and space in this studio scene, followed by an exploration of the dialogic and collaborative encounter between artist-painter and sitter-sculptor in light of the reawakened paragone of painting and sculpture in the late nineteenth century. The idea of paragone also informs the analysis of Eva Bonnier’s studio interior from 1886, in which the artist in reference to the myth of Pygmalion seemingly brings her own sculpture to life. Finally, Asta Nørregaard’s self-portrait in the studio from 1883 is analyzed, focusing on the painting’s complex iconographic program that fashion the artist as universal genius.
I. The Self-Portrait

The self-portrait is distinguished from all other forms of portraiture by the simple fact that the artist is both the maker and the subject of the image. It is traditionally understood to be the primary genre of artistic self-representation and a manifestation of the artist’s self-understanding. With the emergence of the exhibition artist in the nineteenth century, the persona of the artist increasingly became the subject of public interest. The media, the critics and the public were united in their desire to come closer to the individual behind the work. Since the self-portrait was painted without a commission, it was believed to be an authentic product of artistic freedom and a direct expression of the artist’s temperament and psyche. In this climate, the self-portrait gained renewed importance as a key genre of artistic self-fashioning. The following chapter will approach the self-portrait as a medium of self-promotion, allowing the artist to construct an image of herself. The self-portrait will be conceptualized as both an aesthetic and a social object, by means of which the painter positioned herself in relation to her contemporary audience and in relation to a pictorial tradition.

The following analysis revolves around the Swedish painter Julia Beck and the self-portrait she exhibited at the Salon of 1880. It will examine the self-promotional strategies that Beck employed to inscribe herself into the professional tradition of the artist and it will ask how she appropriated and reinterpreted the accompanying pictorial tropes from her own subject position. Emulation will be introduced as a key legitimizing strategy by means of which she appropriated the role of the artist in her self-portrait. Comparative works by Swedish and international artists will be used to context-
tualize Beck’s self-portrait and its use of emulation in a contemporary and historical perspective.

Further, this chapter will explore how Beck used the self-portrait towards the end of her career to organize her own legacy in Sweden. Beck never married and she spent the great majority of her adult life in France, only sporadically returning to her homeland. In contrast to those artists who returned to their home countries after a few formative years abroad and managed to shape their own reception, Beck can be considered an “outsider” who had to regain a position in Swedish art history. She left only a few personal traces behind and relatively little is yet known about her professional biography or her private life. The following chapter draws upon hitherto unpublished archival material, providing new insights into how Beck navigated her career between two cultural contexts. The analysis of Beck’s self-portrait and its function in the making of the artist’s international career exemplarily demonstrates how one can generate knowledge about the self-promotional strategies of artists by closely studying the self-portraits and their object history.

Self-portraiture is an artistic practice that is embedded in gendered structures of meaning. Artists produce images of themselves by employing certain iconographic and stylistic conventions, which were initially designed to promote the privileged status of the male artist. Therefore, every woman artist inevitably had to position herself in relation to this dominant and gendered tradition of representation. From this it follows that every act of inscribing herself into that tradition and employing its visual tropes caused frictions that challenged the very narratives constituting the idea of the artist. The following analysis aims to explore these frictions and to study the strategies by means of which Julia Beck challenged and reinvented the idea of the artist.

The Salon Debut

In the spring of 1880 Julia Beck submitted her self-portrait to the Salon in Paris. The artist represented herself in a half-length portrait dressed in a historicizing costume via a black cloak and a gray-brimmed plume hat. The painting figured as her introduction piece with which she presented herself for the first time to the French public. For many foreign artists residing in Paris, having a picture accepted for the Salon was not only a priority, but often the central

Fig. 17. Julia Beck, *Self-Portrait, Paris*, 1880.
goal of a stay in the French capital. To exhibit at the Salon was a means for women artists to prove their professional seriousness and to launch their artistic careers. Even though women artists encountered bias at the Salon, the exhibition was a public stage on which they could compete directly with their male peers, or as Kirsten Swinth put it: “Here, where they could be judged by merit rather than by sex, was where women chose to advance their cause, demonstrating their identification with professionalism.”

Even if one had been accepted by the jury, it was a rather difficult task to stand out among the thousands of artists contributing to the prestigious exhibition each year, as the Swedish journalist Claës Lundin (1825–1908) remarked in an article on Beck from 1894:

It certainly is not easy to attract attention at the Salon in Paris. The exhibition of 1885 was even very rich in female participants. No less than 1081 women were already then represented there, and to make oneself noticeable among such a mass is very difficult for a young artist without a famous name or guardian.

Despite these obstacles, Beck’s self-portrait was well received by the French press and the Gazette des Femmes praised it as a “good debut”, adding: “Julia Beck has painted her own portrait with a delightful verve: under the elegant, gray hat you have the pleasure to see her face, which is rendered in a fresh and delicate touch.”

In the self-portrait, Beck has placed her body in front of an undefined, light brown background, parallel to the picture plane. She has turned her face towards the beholder and gazes attentively over her shoulder, maintaining a compositional distance to her audience. She has depicted herself in three-quarter profile, with the left side of her face accentuated and the right lying in shadows. The artist’s left eye pierces out of the canvas under a slightly-raised eyebrow and captivates the beholder’s attention. The skilful employment of chiaroscuro in the rendering of the facial features creates a sensation of drama. This impression is intensified by the black traveling cloak, which enhances the volume of the artist’s body. The traveling cloak is accentuated by the white chemise underneath, the strap of a bag and a red handkerchief, placed inside the breast pocket of the cloak. Beck is wearing a brimmed plume hat under which her long brown hair is visible.

Beck’s likeness recalls Baroque portraiture in terms of style, palette, lighting, composition and dress. When asked about her
favorite painter more than fifty years after the completion of the self-portrait, Beck replied that she admired the Spanish Baroque painter Diego Velázquez (1599–1660) for his portraits.\textsuperscript{258} Admiration for Velázquez was widespread during the late nineteenth century, among both French and Nordic artists.\textsuperscript{259} Apart from Velázquez, Julia Beck also seems to have taken inspiration from Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn (1606–1669), who had gained a cult-like status by the end of the nineteenth century. As Alison McQueen has demonstrated, Rembrandt’s persona and oeuvre acquired a mystic resonance among French artists of the period, especially among those who defined themselves as non-conformist or anti-establishment. French artists were inspired by the Dutch master’s presupposed eccentric personality and his distinct style, which they tried to emulate in their own works. For those painters, the emulation of Rembrandt’s artistic persona was a means to fashion their own professional identities.\textsuperscript{260} Edgar Degas (1834–1917), for instance, explored his own artistic identity in a series of likenesses that were strongly inspired by Rembrandt’s self-portraits.\textsuperscript{261} The fascination with Rembrandt also spread to the Nordic countries, indicated by numerous surviving copies of his works by artists such as Mina Carlson-Bredberg, Ernst Josephson, Julius Kronberg (1850–1921) and Maria Röhl (1801–1875) from Sweden, Albert Edelfelt (1854–1905), Venny Soldan-Brofeldt and Dora Wahlroos (1870–1947) from Finland, and Harriet Backer from Norway.\textsuperscript{262} Anders Zorn kept a painting by Rembrandt in his Paris studio and he systematically collected etchings by the Dutch master, resulting in a considerable collection comprising 180 pieces that informed his own practice of the technique.\textsuperscript{263}

There is no evidence proving whether or not Beck copied Rembrandt while studying in the Louvre, but it is safe to assume that she saw his self-portraits during one of her visits to the galleries.\textsuperscript{264} While Beck was working on her self-portrait, she was studying at Académie Trélat with Léon Bonnat (1833–1922), who is known to have introduced his pupils to the portrait painting of both Velázquez and Rembrandt.\textsuperscript{265} Bonnat is known to have encouraged Harriet Backer to study the work of Rembrandt and he congratulated her on an “excellent” copy in a short note.\textsuperscript{266} Prince Eugen (1865–1947), the Swedish painter and youngest son of King Oscar II (1829–1907), studied with Bonnat in the late 1880s and remembered that the teacher invited his students to his studio on Sundays, showing them old master drawings from his own col-
lection. According to Prince Eugen, Bonnat used the drawings as examples to demonstrate to his students “what each of them needed to observe in particular.” Prince Eugen’s account indicates that the study of the works by old masters was integral to Bonnat’s teaching practice.

Rembrandt frequently employed masquerade, disguise and eccentric dress in his self-portraits. In particular, the fashionable beret or bonnet is a recurring feature in his self-portraits and it is often adorned with feathers, which were supposed to signal the artist’s poetic ingenuity. A central stylistic element in many of Rembrandt’s self-portraits is the use of chiaroscuro in the rendering of the features of the artist, creating a rich play of light and shade on the relief of the face. These sartorial and stylistic features can be found in Beck’s self-portrait: While the plume hat is the most prominent piece of dress in her likeness, the chiaroscuro and the shading of the face are the painting’s defining stylistic features. The combination of a watchful and a shaded eye probably alludes to the combined acts of self-scrutiny and introspection traditionally associated with self-portraiture.

Beck’s piercing gaze appears to be as much directed at the beholder as it references the artist’s self-observation in the mirror. The artist’s gaze in the mirror is traditionally conceived to have a self-distancing function in the sense that s/he renders her/himself other in an image, in which imagination and representation inevitably merge into one. The artist can never paint and look at her/his own reflection at one and the same time and consequently the self-portrait always represents a self-image in which appearance and reality interfere. When it comes to women artists, the self-portrait gaze has certain gendered implications and can be understood as a marker of the artist’s self-transformation from object to subject. According to Laura R. Prieto, the gaze can thus turn into a symbol of the artist’s professional status:

Women artists could use this convention in their self-portraits to suggest their own keen powers of observation and analysis, their artistic skill – in effect, their professionalism. The artist who sat for a portrait and turned her gaze back out to the viewer transformed herself from an object to a subject. Her image was not merely the object of the viewer’s gaze, but asserted its own gaze upon the viewer.
When one further compares Beck’s likeness with Rembrandt’s *Self-Portrait with Golden Chain* from 1633 in the Louvre collection, the similarity in pose is also striking. Both artists have represented themselves in half-length portraits with their shoulders turned towards the viewer. They both address the beholder by employing an abrupt turn of the head, a pose Hans-Joachim Raupp has termed *Motiv der genialen Kopfwendung* (Motif of the ingenious turn of the head). According to Raupp, this pose is not simply the logical result of the artist’s look inside the mirror or the rhetorical turn towards the beholder. Rather, the emphasized turn of the head has a symbolic function and stands in for the artist’s ingenuity and intellectual properties. Applied to Beck’s self-portrait, this motif can be read as a bodily claim of the role of the artist and an appropriation of properties traditionally associated with the opposite sex, such as inventiveness and genius. Ultimately, both the gaze and the turn of the head are authorial features that identify Beck as the maker of her own image.

In her self-portrait, Beck referred to a venerable tradition of self-portrayal and employed its visual tropes. This does not mean that the likeness should be understood as a citation of a certain artist or a certain painting. Instead, I suggest that Beck’s self-portrait should be conceived of as an emulation of a certain tradition
of artistic self-representation. These emulative acts, staged in the self-portrait, are versatile, involving dress, gaze, pose and style of execution. Two years after her first arrival in Paris in 1878, in her first Salon contribution, Beck summarized her professional aspirations and formulated a claim to succession at a decisive moment in her career. It is safe to assume that informed visitors to the Salon reflected upon Beck’s appropriation of certain tropes of self-portraiture and her Rembrandtesque use of the chiaroscuro. To better grasp the notion of emulation in relation to Beck’s self-portrait, the aesthetic concept and its history will be briefly presented, followed by a discussion of its gendered implications.

**Emulation as Admiring Rivalry**

Julia Beck’s likeness can be placed in a long history of “visual apprenticeship” based on the emulation, exercise and apprehension of technique, skill and idea.\(^{278}\) In modernist art history imitation and invention have often figured as two contrasting concepts: Imitation or copying are understood as passive and repetitive acts as opposed to creation and renewal conceptualized as independent and autonomous acts. The alleged rivalry between the so-called academic and avant-garde art in the late nineteenth century is grounded mainly in this dualism.\(^{279}\) Modernism and its quest for stylistic innovation and originality tends to imagine the rivalry with the masters of the past as a fight in aggressive and revolutionary terms.\(^{280}\) As opposed to this, in academic art theory, artistic development has traditionally been conceptualized as a natural evolution from imitation via emulation to invention. From the Renaissance onwards, artistic training was grounded in the belief that artistic skill was primarily learned by copying the old masters. Only in the final stages of education was the artist expected to contribute his own inventiveness, although still relying and building on the well-studied models.\(^{281}\) Academic training depended on the “ambitious competition between modern and ancient rivals”, which acknowledged both the pedagogic value of imitation and the artistic value of invention.\(^{282}\)

As a key concept in early modern aesthetics, emulation united artistic continuity with creative novelty. Emulation is distinguished from imitation by the fact that the artist does not replicate, but rivals a master or a masterpiece, which involves the ambition to surpass the example.\(^{283}\) Emulation presupposes the knowledge and
understanding of the example and its underlying systems of belief, just as much as it requires full command of the technique. The act of emulation is generally conceived as respectful because it both pays homage and is an attempt to exceed. As David Mayernik has argued, “emulation practiced well involves critical tension between humility and self-confidence, between subsuming and asserting one’s identity”. However, since the Renaissance, emulation or aemulatio has been conceptualized as an ambivalent term and its competitive impulse has also been associated with darker and less benevolent feelings and character traits, such as envy and contentiousness. Studying Renaissance literature and intellectual history, George W. Pigman has aptly summarized such negative feelings involved in artistic competition under “the dark side of emulation”. Throughout this study, I will return to Pigman’s notion of the ambivalence of emulation as “admiring rivalry”, which oscillates between homage and competition and which is understood as integral to artistic practice and self-fashioning in painting.

In an article on the gendering of emulation in eighteenth-century French art education, Laura Auricchio has explored the ambiguity in women artists’ practice of emulation, which rendered it necessary for their professional careers, but also dangerous for their personal reputations. Auricchio argued that women artists had to be particularly careful not to transgress the fine line between honorary emulation and its “dark sides”, such as ignoble envy, greed or immodesty. The idea of emulation as a competition for glory and professional recognition was contradictory to conventional notions of bourgeois femininity and antithetical to propriety or decorum. Further, Auricchio suggested that such fundamental conflicts between feminine virtue and professional emulation played a vital role in the eighteenth-century practice of barring female students from academic education.

While the ideal of proper and modest femininity still prevailed in the late nineteenth century, the number of professional women artists had greatly increased. Swedish women artists, including Julia Beck, had been granted admission to the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Stockholm, studying in the gender-segregated classes of the Fruntimmers-Afdelningen, founded in 1864. Consequently, as regular students at Konstakademien, women artists had gained the right to enter into a dialogue with the art of the past. However, they still had to balance emulation with gendered expectations. Indeed, Beck staged herself in the self-portrait as an academically trained
artist, who, by means of her training at the academy in Stockholm, was entitled to enter into a competitive exchange with the masters of the past. Consequently, Beck’s self-fashioning in the self-portrait was premised upon her training at the academy in Stockholm. In the following, the artist’s professional development, from her early artistic training at Konstakademien in Stockholm to her studies at the private academies in Paris will be outlined.

From Stockholm to Paris

Julia Beck was born in Stockholm in 1853 as the daughter of Julia Carlsson (1825–1889) and the craftsman Franz Beck (1814–1888), who had immigrated to Sweden from Western Germany in 1840. Beck’s father successfully established a professional position as a bookbinder in Stockholm. He specialized in luxury volumes, which brought him into contact with the financial and cultural elite of the Swedish capital. In her youth, Beck began to assist her father by creating the calligraphy for albums and diplomas. She would later work regularly as an illuminator, a practice that remained an important additional source of income for the artist alongside painting. Consequently, Beck was first introduced to artistic practices in her father’s workshop, a feature which has long been one of the most common ways for women to enter into an artistic profession. While her brother Viktor Beck (1852–1934) assumed their father’s artisanal occupation, Julia Beck eventually decided to study fine art. After three years at Slöjdskolan (The Handicraft School) in Stockholm from 1869 to 1872, Beck studied at Konstakademien between 1872 and 1877. According to the academy’s matriculation register, she was among the most accomplished students, passing several of her courses with distinction.

In an interview with the Swedish newspaper Dagens Nyheter in 1934, Beck revealed that she had enrolled at the women’s department of the academy against her father’s will, who believed that such education “did not suit a family girl”. She further explained that she was accepted only on the grounds of the sample work that she had sent in without including any official recommendation. After his daughter was accepted to the academy, Franz Beck supported her in her professional ambitions. In the interview from 1934, Julia Beck emphasized that she entered the academy through her own efforts and initiative, and solely on the basis of her artistic
skill. Thereby, she fashioned herself as an artist outsider with innate skills that were immediately recognizable.

During her five years of study at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Stockholm, Julia Beck played a leading role in the establishment of the so-called Akademi-Klubben, the academy’s student organization, where both male and female students interacted in informal settings. The club arranged social activities for the students, such as theatre performances, masquerade balls and dance nights. The organization’s first meeting took place in Beck’s studio and she became a member of the editorial staff of the lavishly illustrated student newspaper Palett-Skrap, published by the club. The social gatherings of the Akademi-Klubben were later revived in Paris, where the majority of its members had settled in the early 1880s. Eva Bonnier reported in a letter to her family that Beck had invited former fellow members of Akademi-Klubben to her Parisian studio in the fall of 1883. The social exchange between male and female classmates at Akademi-Klubben laid the foundation for an expatriate community that the artists came to build among themselves in France. Beck’s central role in this artistic circle is evident in Bonnier’s correspondence, but also in Richard Bergh’s letters to his wife-to-be Helena Klemming (1863–1889) from Paris, in which he regularly mentioned Beck and the community’s frequent social interactions. The letters by Bonnier and Bergh indicate that female and male artists from Sweden did not operate in separate spheres, neither at home, nor in France, even though they received gender-segregated artistic education.

The education at Konstakademien was founded on drawing and copying, first after plaster casts of antique sculptures and eventually after the live model. The collections of Nationalmuseum hold over one hundred drawings from the Antique and the Model School produced by Beck during her studies at the academy. Central to the teaching at Konstakademien was further the copying of works by old masters, preferably in the collections of Nationalmuseum. Later on, the academy’s scholarship recipients were expected to send home copies from their journeys to the continent. Lectures in art history were also part of the timetable. The success of Swedish women artists on the French art scene was highly dependent on the thorough and professional education they were offered at the academy in Stockholm. Beck’s teacher Léon Bonnat is said to have uttered his amazement at all of the “talented women artists from the North”. Bonnat’s statement is recorded in a letter by the Swed-
ish artist Johan Ericson (1849–1925) from April 1880. According to Ericson, Bonnat further noted that he had not seen “such good foundations among women before” and he concluded that they must have “a good academy and excellent teachers” in the North.304

After her arrival in Paris in 1878, Beck periodically shared a studio in Montmartre with her compatriots Hildegard Thorell and Anna Munthe-Norstedt (1854–1936). In the winter of 1879–1880 they all worked together on their contributions to the Salon.305 At the time, Beck was studying at Académie Trélat under the guidance of Léon Bonnat.306 Later in the 1880s, she also enrolled at Académie Colarossi and Académie Julian, where the Belgian artist Alfred Stevens (1823–1906) was her most admired teacher.307 The private academies possessed their own collections of historical or historicizing costumes and accessories, which were worn by the models during classes, and it is possible that Beck borrowed the extravagant plume hat that she is wearing in the self-portrait from Académie Trélat.308

Both at the École des Beaux-Arts and at the private academies in Paris the practice of copying had a prominent place in the curriculum. When they were not drawing after the live model at their school, pupils were advised to study regularly in the Louvre and to make croquis of great works in their notebooks.309 Peder Severin Kroyer commented on the purpose of his copies from the Louvre: “I want to hang them in my studio to serve as a constant incentive to spur me on.”310 The comment points, once more, to emulation as integral to both artistic education and artistic self-conception. Copying was believed to foster the artist’s power of invention through the thorough study of the old master’s composition and it was supposed to familiarize the student with the technique. According to Albert Boime, nineteenth-century art education cultivated a “ritualistic approach to copying” and encouraged its students to copy systematically in preparation for an independent piece, “so that the qualities of the old master were assimilated and reflected in the work”.311 The students were recommended to choose a model similar to the subject matter that they intended to treat based on the idea that the act of copying would lead to an identification with and finally an incorporation of the qualities of the old masters.312

It is possible that the practice of copying inspired Beck to paint her self-portrait in a way that demonstrated her involvement with the art of the past. In light of what can be traced about Beck’s education in Stockholm and Paris, the self-portrait can be read as
an act of identification with the artists of the past, making herself their equal. In view of the gendered implications of emulation, this act of identification has subversive potential, when performed by a woman artist. In dialogue with Judith Butler, emulation can be understood as a strategy by means of which Julia Beck became the artist in her self-portrait: By means of emulation Beck could compel her body to conform to the historical idea of artist, she could induce her body to become a cultural sign. She materialized herself in obedience to a historically delimited possibility, which in this context is the established iconography and the pictorial conventions of the self-portrait.313

In fact, Beck’s first painting to be exhibited in the prestigious Salon had a legitimizing function because it was intended to reflect the academic training of its maker at a time, when women were still excluded from the École des Beaux-Arts. Consequently, the self-portrait can be understood as a demonstration of Beck’s mastery of tradition, transformed into her own invention. The self-portrait thus marked the completion of Beck’s artistic training and turned her into a professional in front of an audience of fellow colleagues, critics, future clients and commissioners.

Emulating the Past and the Present

The emulation of the art of the past in terms of style of execution, composition, pose or dress was popular among emerging Nordic artists active in Paris around the year 1880. Although it had certain gendered implications, the practice was attractive to male artists as well. As the following examples indicate, emulation figured as a vital means to fashion artistic identity in an eclectic and experimental manner. Emulation was both a playful and serious way of visualizing professional ambitions.

Between 1879 and 1881, the Swedish painters Hugo Birger and Ernst Josephson shared a combined living and studio space on Rue Gabrielle in Montmartre, and the location soon turned into a popular meeting place for the Nordic artistic community in Paris.314 The artists furnished their Parisian studio with historical props, furniture and copies after works by old masters, including Rembrandt.315 Here, they engaged in a collaborative dialogue with the art of the past. In the first year, Josephson painted a role portrait of his friend Birger in the costume of a Landsknecht, a Renaissance
mercenary, with a sword in hands and arms crossed. Birger is standing next to drapery in front of an undefined reddish-brown background. The bearded artist meets the beholder with a serious gaze, contributing to the costume’s belligerent impression. After a period of educational journeys to the Netherlands and Italy, where Josephson had copied works by Rembrandt, Raphael (1483–1520) and Titian (late 1480’s–1576), he applied his newly gained skills to the portrait of his colleague and friend.

Subsequently, Birger painted a self-portrait, wearing the same costume of a Landsknecht. He is sitting in the friends’ shared studio, which is filled with historical props to give the impression of a Renaissance interior. The interior is decorated with antique furniture, a large ornamented table cloth, a drinking cup and a skull, which is a traditional memento mori motif. The painting appears as a hybrid image that oscillates between self-portrait and genre motif, further recalling the iconography of the learned man in his study. Birger has depicted himself in classical profile, scrutinizing a statuette in front of him. The artist is holding a sketchbook on his lap and he is drawing a plaster cast of the Dancing Faun, excavated in Pompeii in 1830. In this self-portrait, Birger has staged himself in the role of the Renaissance artist, studying and admiring the art of the ancients. At the same time, he has referenced the practice of copying plaster casts, which had formed the basis of his own educa-
tion at Konstakademien in Stockholm. Birger thus presents himself as both an academically trained artist and an intellectual who has thoroughly studied the art of the past.

These examples indicate that identification with the old masters in terms of costume, subject matter and stylistic execution was a widespread phenomenon among the relatively inexperienced Swedish artists, who had recently arrived in the French capital and were still at the beginning of their professional careers. The case of Josephson and Birger further points to emulation as a practice that is just as much directed to the past as it is to the present. In their dialogic paintings, the two artists not only staged a competition with the masters of the past, they simultaneously enacted a competition among themselves. The paintings by Josephson and Birger need to be conceptualized as pendants, paintings in which the artists engage in an admiring rivalry with one another. Emulation, as it was practiced by Birger and Josephson, can thus enact a dialogue with the old masters, while it also can also be used as a collaborative means of self-fashioning in painting. Against this backdrop, emulation can be conceptualized as a practiced identification with fellow artists of both the past and the present. I will return to this notion of emulation as integral to artistic collaboration in the following chapters, especially when discussing other friendship images.

Fig. 20. Hugo Birger, Studio Interior with the Artist's Self-Portrait, undated.
Strategies of Self-Promotion

When it came to self-portraits intended for the Salon, Julia Beck was not alone in her attempt to introduce herself to the French public with a likeness that drew on established iconographic conventions and subversively renewed their meaning. In 1884, the Swedish painter and illustrator Jenny Nyström exhibited a self-portrait in a fashionable black silk dress and plumed hat in the form of an imposing knee-piece in life-size format.318 The painter is placed in front of a patterned yellowish-blue wallpaper and addresses the beholder with her gaze. Both the painting’s oblong, vertical format and Nyström’s confident pose recall the state portraits of rulers. The artist’s left hand is clad in a leather glove, while the right hand is pressed against the hip, holding the other glove. Nyström has placed great emphasis on the faithful rendering of the right hand with the visible knuckles and a shining, golden ring on her annular finger. The pose with the hand resting on the hip and the elbow standing out was common in portraits of military officers and was supposed to signal leadership, pride, composure and strength.319 By means of the chosen format and pose, Nyström expressed a claim to visibility, on both a metaphorical and a literal level. The appropriation of a venerable tradition of portraiture, originally reserved for rulers or noblemen, points to the sense of self-assurance that Nyström intended to convey in her portrait. Further, by exhibiting a portrait of that size, the artist could ensure sufficient attention at the Salon, even if her painting were to receive an unfortunate placement in the exhibition.

The Paris correspondent for the Swedish newspaper Aftonbladet remarked in his Salon review from 1884 upon the difficulties in locating works by Swedish and Scandinavian artists among the several thousand paintings presented in the exhibition without any discernible order: “One can walk around for hours and search for a canvas one wishes to see without finding it. The reader should not count so exactly if we today are unable to list all the works of the Scandinavian masters or apprentices. If we get them right before it all ends, that alone will be a reasonable achievement.”320 The critic managed to locate Nyström’s self-portrait during his first visit and offered a favorable description:

Fig. 21. Jenny Nyström, Self-Portrait, 1884.
Jenny Nyström from Kalmar has painted a portrait of “Mlle J Nyström”, hoc est herself (?), from which one finds that the artist has a distinguished appearance, black dress, a violet bouquet on her right shoulder, pretty hat and a rich fringe, which in a couple of weeks should have grown over her eyes. That aside, let us bow to the artist’s talent!321

In the self-portrait, Nyström’s pugnacious pose contrasts to great effect with her “distinguished appearance” and fashionability. Nyström is wearing a modern haircut with a bushy fringe and a smile plays slightly upon her lips. The expanding rosette-shaped skirt of her precious silk dress contributes to her imposing appearance. The uniformly black color of the dress helps to accentuate Nyström’s prominent signature, executed in red in the lower left corner of the painting, including the year of completion as well as Paris as the painting’s place of origin. In her self-portrait, Nyström has fashioned herself as a Parisienne in precious materials and up-to-date style, combining the accentuated femininity of her dress with a pose often associated with masculine ideals.322

Not unlike her colleague Beck, Nyström came from a lower-middle-class background and had to provide for her own livelihood. Her father Daniel Nyström was an elementary school teacher in Kalmar, a town on the east coast of Sweden. After studies at Göteborgs Musei Rit- och Målarskola (Gothenburg Museum’s Drawing and Painting School), Nyström enrolled at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Stockholm in 1873. She completed her studies in 1881, after receiving the royal medal for the history painting Gustav Vasa as a Child in Front of King Hans. The award was a remarkable distinction conferred on a female student, given the elevated position of history painting in the hierarchy of genres.323 The following year, Nyström received a scholarship allowing her to travel to Paris to study at Académie Colarossi and Académie Julian. Already during her student years, Nyström frequently contributed illustrations to books and journals, which rendered financial independence on a moderate basis.324 In May 1884, she wrote a letter to Count Georg von Rosen (1843–1923), the director of Konstakademien, informing him about her educational progress and accomplishments in Paris:

Your lordship is so kind as to recognize that I have worked like few others in terms of diligence and effort. I did not get away until November 1882, and by spring I had completed the large
Nyström wrote to von Rosen in the hope of having get her scholarship extended. This hitherto unpublished letter offers a remarkably self-confident account of Nyström’s professional development abroad and fashions the writer as an industrious and diligent student. In this letter, Nyström also mentioned that she put much of her energy into the large portrait, by which she meant her self-portrait for the Salon. In another letter from February 1884, addressed to the publisher Oscar Ludwig Lamm (1829–1890), Nyström stated that she could not work on his commissions for illustrations until she had finished her submission for the Salon. The letters from spring 1884 demonstrate that Nyström prioritized the self-portrait over all other studies and commissions, highlighting the importance of the first Salon contribution as an essential career step.

Margareta Gynning has argued that Nyström used to place great emphasis on her appearance, evident not only in her self-portrait, but also in preserved portrait photographs from the same period in which she is always elegantly dressed. According to Gynning, fashionable dress was a means for Nyström to signify her social affiliation as a member of the middle classes. At the same time, dress can also be read as a marker of Nyström’s professionalism. By faithfully rendering the sartorial details in her self-portrait, Nyström could display her skills as a portraitist. In combination with the self-confident pose, the artist further displayed her artistic versatility. By eclectically drawing on both masculine and feminine ideals in portraiture, Nyström might have been attempting to appeal to future clients of either sex. At the same time, the friction between the pose and the dress also points to the ambivalence in Nyström’s self-promotional strategy, oscillating between trying to
adopt the role of the artist and conforming to the gendered expectations of dressing and conducting herself with a certain style.\textsuperscript{329} As Frances Borzello has postulated, for women artists, producing a self-portrait traditionally involved reconciling “the conflict between what society expected of women and what it expected of artists”.\textsuperscript{330} Borzello further argued:

The problem for women – and the challenge – was that these two sets of expectations were diametrically opposed. The answer was a creative defensiveness. It is only through understanding the women’s desire to out-maneuver the critics by anticipating their responses that one can begin to make sense of why their self-portraits look as they do. They wanted to show that they were as good as painters past and present, but dared not risk looking boastful.\textsuperscript{331}

Even though late-nineteenth-century women artists were still faced with such opposing expectations, the likenesses by Beck and Nyström contradict the above notion of “creative defensiveness”. Instead, both artists employ the medium of the self-portrait to actively promote themselves and to fashion themselves as professionals. The Salon paintings by Beck and Nyström point to the official function of the self-portrait as a central instrument of artistic self-promotion. In the case of Beck and Nyström, the self-portrait had a double strategic function in marketing the painter’s persona and in generating commissions for portraits. In their paintings, the artists combine a claim to professionalism with a display of artistic skill. Emulation figured as a key means to accomplish both purposes.
Both artists appropriated pictorial tropes that were traditionally tied to a masculine portrait tradition, signaling character traits such as self-determination, strength, creativity and inventiveness. Beck and Nyström subversively inscribed themselves in that pictorial tradition and generated frictions in their self-representation that would arouse the attention necessary to launch their professional careers on an international art scene.

Ma(s)king Claims in Historical Perspective

Marsha Meskimmon has indirectly commented on the necessity of emulation and strategic friction as instruments with which women artists could fashion their artistic identity and challenge the idea of the artist:

To be a woman and an artist is already going against the grain. It is a profession whose history is dominated by men and thus standard notions of professional practice tend to be masculine […]. Female practitioners also work within the visual language which, like other discursive forms in our society, has been developed by and for men. In order to produce meaning, they must use the dominant codes, but they may use them in alternative ways.332

Emulation can be understood as a way to use the dominant codes of visual language and to do so in alternative ways. Since emulation implies a wish to rival and eventually surpass the chosen example, it also involves creating an alternative representation. In what follows, Julia Beck’s self-portrait will be placed in a historical perspective by presenting a concise overview of self-portraits by women artists, which have likewise incorporated various emulative strategies into their own self-promotion.

In 1770, the French artist Marie-Suzanne Giroust (1734–1772) painted a self-portrait in pastel in which she depicted herself at work. She is fashionably dressed and about to copy a self-portrait of her teacher Maurice Quentin de La Tour (1704–1788), which had been exhibited under the title L’auteur qui rit (The Laughing Artist) at the Salon of 1737.331 Both Giroust and La Tour had made pastel their primary medium. Giroust is turning around in her chair to meet the beholder’s gaze with a friendly smile, while preparing
her pastel stick with a knife. The framed self-portrait by La Tour is placed on an easel next to her own copy, which is still in its early stages with only the underdrawing apparently being completed. Anna Lena Lindberg has pointed out that Giroust self-confidently demonstrates her artistic ability to take a place in the art world side by side with her teacher.\textsuperscript{334} Proceeding from Lindberg’s observation, one can further argue that Giroust’s self-portrait addresses the practice of artistic emulation in its various stages from copying to invention. In her self-portrait, Giroust is depicted in the act of copying, but at the same time she demonstrates that she is capable of transferring this practice into her own invention. She is paying homage to her teacher, but she is also entering into an \textit{admiring rivalry} with his example, allowing the beholder to compare the self-portrait of the teacher with her own. Giroust, who was married to the Swedish painter Alexander Roslin (1718–1793), painted her self-portrait after she had become a member of the \textit{Académie Royale} in 1770.\textsuperscript{335} Returning to Laura Auricchio’s previously cited argument about the double bind in emulation, the artist’s entrance into the prestigious institution legitimized her practicing emulation despite its “dark sides”, which opposed feminine virtue.\textsuperscript{336}

As a medium that was associated with color, softness, delicacy and volatility, pastel was traditionally associated with the “feminine” and regarded as a medium suitable for women, which might have further rendered acceptable Giroust’s act of emulation.\textsuperscript{337} From
In this perspective, Giroust not only emulated her teacher La Tour, but also inscribed herself in a genealogy of female pastel painters culminating in the persona of the Italian artist Rosalba Carriera (1673–1757), who had contributed decisively to the development of the medium and its renewed popularity in France during the eighteenth century.338 Marie-Jo Bonnet has further called attention to the interior, with contemporary furnishing, in which Giroust has staged her self-portrait, arguing that this was the first time a French woman artist employed her own contemporary and personal environment as a site in which she constituted herself as the subject of representation.339 I will return to the function of space in the staging of emulative encounters and collaborative or competitive practices between artists in the following chapters.

Giroust’s contemporary, the Swiss-born painter Angelica Kauffman (1741–1807), similarly developed pictorial strategies to raise her claim for professional recognition by appropriating male artistic topoi and subverting their iconographies.340 According to Angela Rosenthal, Kauffman concealed her intellectual and professional aspirations behind the acceptable masks of traditional iconographies, which she reinterpreted in a manner that would conform to conventional taste as well as societal expectations in femininity and decorum. In her history painting *Zeuxis Choosing his Models for the Painting of Helen of Troy*, Angelica Kauffman appears among the five beautiful Crotonans, who present themselves to the painter Zeuxis.
In contrast to the other four women, Kauffman steps behind Zeuxis and frees herself from his objectifying gaze. She picks up one of his brushes and claims the role of the ancient artist, inscribing herself into a highly regarded tradition of history painting.\(^{341}\)

Not unlike Giroust, the French painter Élisabeth Vigée Le Brun (1755–1842) entered into an *admiring rivalry* with the Baroque artist Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640) in her *Self-Portrait in a Straw Hat* from 1782, which she modeled on his portrait *The Straw Hat*.\(^{342}\) In her self-portrait, Le Brun paid great attention to the depiction of the rich ruffs of her dress, the texture of her hair and the feathers of her elegant straw hat as well as the fine lines of her face, the red lips and slightly opened mouth. The sensuality of the likeness allowed Le Brun to demonstrate her skill as a portraitist, and at the same time, it figured as a means to moderate her professional aspirations and to conform to the conventions of the female portrait. However, Le Brun’s claim to professionalism is evident not only in the artist’s attributes in her hand, but even more so in the act of emulating and rivalling Rubens.\(^{343}\) Le Brun’s self-portrait is not a copy, but a likeness in its own right, an alternative representation, in which she

![Fig. 25. Élisabeth Vigée Le Brun, Self-Portrait in a Straw Hat, after 1782.](image-url)
takes the place of Rubens and inscribes herself into a genealogy of great painters.344

In 1825, the French portrait and genre painter Antoinette Cécile Hortense Haudebourt-Lescot (1784–1845) employed a similar strategy in a self-portrait, citing Raphael’s portrait of Baldassare Castiglione (1478–1529) from 1514–15.345 Like the Italian diplomat and humanist, Haudebourt-Lescot wears a black beret and a gold chain, and additionally a pair of pearl earrings. In contrast to the Renaissance sitter, Haudebourt-Lescot is holding a porte-crayon, which identifies her as an artist, highlighting drawing rather than painting as the basis of artistic practice. The self-portraits by Le Brun and Haudebourt-Lescot open up a dialogue between past and present by inviting a comparison with their male predecessors.346 In addition to the use of emulation, Haudebourt-Lescot’s likeness has in common with the self-portrait by Beck the employment of male costume and the appropriation of a male portrait tradition.

In 1888, the Galleria degli Uffizi commissioned a self-portrait from the Dutch painter Thérèse Schwartz (1851–1918), who by that time had established a remarkable career as a portraitist.347
Schwartze modeled her self-portrait on Joshua Reynolds’ (1723–1792) *Self-Portrait Shading His Eyes* from around 1747, which she had probably seen during a visit to London. The portraits are very similar in composition and color, but the most striking resemblance is the peculiar gesture of the artists shading their eyes with their hands. Rather than referencing the typical self-portrait-look into the mirror, the painters’ poses symbolize the far-reaching and visionary gaze of the artist. Schwartze is wearing spectacles, further highlighting her concentrated gaze. She has turned her active looking into the subject of her painting, while at the same time engaging in a dialogue with the English master. According to Rachel Mader, the emulation of the pose can further be understood as a visual reference to Reynolds’ art theory, in which he emphasized the importance of copying and emulation as necessary preconditions of invention. In his *Discourses*, he coined the term “borrowing”, meaning not simply copying, but rather a deliberate reference to a model with whom one wants to enter into a fruitful competition. Both by borrowing Reynold’s pose and by referencing his theoretical stance, Schwartze presented herself as an intellectual artist, well aware of the traditions of her profession.

The above examples demonstrate that the emulation of the old masters through the adoption and reinvention of poses, dresses, compositions, iconographies and style of execution played a vital role in women painters’ self-fashioning as professionals from the eighteenth-century onwards. Such acts of emulation in painting
allowed women artists to claim the idea of the artist. These acts reach far beyond masquerade or role play: They are serious and enduring rather than playful and ephemeral. Ultimately, the purpose of emulation is to create an inextricable link between the portrayed and the idea of the artist. Emulation means incorporating the idea of the artist in the realm of the painting. Marsha Meskimon has postulated that

the feminine […] is intimately tied to mimicry and masquerade. There is no “transcendental” feminine position, merely mimesis and parodies of the norm; negotiations of the fact of being “other” to the mainstream. But, significantly, women are not simply mimics; rather they are able to use mimicry to subvert masculine norms.351

Against this backdrop, emulation can be understood as a strategy that allows for circumventing the trap of mimicry and subverting the masculine norms constituting the idea of the artist. Emulation was a means to become the artist and to inscribe oneself into the mainstream of the profession, rather than being positioned outside the dominant narrative. Emulation had a subversive potential in the sense that it rendered strikingly visible the normative and its accompanying processes of exclusion. By enabling women artists to enter into a dialogue with the art and artists of the past and present, emulation inevitably turned into a tool that empowered them to redefine what it meant to be an artist.

In light of the continuous and repeated practice of emulation as performed by women artists from the eighteenth century onwards, one can conclude that Julia Beck not only emulated the Baroque artist portrait, but on another level, she also adopted a strategy developed by the women artists of the past. In that sense, Beck’s self-portrait emulated the strategy of “ma(s)king claims”, which Rosenthal had coined in relation to Kauffman’s artistic production.352 This strategy involved the appropriation of iconographies and tropes associated with the (male) artist without losing feminine refinement and decorum.

Even though it is impossible to ascertain whether Beck knew the above examples, it is likely that the work of renowned women artists of the past, such as Kauffman and Le Brun, were known to her. She might even have been familiar with Haudebourg-Lescot’s self-portrait that had already entered the collection of the Louvre.
in 1867. The relevance of these predecessors for women artists in the period is further indicated by a copy of Le Brun’s Self-Portrait with Her Daughter that the Swedish painter Christine Sundberg (1837–1892) made in the Louvre around the year 1880. Sundberg lived permanently in Paris from 1868 until her death in 1892 and she regularly copied works by old masters upon commission. The preserved copy after Le Brun suggests that the work of pioneering women artists of the eighteenth century was known and relevant to Nordic women artists in the period when Beck painted her self-portrait.

Julia Beck’s Internationalism

In what follows, Julia Beck’s life and work after her Salon debut in 1880 will be outlined and I will analyze how she navigated her career in between two cultural contexts and national art scenes. Proceeding from the notion of the exhibition artist, who had to professionally position her/himself by creating public visibility in exhibitions and through continuous press coverage, this subchapter explores Beck’s self-promotional strategies in the course of her transnational career, in which the Salon portrait eventually regained an important function.
In the aftermath of her first participation at the Salon, Beck entered into a new phase of her artistic career. In 1882, she settled in the artists’ colony in Grez-sur-Loing in the forest of Fontainebleau, an area that was particularly popular among Nordic and anglophone artists.\textsuperscript{355} In contrast to her compatriots, Beck was one of the few artists who settled in the village permanently and, even during the winter months, only returned to the capital on occasion.\textsuperscript{356} She participated actively in the vivid social life of the colony, often mentioned in contemporary accounts of the frequent masquerade balls and festivities in the French village.\textsuperscript{357} In Grez-sur-Loing, Beck began to focus on landscapes painted \textit{en plein air} and rendered in fleeting mild \textit{valeur} and loose brushwork. Her landscapes from this period show great stylistic versatility, ranging from the flat and broad brushwork in the rendering of the water to more formalized, calligraphic elements in the depiction of the reed, at times paired with high horizontal lines and elongated formats that reveal the influence of japonism.\textsuperscript{358} During this period she resided in the colony, Beck became a member of the secessionist Opponent movement and in 1885 she signed the petition to the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Stockholm demanding a modernization and liberalization of its organization, exhibitions and educational system.

In the historiography of both the Opponent movement and the Grez colony, Beck’s role has long been ignored.\textsuperscript{359} In recent years, she has been recognized as a leading landscape painter of her generation, yet only a handful studies and exhibitions have touched extensively upon her work.\textsuperscript{360} In her dissertation on the international artists’ colony in Grez-sur-Loing, Alexandra Herlitz has reflected upon Beck’s remarkable absence from the historiography of the colony, although she was a vital member of the international community that visited the Fontainebleau region in the 1880s.\textsuperscript{361} Herlitz has demonstrated that the artist made a major contribution to the development of the so-called \textit{Grez style} with her lyrical and tranquil depictions of the Loing river in grayish and mild tones.\textsuperscript{362}

In the interview with \textit{Dagens Nyheter} in 1934, Beck recalled that she largely abandoned portrait painting after her father’s death in 1888, and focused on landscape painting instead, because she no longer had the financial means to rent an appropriate studio in Paris: “My father died and I had to think of how to exist. In order to become a portrait painter, I would have needed a fine studio, a reception room and all these things one needed in Paris. Now I had to say goodbye to this. I had to thrust aside all portrait painting and
started with watercolors instead.” This statement shows that part of her decision to become a landscape painter and watercolorist was due to practical and financial reasons. For the rest of her life, Beck repeatedly had to tackle financial difficulties, as indicated in her correspondence with her colleagues and art patrons Eva Bonnier and Prince Eugen, to whom she tried to sell her work.

With her atmospheric depictions of rivers, lakes and water lilies, Beck belonged to those Nordic artists who most decidedly committed themselves to *plein air* painting and whose style was most closely related to French impressionism. In the year of her father’s death, Beck painted *The Last Ray of Sunshine*, depicting the Risle River near Beaumont-le-Roger in Normandy. In this atmospheric work, the artist has captured the last ray of sunlight that touches upon the forest and reflects in the water of the river. The flattened composition is characterized by a high horizontal line that almost dissolves due to the reflection of the trees on the water. The contours of the landscape and the river have disappeared and transformed into fleeting and delicate *valeur* that rhythmically structure the composition.

Beck’s engagement with the stylistic and formal features of the French avant-garde rendered her an easy target for the conservative critics in her home country. Throughout the 1880s, one can identi-
fy a recurring pattern in the reviews by conservative Swedish critics who tended to describe her as a “radical”. In the fall of 1885, the artist and critic Hjalmar Sandberg (1847–1888) commented upon a landscape painting that Beck exhibited in the second Opponents’ exhibition, criticizing her for not having been able to “free herself from the pretentious grayish atmosphere, which appears to have been an epidemic in the artists’ colony in Grez”, further wondering why “the painteress has given up on her portrait studies, which just recently seemed to promise something”. The art historian and critic Karl Wåhlin (1861–1937) remarked the following year that in Beck’s work the “exaggerations and onesidedness of valour painting” were more visible than in any other of the “Paris artists”. Finally, in a review of the Konstnärsförbundets utställning (Artists’ Union Exhibition) in 1888, the critic Carl Rupert Nyblom (1832–1907) identified Beck as an exponent of impressionism and criticized the stylistic movement’s “lack of truth”, which sees many more nuances in the color than a sound eye can perceive and, finally, seized by a veritable mania, or some sort of self-disorientation, throws a rain of prismatically broken colors over the subjects, which thereby are literally set on fire, all this done with the zeal to depict them in their full splendor of life, power and color.

A survey of the Swedish press in the 1880s shows that Beck’s work was regularly covered in reviews, which points to the artist’s standing as one of the leading landscape artists at the time. The critical reception of her art in the context of the Opponent movement and the early years of the Artists’ Union demonstrate that Beck was regarded as one of the most radical members of the group, following the French example and the impressionist style in a more pronounced manner than many of her compatriot colleagues.

Julia Beck stayed in France for the rest of her life, finally settling down in the village of Vaucresson near Paris in 1888. In December of 1890 she wrote a letter to Hildegard Thorell, in which she mentioned that she had worked productively, painting both figures and landscapes in recent months:

During the summer I painted three heads, thereafter in the autumn another two. I am studying with great seriousness. I have tranquility around me. I have also painted a “Premier Prin-
temps”, a “Fin d’Automne”. These for the Salon in March at Champs de Mars. In addition a “Sous Bois” and a larger “Au Lac” – I will try to present myself with honor at the New Salon. And you know well how one always awaits the moment with anxiety, when one sees one’s work in public, side by side with that of others. The winter is entrancingly beautiful, but awfully severe. The rime is hanging like real lace from trees and branches – and the trunks stand clad in gray-green velvet. I have tried to put some winter moods on canvas, but the color is freezing on the palette. [...] There are few Swedes in Paris and I have almost exclusively been around French families.369

This is one of the few preserved and hitherto unpublished letters by Beck and a rare occasion on which she shared some information about her work with one of her colleagues and friends, stressing her industriousness and productivity, her exhibition activities and her professional ambitions. She also mentioned that she moved primarily in French circles, as many of her former compatriot friends had by then returned to Sweden.

Vibeke Röstorp has mapped Beck’s exhibition activities in France from the 1890s onwards and has shown that the artist participated in the exhibitions held at the art gallery of Le Barc de Boutteville alongside French impressionist and symbolist painters.370 Between 1891 and 1907, Beck also exhibited annually with the Union des femmes peintres et sculpteurs, which allowed for free participation without prior competition or selection.371 Her works were from time to time covered in the Swedish press and the Paris correspondent for Svenska Dagbladet Erik Rusén (1864–1935) – alias “Volmar” – praised her landscapes in the 1902 exhibition as “strongly personal” and characterized by “a fine poetical sentiment” and “an intimate knowledge of nature [...] seen through a poet’s eye”.372

A remarkable and hitherto unpublished source concerning Julia Beck’s self-promotional strategies is a small collection of letters that she wrote to John Neander (1846–1918), an editor of the newspaper Nya Dagligt Allehanda. Here, Beck appeared as an enterprising artist who talks about her exhibition activities, sales to prestigious patrons and professional recognition in France, trying to convince the journalist to cover her professional progress in the newspaper.373 In 1893, she informed Neander that she had been invited by the French committee to participate as illuminator in the World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago, mentioning that she
had become a member of the *Société des miniaturistes et enlumineurs en France* (Society of French Miniaturists and Illuminators). In December 1894, she announced that she had received a medal for her work at the Exposition, hoping that the good news would be covered in the newspaper. In 1896, Beck commented on her participation in the exhibition of the *Union des femmes peintres et sculpteurs*, mentioning that her contribution had been praised by the president of the Republic Félix Faure (1841–1899) and his daughter Lucie Faure (1866–1913) on the day of the opening.

The correspondence with the editor of *Nya Dagligt Allehanda* not only provides some rare insights into Beck’s life in France, but it also demonstrates that she used the media and her personal contacts repeatedly and systematically for her own professional self-promotion. These letters indicate that Beck was eager to present herself as a successful artist who was recognized by members of the cultured and political elite in France. At the same time, by informing Neander of her professional development, she aimed to be present in the press and in the art scene of her home country despite her relative absence. Even though she exhibited in Sweden from time to time, she rarely traveled home during these years. In 1897, Beck mentioned in a letter that she had not been in Sweden for the past ten years and that she was now on her way to Gothenburg to show her works to the collector Pontus Fürstenberg. In an interview with the weekly women’s journal *Idun* from 1894, the artist was asked if she ever wanted to return to Sweden. Beck replied that even though she loved the “happy, lively Stockholm”, she did not believe that she could be “productive enough” at home. She further explained that it appeared impossible to her “to work really seriously at home”. This observation seems to apply in some sense to all of the artists covered in the following pages: They all spent their most formative and/or productive years as artists abroad.

A critic for *Stockholms Dagblad* remarked in an article about Beck’s visit to Stockholm in 1926: “More than one of our artists got caught in France and is more or less lost to the homeland.” This comment still applies to Beck, when one considers the artist’s long-lasting absence from Swedish art history. In recent years, several scholars have highlighted the impact of migration on the reception history of Nordic women artists in the period, mentioning Beck as an example. Both Herlitz and Röstorp have used her case to analyze the systematic exclusion of expatriate artists from Swedish
art history. Herlitz has argued that the nationalist aesthetic ideals of the Artists’ Union became dominant in Sweden from the late 1880s onwards, excluding Beck, who neither engaged in national romanticism nor painted genuinely Swedish motifs. Its protagonists, the artists and writers Richard Bergh, Karl Nordström (1855–1923) and Georg Pauli, as well as sympathetic critics and art historians, such as Georg Nordensvan (1855–1932) or Sixten Strömbom, were successful in writing their own history, with their anecdotal accounts shaping the reception of the period during the entire twentieth century.

Beck’s internationalism assigned her the place of an outsider caught in between two national historiographies, the Swedish and the French. According to Röstorp, the artist’s in-between-position was rendered most obvious in 1900, when Beck, alongside other expatriate artists, was disregarded for the Swedish section of the World Fair in Paris, organized by the Artists’ Union under the commissariat of Anders Zorn. Instead, Beck participated in the exhibition of the Union des femmes peintres et sculpteurs, which was on show at the same time. The critic Theodor Lindblom (1858–1903) reacted strongly to the artist’s omission from the World Fair, suggesting that “art politics” had led to her non-consideration by the jury consisting of her former classmates and fellow Opponents. It appears likely that her work was considered not national enough in expression, style and motif to represent Sweden in the World Fair. As a consequence, Röstorp has coined the concept of the third culture artist, denoting those artists, including Beck, who were considered exotic and innovative by the French, while being condemned as “Frenchified” by their compatriots at home. Those artists, who had founded the Opponent movement in order to improve the exhibition opportunities of expatriates among other points of criticism, eventually excluded their former colleagues who resided abroad from participation, many of them women. This parochial and misogynist development might explain why Beck stated in the interview of 1934 that she regretted having been part of the Opponent movement, adding: “By now I understand better, what those years at the academy were worth.” The same year, she received the Légion d’honneur, the highest civilian decoration in France for her artistic work, which points to the professional recognition she had gained abroad but had been denied at home.
Organizing Her Legacy

Julia Beck was not only aware that her in-between position was harmful to her career and reception, but actively counteracted her marginalization. Towards the end of her career, she used the self-portrait from the Salon of 1880 to organize her artistic legacy and to secure a place for herself in Swedish art history.\textsuperscript{387} Fifty years after its completion, Beck donated the self-portrait from 1880 to the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Stockholm. The letter to the secretary Erik Lindberg (1873–1966) from October 1930, in which she proposed bestowing the painting on the academy, indicates that the donation was a deliberate attempt to secure her reputation in her home country:

My dear Monsieur Lindberg, in few words what I have to say – do you remember me through my dearly missed Hildegard Thorell – the photograph of my self-portrait executed and exhibited at the “Salon des artistes français” already in 1881 or 82 – student of Leon Bonnat and Gérôme, my works from France always arose attention in the press – Henry Greville wrote about it – “Mlle Beck s’est pente sous son chapeau grés en costume de voyage – Bon Début.” Now I wish to bestow my self-portrait on the Royal Academy of Fine Arts. Where I myself have been a student – with [?] colleagues. Among them Bergh, Zorn, [?], Lindman, Kreuger etc. – and myself one of the few female [?] Jenny Nyströms – Where I loved my [studies] under Boklund, Rosen, Wallander and Malmström. There I could study in the atmosphere I loved – It is a precious gift and beautifully [?].\textsuperscript{388}

Unfortunately, the document is glued into the pages of the protocol and therefore parts of it are unreadable. Nevertheless, the letter to the academy can be understood as a remarkable attempt by Beck to inscribe herself and her work in an academic line of succession. Not only the initial act of emulation performed inside the painting, but also the eventual act of donating the portrait to the academy followed the same strategy: to claim artistic recognition and to be recognized as part of an academic tradition of apprenticeship and genealogy. The painting would be incorporated into the academy’s collection of artists’ portraits and thereby Beck would finally be recognized as one of its legitimate representatives. In the letter, Beck anticipated the incorporation of her work and her persona.
into the history of the academy by inscribing herself and her work into a genealogy of artists, diligently listing her teachers and some of the leading artists of her generation. The act of donating her self-portrait to the academy allowed her to enter into this particular line of succession and to reconcile her double artistic identity, torn between the French and the Swedish contexts. By donating the self-portrait to her former academy, Beck established her own legacy in Sweden, trying to make sure that her work would not be forgotten in her home country despite fifty years of relative absence. Both the painting and the donation can be understood as acts of self-fashioning as a member of the academic community.

The Royal Academy of Fine Arts accepted the donation in November 1930.389 Beck expressed her satisfaction with the decision in a letter to a friend.390 It is worth noting that she kept the portrait in her possession for half a century and never sold it. Instead, at the end of her life she organized the self-portrait’s institutionalization and musealization. The self-portrait had a special place in Beck’s life story, as it stands in for the starting and the end point of her artistic career. It was the image with which she wanted to introduce herself as a professional painter to an international audience and it was the image by which she wanted to be remembered in her home country. This narrative testifies to the crucial importance of the self-portrait in the making of Beck’s decentered career.

From another perspective, the story of the self-portrait supports the notion that the schism between the Opponents and the academy was less dichotomous and the relationship between the 1880s generation of artists and the art establishment and its tradition more ambivalent than the early historiography permitted. Consequently, it is not a paradox that Beck painted a self-portrait in academic manner and brownish palette, while rendering her plein air landscapes in fleeting valeur and impressionist brushwork. By emulating the masters of the past, Beck appropriated the role of the artist and legitimized her entry into the profession. As a landscape painter, she engaged with the new artistic developments of her own time and developed a personal style that ultimately defies any regional categorization.
In 1891 the Danish artist Anna Petersen (1845–1910) painted an interior representing a group of women spending the evening together by lamplight. In *An Evening with Friends, by Lamplight* four women, including the artist who is positioned outside the picture plane, have gathered to listen to the young musician Frida Schytte (1871–1948) play the violin. The scene is set in Petersen’s elegantly furnished home: the walls are filled with paintings in golden frames, and the flowerpots on the windowsills, the carpets and curtains give the room a cozy and warming atmosphere. The only source of light is a paraffin lamp hanging from the ceiling. Schytte is standing next to the lamp, represented in profile and playing her instrument. Schytte’s reflection in the mirror enhances her presence. The audience for this intimate nightly concert are three women, their faces cast in shadows or turned away from the beholder. Two of the women are reclining on the sofa in relaxed postures, while the third woman is depicted from behind, sitting on a chair and holding a glass. The atmosphere of the gathering oscillates between interaction and isolation. The friends are united in listening to the sound of the music and at the same time appreciating it in silence and solitude.

The conspiring air of such close friends’ gatherings in the privacy of the home had by the end of the nineteenth century turned into a popular motif in art. In ambitious and multi-figured compositions, artists, such as Anna Petersen, Hanna Hirsch-Pauli and others, portrayed the artistic and intellectual circles to which they belonged. After acquiring Petersen’s painting in 2007, the Hirschsprung Collection in Copenhagen investigated the identity of the women represented and concluded that the couple reclining on the sofa were
(from left) the painters Bertha Wegmann and Jeanna Bauck and the woman sitting next to them on the chair was their colleague Marie Krøyer. In the painting the relationship between Bauck and Wegmann is somehow rendered unclear, but their spatial closeness and relaxed poses imply that they are comfortable with one another. The physical proximity of the two artists’ bodies turns them into the decentered couple of the image, while the nature of their relationship is literally lost in the dark.

The following chapter focuses on the friendship images by Bauck and Wegmann and explores the significance of their professional and personal relationship for their self-fashioning. It uses their artistic partnership as a central case that aids in understanding the importance of friendship and collaboration for the self-fashioning of Nordic women painters. It focuses primarily on selected friendship images painted by the two artists, but it will also introduce examples by other painters to demonstrate how vital the genre was in the period. The following chapter investigates the
making of artistic identity through mediated self-representation. It asks how both individual and collective identity are negotiated in and through those paintings in which the friend acts as sitter or model, and how these artworks in turn are constitutive for the emotional community of Nordic women artists. Conceptualizing portraits as social agents, the artists’ reciprocal acts of imagining companionship in painting are not merely understood as signs of friendship but objects fundamental to its negotiation and integral to the respective artists’ self-fashioning.

This chapter draws extensively upon previously unpublished archival findings, the correspondence by Bauck and Wegmann with their mutual friend and fellow colleague Hildegard Thorell constituting the central source material. These letters will not only be used as empirical evidence informing about their lives, their relationship and the evolution of their works, but the analysis will also consider the role of the friends’ epistolary practice in the development of their artistic partnership and professional network.

First, it is necessary to define and conceptualize the genre category of the friendship image and to discuss the importance of friendship in women’s lives in the late nineteenth century, and more precisely, inside the emotional community of Nordic women painters.

The Friendship Image as Genre Category

The hypothesis of this chapter is that friendship and collaboration were crucial for Nordic women artists’ self-fashioning in the late nineteenth century and that affectionate feelings and a spirit of belonging had a vital impact on their representation of one another. A photograph discovered during the research process in the archives of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Stockholm can be read as a visual and bodily manifestation of the strong sense of community among a group of female art students. It was taken in the late 1880s at Fruntimmer-Afdelningen and represents four students who are standing closely together. They are holding tightly onto one another and it seems as if they are forming one unitary body and taking shelter behind one another’s backs. The student to the outer left has placed her hand in a confidential gesture inside the pocket of her fellow student’s apron. The latter is held in a tight embrace by another student positioned behind her, who is resting her
head on her shoulder. The women are smiling and looking attentively into the camera, while their heads form a smooth line.

The four painters can be identified by comparing their features to other photographs: Gerda Roosval-Kallstenius (1864–1939) to the outer left, Maria Asplund Wrangel (1861–1923) in the front, followed by Ida Gisiko (1859–1940) and finally Lotten Rönquist to the far right. Gerda Roosval, who married the painter Gottfrid Kallstenius (1861–1943) in 1891, and Lotten Rönquist remained close friends even after having completed their education at the academy. In the early 1890s, they studied together in Paris.

In this carefully staged photograph, the four students display their mutual affection and communal spirit. This image raises the question of how such a sense of community and camaraderie affected the professional development and self-understanding of women artists in the period. A fruitful way to answer this question is to study paintings in which artists sit for one another.

If the self-portrait is the artist’s favorite means of reflecting on her/his profession, the artist portrait may come second. Since the Renaissance, a portrait of a like-minded individual, a friend or a colleague has figured as a gift and a preferred object of exchange, but on a metaphorical level used as a means to exchange ideas, to comment on shared artistic ideals, or on the other’s personality and beliefs. It has been used to express admiration, as much as it has been employed to generate the same. The artist portrait is a form

Fig. 32. Gerda Roosval-Kallstenius, Maria Asplund Wrangel, Ida Gisiko and Lotten Rönquist in the Higher Painting Class at the Women’s Department of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts, Stockholm, 1887–88.
of artistic dialogue and competition at the same time. Friendship between artists is an encounter *inter pares* – and a portrait resulting from it an intimate get-together, seeing eye-to-eye in both its literal and metaphorical sense.

In what follows, I will broaden this rather loose definition and propose a genre category for paintings in which artists imagine one another. The purpose is to investigate what I suggest to term *friendship images*, a genre category comprising paintings in which the artist friend acts as a sitter or model. This definition derives from the fact that not all artworks examined in this study belong to a single established genre category, such as the portrait in its strict definition. The artists employed one another as sitters or models in order to experiment in a range of genres, such as interior, genre, landscape and portrait, often deliberately letting them merge into one another. Despite the diversity and eclecticism of these paintings, I will argue that all of these friendship images have in common an addressing of companionship, artistic exchange, collaboration and community, sometimes in a more immediate and sometimes in a more suggestive manner.

In the work of Nordic women painters, the genre of the friendship image gained currency in the late nineteenth century and in particular in the 1880s. During this period, they transgressed the boundaries between amateurism and professionalism in considerable numbers and began to conceive of themselves as a community in an unprecedented manner. As will be discussed later in this chapter, women artists have addressed their relationships in painting in previous periods, but these images mostly visualized the hierarchical order between teacher and student. In the late nineteenth century women artists began to depict a shared experience, painting one another on an equal footing and in intimate settings, inserting obvious or hidden cross-references in the images that visually bind them together.

To the best of my knowledge, there does not exist any explicit terminology, definition or theorization of the above phenomenon in anglophone scholarship. However, with regard to the German context, Klaus Lankheit introduced the term *Freundschaftsbild* (friendship image) in his seminal study *Das Freundschaftsbild der Romantik* from 1952, dedicated solely to works by male artists. Here he identified the visual display of affection and a sense of community as a key characteristic of the romantic movement, discussing its representation in the works of Caspar David Friedrich.
(1774–1840), the Nazarenes and others. According to Lankheit, the *Freundschaftsbild* is both a genre and a style, characterized by expressions of equality in content (*inhaltliche Gleichwertigkeit*) and form (*formale Gleichgewichtigkeit*). My approach is inspired by this definition, but I mean to add that equality also expresses itself in a shared authorship and a collaborative spirit. Lankheit initially applied the term only to double or group portraits, representing at least two friends together. His approach is therefore strictly limited to representations of friendship in painting. In both German and Nordic art history, the terms *Freundschaftsbild* and *kamratporträtt* or *venskabsportræt* have become somewhat accepted, but rather non-reflected terms, applied more broadly to portraits exchanged between artists. Based on Lankheit’s initial definition, *friendship image* as the English equivalent to *Freundschaftsbild* is used here. At the same time, the aim is to apply the term more broadly as a figure of thought in order to gain insights into social practices of friendship, exchange and collaboration amongst artists. This study advocates for making the concept of the friendship image useable as a theoretical tool in understanding the specific nature of images that come into being through exchange and collaboration between artists, when they sit for one another and thus share in *acts of portrayal*.

When studying the collaborative practices of the painters, it is useful to employ the literary scholar Bette London’s definition of collaboration developed in relation to women’s literary partnerships. London defines collaboration as “acts of assistance and inspiration, acts of mentoring or mutual influence; acts of revision or editorial input.” By analyzing collaborative acts in painting, the purpose is to explore how Nordic women painters invented one another as professional artists in friendship images and how, by means of mediated self-representation, they decisively partook in one another’s self-fashioning.

**Women’s Friendships in the Nineteenth Century**

In order to apply the concept of the friendship image as a modus operandi, it is necessary to clarify what is meant by friendship, both in a broader historical perspective and in the context of artistic partnerships between women in the late nineteenth century. On a basic level, friendship is based on the establishment of a common identity. Two people become friends when they realize that...
they have something in common. Friendship, as an intersubjective relationship, needs to be reciprocal and presuppose some form of equality. In the Aristotelian tradition, a true friendship is based on the ability to love a friend for his own sake, instead of, for instance, material or purely selfish reasons. Loving a friend does not, however, imply giving up on oneself. The friend is rather loved as another self, an alter ego. According to the philosopher Bennett W. Helm, friendship is practiced identification, meaning to be concerned with another’s “identity in a way that is somehow analogous to my concern for my own identity.” Friendship can thus be defined as a form of “intimate identification”, incorporating another person’s identity into one’s own by, for instance, valuing something a friend loves for his or her sake. Only by questioning the individualist conception of persons are we able to make sense of both the intimacy and the shared agency involved in affectionate relationships. Helm’s insights inform the above definition of the friendship image. Being a friend and painting a friend are equally acts of identification that have the ability to trigger dynamics in both parties involved. The philosophers Dean Cocking and Jeannette Kennett have employed the analogy of the portrait painter, when likewise discussing the transformative power of friendship:

The portrait painter does not aim to produce a mirror image of her subject. […] Rather, a good artist draws her subject in a new light; she influences and enriches our sense of the person portrayed. So, too, do our close friends draw us and so enrich our sense of self through their engaged interpretations of us. I do not see myself in you as the mirror view suggests, I see myself through you. We are thus, to some significant extent, each other’s creators.

Borrowing from Cocking and Kennett, in the friendship image both artist painter and artist sitter turn into one another’s “creators”.

Friendship is grounded in choice and selection. We choose our friends, as the writer C. S. Lewis (1898–1963) remarked, because we share certain insights, interests or tastes that distinguish us from others. This is why every friendship is also “a sort of secession, even a rebellion […] a pocket of potential resistance” from the rest of society. Friendship thus possesses a subversive and liberating potential. It can provide affiliation and belonging to a group, trig-
ger dynamics, and figure as an agent of social change.414 As the literary scholar Sharon Marcus has pointed out in relation to Victorian society, friendship offered women of the middle classes a free zone, which enabled them to take an active stance towards one another:

Female friendship reinforced gender roles and consolidated class status, but it also provided women with socially permissible opportunities to engage in behavior commonly seen as the monopoly of men: competition, active choice, appreciation of female beauty, and struggles with religious beliefs. As friends, women could comport themselves with one another in ways forbidden with men, without compromising the respectability so prized by the middle class.415

While women were expected to take on a passive role in their relationships with men, they were allowed to show agency, initiative and spontaneity and express themselves more freely in their friendships with other women, which were relationships of their own choice.416 In their influential work, the American historians Carroll Smith-Rosenberg and Lillian Faderman have highlighted the importance of female friendship in women’s lives in the nineteenth century.417 Faderman has argued that deeply felt and passionate friendships between women were accepted by society, which considered women friends “kindred spirits who inhabited a world of interests and sensibilities alien to men.”418 Being among other women meant being trusting, unrestrained and sharing one’s inner thoughts and feelings. While women were expected to hide their emotions in the presence of men, the “shield of passionlessness” could be lowered in front of other women.419 Emotionally passionate and physically expressive relationships between women were accepted by middle-class societies in the nineteenth century, because they were believed to promote feminine virtues, such as sympathy and altruism, which would eventually turn the women into good wives and mothers.420 Even though the work of Smith-Rosenberg and Faderman is shaped by a certain romanticization of female friendship and has been criticized for segregating intimacy between women in a “female world” in accordance with the ideology of the separate spheres, it has initiated research interest in the history of friendships between women.421

During the late nineteenth century, as more women began to claim gender equality, there was all the more reason for them to
bond against those who wished to deny them greater possibilities. As Martha Vicinus has observed, women's friendships became particularly intense and all-encompassing during the last thirty years of the century, which was a time when women were experiencing a growing contradiction between old patterns of behavior and social expectations as well as new professional ambitions. Women who wanted to pursue a career were particularly reliant on support by like-minded friends in order to cope with structural discrimination and prejudices on the basis of their sex. Friendship became a partial solution to these contradictions through companionship and solidarity.

Towards the end of the century, as sexuality began to be medicalized and categorized and the term lesbianism came more widely in use, anxieties about gender distinction became more pronounced and previously positive and tolerant attitudes towards intimate women friends began to be challenged. The female body, which had long been regarded as more or less asexual and passive, began to be perceived as sensual and capable of a desire that had the potential to be destructive or even fatal. In the Nordic countries, a heated public debate (in Sweden known as *sedlighetsdebatten*) unfolded in the 1880s in the press, literature and theatrical plays about sexuality and sexual morals. At the same time, influential medical practitioners and scholars, who worked in the growing field of sexology, stigmatized same-sex love as a functional sign of degeneration and as a disease causing insanity. Sexologists popularized the idea of a so-called *third sex*, which was supposedly driven by inverted emotions and a neurotic desire to reject women’s assigned role. Building on such theories, influential conservative commentators vilified same-sex partnerships as “pathological” and “morbid”. Intimate relationships between women began to be conceived as a threat to patriarchal society, the institution of the family and the whole social order. Unmarried working women who claimed a place for themselves in public life were criticized as abnormal, both socially and biologically.

The late nineteenth century was a period of radically changing conceptions of female friendship. Relationships that once were considered as consolidating traditional gender roles and class status began to be conceived as a threat to the status quo because they were believed to promote women’s self-sufficiency, professionalization and their financial and emotional independence from men. It is crucial to be aware of these shifting attitudes towards female
friendship, when it comes to studying the relationships of women artists and their representation in both epistolary exchanges and friendship images. When women artists fashioned their relationship in writing and in art, they could draw on a long tradition of the promotion of female friendship and ideas about its ennobling effects, but they also had to position themselves in relation to discrediting attitudes towards unmarried, working women and intimate women friends.

Professional and Emotional Community

For the women artists covered in this study, friendship had both a practical and an emotional value. Middle- and upper-class women in the late nineteenth century could not travel unchaperoned if they wanted to make a decent impression. Female art students who went abroad to complete their education normally organized their journeys in small groups of two or three women, colleagues or relatives, who traveled together. Working women often shared accommodation and women artists rented studios together to lower their expenses. In a letter from December 1868, Bertha Wegmann described her daily routines in Munich and how she organized the cohabitation with her fellow colleague Rosie: As soon as the sun came up and until five o’clock in the evening the roommates painted in their shared studio and between five and seven they went to a drawing school to draw from the life model. Thereafter they returned home, had tea and proceeded to draw one another, often working until midnight. The seriousness of the fellow students’ (collective) studies is a recurring theme in women artists’ personal testimonials and autobiographical writings in the late nineteenth century.

Women painters were not allowed to receive independent teaching from a male artist. Instead the women needed to form groups or classes if they wanted to behave with decorum. At the private academies in Paris, female students had to work in crowded classes and were only provided minimum instruction from their teachers. As a consequence, they improved mainly by watching one another and critiquing one another’s work. The Finnish artist and writer Helena Westermarck (1857–1938), who studied both at Académie Trélat and Académie Colarossi in the early 1880s, recalled that, as an inexperienced student, she learned most by studying the more advanced students’ work. The British painter and early
feminist writer Anna Mary Howitt (1824–1884) described her own and her fellow colleague Jane Benham’s (*1829) artistic education in mid-nineteenth-century Munich, stating that the alternative to private instruction with a renowned master was to educate one another: “We determined, if we could find no real first-rate master, to have models at our own rooms, and work from them most carefully with our anatomical books and studies beside us; that we would do all as thoroughly as we could, and help and criticise each other.”436

Since hiring models was expensive, art students often took turns in sitting for one another. When Wegmann studied at Johanna Unger’s (1837–1871) private drawing school in Munich in 1868, she complained that the professional models were very expensive.437 Consequently, at the little school it was the rule “that all members shall paint one another” and the teacher’s friends had permission to paint the students, “but only under the condition that they will sit and let themselves be painted in return.”438 Marie Bashkirtseff explained in her diary that her fellow students at Académie Julian at times refused to sit for a colleague who had not yet proven successful at the Salon.439 Modeling for a fellow student was not only a common educational practice, but it could also figure as a sign of recognition of the painter’s status or a friendly gesture, because sitting for a portrait was a time-consuming favor. Lack of time was also the reason Hildegard Thorell refused Ernst Josephson’s request to paint her portrait in Paris in 1880.440

The importance of exchange and interaction with fellow art students is a recurring theme in the writings of women artists in the late nineteenth century. The British painter Charlotte J. Weeks (active 1876–1890) argued in an article entitled “Lady Art-Students in Munich” from 1881 that a woman needed to make friends if she wanted to succeed as an artist:

It would be advisable for a stranger to cultivate as much as possible the society of her fellow-students. Constant emulation and interchange of opinion on art-subjects is valuable, and the long winter evenings are usually employed in drawing from the figure model. A lady places her studio at the disposal of perhaps half a dozen friends and acquaintances, who share the expense of model, light, and heat […]. I always experienced the utmost cordiality and friendliness from all with whom I came in contact, and there is no difficulty in forming a pleasant and profitable circle of acquaintances.441
In her practical handbook *Studying Art Abroad And How To Do It Cheaply* from 1879, the American artist May Alcott Nieriker (1840–1879) likewise advised her countrywomen:

It only needs, however, the co-operation of a sufficient number of earnest female students to form a club, hire a studio, choose a critic, and engage models, to secure the same advantages now enjoyed only by men, at the same exceedingly low rates.442

Helena Westermarck recalled the lively discussions on artistic matters with her female peers and compatriots in Paris in her memoir:

It was exciting for us to meet in surroundings that were brimful with artistic interests. I cannot remember that, when some of us were together, we talked about anything else but art – with enthusiasm – or in desperation – but always with a youthful, profound trust in the power, honor and splendor of art.441

As Alexandra K. Wettlaufer has observed in her study of Anglo-American women artists’ travel writing, artists tend to portray themselves in their travel narratives as members of a community of like-minded friends. Central to their accounts “is a sense of community: women travel together; paint and sculpt together; meet, observe, and depict other women; discover women painters of the past, […] actively encouraging their sisters in art.”444 Thereby they inevitably challenged the romantic idea of the (male) artist as a solitary, isolated and melancholic genius.445 Apart from the above-mentioned memoir by Westermarck, Nordic women artists did not engage in writing travel narratives to the same extent as their American peers.446 However, community constituted a central theme in their private correspondence, as will be demonstrated in the course of this chapter.

Although many women artists supported one another in different ways, collegial relationships were anything but free from competition. It is notable that Weeks used the term “emulation” in the article quoted above when referring to the collaborative spirit among female art students. As discussed in the previous chapter, emulation can entail such opposing emotions as identification, homage and admiration, as well as rivalry and envy. The practice of emulation ran contrary to traditional ideals of girls’ education, which fostered propriety rather than competition.447 Emulation
had an inherently subversive potential when exercised by women artists, as it strengthened their professional ambitions. In her study on the function of male sociability and voluntary association in the construction of a bourgeois culture in nineteenth-century France, the historian Carol E. Harrison claimed that emulation was a “distinctly male preserve” strongly linked to bourgeois manhood: “The ability to learn from and surpass the example of one’s peers without permitting rivalry to create bitterness was a particularly masculine attribute.” The professional sphere of art education in France calls into question this gendering of emulation as an exclusively masculine attribute. In fact, emulating the work of their peers was a vital informal classroom practice among female art students both at the academy in Stockholm and at private art schools in Paris, Munich and other artistic centers. Mutual emulation facilitated the professional development of women artists more than the occasional formal education by their official teachers.

The letters sent by the young Hanna Hirsch to her more advanced colleague and childhood friend Eva Bonnier pay vivid testimony to the competitive spirit among female art students at the academy in Stockholm. While Bonnier was already studying in Paris, Hirsch kept her informed about her own studies at Fruntimmers-Afdelningen. In winter 1883, Hirsch reported who among her fellow students had recently made progress, who had fallen into the teacher’s disfavor, who appeared to be more talented than the others and finally who had fallen in love with whom. The rivalrous atmosphere at the academy increased towards the end of the academic year when the students participated in the academy’s annual competitions. When describing her fellow students’ contributions, Hirsch used particularly harsh language: “Fanny [Ekbom] is the best of all and I think she is making great progress. I wish she could do her painting well and beat Gerda [Wallander]’s to death.”

Likewise, at the private academies in Paris similar competitions, called concours, were a regular teaching practice that facilitated rivalry and encouraged the students to constantly compare themselves to one another. According to Hildegard Thorell, the students at Académie Trélät were even seated according to skill: the more accomplished students, among them Harriet Backer, sat in the front with the best view of the model on a so-called place d’artiste. The Swedish painter Mina Bredberg made an ink drawing in 1884, depicting her fellow students at Académie Julian in the crowded classroom, drawing a nude model positioned at the end of the room.

Fig. 33. Mina Carlson-Bredberg, Atelier Julian, 1884.
Anna Bilingiska utlöpare de bästa elev-
poängen gift sig i jull i og tydigt.

miss dean

den näst bästa

elever.

modellens plats är på fridens

la Massierre, Amelie

Hennes palette ligger på stolen.

hennes bra-ögon och färd i spanien

och också

till venster bakom kaminröret är den afsedde tarnben.
På öppet fönster syns skynklet till detta sk. kapprum i hörn.
A la fin de l'article, M. l'abbé
(qui a été la première personne à
s'adresser à lui), demanda
si M. l'artiste allait continuer
son ouvrage. Ce dernier répondit
par un sourire, mais sans
répondre.

M. l'artiste était un artiste français,
renommé pour ses portraits
et ses scènes quotidiennes. Il est
connu pour sa manière d'illustrer
les moments de la vie ordinaire,
sous un angle originale et
émouvant.

Atelier: Julian 1884.
Below her drawing, Bredberg has commented on the different students, introducing the Polish artist Anna Bilińska (1857–1893) as the academy’s “best student” and a Miss Dean as “the second-best student”. Bredberg’s comments imply that the classes at Académie Julian and other art schools possessed their own hierarchic structure that distinguished the more accomplished students from the rest of the class.

The above examples demonstrate that it is crucial to provide a balanced account of such communities. The relationships between artists often involved cooperativeness, friendship and affection, but they were also based on calculated or practical considerations and could cause rivalry as well as negative feelings, such as envy or resentment.

During study periods abroad, women peers and friends replaced the family as the defining social framework. The detachment from home and the autonomy of expatriate life allowed for a greater emotional freedom and intensified relationships between women friends. Many working women, including artists, chose to remain unmarried and formed long-lasting partnerships with women friends and kin, particularly sisters, and built their own social safety nets. Jeanna Bauck, for instance, lived for long periods together with Bertha Wegmann and eventually formed a household with her adopted sister Hanna. Hanna Lucia Bauck (1845–1926) was a pianist and an integral member of the friends’ artistic community. She recurs as a versatile model in the oeuvres of both Bauck and Wegmann. The sister apparently allowed the artists to work freely because her portraits display a remarkable stylistic versatility and, at times, an experimental character. Wegmann’s portrait of Hanna Lucia Bauck, probably painted around 1890, is an exceptional work in the artist’s oeuvre in its employment of loose, shimmering brushwork and an expressive color scheme. Female family members proliferated as ready-at-hand models in the figure paintings of many women artists in the period, who articulated and explored these intimate relationships and complex ties of affection in paint.

Friendship, like all forms of emotional relationships, remains an intangible concept, which raises the question of whether it is applicable in a scholarly context at all. Despite widespread insecurity among scholars about how to address feelings scientifically, emotions have in the last twenty years become a central subject of inquiry in the humanities. Working in the emerging field of the history of emotions, the medievalist Barbara H. Rosenwein introduced
the concept of “emotional communities”, allowing one to “uncover systems of feeling”, such as “the nature of the affective bonds between people” belonging to a specific social group. Rosenwein defines emotional communities as “groups in which people adhere to the same norms of emotional expression and value – or devalue – the same or related emotions.” According to Rosenwein, this concept is applicable to a variety of social communities, both larger entities, such as a certain occupational group, as in this context artists and painters, and smaller entities, here a group of friends. Different emotional communities can exist side by side and individuals can move in between them, but not always without causing conflict. Even though Rosenwein initially developed this theoretical approach in relation to medieval communities, it can and has already been applied to other historical contexts.

I suggest to conceive of the social networks and friendships developed by Nordic women painters in the late nineteenth century as emotional communities. In doing so, one can make better sense of the friendship images and epistolary exchange of these artists. Nordic women painters, like Bauck, Thorell and Wegmann and their circle of sisters and female artist friends, shared a set of values,
interests, experiences and feelings, which makes Rosenwein’s terminology applicable and useful in this context. The concept helps to grasp the conflicted notion of being woman and artist in the late nineteenth century as a shared experience. Further, emotional community proves a more suitable term for such relationships than “sisterhood”, which has occasionally been used as a substitute for the more common term “brotherhood” in studies of women artists’ communities. In contrast to artistic brotherhoods, such as the Nazarenes in the early nineteenth century, the women artists whose works are studied here did not conceive of themselves as a separate, elitist group, neither did they officially unite under a shared program or manifesto. Furthermore, artistic brotherhoods were characterized by exclusiveness, institutionalized structures and a shared ideology. The relationships of the women artists in this study were more interpersonal, informal and pragmatic, rendering emotional community a more appropriate concept.

Corresponding Lives: Jeanna Bauck, Hildegard Thorell and Bertha Wegmann

In what follows, the history of the artistic partnership between Jeanna Bauck and Bertha Wegmann and their friendship with Hildegard Thorell will be reconstructed by means of an in-depth survey of their correspondence. Since neither of these artists is yet a household name in Nordic art history, the analysis of their letters is organized along a chronological outline that allows a simultaneous presentation of their biographies. The central aim is to analyze how the artists represent their relationships in writing and how they establish an emotional community in their epistolary practice.

Jeanna Bauck was born in Stockholm in 1840 into an artistically inclined middle-class family. Her father Carl Wilhelm Bauck (1808–1877) was a musical composer, writer and lecturer at Kungliga Musikhögskolan (Royal College of Music). In 1863 she left Sweden to study painting privately in Dresden, Düsseldorf and finally in Munich, where she arrived in 1866. The Bavarian capital remained Bauck’s base for the rest of her life. In the survey book Women Painters of the World from 1905, Bauck was listed among Germany’s leading women artists, taking a “rank among the serious women painters of today”. Even though her life and oeuvre are today largely forgotten, such mentions demonstrate that she
had a considerable reputation as an artist at the turn of the century. An examination of German art journals shows that Bauck began to exhibit frequently in Munich from 1866, and that her landscapes were reviewed favorably by the press.\footnote{471 Around the year 1871, Bauck became acquainted with Wegmann, who in December of that year mentioned her for the first time in a letter, calling her a “a quite talented landscape painter”.} The friendship between the two artists intensified in the following years.

Bertha Wegmann was born in Soglio, Switzerland in 1847 and relocated as a child to Copenhagen, where she grew up in a merchant family. After having received her primary artistic training in Denmark, Wegmann moved in 1867 with financial support from Jewish patrons to Munich. Here she continued to study privately and worked as a portrait and genre painter for 13 years.\footnote{473 By the end of her stay in Munich in 1879, Wegmann was considered one of the most talented women painters of the Munich school.} Wegmann later stated that the reason for her move to the Bavarian capital was the relatively low living expenses in comparison to other artistic centers.\footnote{475 It is likely that other reasons played into her decision: Munich offered good exhibition opportunities, a flourishing art market and an excellent art academy, which was closed to women but its members supervised female students privately.} According to Charlotte J. Weeks, the city provided women artists with plenty of training opportunities and an unparalleled freedom that allowed them to live “a garçon life, such as can only be obtained in a place where it is a common thing for a lady to live alone in lodgings”.\footnote{477 Bauck and Wegmann spent the formative years of their respective careers in this relatively liberal environment, and it was here that their friendship evolved. The sources regarding the early years of their friendship are limited to the formal letters that Wegmann sent to her patrons in Copenhagen and in which Bauck is only mentioned from time to time.} In 1879, both artists participated in the Internationale Kunstausstellung (International Art Exhibition) in Munich, where they were exposed to French plein air painting and the works of the painters of the Barbizon school. These impressions may have prompted them to relocate to France to gain fresh artistic impulses.\footnote{479 The body of source material increases dramatically as soon as the friends travel to Paris in the fall of 1879 and meet their fellow colleague Hildegard Thorell, who described her encounter with Bauck and Wegmann in great detail in correspondence with}
her husband Reinhold. Thorell was among the few married women who pursued a professional career as a painter. She studied at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Stockholm between 1876 and 1878, before moving to Paris in 1879 to complete her education.\footnote{480} Thorell met Bauck and Wegmann in a guesthouse on the Rue des Bruxelles in the ninth arrondissement in Paris, where they all resided over the winter.\footnote{481} In December 1879, Thorell offered a warm portrayal of her Swedish acquaintance:

Jeanna Bauck is one of the most adorable people I have met in my life. The first impression, i.e. her appearance is not appealing – she looks like a student with her short hair, but that similarity disappears as soon as you talk to her. She seems exceptionally mild, bright, modest and always with bon courage. She is 39 years old, which I almost could not believe, but she told me today. She is awaiting an intimate friend and moreover a prominent painter from Munich, Miss Wegmann, Danish, who will also be living here. […] I almost dare to say that Jeanna and I have already become good friends.\footnote{482}

A photograph taken at the studio of Franz Hanfstaengl in Munich, probably from the early 1870s, shows the youthful features of Bauck, who was wearing her hair short. In the nineteenth century, such a coiffure was associated with emancipated and intellectual women and was worn by artists and writers, such as the French animal painter Rosa Bonheur, the French writer George
Sand (1804–1876), the Norwegian sculptor Ambrosia Tønnessen (1839–1948) and the Swedish critic Klara Johanson (1875–1948). In contrast to the self-confident Swede, Wegmann had, according to Thorell’s first impression, a sensitive character and appeared to be dependent on her friend: “Bertha is a fragile nature, […] and it would not happen, even just for an hour that Jeanna would separate from her.” During their first winter in Paris, the three artists studied together at Académie Trélat and spent much time, including the Christmas holidays, together.

In December 1879, Thorell decided to take private lessons from Wegmann, whose work she admired immensely: “I am extremely happy that Bertha Wegmann is painting in the atelier, since we learn a lot just by watching what she does and, besides, she has taken me under her wings.” It is remarkable that Thorell chose this wording, as it suggests that Wegmann felt a responsibility for the younger artist and a protective urge that exceeded an ordinary teacher-student-relationship. Wegmann became both a close friend and a mentor for Thorell, rendering their relationship somewhat asymmetrical, with Thorell looking up to Wegmann. In the weeks to follow, Thorell entered into a productive period: “Under Bertha’s guidance I have no less than three portraits in the works and I find in Bertha the best teacher.” According to the student’s own accounts, Wegmann’s private tuition had a greater impact on her artistic development than the sporadic corrections by Léon Bonnat, Jean-Léon Gérôme (1824–1904) and Jules Bastien-Lepage (1848–1884) at Académie Trélat. In retrospect, writing to Thorell, Wegmann also acknowledged the importance of skillful fellow students:

I also long to see you again and to talk to you a bit, but there can be no question of going to Paris again right now, I simply cannot afford it, but I would like to paint there together with you again some winter, preferably at a school as back then, I thought the time at Trélat’s was so nice and enjoyable, and we all had such an upswing, there was real progress. […] I don’t believe that any other school would be as good as Trélat’s, even though she was a crazy woman, but there were good teachers, and the whole thing was not as business-like as in the other schools. I look upon the time there as one of the most enjoyable episodes in my life, and as one of those during which I made the greatest progress […] Back then there were so many skillful students, and they do help more than having teachers for ten years.
These and other similar comments suggest that the influence of fellow students was in fact far greater on Nordic women painters’ professional developments than the sporadic supervision by the teachers at the private academies in Paris. Whereas the renowned French teachers provided Thorell with the desired professional pedigree, the day-to-day interaction with her peers and the informal teaching by Wegmann had a far greater impact on the advancement of her painting technique. In correspondence with her husband Reinhold, Thorell repeatedly expressed her admiration for Wegmann and her gratitude for the support she received from her friend:

You may not understand how much I am indebted to her, but it is essentially to her credit if I have improved my painting. She has put unusually much effort into me. I asked Jeanna for advice, but she explained that B. had made the effort only out of her own interest in me, since she believes that I have talent. […] You will never see any male artist who has bolder brushwork, more power, or a more beautiful perception of nature than Bertha is able to put into what she paints.495

In return, Thorell sat for her new mentor, who painted an intimate, small-scale portrait of her student in fashionable dress in only two days.491 Thorell explained: “She will paint me with my generally much admired green hat and new coat, which both together should give a most stylish impression.”492 Around the same time, Thorell painted the portrait of an American widow, Miss Gay, who was living with her daughter in the same guesthouse as the artists. Thorell depicted the American sitter in the same coat that she herself was wearing in Wegmann’s portrait. By comparing the delicately rendered fur-trimmed coats and reddened cheeks of the sitters in the portraits of Hildegard Thorell and Miss Gay, one can easily discern the stylistic similarities between teacher and student. For the likeness of Miss Gay, Thorell employed a technique of applying a light layer of bright colors as underpaint that she had learned from Wegmann.493

Thorell’s portrait of Miss Gay was accepted for the Salon of 1880, and it had a prominent position in the exhibition. The following year the painting was acquired by the Gothenburg Museum.494 Bauck was also represented at the Salon in 1880, participating for the first time and exhibiting a landscape in the style of the Barbizon school entitled Summer Evening. Bauck took Fig. 36. Bertha Wegmann, Hildegard Thorell, The Artist, 1880.
part a second time in 1882 and that year Wegmann was listed as her teacher in the Salon catalog. Wegmann celebrated her first success at the Salon in 1881. She participated under the Francophone name Berthe Vegman and received an honorable mention for her portrait of Jeanna Bauck (see fig. 60).

In the summers of 1881 and 1882, Bauck and Wegmann lived together in the guesthouse Hôtel de la Marie in Écouen in the Île-de-France. Here, they collected sketches to work with during winter and made day trips to the capital to visit exhibitions. During such excursions to Paris they would also visit their friend Thorell, who described these meetings in letters to her husband. Thorell found the friends’ company “refreshing” and the professional exchange gave her “courage and passion to work.” In the summer of 1881, Thorell sat once more for Wegmann. In this genre painting Thorell is sitting in a landscape setting listening to a young man reading aloud. In return, Wegmann provided advice and instruction, which Thorell thankfully remarked upon: “You cannot imagine how warmly interested she is in my painting and how well she understands me. I could never have met any teacher that suits me better.” A few weeks later, Thorell reflected upon Wegmann’s selfless support: “Kind Bertha, she cares about me as if it was her-
The letters by Thorell speak of a strong sense of community, trust and identification among the artists. Since Thorell uttered her admiration for Wegmann not only in correspondence with her artist friends, but also in multiple letters to her husband, it seems that she expressed honest and deeply felt emotions.

Back home in Copenhagen in October 1882, Wegmann commented on her fickle artistic temperament and longed for a reunion with Bauck in Munich: “Yes, such a poor artist's soul is a wondrous thing... now it goes up, now it goes down, now one is in seventh heaven, and now in purgatory! You can understand how I long to come to Munich and show my works to Jeanna, and where I will study so much!” Upon her arrival in Munich, Wegmann exclaimed once more in a letter to Thorell: “I have great katzenjammer and I am bursting to show my paintings to Jeanna in order to hear the sentence on me, since in Copenhagen I do not have a soul on whose opinion I count. Today Jeanna will come to my studio, and then I will learn my fate.” This humorously dramatizing statement implies that Wegmann relied on Bauck’s advice in artistic matters and that her friend’s opinion was very important to her.

In the spring of 1883 Thorell joined her friends in Munich for a couple of weeks to study with Wegmann, who by that time already tutored a number of students privately, both in Munich and in Copenhagen. Wegmann commented upon Thorell’s decision to come to Bavaria: “It pleases me a lot that you want to follow through with coming to Munich and I will happily do everything to support you in your art. You know well how much I care about you and how much I believe in your great talent.” Even this study period is meticulously documented in the correspondence with Reinhold Thorell, in which Hildegard Thorell provided detailed accounts of the instructions by Wegmann. In Thorell’s letters, Wegmann appears as a strict and honest teacher, who always “sharpened her eyes” when criticizing the colleague’s work, while at the same time reassuring her of her talent. Often Thorell spent the evenings together with her friends in the Bauck sisters’ apartment:

Yesterday evening I was invited to eat supper with Jeanna and her sister, i.e. there was no other guest but me. Bertha lodges there and we had such a great time. I never have a better time than in the company of these two friends. There, in private, we had the liveliest discussion about the right of art to exist or not to exist.
Here, Thorell emphasized the intimacy of their relationship, which allowed them to debate open-heartedly about artistic matters. After Thorell had returned to Stockholm, Bauck stated that her home felt empty without her friend’s presence, comparing their lives with those of “migrating birds without a permanent home”. By 1883 the artists had established lives and careers in three different countries, turning the periods they spent together into something rare and precious.

In the months to follow, Bauck and Wegmann kept Thorell informed about their artistic progress. In June 1883, Wegmann struggled to finish the painting *Mother with a Child in a Garden* for the *Nordisk Kunstudstilling* (Nordic Art Exhibition) in Copenhagen, while Bauck reflected sympathetically on her perfectionism:

She is up to her ears in a hurry with her “Mother with the Child” in the garden, you know, it is again completely overworked, has turned into something completely brilliant, but it has to go head over heels in a couple of days and there is still plenty missing, it is for the exhibition in Copenhagen – [...] She is currently painting and sighing over her canvas – outside the rain has been pouring for four days and nights. It is dark and the lighting is miserable, so she needs to pause from time to time – poor her, she is tired and hopes that she soon will be done with this never-ending canvas! Yes, quid pro quo – she is sacrificing everything for her art and therefore it is simply just that she is so successful.
According to Georg Nordensvan’s enthusiastic report in *Ny Illustrerad Tidning*, the painting eventually won both critical and public acclaim at the exhibition. The same year, Thorell assisted Wegmann in selling the painting to *Nationalmuseum*.

In a letter to Thorell from the summer of 1883, Bauck praised Wegmann’s portrait of her sister Anna Seekamp in an enthusiastic manner, indicating that she identified strongly with her friend’s success: “I am really fond of Bertha’s portrait of her sister, it is the best I have ever seen in terms of portraiture, and I am so conceited about my friend having done it that I look down my nose at the whole world.” Wegmann had won a third-class-medal at the Salon of 1882 for this insightful likeness of her sister. In early May 1882, shortly after the exhibition had opened, Wegmann had informed Thorell about her Salon success, indicating that the jury member Jean-Charles Cazin (1840–1901) had advocated for her portrait:

Wegmann remained the only Nordic woman artist to receive a medal from the jury throughout the 1880s. The following year, Wegmann also received the *Thorvaldsenske Udstillingsmedalje* at the annual Charlottenborg exhibition in Copenhagen, the highest honor awarded by the committee of Denmark’s most prestigious art exhibition. In the portrait, the artist’s sister has taken a break from her needlework and is curiously glancing at the beholder while playfully letting the yarn glide through her fingers. According to Wegmann’s own account, the sittings with the sister helped her to get over all the “pettiness” she felt she was surrounded by at home in Copenhagen. According to an obituary in a Danish newspaper, Anna Seekamp was an amateur landscape and flower painter herself and her home in Rungsted, outside of Copenhagen, was “always open for young artists”. The portrait of Seekamp
proved Wegmann to be a successful exhibition artist, who managed to receive recognition for a work both abroad and at home. The artist and critic Niels Vinding Dorph (1862–1931) later commented on Wegmann’s success at the Charlottenborg exhibitions in the 1880s: “Older visitors to the exhibition will still remember those years when Bertha Wegmann’s art dominated Charlottenborg, and when large crowds assembled in front of her paintings.”

How important the company of her friends was to Wegmann becomes apparent in two letters from 1883. In July, she confessed to Thorell that she wished for Bauck to move to Copenhagen to live with her, as she felt incomplete without her closest friend: “I wish she would like to be there with me – as long as she is not there, too, I feel drawn back and forth and have nowhere to gain a foothold.”

Bauck wrote these lines to Thorell to Wegmann’s dictation, which turns the comment into an indirect request addressed to Bauck. In December, Wegmann also assured Thorell of the exceptionality of their friendship:
If only you had not been so far away, so often I long to talk to you about our shared great love, about divine art, there is no one that understands this passion quite like you, and experiences it so fervently and burningly. Here, among these merchants, these wholesalers, these practical and material people, I often feel as if in a desert, and there is no one who understands me. Extending far beyond epistolary conventions of politeness, these assuring and tender comments in the letters demonstrate that the friends formed an emotional community characterized by shared experiences, feelings and beliefs. The artists distinguished clearly between their friendship, which was apparently based on mutual understanding and understood as emotionally deep, sincere and trustful, and their more superficial relationships to other people. Their friendship was based on affection, identification and at times even co-dependence, resulting in a pronounced sense of community that basically excluded the rest of the world. Time and again, the three artist friends reassured one another that they lived in a world of shared artistic concerns and emotions, often considered incomprehensible to those situated outside of their emotional community.

During the following thirty years, Bauck and Wegmann regularly visited one another and undertook study trips together. In May 1884, Bauck visited Wegmann in Copenhagen and in the winter of 1885, when the latter was receiving medical treatment for her rheumatism and chlorosis in Dresden, Bauck took care of her, “faithfully following” the friend throughout the “misery”, as the patient thankfully remarked. To help Wegmann return to artistic productivity, the artists copied together after old master paintings in the Dresdner Gemäldegalerie. During this sojourn in Dresden, Wegmann painted the second known friendship image of Bauck (see fig. 64), which she exhibited both at the Salon of 1886 and at the Exposition Universelle of 1889. Bauck and Wegmann returned to Écouen for a joint study trip during the summer of 1886.

After having spent the summer of 1889 in Tyrol, Wegmann visited Bauck in Munich during the fall and stayed for a lengthy period in her friend’s home. Bauck mentioned in her correspondence with Thorell that Wegmann chose to live in extreme isolation: “Now in Munich she has become really unsociable, cannot stand talking to anyone, locks herself up in the studio, and doesn’t want to do anything but quietly sit and paint with me, read and keep...
silent! I am the only lucky one who is allowed to be around.” In late October, Wegmann sent a series of ink drawings to the Danish physician Peter Dethlefsen. In one of these images, entitled *Vore aftener i Jeannas atelier* (Our Evenings in Jeanna’s Studio), Wegmann has depicted herself in Bauck’s company. Bauck is sitting in an armchair reading in a book, while Wegmann, sitting right next to her, is drawing in a large sketchbook. Wegmann’s informal double portrait captures the intimacy of the friends’ relationship.

In the autumn of 1891 the artist friends returned to Tyrol to hike and collect sketches together, as Bauck informed Thorell: “We each drew a sketchbook full, not with vedute, but with atmospheres, interiors, whatever we liked – it is a joyful memory.” In the summer of 1892 and in the fall of 1894 Wegmann returned to Munich for intensive study periods, as Bauck explained: “We have been hard-working together that time, the idea was that we would study together the whole winter, and indeed we painted from morning to dusk, just as much as was possible.” These repeated periods of working together, during which they experimented and collected...
sketches for later compositions, appear to have fulfilled an important function in both painters’ artistic practice. Both repeatedly described these periods as particularly creative and productive.

During her 1894 sojourn in Munich, Wegmann was accompanied by her new companion Toni Müller (1864–1947), whom she had first introduced in a letter to Thorell the previous year:

I have got a new friend who is living with me now, but Jeanna allows it, because it is a sweet quite young girl, actually a true child, I met her in the summer on Rügen, and she became so fond of me that she asked if she could come along with me. I like her a lot and her company is a great joy and comfort to me. Jeanna knows how much her company means to me and she is happy that I am not so alone anymore.

The appearance of a close companion in Wegmann’s life seemed to have caused some friction between her and Bauck. When Wegmann, many years later, in 1912, borrowed Bauck’s apartment and studio in Munich and lived there together with Müller, Bauck offered a vivid description of her friend’s companion, revealing mixed feelings: “a protégée, a younger girlfriend, a unique, remarkable, not completely normal poetess […], Toni Möller [sic] is her name – beautiful, energetic, domineering, but everything around her has a tendency towards the abnormal – otherwise endlessly good-hearted.” The descriptions of Müller in the letters by Bauck and Wegmann raise some questions regarding the nature of this “triangular relationship”.

The cohabitation between Wegmann and Müller lasted from 1892 until the artist’s death in 1926, whereupon Müller entered a Catholic convent in Copenhagen. During the final years of her life, Wegmann lived in a pension for women in Copenhagen together with Müller, who took care of her, as stated in an article in the Danish newspaper Politiken from November 1923: “It is not easy to meet the old painter. If one visits her after 7 p.m. in the ‘Damehotellet’ where she has her private place of residence, her lovely friend and good spirit, Miss Müller answers that Miss has already gone to bed.” The two women lived openly together and apparently they had their strict daily routines. In this account Müller is assigned the role of the good “housewife” who looks after her companion. Their relationship can best be described as a life partnership or Boston marriage, meaning two women living
Wegmann was considerably older than Müller, seventeen years her senior, also implied in her previously quoted choice of words, calling her companion a “true child”. In 1898, Bauck referred to Müller in a letter to Thorell as Wegmann’s “foster child”, which suggests that the couple had a somewhat asymmetrical relationship, with Müller dependent on Wegmann.\textsuperscript{538} As the literary historian Carina Burman has pointed out, it was quite common among turn-of-the-century female couples to compare their partnerships with mother-daughter relationships and play with such associations in private circles.\textsuperscript{539} During a visit to Berlin in 1904, Wegmann and Müller had their picture taken at the photographic studio of Hermann Tietz (1837–1907). The two women are elegantly dressed, they stand closely together while holding their dog Fuggi. In this photograph, Wegmann and Müller stage themselves as a couple and the pet between them symbolizes their close bond.\textsuperscript{540}

Müller also featured as a model in Wegmann’s oeuvre, and probably in the late 1890s the artist painted a portrait of her companion against the background of a dark forest.\textsuperscript{541} If one compares the sitter
in *Portrait of a Young Woman in a Blue Dress* with Müller’s features in the photograph from 1904, the resemblance is striking enough to identify her as the sitter. Müller is wearing a page-boy haircut that frames her round face, characterized by big eyes and full lips. She is wearing a blue blouse with a collar and a ribbon that is reminiscent of a sailor dress, which due to its natural waist was one of the designs promoted by the dress reform movement.542 The portrait of Müller is executed in broad and vibrant brushstrokes and the area around the hands, holding a yellow flower, is only loosely rendered. In this experimental portrait, the artist’s companion appears as a modern woman, whose androgyne appearance and boyish haircut indicate her unconventional lifestyle.

Bauck’s characterization of Müller raises some questions regarding the nature of her own relationship with Wegmann. It is remarkable that Wegmann suggested in the letter from 1893 that she needed Bauck’s permission to form a household with Müller, which implies an unusual dependence and a close bond between the friends. Bauck’s verbose description of Müller’s personality in the letter to Thorell from 1912 appears disparaging, and it seems as if she was jealous or wished to dissociate herself from Wegmann’s mannerless companion. Judging from some of her comments in the correspondence, Bauck had a more conservative outlook than Wegmann. She criticized, for instance, the younger generation of

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women artists for making themselves “ridiculous with their boyish manners, drinking, smoking, partying”, thereby discrediting the whole professional group of women artists.541

In contrast to Müller’s apparently asymmetrical relationship with Wegmann, Bauck and Wegmann had a more egalitarian partnership of strong emotional and professional significance. Of course, the contemporary reader of these letters might wonder if any of these relationships would in today’s terms be considered homosexual or lesbian. From the sources at hand it is impossible to trace whether these women engaged in any sexual intimacy.544 Even between friends, much remained unspoken as well as unwritten and one cannot know to what extent Bauck and Wegmann shared their thoughts and feelings with their married friend Thorell.545 Only in two consecutive letters from 1891 has Wegmann mentioned an “intermezzo” with a man bearing the initials P.D., immediately ensuring herself that Thorell would not share her newly won knowledge with anyone else.546 As Martha Vicinus has pointed out, women had good reasons to be discreet about their sexuality because the consequences of being outspoken about physical desire could be dangerous to their reputation and respectability.547

Both the question of whether these relationships were lesbian or not, and any possible answer, appear anachronistic given that Bauck, Wegmann and Müller most probably never thought in such strict categories as heterosexual versus homosexual desires.548 In an interview on the occasion of her seventieth birthday in 1917, Bertha Wegmann stated “My life was devoted to friendship, I was loved very much”, and she added: “For five years I have lived in the mountains of Silesia, where a young friend’s father had built me a studio.”549 In this statement, directly followed by a comment about Toni Müller, Wegmann used friendship and love interchangeably and she described the former as a guiding theme in her life. As the literary historian Birgitta Holm has argued, intimate relationships between women in this period defy any easy categorization and one should rather conceive of them as evolving along a “gliding scale”, which, in this case, oscillated between friendship and love.550

Anna Petersen’s group portrait An Evening with Friends, by Lamplight from 1891 (see fig. 31), introduced at the beginning of this chapter, elucidates the complexity in reading these ambiguous relationships. Bauck and Wegmann are sitting on the sofa to the left with their faces turned in opposite directions. They are focusing on the music and do not engage in any direct interaction. At
the same time, the two artists are sitting close together and because their shoulders meet, it even seems as if they are holding hands. Examining the scene more closely, this certainty disappears. Their hands remain hidden in the shadow cast by their own bodies. Even though the beholder cannot know if they are touching one another, the representation of their harmonious togetherness implies a strong sense of intimacy.

Despite some remaining insecurity, it seems legitimate to use friendship as an umbrella term to describe the above relationships. Friendship had ambiguous meanings and divergent uses in the period, applicable to both sexually and non-sexually intimate relationships between women. As Sharon Marcus has pointed out, in the nineteenth century, friend was a “capacious term” and could denote an emotional intimate or a lover. Against this backdrop, Marcus concludes: “We can best understand what kind of relationships women had with each other not by hunting for evidence of sex, which even if we find it will not explain much, but rather by anchoring women’s own statements about their relationships in a larger context”, such as “the complex linguistic field of lifewriting”. The above statements by Bauck and Wegmann are rare occasions of “queer dissonance” in their correspondence, countering the dominant gender ideology of the day. Such a reading only becomes visible if the reader considers the heteronormative social context in which the letters were written. In many ways, these relationships, whether they were sexual or not, undermined and challenged the heteronormative ideology that governed the period. As Øystein Sjåstad has remarked in relation to Kitty Kielland’s non-normative life choices, “to remain unmarried voluntarily was a queer choice, but this did not automatically mean the woman was a lesbian”. Inspired by Tone Hellesund’s understanding of the single middle-class woman or “spinster” as a queer cultural category, Sjåstad has defined queerness as the challenge of society’s gender expectations and the willingness to build a life independent of these constraints.

Bauck, Wegmann and Müller built lives that revolved around their emotional community, consisting of female friends and siblings. In the context of this study, the fact that their relationships during different periods in their lives closely resembled marriages – in the sense that they constituted the women’s primary emotional bonds – is more important than their sexual orientation. These women formed partnerships with one another and concluded social

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Fig. 44. Bertha Wegmann, Portrait of the Swedish Painter Jeanna Bauck, 1905.
contracts, providing economic and social safety as well as emotional support. In contrast to heterosexual marriages, however, these partnerships offered one decisive advantage: They allowed for the personal freedom to pursue a professional career, which was denied to the majority of women who married a man. Bauck and Wegmann, whose partnership is central to this chapter, developed an emotionally intimate and professionally productive relationship. During long periods in their lives, they formed a household and a studio community, they supported one another financially and collaborated artistically.

Following the two artists’ deaths, Toni Müller played a decisive role in securing the friends’ work for posterity. Wegmann herself documented in her will that Danish museums should be allowed to choose a painting from her estate. Several museums followed that invitation on the occasion of the memorial exhibition held in Charlottenborg in October 1926, including Århus Kunstmuseum, which selected Wegmann’s portrait of Jeanna Bauck from 1905. In 1931, Müller made sure that key works by Bauck and Wegmann entered the collection of Nationalmuseum. Finally, in 1941, Müller organized a second commemorative exhibition of Wegmann’s work. At this exhibition, the remaining paintings in the artist’s estate were sold in order to build a foundation for destitute young women artists in Wegmann’s name.

In their correspondence with Thorell, Bauck and Wegmann repeatedly emphasized their mutual influence on one another’s artistic progress and recounted joint study trips and co-working periods. In the late 1890s, when Bauck was living in Berlin and teaching at the Verein der Berliner Künstlerinnen (Association of Women Artists in Berlin), Wegmann visited her several times. During a visit in 1898, Wegmann and Bauck worked simultaneously on their respective portraits of Hanna Lucia Bauck, depicting the sister from slightly different angles. In a letter to Thorell, Bauck mentioned that Wegmann had the idea for the portraits after copying Sandro Botticelli (1445–1510) in the Gemäldegalerie, suggesting to paint Bauck’s sister in the style of the Renaissance master. The artists learned much from such joint exercises, as Wegmann explained in a letter to Thorell from 1887: “How much I would like to paint together with you, dear Hildegard, how refreshing it would be to paint together from a model, but I don’t have the means for this. Unfortunately, I have to consider selling, and then I cannot paint studies, because no one wants to buy them.”
The preserved letters indicate that Wegmann made her last long study trip to Munich from the fall of 1911 until the summer of 1912. The First World War eventually kept the friends apart for several years and thereafter there is no mention of any study trips or visits in the preserved letters. In a letter from 1915, Bauck regretted not having been able to work together with Wegmann: “She had so much wanted to come here during the winter to really paint aside me, something we both used to benefit from a lot. But I have had a real wartime here and barely got through it alive.” When talking about painting jointly, Bauck used the Swedish term *ikapp* (“måla ikapp med mig”), which means to do something simultaneously in the form of a competition. Hence, she implied that she collaborated with Wegmann through competition and emulation, meaning that they improved by trying to keep pace with one another. Inherent to both friendship and artistic collaboration is the notion that one wants to live up to the partner’s expectations and skills. Therefore, the painters’ artistic partnership oscillated between, at first sight, opposing poles of collaboration and competition. In other words, a collaborative-competitive spirit formed the core of their shared artistic practice.
When the friends had reached old age, long journeys became impossible to undertake and the letters became the sole source of communication and exchange. In 1918, Bauck summarized her feelings in a letter to Thorell: “Sad that we are so far apart – my dearest friends are far away, you in Stockholm, Bertha in Copenhagen […] – as inaccessible as if they were on the moon.” During the 1920s the epistolary exchange became more infrequent until it finally ended with the deaths of Thorell’s correspondents in 1926.

This analysis has shown that the letters exchanged between Jeanna Bauck, Hildegard Thorell and Bertha Wegmann had both social and psychological functions. The correspondence allowed for communication when apart and forged interpersonal ties. It figured as an emotional outlet for self-expression and group-building. The study of the epistolary exchange demonstrates that the artists’ relationship was shaped by a strong sense of community and belonging, and it was built upon shared feelings, experiences and professional aspirations. The correspondence further indicates that Bauck and Wegmann not only shared a strong emotional bond as friends, but that they even collaborated closely as artists. In the following, the focus will shift from the friends’ letter-writing to their paintings by means of detailed analyses of selected friendship images and shared artistic practices.

Doubled Portrait

The artistic companionship of Jeanna Bauck and Bertha Wegmann spanned over many years and resulted in several friendship images. Bauck painted Wegmann once, probably in 1889, representing her friend at work in the studio (see fig. 50). Wegmann portrayed Bauck on several occasions during the 1880s: for the first time in Paris in 1881 (see fig. 60) and for the second time in Dresden in 1885 (see fig. 64). Both portraits were exhibited at the Salon in Paris in 1881 and 1886 and were thus essential in shaping Wegmann’s reputation as a portraitist. The catalog published on the occasion of Wegmann’s memorial exhibition in Charlottenborg in October 1926 lists two additional portraits of Bauck painted in the 1880s, neither of which has yet been located or identified. Wegmann painted her last known portrait of Bauck in 1905, depicting her older friend in profile, seated in an armchair with her hands folded over a book (see fig. 44). The scarce literature on the artists tends
to state that they painted around twenty portraits of one another, without providing any supporting information.\textsuperscript{571}

When it comes to group portraits, Bauck might also have sat for Wegmann’s genre painting \textit{Two Friends Drinking Tea in the Artist’s Studio}, which was begun around 1885 and completed as late as 1925.\textsuperscript{572} The lady with the curly blonde hair to the left bears some resemblance to photographs and portraits of Bauck. The woman to the right with the brown hair and heart-shaped face is reminiscent of Hildegard Thorell in Wegmann’s likeness from 1880. Yet, there is no further supporting evidence proving these identifications. A pencil drawing by Wegmann in the collections of \textit{Statens Museum for Kunst} in Copenhagen depicts a similar scene with three women drinking tea in a studio. An ink drawing with the same motif, included in a letter from Wegmann to Peter Dethlefsen from the fall of 1889, allows us to identify the women (from left) as Jeanna Bauck, Hanna Bauck and Agathe Röstel, and it also reveals that the depicted room is Bauck’s studio on Landwehrstrasse 40 in Munich.\textsuperscript{573} Agathe Röstel was a genre painter who had her studio in
the same house. In 1879, Wegmann painted a portrait of Röstel, which she displayed on a wall in her studio in Copenhagen as late as 1917, as evidenced in a photograph. The portrait remained in Wegmann’s ownership until her death. Even though information on their relationship remains scarce, Wegmann’s portrait and her drawings strongly suggest that Röstel was a close friend.

The following analysis of the friendship images focuses on the studio scene by Bauck and the two Salon portraits by Wegmann. In these paintings the artists elaborate most deliberately on their shared role as professional artists. In particular, the two Salon portraits, which were intended to be put on display in the most prestigious exhibition of the time, fulfilled an important function in showcasing both the painter and the person represented. The primary function of these exhibition pieces was to establish a professional reputation for the artist, but partly also for the sitter. At the same time, the paintings by Bauck and Wegmann also figured as tokens of friendship. Two of the three paintings, Bauck’s genre

Fig. 48. Bertha Wegmann, Afternoon Tea in the Artist’s Studio, 1889.
scene and Wegmann’s 1881 portrait, remained in Wegmann’s possession, pointing towards their personal importance as friendship images. As material signs of friendship, these paintings recalled the presence of the friend, even when she was far away in a different country. In the friendship image, the temporal and the permanent – the ephemeral act of portrayal and the lasting presence of the artwork – establish a sense of companionship in the moment of the sitting and keep it alive ever after. After Wegmann’s death in 1926 both paintings were donated to Nationalmuseum according to the artists’ will and thereby incorporated into an eminent museum collection.576

It was long believed that Bauck’s undated genre scene depicting Wegmann portraying a hitherto unknown gentleman was painted in Munich in the late 1870s, shortly before the artists traveled to France in 1879.577 The dark palette, seemingly metonymic with the Munich school, was the central stylistic argument for this dating. It was based on the idea that the works of the two painters “lightened
up” considerably as soon as they moved to Paris and were exposed to the art of French *plein air* painting.\(^{578}\)

Emilie Boe Bierlich has recently located the portrait that Wegmann is painting in Bauck’s studio scene in private ownership and identified the sitter as Peter Dethlefsen, a Danish physician and psychiatrist of renown.\(^{579}\) Wegmann’s painting is undated, but according to the entry on Dethlefsen in *Dansk Biografisk Leksikon*, she portrayed him in 1889, meaning that this portrait was painted af-

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Fig. 50. Jeanna Bauck, *The Danish Artist Bertha Wegmann Painting a Portrait*, 1889.
After the artists’ longer sojourns in Paris in the early 1880s and after Bauck had settled again in Munich.580 This date is further supported by an entry in the Salon catalog of 1889 that lists a painting by Wegmann entitled Portrait de M. le Dr. P. D., which must be the portrait of Peter Dethlefsen.581 Hence, Wegmann’s portrait as well as Bauck’s genre painting were most likely painted in the winter of 1888–89 or spring of 1889.

Based on the preserved letters with greetings and drawings that Dethlefsen received from Bauck and Wegmann between 1889 and 1903, the artists were on friendly terms with their sitter.582 The previously mentioned letters from Wegmann to Thorell, which record an “intermezzo” with “P.D.” in Paris in 1891, indicate that the artist and her sitter eventually developed a temporary romantic attachment.583 Peter Dethlefsen, born in 1855, studied neurology in Berlin from 1887 and finally completed his education in Paris in 1891. The worldly physician might have sat for Wegmann’s portrait during a journey to Munich. Since Wegmann visited Bauck regularly in Munich for longer co-working periods, it appears likely that she painted the portrait of Dethlefsen in her friend’s studio. Judging from the letters to Thorell, Bauck, in turn, traveled only rarely to Copenhagen. In a letter to Thorell from Jenbach in Tyrol in August 1889, Wegmann noted that Bauck had probably told the
friend what she had been working on before leaving for the mountains. This letter indicates that Wegmann spent the spring of 1889 in Munich, where she could have painted Dethlefsen’s portrait.

In October 1889, Wegmann sent the above-mentioned illustrated letter (see fig. 49) to Dethlefsen, depicting Bauck’s studio from a different angle than the one chosen by her friend in the painted studio scene. However, both Wegmann’s drawing and Bauck’s studio scene include very similar furnishing, draperies, easels and large windows with metal muntins. Wegmann’s studio in Copenhagen, which was located in the Kunstnerhjemmet (The Artist Home) on Gothersgade, had smaller windows at that time. In Bauck’s painting, the studio is filled with dark wooden furniture and the chair in the foreground, a Bavarian Bauernstuhl (peasant chair), was a typical element in Munich homes during the late nineteenth century. The various decorative objects in the interior are represented in artful disarray and provide the room with a homely atmosphere. Clockwise, one sees a portfolio containing drawings and prints, a decorative drapery, a parasol and a chest of drawers on top of which stands a replica of the Venus de Milo. The painting placed on the wall in the back can be identified as Woman in Black by Bertha Wegmann from 1872 in the collection of Nationalmuseum. Wegmann might have left the painting in Munich as a souvenir to her friend, who eventually must have returned it to her, as it was included in her estate. In front of the window to the right, Bauck has arranged a still life with a wine bottle, a hand mirror and a collection of paintbrushes, surrounded by a group of house plants.

If one compares Bauck’s painting with contemporary photographs depicting studios in Munich, the similarities are striking and they strongly support the argument that both her studio scene and Wegmann’s portrait of Dethlefsen were painted there. A useful source in this respect is the photographic series of artists’ studios produced by Carl Teufel (1845–1912) between 1889 and 1900, documenting several hundred work spaces in the Bavarian capital. This photographic series forms a unique source for the social history of art in Munich and it testifies to the high degree of standardization among the studios in the late nineteenth century. In Teufel’s photographs the residents are often present, but they tend to merge with the rich décor of their interiors. A typical example is the photograph depicting the studio of the painter Luise Max-Ehrler (1850–1920), which conveys the same atmosphere as Bauck’s painted interior and is furnished with similar decorative elements.
The evidence available at present and the arguments outlined above suggest that Wegmann’s portrait and Bauck’s studio scene were painted in Munich in the winter 1888–89 or spring 1889. Thus, the painting was created ten years later than previously assumed, which invites a reconsideration of the simplified historiography of the supposed relocation of Nordic artists from Munich to Paris. The history of artistic progress, leading from the dark academic painting of the Munich school to the bright naturalism of French plein air painting, is in fact a parallel phenomenon. I would argue that this case is an exemplary demonstration that the careers of artists are not linear but circuitous. Just as Bauck and Wegmann move back and forth between different cities and artistic centers, their art evolves in pendular movements. Different artistic expressions can exist side by side and simultaneously in a single artist’s work.

At least as relevant as the date and place for the context of this study, however, is the meaning of the portrait sitting that Bauck’s studio scene depicts. Frances Borzello has postulated that women painters in the nineteenth century never reversed the hierarchies of
looking by placing a man as the object of scrutiny in their studio.\textsuperscript{590} The subject matter of Bauck’s genre scene is indeed exceptional, as it depicts her fellow colleague and friend Bertha Wegmann in her professional role, working on the portrait of a male sitter and, in fact, on a painting aimed for the Salon. Wegmann has turned her back on the beholder and is working at her easel in the center of the composition. Her sitter, Peter Dethlefsen, is formally dressed and has taken a seat in a chair placed on small pedestal in the corner of the room. In Bauck’s genre scene, he is smoking a cigar, a prop that disappeared in Wegmann’s eventual portrait. Apart from this detail evoking the processuality of the depicted sitting, the two portraits of Dethlefsen coincide to a high degree, including the sitter’s pose, forward-leaning and with a walking cane in his hands. In both cases, Dethlefsen is staged as an elegant member of the middle classes, dressed in a black jacket, polished shoes and leather gloves. The inclusion of a seemingly affluent and urbane male sitter in the composition renders Wegmann a sought-after professional who has entered a business relationship. The distance between the artist on the studio floor and the male sitter on the pedestal underlines the seriousness and propriety of this professional exchange. In Bauck’s genre scene, Dethlefsen turns into a signifier of Wegmann’s professionalism.

Following the logic of the painting’s composition, the male sitter was faced with two women painters simultaneously working on his representation: While Wegmann was painting his portrait, Bauck painted a genre scene representing the sitting. With regard to the French and British contexts, Alexandra K. Wettlaufer has argued that more and more women artists in the nineteenth century began to challenge and circumvent the structures of the gaze to claim a (contested) subject position in painting.\textsuperscript{591} During the last twenty years, scholarship on nineteenth-century visual culture has questioned the gendered dynamics of vision and emphasized the role of women as active spectators.\textsuperscript{592} The friendship image can be understood as a key genre in which women artists claim the role of active spectators. In the works of Bauck and Wegmann, the gaze is used as a central instrument in claiming a subject position that unmistakably fashions the colleague as professional.

When it comes to claiming the subject position of the artist, I propose that the friendship image holds one important advantage in contrast to the self-portrait: It allows the artist to be represented in the act of painting at the same moment when she actually puts
the brush on the canvas. Only here can the artist’s act of painting potentially occur simultaneously with the making of the friendship image that represents that very act. In the self-portrait, the artist cannot represent her-/himself at work in the same way, because s/he depends on the mediation provided by the mirror. From that perspective, Bauck’s depiction appears more immediate and represents the colleague in a moment of absorption and concentrated work. This impression of focused seclusion is further enhanced by Wegmann’s averted position in relation to the beholder.

Bauck’s genre scene can be understood as a double portrait, in which Wegmann’s act of painting inside the painting is mirrored by her own simultaneous act of painting her friend in the act of painting. In that sense, the friends reproduce one another’s gestures and both perform the role of the artist at the same time. As Marsha Meskimmon has pointed out in her study of self-portraiture, to alternate between subject and object functions possesses a range of critical implications for women artists:

Self-portraiture is implicated in the complex interweaving of the subject and object roles we play. The author of the self-portrait is both subject and object. For women, this interaction is particularly critical. Woman has been the object of art for centuries, while women have remained marginalized as producers. To act in both roles, simultaneously, is to stage a crucial intervention.593

Bauck’s genre scene represents such an intervention, as it enables two women painters to act as producers of a work of art at the same time. In fact, what the beholder sees on the canvas in the center of the composition is not the portrait of Dethlefsen, but rather Wegmann’s head, which is framed by her own canvas, as she blocks the likeness she is working on from view. From the beholder’s perspective, Wegmann thus becomes a portrait head on her own canvas, which turns the scene into a mediated self-representation painted by her artist friend Bauck. Wegmann changes from object to subject and back in this act of portrayal that ultimately renders the division between the categories of the object and the subject rather unclear.

Applying Ewa Lajer-Burcharth’s concept of mediated self-representation to Bauck’s friendship image, Wegmann realizes herself through Bauck’s touch in the moment when Wegmann appears as a portrait head on her own canvas.594 At the same time, Bauck realiz-
es herself through Wegmann’s touch in the moment Bauck depicts Wegmann from behind and repeats her actions. Consequently, the act of painting is conceived as a shared endeavor, just as the studio is conceptualized as a co-inhabited space. By representing her friend Wegmann at work in her own artistic realm, Bauck transforms the studio into a space for artistic emulation and collaboration. In this studio scene, the artists’ identities entangle and the positions of the painter and the represented seem to merge into one.

In this friendship image, Bauck and Wegmann stage a relationship between equals and fashion themselves as *team-mates* in Goffman’s terms: they perform the role of the artist together at the same time and place before the same particular audience.\(^5\) Having the collaborative structure of Bauck’s friendship image in mind, it is worth comparing this late nineteenth-century studio scene with earlier paintings, in which women artists represented themselves and their peers in the role of the artist. In order to analyze conceptual and compositional changes and continuities over time, it is informative to study two eighteenth-century examples by the French painters Adélaïde Labille-Guiard (1749–1803) and Marie-Gabrielle Capet (1761–1818). These are rare group portraits, in which women artists stage themselves as members of an occupational group.

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**From Exceptional Woman to Team-Mate**

In 1785, Adélaïde Labille-Guiard painted a programmatic and large-scale self-portrait at the easel with two female art students.\(^6\) The pupils Marie-Gabrielle Capet and Marie-Marguerite Carreaux de Rosemond († 1788) are positioned behind their seated teacher, who is at work, and are putting their arms around one another in a confidential gesture. While Capet is joining the teacher in addressing the beholder with her gaze, Rosemond is looking at the canvas. Labille-Guiard is fashionably clad in a sumptuous silk dress and a plumed hat with a silk ribbon. She is prominently holding palette, brushes and a mahlstick in her hands, making it perfectly clear that she is the main character of this scene. The artist’s attitude towards her pupils is characterized by maternal intimacy. Even though the students are compositionally subordinate to their teacher, Labille-Guiard has portrayed them as recognizable individuals rather than as anonymous types. The presence of the students underlines Labille-Guiard’s professional standing and af-
firms her commitment to teaching. A few years later, in 1789, Labille-Guiard submitted a portrait to the Salon that represented her favorite student Capet in the role of the artist working on a miniature. In the end, Capet specialized in miniature painting and collaborated with Labille-Guiard by turning the teacher’s portraits into miniatures.

At the Salon of 1808, Capet exhibited a studio scene that figured as an homage to her late mentor Labille-Guiard. It shows Labille-Guiard painting the portrait of a male sitter under the guidance of her husband and teacher François-André Vincent (1746–1816). The sitter is the artist Joseph-Marie Vien (1716–1809), who was Vincent’s teacher and recognized as the father of the modern French school. Positioned behind Labille-Guiard’s back, Vincent points towards a detail on the canvas, apparently giving advice, while her gaze follows his gesture. Sitting on a chair right next to Labille-Guiard, Capet – the painter of the scene – has inserted herself into the composition, assisting her teacher by preparing her palette. The other attendees of the sitting are students of Vincent and members of Vien’s family, but Capet is the only per-
son in the scene who addresses the beholder with her gaze. Thereby she implies that she is the maker of the painting. Her role as artist is further underlined by the attribute of the palette. In a sense, Capet shares the attributes of the artist with her teacher Labille-Guiard, who is holding a brush in her right hand.

Similar to the genre scene by Bauck depicting Wegmann at work, both Capet and Labille-Guiard act as artists at the same time: Capet is capturing the sitting and Labille-Guiard is painting the portrait of a male sitter. However, inside the composition Capet stages herself not as Labille-Guiard’s collaborator, but as her assistant and she therefore takes on the role of the student rather than that of the colleague. In her study of the eighteenth-century artist portrait in the context of the *Académie Royale*, Hannah Williams has argued that a normal master-student relationship oscillated between intimacy and distance: while master and students were separated by hierarchy, they were nevertheless united by their working relationship. This ambivalence between intimacy and distance is also characteristic of the encounter between the teacher and her students in the group portraits by Labille-Guiard and Capet. In these works, the relationship between teacher and student is conceived in terms of hierarchy and genealogy, emphasizing lineage and succession.

However, in its combined representation of male and female teacher-student relationships and its visual entanglement of the ideals of fraternity and maternity, the studio scene by Capet displays a sense of equality between the sexes that integrates the women artists into a greater line of succession. In fact, that line reaches from Joseph-Marie Vien to Marie-Gabrielle Capet, with her personifying the conclusion of this genealogy as the artist who documented it in paint. This compositional and conceptual equality between male and female artists can be read in light of Labille-Guiard’s involvement in the short-lived reform efforts towards an abolition of the limit on the number of women academicians in the *Académie Royale*. In 1808, Capet chose to depict an imaginary scene that alluded to the actual event of Labille-Guiard executing the portrait of Vien in 1782, a painting that had secured the teacher’s position as a member of the *Académie Royale*. Consequently, this studio scene has a twofold legitimizing function in fashioning both Labille-Guiard and Capet as members of an artistic community built on rank, genealogy and professional pedigree.

Mary D. Sheriff has coined the term *exceptional woman* in a study of Elisabeth Vigée Le Brun, in which she analyzed how the paint-
er’s professional identity and career were informed by eighteenth-century notions of feminine creativity and achievement conceived largely as matters of exception. The notion of the exceptional woman was used to justify the status quo according to which only outstandingly talented women artists entered the academy and enjoyed its privileges. Capet’s and Labille-Guiard’s studio scenes follow this logic to some extent, as they only allow a single female painter to take on the leading role of the exceptional woman. A woman artist who represented herself on an equal footing with a female peer would have formed a threat to the status quo because she would have suggested the woman artist to be a normality or even the rule rather than the exception. However, these studio scenes also entail an implied challenge to the idea of the exceptional woman. Even though the female students are rendered subordinate to their admired teachers, their inclusion in the composition introduces them as the artists’ potential successors.
Marie-Geneviève Bouliard’s (1763–1825) portrait of Adélaïde Binart (1769–1832) in the role of the artist from 1796 forms an interesting supplement to the above-mentioned examples because it suggests a more egalitarian relationship between artist-painter and artist-sitter. In contrast to the above teacher-student relationships, Bouliard and Binart were colleagues and consequently situated on the same level in the artistic hierarchy. This equality is implied in the immediateness of the portrayal: Binart is sitting on a chair, holding palette and brushes in her left hand. She is dressed in a white chemise and wearing her curly hair down and loose according to contemporary fashion. The painter has relinquished any inclusion of narrative content in the scene and has instead placed the sitter in front of an undefined background. Consequently, the painting focuses entirely on the intellectual and artistic exchange between the painter and her sitter. Bouliard’s portrait is rendered in immediate frontality with Binart looking at the beholder with an intense gaze. This frontality seems to reflect a mutual understanding between artist-painter and artist-sitter and it is a compositional feature that will recur in the friendship images of the nineteenth century, such as Bertha Wegmann’s 1881 portrait of Jeanna Bauck analyzed below.
The Interior as Friendship Image

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, when women were pursuing art as a profession in growing numbers, the friendship image, set in the shared working and living space, first turned into a more common subject matter for painting. Emphasizing collegiality and a shared existence, women artists built a sense of community by painting one another in a communal environment. Around the same time, when Jeanna Bauck and Bertha Wegmann produced their friendship images, the Norwegian painters Harriet Backer and Kitty Kielland entered into a similar artistic partnership. Several parallels are noticeable between these two artist couples, making the comparison worthwhile. Backer and Kielland became close friends in Munich in 1875. The former moved to Paris in 1878 and the latter followed in 1879 and together they shared an apartment and studio over many years. It is difficult to assess and define the relationship between Backer and Kielland, but as with Bauck and Wegmann, it was a partnership that constituted the two artists’ primary emotional bond over many years. The fact that parts of Backer’s correspondence, including her correspondence with Kielland, were only made available to scholarship and the public in the form of censored transcripts indicates, once more, that the sources on the intimate friendships of women artists are structured by silences, gaps and discontinuities.

Whereas Backer painted predominantly interior scenes with rich colors and light reflections, Kielland was mainly a landscape painter best known for her depictions of the Jæren region with its fenlands and expansive horizons. In Paris, Kielland also painted several interiors, one of which depicts Backer in their shared apartment and studio in 1883. In the interior from rue de l’Université, Backer is reading at a desk in a corner of the room. She is depicted in profile, gazing down at a book in front of her and she seems to be absorbed in her reading. The pose with the head resting on the hand enhances the intellectual aspects of her activity. By the end of the nineteenth century, reading had transformed from a group activity centered on recitation into a private activity undertaken in isolation. Indoor genre images depicting women alone and absorbed in their reading proliferated in the 1880s. In Kielland’s interior, the friend is depicted with her back turned towards the viewer. Oblivious to her surrounding, Backer appears self-contained and somewhat detached from the rest of the composition.
The absorption of the figure is mirrored by the interiority of the secluded studio space framed by a group of plants next to a window, the presence of which is only indicated by the ray of light it casts upon the sitter. On the wall above, a Jæren motif by Kiel-land is prominently displayed, depicting the Norwegian landscape that by that time had become the artist’s signature. The painting is surrounded by a Japanese parasol and a pair of fans, fashionable items referencing the artists’ shared interest in japonism. On the easel to the left the beholder is allowed a glimpse of a painting in a golden frame that can be identified as Backer’s portrait of Kielland painted the same year. It represents the middle-aged and respected artist friend sitting in an arm chair in fashionable dress, wearing leather gloves and holding a matching fan. The portrait combines a classical monumentality in its compositional setting with a distinct realism in the rendering of the friend’s facial features. Both Kielland’s studio interior and Backer’s portrait were first shown in 1883 at the *Nordisk Kunstudstilling* (Nordic Art Exhibition) in Copenhagen. For the attentive visitor, the interconnectedness of the two exhibited pieces must have been evident. Thereby, Backer and Kielland not only displayed their individual works at the exhibition, but simultaneously staged their relationship.

In the interior painting the likeness is yet unfinished and a couple of brushes and a rag are placed in front of it, indicating the act of painting. The objects suggest that the painter and the sitter
have only taken a break from work, while also revealing the double function of the room as a combined home and studio. The scenery indicates that Backer and Kielland worked simultaneously on their respective friendship images and sat on a rotating basis for the portrait and interior respectively. In April 1883, Backer mentioned in her correspondence with her former teacher and friend, the Norwegian painter Eilif Peterssen (1852–1928), that she had worked intensively, nine days in a row, on Kielland’s portrait, trying to finish it in time for the Salon in May. Eventually she gave up on the idea, and this might have been around the same time Kielland began working on the interior.

Marit Lange has claimed that Backer and Kielland, in their series of paintings that depict their shared apartment and studio, “never represented the studio as a work space, but always as a pretty home”. By contrast, one can also claim that it is precisely the multifunctionality of the interior, as both a home and a workspace, that is emphasized in Kielland’s painting. The unfinished painting and the artist’s tools identify the depicted room as a work space. The interior stages the two painters’ combined artistic versatility by means of the landscape on the wall, the portrait on the easel, the genre scene of the reading woman in the center as well as the still life of plants to the left and last but not least the interior painting itself. Similar citations of paintings in paintings recur in Kielland’s oeuvre. Already in 1881, she had painted an interior from her apartment in Paris with a breakfast table. Above the Baroque-inspired still life on the table, she inserted a portrait of herself painted by Backer. In both Parisian interiors, Kielland is present through portraits painted by her long-time companion.

As Alison Strauber has argued, domestic ideals were increasingly incorporated into artist portraits and scenes of sociability in the studio in French art in the second half of the nineteenth century. Analyzing works by Frédéric Bazille (1841–1870) and Pierre-Auguste Renoir (1841–1919), Strauber has claimed that “the all-male studio merges with the bourgeois home, creating spaces of comfort and companionship that reinforce the bonds of male artistic communities.” According to Strauber, the artists shifted the emphasis from the studio as a space of work and craftsmanship to a space of sociability and leisure. This renegotiation of the studio space might reflect the shifting artistic focus on subject matters associated with leisure and recreation in urban and natural settings. Kielland’s interior likewise oscillates between work and
leisure in its combination of the activities of painting and reading in an environment that is both studio and home. The interior’s ambiguity might reflect the complex relationship of Backer and Kielland, which was both an intimate friendship and a professional partnership between two like-minded colleagues.

The artists’ sense of community is indicated by a series of cross-references inserted into Kielland’s studio scene. The “happy home”, as Backer called the apartment that she shared with her “roommate and best friend”, is decorated with several pairs of objects, such as the finished painting on the wall and the canvas on the easel, or the two chairs and the two fans, which can be read as symbols of the artists’ companionship. Such formal and iconographical features that convey personal affiliations are common for friendship images in the period. A well-known example of such a pictorial strategy of cross-referencing is Édouard Manet’s (1832–1883) portrait of Émile Zola (1840–1902) painted for the Salon of 1868. The sitter is surrounded by art objects that reflect the taste and interests he shared with his painter friend. This friendship image has in common with Kielland’s studio interior that the relationship between artist and sitter is not primarily addressed by means of direct bodily interaction, for example in form of a welcoming or answering pose or gaze. Instead, affiliation is revealed for the privy observer through the narrative aspects of the surrounding space and the objects displayed. According to Richard Brilliant, Manet’s portrait of Zola was shaped by the twofold purpose of invoking the painter’s own presence through the portrayal of his writer friend. Manet has produced a representation of himself in the “process of fashioning an image of a distinguished ‘other’.” The same notion of mediated self-fashioning applies to Kielland’s interior, and to an even higher degree to Bauck’s genre scene from Munich. Whereas Kielland evokes her own presence mainly through the portrayal of the shared home and work space, with its meaningful objects, Bauck does the same, not only through the depicted interior, but also through Wegmann’s action, which mirrors her own act of painting.

Apart from the allusions inside Kielland’s interior, the subject matter of the painting itself can be understood as an homage to the friend because it cites the genre that was Backer’s specialty: the interior with a staffage figure or the realistiske samtidsinteriør (realist contemporary interior), as Marit Lange has termed such images. The studio scene can be read as a citation of paintings such as Blue
Interior from the same year, in which their colleague Asta Nørregaard sat for the staffage figure absorbed in needlework.635  
This notion of the friendship image as a citation of the colleague’s work can also be applied to the case of Bauck’s studio scene. A late statement by Wegmann from 1925 regarding her Munich years is particularly illuminating in this context:

Back then I did not consider for a moment becoming a portrait painter, but I was rather interested in what one could call situation painting [Situationsmaleriet]. Not the genre painting, with anecdotes inside, which I always hated. But just the situation image: “An Artist’s Garret”, “Mother with Her Child in a Garden” and so forth, whatever you may call it, my old paintings from the days of youth! That I turned out to be a portraitist simply happened when I had used a model for one of my situation paintings and people found the likeness characteristic and good.636

In the interview Wegmann made a noteworthy distinction between anecdotal genre paintings, depicting arranged and narrative scenes that were often intended to entertain or educate, and her own nat-
uralistic depictions of everyday, momentary situations without edifying undertones. By depicting a situation from the artists’ shared studio, Bauck cited the friend’s preferred genre from her Munich years. The eclecticism with which Wegmann and Bauck developed the hybrid genre of the situation painting reflects the tendency towards a disintegration of traditional genre categories in the period. According to Wettlaufer, strategically disrupting and reconfiguring genre categories enabled women writers and artists in the nineteenth century to propose alternative ways of understanding art, society and gender, and to publicly introduce the “image of the female creator”.

In their situation paintings from Munich and Paris, Bauck and Kielland stage their combined living and working environments as enclosed spaces of female companionship, in which collaboration, community and artistic productivity can thrive. The combination of work and leisure in the furnishing of the interiors as intertwined homes and studios underscores the importance of friendship in the painters’ life both on a personal and a professional level. As the artists furnish the rooms with objects that symbolize their artistic community and cross-reference their oeuvres, they fashion a common artistic identity mediated through the studio space.

After having studied Bauck’s studio scene in a broader historical and contemporary perspective, the following analysis will focus on Wegmann’s two portraits of Bauck that were exhibited at the Salon in Paris in the 1880s.

Fashioning Two Versions of Jeanna Bauck

During their stay in Paris in 1881, Bertha Wegmann painted a portrait of Jeanna Bauck, the painting she chose as her entry piece at the Salon the same year. The Salon catalog offered the following description of the painting:

Young blonde woman, with a tousle-head, depicted en face, sitting on a bench, in the artist’s studio, under a big window, which offers a view over the rooftops of a city, under a clear and fresh light. She is dressed in black and she holds an album in her crossed hands on her knees. To the right, a palette, a towel, paintbrushes.
Bauck is seated on a table in the studio, palette and brush placed to her left. The artist is wearing a dark dress and a golden chain around her neck, and she is holding a book in her hand with her index finger placed inside to mark a page. The gesture imparts spontaneity to the scene, making it appear as if Bauck has just been interrupted by the painter and is now gazing back at the friend and the beholder. The genuineness of the sitter’s facial expression is enhanced by the slightly opened mouth that signals a smile. The opened mouth was an unusual feature in portraiture at the time because it broke with rules of conduct and was thus considered inappropriate in formal or public portraits. It seems as if Bauck is about to react to something Wegmann is saying and in the next moment she might respond or smile. Bauck’s relaxed attitude matches the recalcitrance of her headdress. Her blonde and curly hair is shining, framing her face almost like a halo. Wegmann employed a comparable style of depiction in later paintings such as Young Mother with a Child in a Garden of 1883 (see fig. 39), in which the head of the mother is illuminated in a similar manner. The Danish art historian and critic Julius Lange (1838–1896) stated that Wegmann’s sitters tended to shine from within, as if illuminated by a lamp. This stylistic feature seems to have appeared for the first time in the portrait of Bauck. At that time, Wegmann began to paint in brighter colors and she experimented more with light effects as seen in the hair of her friend, which reflects the daylight entering through the windows. The landscape sketch in the background testifies to the artists’ shared interest in plein air painting. It most likely originates from one of their joint study trips and reveals that the person portrayed is a landscape painter.

In the 1881 portrait Bauck is leaning forward as if she wants to come closer and bridge the spatial divide between herself inside the painting and the painter, her friend Wegmann outside the picture plane. The sitter’s informal pose of leaning forward, as if reaching out to the painter, can be understood as an act that expresses friendship and affection. This pose is common in friendship images in the period and recurs in portraits of male and female artists alike.

The Finnish painter Hilma Westerholm (1863–1952) assumed a similar pose in a portrait painted by her colleague and compatriot Elin Danielson-Gambogi (1861–1919) in 1888. According to Riitta Konttinen, both the setting and the pose were inspired by Edgar Degas’ portrait of the flower painter Victoria Dubourg (1840–1926).
from 1868–69. The Finnish artist and critic Fanny Churberg (1845–1892) wrote a favorable review of Danielson-Gambogi’s portrait, describing it as an intimate likeness belonging to the sphere of the family or the inner circle. Churberg praised the composition as “original”, as it appeared “like a moment’s fortunate touch upon reality”, while the sitter’s personality was convincingly rendered in a refreshing manner. A similar impression is conveyed in Bauck’s portrait, especially in the pose, which appears spontaneous and informal. Likewise, friendship images by male artists, such as Richard Bergh’s portrait of Nils Kreuger (1858–1930) from 1883, apply the forward orientation of the sitter’s body and thus follow this convention of the friendship image.

Borrowing from Aby Warburg (1866–1929), this popular motif of the affectionate pose of the sitter – leaning forward while gazing expectantly at the beholder or the artist friend – is used in these friendship images as a *Pathosformel*. When Warburg coined the term in 1905, he was referring to a recurring passionate language of gestures and an emotionally charged visual trope. The friendships of women in the nineteenth century were structured by
certain codes and rituals, often involving the frequent exchange of letters and gifts in the form of dedicated poems, portrait drawings or photographs. The affectionate pose can be read as one such code by which friendship was fashioned in portraiture. Hence, one can read the Pathosformel of the affectionate pose as a visual equivalent to the frequent verbal exclamations of love and admiration in letter writing in the period. Both visually and verbally, in their poses and in their letters, Bauck and Wegmann performed their friendship by continually expressing a sense of companionship across different media.

The room that surrounds Bauck in the portrait contributes to the atmosphere of intimacy. Bauck is sitting in a corner of the studio and she is surrounded by vine leaves that are growing wildly on the top of a small shelf. The plant makes the room appear like a bower and the division between the inside and the outside is rendered somewhat unclear. The intrusion of nature into the artists’ studio can be understood as a comment on the sitter’s profession as a landscape painter. Bauck is sitting on a table with a book in her hands and it seems as if she has just taken a short break from work,
as the painter’s tools – a palette, brushes and a rag – are prominently placed to her left, ready to be used. The visual entanglement of the act of reading and painting recalls Kitty Kielland’s interior analyzed above. In both cases, the friend is staged as an intellectual and an artist at the same time. Whereas Kielland’s interior recalls the tradition of the reading woman popularized in seventeenth-century Dutch painting, Wegmann’s portrait is more unconventional in its seeming spontaneity, informality and direct address of the beholder.

The viewer today might not react immediately to the fact that Bauck is sitting on a table rather than a chair and crossing her legs at the knees, but for the contemporary observer such a setting constituted a radical break with the conventions in portraiture. Both the position on the table and the sitter’s uncombed hair broke with decorum and counteracted accepted ideals of proper femininity in portraiture. In formal portraits, the female sitters crossed their legs at the ankles, never at their knees. As Tamar Garb has argued, a woman’s social standing was measured in relation to her narcissistic self-absorption, and those women who did not care about their appearance risked being called “monstrous” or “manly”.

A later account of Bauck’s unconventional appearance and personality is telling in this context. When the German painter Paula Becker (1876–1907) was studying with Bauck at the Verein der Berliner Künstlerinnen in 1897, she provided a lively characterization of her teacher in a letter to her parents:

Do you want to know what she is like? First, what she looks like. Well, unfortunately she looks like most female artists: unkempt and a little shabby. She probably took care of her hair when she was young, but now it looks more like a mound of feathers. Her figure is large, fat, without a corset, and she wears an ugly blue-checked blouse. At the same time, she has a pair of happy bright eyes which are always observing things, and with which (as she told me later), she always draws a grid of horizontal and vertical lines over any new face she meets.

In contrast to her condescending comments about the teacher’s “rough-and-tumble appearance”, Becker’s remarks about Bauck’s personality reveal sympathy and admiration:
Jeanna Bauck [...] is extremely practical. Everything she says, in fact, is practical and at the same time wonderfully subtle. She is very modern, which means, in the good sense of the word, nothing more than youthful effervescence. She is in remarkable condition for someone fifty years old. I love her very much. Speaking with her gives me a feeling of great comfort. She is so charming and innocent, has that kind of innocence that simply disarms you.654

Becker began her account by criticizing the teacher’s rough looks, which she identified as a common feature in women artists. In the letters to her parents Becker reiterated prevalent prejudices about women artists, who in contemporary caricature often appeared disheveled and boisterous.655 At the same time, the teacher’s charisma, as well as her practical and straightforward manners, apparently made a lasting impression on the student, who would soon become a member of the artists’ colony in Worpswede and marry the painter Otto Modersohn (1865–1943). The letters by Becker indicate that Bauck was an unconventional appearance according to the standards of the day, with her short and untamed curly hair and her refusal to wear a corset. This non-conformist attitude is mediated in Wegmann’s portrait mainly by means of the natural hairstyle, the open mouth and the relaxed position on the table.

The pointed informality conveyed in Bauck’s appearance and pose is a typical feature of the friendship image and the studio scene in the nineteenth century. In fact, it is most common in the work of male artists. During a joint stay at the artists’ colony in Skagen in Denmark, the Norwegian painter Christian Krohg (1852–1925) depicted an informal conversation with his colleague Charles Lundh (1856–1908) by inserting his own feet resting on a chair in the lower right corner of the composition. Lundh is casually sitting on a chair opposite the painter with his head resting on his hand and listening carefully. In Gustave Courbet’s (1819–1877) The Painter’s Studio from 1855, the artist’s friend, the writer Charles Baudelaire (1821–1867) is sitting on a table reading a book at the right edge of the monumental composition.656 Finally, in 1867, the French painter Frédéric Bazille painted a portrait of Pierre-Auguste Renoir in which the colleague is nonchalantly seated on a chair with his feet resting on the edge of its frame.657

These are just three examples that demonstrate the prevalence of informal poses and various ways of sitting in friendship
images and studio scenes in the nineteenth century, in both Nordic and French art. Such a seemingly unmannered representation not only conveyed an uncontrived and trustful relationship with the painter, but it also fashioned the sitter as an unconventional and genuine artistic personality.

Hildegard Thorell’s correspondence indicates that Wegmann’s portrait of Bauck met with an ambivalent reception and contradictory reactions in Paris and Copenhagen. Writing to her husband in June 1881, Thorell gave a vivid account of a peculiar episode at the Salon:

How much I am looking forward to studying with Bertha, I love very much what she does. On the 24th she is coming in to Paris to receive her mention honorable in grand style. The other day when J. & B. were at the Salon a woman approached Jeanna and asked if it was herself who had painted her portrait in such an excellent manner, to which Jeanna replied that it was her friend who had done the same, introducing Bertha to the stranger, who then explained that she was Mme. Cazin, married to the eminent painter, adding that “every time my husband and I are here, we admire this portrait.” B. has heard from elsewhere that the whole École des Beaux-Arts is in admiration of the portrait.658 

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Fig. 63. Christian Krohg, Charles Lundh in Conversation with Christian Krohg, 1883.
In her letters, Thorell tended to mention the two artist friends in one breath and referred to them as a unitary entity, often using the abbreviation “J. & B.” (Swedish “J. o. B” with “o.” for “och”). This episode from the Salon testifies to the positive reception of the portrait in the French art scene. Marie Cazin (1844–1924), who was a landscape painter herself and married to fellow artist Jean-Charles Cazin, was not only very taken by the portrait, but first mistook it for a self-portrait. It is noticeable that Thorell deemed the confusion worth mentioning in a letter discussing the positive reception of the portrait. She might have wanted to imply that the confusion of the portrait as a self-portrait pointed to the persuasiveness of the portrayal.

In light of the close artistic companionship between Bauck and Wegmann, Cazin’s misreading of the painting as a self-portrait holds some truth after all. Ultimately, the portrait can be read as a mediated self-representation depicting a shared existence. By exhibiting the portrait of her closest artist friend at the Salon, Wegmann fashioned an image of the woman artist that represented herself just as much as it represented Bauck. Consequently, I would argue that the artist and the sitter fashioned a collective rather than a solitary artistic identity that came into being in a dialogic act of portrayal.

The reception of the portrait in Wegmann’s home country differed decisively from the praise initially expressed by the Parisians. In a letter to Thorell from December 1881, Wegmann reflected upon the lack of understanding that she faced in Copenhagen: “My studies, and Jeanna’s portrait simply have no luck here, they look at them dumbfounded, and there is no one that comprehends one whit of my painting.”659 In September the following year, Wegmann added:

I despise the Danes with their philistinism, which pervades all their manners and tastes. Would you believe they found Jeanna’s portrait to be “flighty and wild”, this means to say as much as in Swedish “rusket” [unruly] and for the sole reason that she is not sitting neatly combed in a chair with her hands tidily in her lap, as in all their other portraits.660

Wegmann criticized the conservative taste in art in her home country in a harsh tone. By using the term “philistinism”, she referred to the then common stereotype of the narrow-minded “bourgeois”
as reactionary and hypocritical as opposed to the non-conformist and visionary “bohemian artist”. In Wegmann’s opinion most of the female portraits produced in Denmark at the time were very conventional, representing delicately dressed and coiffured women in passive poses.

On the occasion of Wegmann’s seventieth birthday in 1917, Niels Vinding Dorph commented upon the unusual activeness of the sitters in Wegmann’s portraits, and he argued that she did not try to achieve “a cold distance between the beholder and the depicted”, which was common for most portraits in Denmark. To the contrary, he suggested that Wegmann’s sitters met the beholder as if engaging in a direct and personal conversation:

These eyes meet our eyes with a penetrating look, this mouth talked and smiled at you, this figure was so closely observed in terms of expression and movement that you felt convinced that this was the man, exactly in the way his personality appeared to his surroundings, and in that way, he is supposed to be remembered.

Dorph concluded that Wegmann’s portraits did not show any “Danish characteristics”, which made her appear like a stranger in the eyes of the public in her home country. When it comes to the portrait of Bauck, the Danish audience was expecting a more distanced and idealized likeness. The naturalistic depiction of a professional woman artist in the privacy of her own studio appears to have caused mainly incomprehension. As Wegmann’s own statement indicates, in the public’s eye the proper and neat appearance of the sitter in a portrait was closely associated with ideals of moral, character and propriety and consequently, Bauck was compromised by Wegmann’s unconventional depiction.

Wegmann’s comment further points to the difficulties that such Paris-trained third culture artists, who introduced a remote naturalism to their work, faced upon returning to the more traditionalist and conservative art scenes in their Nordic home countries. Although considered traditionalist and conservative by French artists, the Paris Salon constituted in the eyes of Nordic artists, like Wegmann, an opportunity to validate their non-conformist artistic tendencies, which were often dismissed by the art establishment in their home countries. Nevertheless, despite different tastes in art, participation, or even distinction, at the Salon had an important legitimizing function at home.
In a letter to Thorell from December 1883, Wegmann commented on the purchase by Nationalmuseum of her painting *Mother with a Child in a Garden* (see fig. 39) and argued that the award of a medal at the Salon of 1882 for the portrait of Anna Seekamp (see fig. 40) was decisive in establishing her reputation in Denmark:

So eventually the Swedes bought my painting, and I am actually happy about it, because I think that the Swedes have better judgment than the Danes. It is odd that you, who have such kinship in your taste with the French would buy my painting, but as I always say, no one is a prophet in their own country, and if they had not given me the medal in Paris, I would still be as unknown and disrespected here as a poor house sparrow. 

In an obituary published in the newspaper *Nationaltidende* in 1926, a critic commented upon the reception of Wegmann’s work in Denmark, and argued that the “foreign character” of her art “made her stand outside the development of Danish art”, although she was, from an artistic perspective, among the most accomplished painters of the day. Not only because of her painting style, but also due to her Swiss background and international training, Wegmann was considered a foreigner by the Danish public. In her study of the dynamics of transnationalism, migration and mobility in the life and work of Danish women artists at the turn of the century, Emile Boe Bierlich has argued that a discriminatory web of prejudices against nationality, artistic training and gender assigned Wegmann an outsider position and legitimized her marginalization.

When Wegmann entered the Charlottenborg exhibition committee and became a member of its jury in 1887, she reflected once more on the conservative art establishment in her home country: “So many asked me to accept the election, because otherwise there would be so many old wigs and professors who condemn everything that belongs to the modern school; so I didn’t want to reject it, although it is anything but a pleasant job.” The following year, Wegmann used her powerful position as the first female member of the plenary assembly of Det Kongelige Danske Kunstakademi (The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts) to help establish an art school for women under the roof of the academy in Copenhagen.

In 1885, as if she wanted to silence the critics in her home country, Wegmann painted a more respectable portrait of Bauck, who, this time, is depicted as a refined lady in a fashionable dress, seated
in an armchair. However, it is only at first glance that this likeness appears aligned with more conventional portraiture. Rather than folding her hands tidily in her lap, Bauck strikes her own subversive pose in this second likeness intended for the Salon.

According to the Salon catalog of 1886, Wegmann was represented that year with a portrait. A letter by Bauck from June 1886 reveals that the exhibited work was Wegmann’s portrait of Bauck, now in the Hirschsprung Collection and previously dated to 1887. Furthermore, the letter to Thorell provides important insights into the circumstances of the painting’s making and what it felt like to see it on display at the Salon. Bauck explained that the portrait was painted in Dresden in 1885, during a period when Wegmann was suffering from rheumatism:

In the middle of all this distress she painted nonetheless a most fine and beautiful portrait of me, so remarkable that not only the critics and my humble self, but even the worst of all, she herself, really had to admit that it was good, when we just recently were at the Salon and had been intimidated by all the good things there (good lord, how these people can paint!!!), and suddenly were standing in front of my portrait. The format is very small, the face 14 centimeters, I am sitting in a chair, totally comme il faut, in black with a black capote bonnet and a black glove on the left hand, and with my pince-nez at my lips, the right hand holding the glove and lying on my knee, the whole a knee-piece – warm light-gray background. It was a feat to paint in an ordinary room, with the sun shining in every time there was some sun and without any of the usual studio comforts.

In the same letter Bauck informed her friend about her overall impression of the works exhibited at the Salon:

There is such a sum of talent that one could go around here for a year just to study and learn. And it is this genuine ultra-modern fat technique, wet and juicy and delicious […] – nothing else than this is to our taste, one walks around like a real gourmand and despises everything that is not excellent. […] However poorly we tend to think of the French, their art is immaculate – and the noblesse of the color, and their superiority in drawing is quite daunting to see!
In the second friendship image of Bauck that was displayed at the Salon in Paris, the sitter is no longer represented in the role of the painter, but rather as a refined lady with a sober expression and mature facial traits. In her gloved left hand Bauck is holding a pince-nez, which she leans against her chin. Her right hand is resting in her lap, holding the second glove. Bauck is sitting in an armchair, which is placed diagonally to the picture plane, thereby establishing a barrier between the sitter and the beholder. This position emphasizes the sitter’s respectability.

According to the sociologist Beverley Skeggs, respectability can be understood as one of the most pervasive signifiers of class, and as a standard to which every middle-class individual in the period aspired. At the same time, respectability figured as an efficacious marker of distinction against the working-class masses. The notion of respectability as a marker of class distinction will run like a common thread through the following analysis of the portrait, which is based on the assumption that respectability and professionalism are here bound together in a charged relationship. As the critique of the 1881 portrait of Bauck already has indicated, expectations or judgments about respectability were central to the visual representation of femininity in the nineteenth century and consequently also to the representation of the woman artist. The critique of the first Salon portrait raises the question of how the ideal of the respectable woman could be made compatible with the professionalism of the artist.

In the 1885 portrait Bauck’s pose is more distanced and is combined with a sharp, however friendly, gaze directed at the beholder. The artist is clad all in black and her fashionable appearance enables Wegmann to display her ability as a portraitist, especially when it comes to the rendering of the different nuances of the dark garments of varying textiles in dialogue with the sitter’s fair skin: the friend’s softly curled lips touch the cold shining metal of the glasses, which in turn reflect the daylight, entering into the room from the side. The stringy leather of the glove forms a fine material contrast to the dark semi-transparent veil touching the sitter’s skin and the large silk ribbon, and so forth. All these difficult sartorial details were captured by Wegmann under aggravated circumstances outside a proper studio. The painting is executed on wood, which further accentuates the small-scale painting’s textual qualities. In Wegmann’s portrait of Bauck the art of fashion and the art of painting are intimately intertwined and both are used as
means to stage the artist’s remarkable abilities as a portraitist at the Salon of 1886. At the same time, the meticulous depiction of sartorial details – the different fabrics, the quality of the leather and the good seams – convey the privileged social status of the sitter, which is enhanced by the choice of all-black.679

The dark clothes direct the beholder’s attention more closely to the facial features, such as the tiny wrinkles around Bauck’s penetrating eyes, which are rendered convincingly by the painter friend. Almost forty years later in 1924, a Danish critic remarked after a visit to Wegmann’s studio: “She is a dedicated lover of beauty, but prefers those models who are of a characteristic type and who are marked by life. ‘This is why it is difficult to paint the very young’, she says.”680 Indeed, studying the small-scale portrait of Bauck closely, one can see that Wegmann has meticulously documented the first signs of aging in her friend’s face, which was, according to the sitter’s own account, only 14 centimeters in diameter in size in the final composition.

With the portraits of Bauck, Wegmann introduced herself to the French and international art scene in 1881 and reaffirmed her reputation as an accomplished portraitist five years later. Bauck’s use of the phrase comme il faut in the letter to Thorell is a key to the understanding of the portrait. The phrase suggests a certain constraint that can involve both appearance and conduct, or character. In light of the critique of the 1881 portrait of Bauck, the second friendship image can be read as a response directed at the critics and as a sequel or pendant to the first Salon portrait. Whereas the 1881 Salon portrait staged Bauck as the artist, the portrait exhibited in 1886 represented the friend as a refined lady. As pendants, the friendship images fashioned two versions of Jeanna Bauck, which together demonstrated that professionality and feminine elegance were not mutually exclusive.

In the following, I want to suggest that Bauck is fashioned as a femme comme il faut or a proper lady in the 1886 Salon portrait. This idiom comme il faut was widely in use at the time, not only in the French, but also in the Swedish language, and it was repeatedly employed by several of the artists in this study in their epistolary writing.681 The expression was supposed to convey a certain moral and social type of judgment that conformed to the social distinction of the (upper) middle classes.682 The literary historian Susan Hiner has analyzed the complex category of the femme comme il faut, studying “the notions of respectability and distinction that define
her and that she redefines”. In her study of fashion and the feminine in nineteenth-century France, Hiner has emphasized the importance of the fashion accessory as a marker of distinction and as a tool for women to classify and codify their position in society. The notion of the *femme comme il faut* points to the interrelationship between the fashionable and the moral.

Directing attention towards the importance of clothing as a marker of distinction allows one to study the impact of fashion on the (mediated) self-fashioning of the artists Bauck and Wegmann. In a study of the Swedish modernist artist couple Sigrid Hjertén (1885–1948) and Isaac Grünewald (1889–1946), Andrea Kollnitz has analyzed the relationship between the role of the (woman) artist and fashion, which she conceptualized as a “liberating and confining performative marker”. Kollnitz has called attention to fashion and accessories as ambiguous signifiers of the divided role of the woman artist, who is the maker of her own work, but has to constantly present herself as a respectable woman in front of others.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, women were aware of the fact that their class status was not self-evident, but had to constantly be regained through performative acts. Combining Butler’s theory of gender performativity with the category of class, a woman’s middle-class identity is obtained through the stylized repetitions of acts and these acts also involve wearing certain clothes and accessories. Applying this perspective onto the friendship image, I will now study the use of fashion and accessories in Jeanna Bauck’s portrait from 1885 as both confining and liberating performative markers in the construction and subversive distortion of the *femme comme il faut*.

The glove and the veil were necessary accessories in French bourgeois women’s day and evening toilettes and signified the department store and Parisian consumer culture. As signs of respectability, the glove and the veil were also associated with “bourgeois modesty and bodily decorum”. According to Hiner, veils and gloves indicate certain modes of behavior because they cover and protect female flesh and at the same time they suggest sensual pleasure by means of their softness and by leaving visible certain portions of the female skin. The dialectic tension between concealing and revealing is reflected in the depiction of Bauck’s hands: her left hand is covered by a black glove while the right hand is holding one, thereby contrasting the leathery surface with the fair, soft skin of its wearer. Likewise, a veil is attached to Bauck’s hat,
although it does not prevent the artist from piercing out of the canvas. The glove was vital in affirming a woman’s status as part of the leisured middle classes because it signified her distance to labor. White hands figured as a corporal expression of minimal manual labor, and, for working middle-class women, the glove was a useful concealer that hid traces of labor, thereby guaranteeing their social disassociation from the working classes. The glove helped to prevent class slippage and maintain whiteness and racial distinction. At the same time, the glove was a conforming device, comparable to the corset.

Applied to the portrait of Bauck from the Salon of 1886, the glove can be read as a sartorial instrument that was meant to restore the integrity of both the artist and the sitter after the harsh critique directed at the likeness from 1881. By means of her conspicuous dress and accessories, Bauck is fashioned as a respectable lady of the middle classes. A woman’s sumptuous attire, understood as an identity obtained through consumption, usually paid homage to the husband’s success, his prowess in the market and his ability to accumulate fortune. Since Bauck was an unmarried painter, all the economic power and conspicuous consumption conveyed in her attire is reducible to her own professional achievement. By the end of the nineteenth century sober black became fashionable for female daytime dress and was believed to signify the wearer’s dignity, maturity, substance and probity. Black was the color of “bourgeois sobriety”, and according to the sartorial norms of the middle classes, it was still mainly associated with men’s fashion and the professional or commercial aspects of public life. Sober and restricted clothing signaled that its wearer was morally and financially responsible.

Édouard Manet was famous for “his constant use of black” and he prominently employed all-black clothing in his portraits. In his portraits of the politician Antonin Proust (1832–1905) and the writer and journalist Théodore Duret (1838–1927), Manet combined the black costumes with the typical middle-class accessories of the leather gloves, top hats and walking sticks. The portrait of Antonin Proust was exhibited at the Salon of 1880 and therefore it must have been known to both Wegmann and Bauck. Wegmann stated in an interview from 1917 that she had once visited Manet in his studio, and although she did not care much for his art, she was inspired by his revaluation of color. The encounter with the French artist might have had an impact
on her portrayal of Bauck, in which she subtly communicated the sitter’s independence, self-obtained dignity and professional status by means of dress and color.

According to Kollnitz, fashion can be employed as a tool for challenging or breaking norms in painting and in gender. With regard to Hjertén’s self-staging, she has argued that the artist combined the beautifying and idealizing aspects of fashion with expressive distortion, creating a sense of uneasiness by means of certain colors and shapes in her clothing and its representation on canvas. In Bauck’s portrait, the pince-nez, combined with the playful gesture with which it is displayed, creates a sense of distortion and constitutes a friction that disrupts and challenges the first impression of the sitter as a *femme comme il faut.*

The pince-nez featured rarely in representations of women in the nineteenth century, but occurred at times in portraits to highlight the intellect of the sitter. A prominent example is Mary Cassatt’s portrait of her mother reading the newspaper. The practical glasses usually indicate that the sitter is actually reading rather than simply posing. Furthermore, there is an even longer tradition of spectacle-wearing artists in self-portraits, an accessory meant to convey the intellectual nature of the person depicted. As Anna Lena Lindberg has remarked, glasses symbolize the sense of sight, the artist’s most important tool. In that sense they can be understood as an artist’s attribute, a substitution for the easel, palette or brushes. Another dimension of the representation of glasses in a self-portrait is power, since they improve and enhance sight. The glasses thus reinforce the artist’s scrutinizing gaze.

A comparable example of the use of the pince-nez is the Finnish painter Helene Schjerfbeck’s (1862–1946) likeness of her colleague and friend Helena Westermarck, painted in 1884 during a class at Académie Colarossi in Paris. Westermarck is depicted in profile with her mouth slightly open, wearing a pince-nez and concentrating on something beyond the realm of the composition. She is probably painting, too, even though the beholder cannot see her tools, the canvas or a motif. However, the expressive and loose brushwork in the area of Westermarck’s arms and hands indicates movement and suggests that she is working. In Schjerfbeck’s portrait the industriousness and concentration of the friend’s invisible action is enhanced by the practical pair of glasses.

In the late nineteenth century, the pince-nez became particularly fashionable among men of the middle classes, while women
usually preferred the lorgnette, a pair of elegant spectacles with a handle. Whereas the lorgnette was worn like a piece of jewelry, the pince-nez was a much more practical item because it allowed its wearers to use their hands freely. In the portrait, Bauck is holding a pince-nez in an oval style with a thin rim on a fine gold chain attached to her dress. This was the most common version worn by women. Emancipated women often favored the pince-nez over the lorgnette. Against this backdrop, the pince-nez can be read as an important element in the fashioning of Bauck as a professional.

Instead of actually wearing her pince-nez, Bauck is thoughtfully holding it in her hands, as if she is about to put it on her nose in the next moment. According to Anne Higonnet, the hands were central to the bourgeois gentleman’s portrait and they were supposed to be activated by certain gestures or attributes. In contrast, women’s hands were expected to be more passive, gloved or soft and ivory white, gentle and ornamented by fans, bouquets or needlework. Similarly, Tamar Garb has suggested that the male and female portraits in the nineteenth century assumed different functions and required different modes of reception by the viewer: Viewing the portrait of a man presupposed “laborious looking” and the beholder needed to carefully decode attributes, signs and symbols. In contrast to the intellectual engagement required by a male likeness, the portrait of a woman was expected to offer mainly “sensual delight and surface pleasure” and to stimulate the imagination rather than to inform.

Wegmann’s Salon portraits counteract such dichotomic, gender-differentiated approaches to portraiture. Instead, they complicate and subvert the conventions of the female portrait. In the 1881 Salon portrait, Bauck’s natural appearance and her relaxed pose challenged decorum. The following year, the artist’s sister Anna Seekamp subverted a traditional motif of female diligence by joyfully playing with a ball of yarn rather than dutifully doing her needlework. Finally, in 1886, Bauck is staged at the Salon as an intellectual with a pair of practical glasses as a central attribute. Bauck’s right hand is resting in her lap, as if Wegmann wanted to reply to the comments by the Danish public, who rejected the 1881 portrait, because Bauck did not “sit neatly combed in a chair with her hands tidily in the lap, as in all their other portraits.”

Nevertheless, in the second likeness for the Salon, Bauck’s portrayal is far from conventional: the sharp and almost challenging
look of her eyes combined with the playful display of the glasses once more turn the gaze – a woman artist’s active looking and observation of the world – into the theme of the artists’ collaborative portraits. In the two friendship images intended for the Salon, hands, faces and attributes of professional or intellectual identity – the book, the palette, the brushes and the pince-nez – are carefully rendered, combined with a naturalistic portrayal of the facial features and alert gazes. The 1886 Salon portrait shows evidence of aging, while securing the sitter’s integrity by means of a sober and meticulous depiction. Both portraits convey character, pride and psychological depth and are based upon the intellectual dialogue and joint professional endeavor shared by the painter and the sitter. In light of Garb’s argument, the friendship images by Bauck and Wegmann reinvent the female portrait as an intellectual challenge for the beholder that requires laborious looking.

Wegmann chose her dear artist friend Jeanna Bauck and her sister Anna Seekamp as her favored sitters for these three Salon contributions. The decision to collaborate with her colleague and her sibling in the making of these important exhibition pieces was most likely a result of the repeated difficulties that the artist had experienced with occasional and professional models. In March 1880, Thorell informed her husband that Wegmann had already partially completed a portrait of a young Frenchwoman for the Salon, when the sitter’s father decided to withdraw the commission only two weeks before the submission date:

Poor little Bertha Wegmann had such bad luck recently. She was supposed to do a large portrait for the “Salon” (and it is the main purpose of her visit here to paint something for the same) of Mlle. Chanclarc who had given her word of honor to pose properly for it; and then on Friday comes her sister, who is married here, although even she had given her consent and declares that their father has written and has forbidden the daughter to have her portrait painted, since Mlle. W. could keep the portrait and then the girl’s reputation could suffer, because possibly Mlle. W. could give it away to whoever. Thereupon Bertha replied that she had given her word of honor that nobody would get the portrait, but the sister responded “yes, artists are still artists” (meaning not to be trusted), then Bertha, who is very proud, turned her back on them.712
The trouble with the commissioned likeness in 1880 explains why Wegmann first participated at the Salon the following year with Bauck’s likeness. It is worth noting that the father feared for the reputation of his daughter if she sat for the portrait. It seems as if he wanted to prevent his daughter from being regarded as an artist’s model due to the questionable social standing of the professional models. Furthermore, the sister’s comment points to the artist’s ambivalent social position, as she implied that Wegmann was not trustworthy. In her correspondence Thorell reported repeatedly on Wegmann’s conflicts with unreliable models. In the spring of 1881, Thorell also remarked that it had become increasingly difficult to find available models due to the high demand by Parisian artists. These anecdotes point to the various problems and insecurities faced by the artists when hiring occasional or professional models. In light of these experiences, it is hardly surprising that Wegmann rather relied on friends or relatives for her Salon paintings in the years to come. Wegmann’s close ones were not only free of charge, but she could also expect them to sit in the way she wanted – meaning that they gave her the time and the number of sessions she needed, and allowed her greater freedom in her work.

By the mid-1880s, Wegmann had made herself a name as a society portraitist in Copenhagen, receiving numerous commissions from the higher social strata of Danish society, which allowed her to provide financially for her closest relatives. At least at one point, Wegmann supported Bauck financially. In 1904 she had some money sent to her. Throughout the years, Bauck repeatedly stated in her letters to Thorell that “commissions rained” on Wegmann. In 1915, she remarked: “Bertha has a lot of commissions and works more than her powers allow […] She writes that people buy enormous amounts of paintings in Copenhagen, but of course only by Danish painters. They are ultra-patriotic there.” This comment points once more to the impact of nationalist tendencies on Wegmann’s career. Nevertheless, she managed to establish a successful career as a portraitist in Denmark despite her outsider position as a Swiss-born and internationally-trained artist.

Already by 1884, Wegmann’s portraits were in great demand in Denmark, but she declared that she did not intend to work solely as a portraitist: “I have to work, almost every day I refuse some portrait commission, people are like crazy, and I do not have in mind to solely become a portrait painter.” Wegmann considered work-
ing to commission monotonous and tiresome and she complained in a letter to Thorell: “Portraits, portraits and always portraits, this affects both soul and art, and this is what I have been fighting with the entire winter; those are lucky, who do not need to paint for the sake of money!” In 1886, she stated that painting landscape studies during the summer helped her to “wash herself clean” from commissions and the tiring need to unite likeness with idealization. According to Wegmann’s own account, painting landscapes was also a welcome change after all the conflicts with her French models. In 1920, Bauck reported again on Wegmann’s workload:

She was so flooded with all these same old portrait commissions, and so tired of all these constant eyes and noses and mouths, that so need to resemble, and often are so uninteresting. […] No, then I prefer my landscapes […] in which lie feeling and poetry, but how rarely such reside in some everyday person that wants to be painted!

These accounts indicate that painting an artist friend or a relative, someone the artist could easily relate to, must have been a much more stimulating activity than working upon commission. Such statements thus point to the exceptional position of the friendship images in the artistic production of the Bauck and Wegmann. In the eyes of the artists, the commissioned portraits were primarily a source of income and had only a very limited artistic merit. When asked by a Danish journalist in 1923 about her work as a portraitist and how many portraits she had painted over the years, Wegmann distinguished clearly between commissioned works and those she painted independently:

Hundreds, thank god they were not all commissions. Those which I painted for my own pleasure were the most fun. […] Yes, so you feel most free. I am such a pliable nature and I cannot help but being influenced by the people I paint, to my own torment. […] I feel unhappy when I cannot do as I wish. I always seek to make my models forget themselves, so that the pose does not appear conscious. I speak to them about the one they love or the one they care about. And then they forget everything about who they believed they had been. So, they become real people… Portrait painting is psychology. That is why it gets on the nerves.
This statement indicates that the personal engagement and interaction with the sitter were central to Wegmann’s working method as a portrait painter. She further revealed that her sitters had a certain impact on her in return, and one can imagine that this applied to an even higher degree to the sitter, who was her closest friend and colleague, with whom she shared the same profession, an intimate companionship and a similar background. This collective identity might have prompted and upheld Wegmann’s interest in her favorite sitter, Jeanna Bauck. By representing her fellow colleague, she could put her own experiences on canvas, too.

The analysis of Wegmann’s Salon portraits of Bauck has demonstrated that the artist is not a stable or static category, but that it is refashioned in every act of portrayal. Conflicting notions of professionalism and femininity were renegotiated and resolved in the shared artistic project of the friendship image.

Collaborative Practice and Dual Authorship

Writing from Munich in the fall of 1880, the Norwegian painter Gerhard Munthe (1849–1929) commented on the artistic partnership of Bauck and Wegmann in a letter to his parents. He appreciatively called them “two inseparable friends, whose names resound over the whole of Germany”, explaining that they had just returned from Paris “with excellent studies done in the countryside in France”. He mentioned that Bauck had to care for her mother and siblings, and that it was probably only with the help of Wegmann’s financial support that she had been able to make the journey. Munthe concluded his admiring report: “They are very reclusive, and I am one among the few friends who are granted an audience by this exceptionally skilled ladies’ firm.” Munthe’s portrayal of the two companions indicates that he was rather impressed by their talent and proud to call himself their friend. He appears to have been both puzzled and fascinated by their unusually close relationship. The choice of words towards the end of his account is especially remarkable in the sense that he compared the partnership between Bauck and Wegmann to a business. The characterizations “two inseparable friends” and “this exceptionally skilled ladies’ firm” imply that Munthe was aware that the artists’ relationship was more than emotional, but that it had professional implications. In his eyes, their relationship was both a private and
a professional partnership. It is notable that Kitty Kielland used a similar metaphor in a letter, when describing her close partnership with Harriet Backer: “For other people we have turned into one person, so they generally mix us up. We are like a company, e.g. Steen & Strøm, they know the company, but forget who is Steen and who is Strøm.” In both cases, the artist companions were identified as a unity by their surroundings to such an extent that the individuals became almost indistinguishable.

Not only colleagues and acquaintances reflected on the close artistic union between Bauck and Wegmann, but even the contemporary press repeatedly touched upon their relationship when covering the individual artists’ work. In 1897, the German women’s journal Frauen-Daheim visited Bauck in her Berlin studio and provided an engaging portrayal of the artist. The anonymous author commented on the “sisterly friendship” and “intimate collaboration” with Wegmann, who had inspired Bauck to paint portraits. In 1900, the German illustrated magazine Moderne Kunst elaborated on Wegmann’s impact on Bauck in similar terms, stating that she “owes her great skillfulness in the portrait genre” to her Danish colleague. While the first article spoke of an equal and collaborative relationship between the painters, the second text described it more as an one-sided dependent teacher-student relationship. A third article from 1898 in the American cultural journal The International Studio treated Bauck and Wegmann as equal partners and commented upon the similarities in their work. The author stressed the shared qualities of the two painters’ portraits, lying in their ability to look into the soul of their subject and penetrate into the character of the individual depicted. Finally, on the occasion of Wegmann’s seventieth birthday in 1917, the Danish newspaper Illustreret Tidende commented upon her relationship with Bauck:

Together with her faithful friend and fellow student, the landscape painter Jeanna Bauck in Munich, she has conducted many study trips around the world, and it is said that these two painters’ artistic views are so similar that at times it can be difficult to determine which of them has painted a work, in which their painting styles are united. Otherwise, it is generally claimed that one never is in doubt when standing in front of a Bertha Wegmann.
All four articles have in common that the commentators reflect upon the two painters’ collaboration and identify it as integral to their respective professional development. Ultimately, the Danish critic even argued that the artists’ close relationship has led to a shared artistic expression that made it difficult to distinguish between the individual artists’ works.

The preserved correspondence and additional hitherto unpublished archival sources suggest that the artists’ collaboration transcended the practices of reciprocal portrayal, joint study periods and cohabitation described above. In fact, the two painters seem to have systematized their cooperative painting practice in a way that renders Munthe’s phrase of the “ladies’ firm” more accurate than one might have initially believed.

In 1923, Wegmann was commissioned to paint the portrait of Queen Alexandrine of Denmark (1879–1952). The following spring, Bauck informed Thorell that Wegmann was struggling to finish the painting and added: “She wishes to have my helping hand, because it is boring, but no one should see that I am painting too.” A few weeks later Bauck stated, when reporting on Wegmann’s burdensome workload: “She has portrait commissions and she finds it exhausting. Once, I used to paint the clothes, the background, and the details in her portraits in order to spare her some effort, but from here I cannot do that.” These late letters, written when Bauck was eighty-two years old, reveal that the artists collaborated on Wegmann’s commissions and that Bauck repeatedly executed parts of the friend’s portraits. Furthermore, Bauck referred to their collaborative painting practice as a shared secret that no one was supposed to know about. This might explain why there is no reference to this practice in any previous letter to Thorell.

In light of this account, one can neither prove nor rule out the possibility that Bauck painted parts of Wegmann’s portraits for the Salon, thus not only sitting for, but painting some of the details in her own mediated – or maybe even immediate – self-representations. This evidence also adds a new dimension to Bauck’s studio scene depicting Wegmann painting the portrait of Peter Dethlefsen for the Salon of 1889 (see fig. 50). While Wegmann is standing in the center of the composition painting the portrait, Bauck is invisible to the beholder’s eye and positioned outside the picture plane. Following the logic of the composition, both artists are simultaneously working on the portrait of the male sitter. Wegmann is painting Dethlefsen’s portrait, while Bauck is depicting the sitting
and thereby participating in her friend’s work. Or to put it differently, Bauck is painting the canvas that Wegmann is working on and is partaking in the friend’s art. In the end, Bauck’s genre scene alludes to the friends’ collaborative painting practice and hints at their shared secret, which is encapsulated in the preserved letters. Potentially, the revelation in Bauck’s letters to Thorell thus adds another dimension to the collaborative nature of the friendship images.

A letter by Toni Müller on the occasion of the donation of several paintings by Bauck and Wegmann to Nationalmuseum in 1931 not only supports Bauck’s claims, but shows that the painting assistance was mutual. Wegmann’s longtime companion remarked that she was not surprised to hear that the curators had difficulties attributing the works. According to Müller, “the painting styles of these intimate friends and art companions had, after many years of joint study trips and studio community, started to resemble one another in such an astonishing manner” that the two painters “even amused themselves with executing minor parts in one another’s paintings.” Müller further explained:

> There are, for example, several portraits of J.B., where B.W. has painted the hand or hands (she loved to paint hands and J.B. disliked it). The daughter of a Belgian envoy in Berlin has hands by B.W. in J.B.’s portrait, just like the singer Eugen Hildach in Frankfurt am Main, and Hanna Bauck’s hands in the portrait that is owned by the Krupp collections and so forth.

According to Müller, Wegmann used to say that Bauck “had in her little finger more talent than all other artists in their whole hands”, but she sometimes lacked patience, “so when she got tired of a commission, she simply sent the painting over to Cph to B.W. who would reach out with her helping hand finishing what J.B. did not want to complete, preferring a new task.” Müller’s explanations support the impression that these joint painting practices were carried out on a routine basis, reminiscent, on a smaller scale, of the division of labor in early modern artist workshops. When it came to executing commissions, Bauck and Wegmann collaborated pragmatically like partners in a firm.

The purposeful pragmatism of the artists’ productive collaboration runs contrary to the widespread understanding of the modern artist as autonomous, independent, self-contained and creating
original work. The painters’ collaborative method of painting involves a radical challenge to the prevalent trope of the artist as a solitary genius and its claim to originality, meaning that one work needed to be attributed to one artist alone. In contrast to the early modern workshop practice, the nineteenth-century artists’ mode of operation was supposed to be entirely individualist. The making of an author name as well as a public signature and reputation were essential for professional success. In light of these prevalent topoi of solitary genius, individual Authenticity and personal style, collaboration was more or less proscribed.

The importance of the ideal of individual Authenticity is evident in an event that the French impressionist painter Berthe Morisot described in a letter to her sister Edma (1839–1921). When Morisot struggled to finish her painting *The Mother and Sister of the Artist* in time for the Salon of 1869, Édouard Manet offered to help her out. Manet eventually reworked and finished the painting against the will of his colleague, who considered the whole episode “agonizing” and hoped the painting would be refused. As Marni R. Kessler has pointed out, although such corrections were not necessarily uncommon, they were forbidden and could lead to exclusion from the Salon. Kessler referred to Manet’s intervention as an invasion of Morisot’s space of representation: “His invasion of her canvas, his layers of paint effectively veiling her paint, may be seen as a similarly proprietary effort, as his way of claiming Morisot’s space of production, and not necessarily as an artistic collaboration.”

It is informative to compare Morisot’s shocked reaction to Manet’s invasion of her canvas with Bauck’s and Wegmann’s mutual interventions. Whereas the first incident points to the asymmetrical relationship between Morisot and Manet, it seems as if neither Bauck nor Wegmann experienced their friend’s contributions as any form of invasion or intrusion. Whereas one can read Manet’s interference as a one-sided proprietary and paternalistic act, the collaborative practice of Bauck and Wegmann was mutual and equal. Nevertheless, Bauck and Wegmann also kept their collaboration a secret and it seems likely that they did so because the authorship of women artists and the originality of their work was repeatedly contested by critical or hostile voices that questioned their abilities and professionalism. For instance, in 1858 the American sculptor Harriet Hosmer (1830–1908) was accused by the British press of allowing Italian craftsmen to produce her work, although the use
of studio assistants and marble cutters was common practice in the period. Thus mistrust against women’s artistic merits was never fully to disappear in the late nineteenth century.

To my knowledge, there are only a few examples in Nordic painting of the period where collaboration is evident and even forms an integral part of the conception of the work. Some of these paintings were created in the context of the artists’ colonies, where fellowship, group identity and shared artistic ideals were fostered as a countermovement to individualism and urban isolation. In Skagen, the married artist couples Anna and Michael Ancher and Marie and Peder Severin Krøyer collaborated on paintings that addressed their partnership in life and in art.

In a joint work painted in the winter of 1882–83, Anna and Michael Ancher represented themselves in their home, the Havehuset, in Skagen. Anna Ancher (1859–1935) portrayed her husband
Michael Ancher (1849–1927), who in return portrayed his wife and painted the surrounding interior. In the resulting genre scene, the couple are sitting in their armchairs, contemplating from a critical distance a work placed on an easel. Apart from the easel, the interior resembles a typical middle-class home: blooming flowers, a golden frame and an old master portrait convey elegance and refinement. The subject matter oscillates between the established genres of the conversation piece and the group portrait with a married couple, in which the dog traditionally signifies marital fidelity. Likewise, Michael Ancher’s gesture of touching the back of his wife’s chair is conventional: he looks over her from behind her seated position. Marital harmony is further indicated by several rhythmic doublings across the scene: a pair of tea cups, two opened books on the table and a kerosene lamp that reappears as a reflection in the mirror. Anna Ancher, with her recognizable features in sharp profile and in an elegant red dress, marks the center of the composition. In Judgment of a Day’s Work from 1883, the couple are viewing a painting that they have been working on during the day.

In a letter from November 1882, Anna Ancher told her cousin Martha Møller (1860–1929) that collaborating with her husband was a welcome distraction from painting the local fishermen: “Besides, it just interests us right now to work on a small painting, for which we paint one another; it is so pleasant to get away from all the common fisherfolk and to find some civilized people, who, by the way, are much more picturesque than the prior.” Apparently, Anna and Michael Ancher wanted to escape from their usual subject matter, namely the local population of villagers and fishermen. This double portrait is thus as much about dissociation, as it is about association: The Ancher couple renders itself as a unity distinguished from the local population that surrounds it. This unity implies a clear class distinction, already indicated in the opposing pair of the “common” versus the “civilized” people in Anna Ancher’s statement. The artists’ dissociation from the local community is emphasized in the painting by means of their intellectual and contemplative activity (rather than the actual act of painting as a craft or manual labor) and the surrounding middle-class environment.

In Judgment of a Day’s Work, Anna and Michael Ancher fashion a common identity by means of mutual portrayal, corresponding actions and a shared home. The painting’s dual authorship figures as a metaphor for the couple’s creative unity and it was exhibited in the name of both artists the following year at the Charlottenborg
Otherwise, as the couple’s individual styles merge into one, the collaborative effort would not have been visible to the naked eye.

In contrast to the stylistic harmony of the Anchers’ double portrait, Marie and Peder Severin Krøyer collaborated on a small-scale double portrait in 1890 that renders their individual hands strikingly visible: While her brushwork is broad and expressive, his is finer and more delicate. While she painted him in a cool color scheme, he chose a warm palette for her portrayal. In the center of the composition, where the individual expressions meet, the differently applied paint forms a barrier that separates the individual frontal portraits from one another. Due to the frontality of the portraits, the artist couple are not sharing in a dialogue with one another, but they rather engage in two separate conversations with the beholder.

Fig. 67. Marie and Peder Severin Krøyer, *Double Portrait*, 1890.
The same year, Hanna Hirsch-Pauli painted a portrait of her colleague Karl Nordström, whose daughter later claimed that her father had painted the still life in the background consisting of bottles and books. In contrast to Kjell Boström, who referred to this anecdote and believed himself able to identify the artists’ hands and typical color schemes in the final work, Margareta Gynning claimed that Hirsch-Pauli had painted the still life herself, asking: “Why should someone else need to paint the motif, if she herself was a skillful still life painter at the time?” If Nordström actually executed a detail in his portrait, it should not necessarily be read as an act of artistic superiority. It could also be understood as an emulative and dialogic play between the artists, common in friendship images from the period. In contrast to the above-mentioned case of Manet and Morisot, Nordström and Hirsch-Pauli never engaged in any asymmetrical teacher-student relationship. Therefore, a potential contribution from his side would not have been perceived as a threat to her professional independence. Hirsch-Pauli exhibited the portrait of Nordström frequently in the early 1890s, which points to its importance in her artistic production.

Of course, similar collaborative efforts in painting were not limited to the Nordic context. Rosa Bonheur, for instance, added
a bull to her likeness painted by Édouard Dubufe (1819–1883) in 1857, thereby displaying all her skill as an animal painter in a portrait otherwise painted by her male colleague.752 Another French example is Frédéric Bazille’s studio scene Studio on the Rue la Condamine. Here, his friend Édouard Manet inserted the exaggeratedly tall figure of Bazille into the scenery to make him appear among his friends. According to Bridget Alsdorf, by assisting his friend, Manet allowed Bazille to figure in the painting as an equal part of the group of artist friends without compromising the composition’s collective statement.753 Consequently, the history of the making of the painting corresponds to the artistic and social interaction among artists and critics it is supposed to display.754

These Nordic and French examples can be conceptualized as friendship images in the sense outlined at the beginning of this chapter. They are characterized by a dialogical structure that emphasizes collaboration and community on a material and iconographic level, or in terms of execution and subject matter. The case
of Bauck and Wegmann considerably exceeds the examples outlined above, since their collaboration was not confined to paintings that addressed artistic identity, friendship and community. Instead, their co-authorship even included commissioned works and was kept secret from the public. One can assume that contemporary buyers expected an authentic work by the hand of the individual painter, either by Bauck or Wegmann. Obviously, one cannot rule out the possibility that other painters in the period collaborated in a similar manner. However, to the best of my knowledge there does not exist any comparable case in which the collaborative practice is documented to the same extent as it is for Bauck and Wegmann.

In her letter to the director general of Nationalmuseum, Toni Müller recounted another episode from the painters’ artistic partnership that further demonstrates that collaboration was integral to their professional identity and their self-fashioning as artists. Müller explained that Bauck and Wegmann not only painted but even signed some of their studies together:

Sometimes the two artists would even paint a painting very openly together, such as a landscape (or a still life with flowers, one of them one piece, the other another piece). I own a pretty landscape of a meadow with willows, where the signature was once written out as Bauck-Wegmann, but unfortunately and much to my regret, the art dealer who framed and sold several of them in the auction after B. W.’s works unwarrantedly cut off half the signature, leaving only Wegm. I was very angry and sad about this, but he reckoned that it was out of the question to have both names there (and indeed, I actually thought that this was deliciously interesting).755

This anecdote indicates that collaboration shaped the artists’ entire painting practice from the experimental and preparatory study to the finished painting intended for sale. It is remarkable that the artists even signed some of their studies together and thereby openly marked them as collaborative pieces. Signing a painting is the most obvious act of artistic self-fashioning, since it inevitably binds the work together with the artist’s persona.756 The signature is the ultimate sign of individual authenticity and it is deeply rooted in the general conception of creativity.757 To share the signature, and thereby the authorship over the artwork, counteracted prevalent notions of unitary artistic identity and individual genius, which explains
the art dealer’s incomprehension and disapproval. From his perspective, a doubled signature risked reducing the profit of the sale.

The painters themselves deliberately encapsulated their entangled artistic identity and collaborative partnership in a doubled signature. Borrowing a trenchant formulation by Chadwick and de Courtivron, this act of co-authorship challenged the limited understanding of creativity as “an extraordinary (usually male) individual’s solitary struggle for artistic self-expression.” From a feminist perspective, the study of such collaborative practices has the potential to form a powerful instrument for a critique of the paradigm of the single (and usually male) artist, still dominant in art history. According to Lorraine Mary York, scholar of English and culture, women’s collaborative practices in the nineteenth century can be understood as a form of resistance to the romantic construction of the author as a particularly male type.

As Bette London has pointed out in relation to women’s collaborative writing, collaboration rarely takes place out in the open: “Collaborations, indeed, frequently exist even where two authors don’t name themselves as such.” Collaboration is often practiced in secret in order to protect the authors’ arrangements “from public scrutiny – even public ridicule.” When it is practiced by women, collaboration easily runs the risk to be misunderstood as female passivity or to be viewed as a sign of sentimentality and weakness, or it could seemingly confirm the bias against the originality of their art. As opposed to such prejudices, the case of Bauck and Wegmann demonstrates that the artists’ regular collaboration on portrait commissions grew out of pragmatic considerations of making their work more effective through the division of labor, and it raises awareness of the everyday realities of artistic practice often denied or neglected by artists themselves and historians alike. The case of Bauck and Wegmann exemplarily allows for a reconsideration of the importance of collaboration for artistic practice and identity formation. Ultimately, their collaborative practice challenges the idea of the artist as an individualist.

Returning to the correspondence of Bauck and Wegmann with Thorell, the artists’ epistolary exchange shows some striking similarities to the above outlined collaborative painting practice. The artists’ dual authorship and mediated self-representation in painting find equivalents in their writing practice. Wegmann repeatedly stated in her letters to Thorell that she disliked writing letters and had some troubles expressing herself in writing:
Well, it is true that I am bad writer, and I do not want to deny that I would prefer it by ten, a thousand times to sit opposite you and talk to you while I look into your large childish eyes. Instead I am sitting here with the cold paper and the ugly ink bottle and let the words creep across the paper like a slow snail. Everything one says appears so old and stale, not really worth writing down. It gets even older from the slowness of the pen and I could die of impatience before I have said the most basic things. If one could express one’s thoughts in painting it would be so much easier, but how should I depict gratefulness?

Likewise, Bauck claimed that it was easier for Wegmann to finish an entire painting than a single letter. At times, Wegmann had great difficulties deciphering Thorell’s Swedish letters, and then she forwarded them to Bauck to have them translated. Bauck used to call herself Wegmann’s “secretary” and occasionally she would act as her friend’s scribe, answering her correspondence. When she was spending time together with Wegmann, Bauck often wrote letters in both artists’ names to Thorell or according to Wegmann’s dictate. Writing from Munich in July 1883, Bauck noted in the upper left corner of the first page: “Written by Jeanna, but dictated by Bertha.” In the course of the letter, Bauck indicated that she alternated her own voice with Wegmann’s dictation: “Now comes Jeanna herself” is followed by “now Bertha comes again.” Whereas the entire letter is written in Bauck’s handwriting, Wegmann has signed it herself. Repeatedly, Bauck wrote in Wegmann’s name and in a letter from November 1884 she stated accordingly: “Today I figure as Bertha’s secretary, and while she is sewing eagerly, I am writing to you according to her dictation. [...] Now I withdraw my little person and let Berthel speak.” In the summer of 1886, Bauck introduced a letter to Thorell in a similar manner: “This time it is myself, Jeanna, who is writing, but both in my and Bertha’s names, so it applies just as much to her.”

The dialogic or mediated structure of the artists’ writing practice and the shared authorship of the resulting letters shares some striking similarities with their collaborative painting practice and their friendship images. Wegmann expressed herself through Bauck both in painting and in writing. In both media, the letter and the friendship image, Wegmann communicated through her friend.
(men för ögonblicket är hon naturligvis
i Shanghai) med sin egna och mägar
om en tavla efter naturen. Så hon är hän,
så vi öfva i mästaren bien, där är flera goda
bildar, men huvudsaken blir väl ända frå
avserna. — Inn kommer Jeanne gjen.
Snilda tillbygd! Jag är alldeles för

Kast i Bertha, poträde af sin egna, det är
i båda på någonmän sälla, på porträtten, och
är på någotst sannerligen en af min vän gjen,
ons att är i det, inte valdren efter atten. Hvar,
min helmar ochLivits till tiden. — Inn kommer Bertha gjen. Där är bra snär
af dig att vilja invitera och mig att komma och
mede hos dig. — Det kan nog hända att jag bad
man invittera andra, för det infaller att se på
den vackra carac och din vackra villa.
Kom samma på en idé göra min tavla
fartyg som jag börjar gjen! Iv är
—
Employing Ewa Lajer-Burcharth’s concept of touch, both painting and letter writing figured as creative arenas for the artists to realize themselves through one another’s touch – be it the touch of the ink on paper, the touch of the brush on canvas, or the doubled and entangled signature. By writing and posing, Bauck and Wegmann expressed themselves through mediated self-fashioning. Thereby, the artists counteracted prevalent notions of solitary authorship and isolated genius across different media.
III. The Studio Scene

The hitherto unpublished file on the painter and illustrator Brita Ellström in the archives of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Stockholm contains a small self-made photo album from the artist’s stay in Paris in 1903. At the time, Ellström held a scholarship from the academy in Stockholm, which allowed her to study at Académie Colarossi and Académie de la Grande Chaumière. On the first page of her album, the artist has drawn the layout of her studio, informing precisely of the measurements of the room, the placement of the furniture and the staircase reaching up to a loft bed, the number of windows and the position of the entrance door. This ground plan is complemented by a series of photographs meticulously documenting the interior of the studio from various angles. Each image is accompanied by a short description. Ellström herself, or visitors, are absent from the photographs, apart from one image portraying the painter’s model Marie Cataldi, who is shown sweeping the floor. Ellström assembled her memories from France in an album, in which the combined home and studio represented her experiences abroad. In designing the album, she engaged in an activity that was traditionally associated with women of the middle classes. Since album art was usually pursued in a domestic environment, and was considered a private and personal activity, it was long regarded as a practice particularly suited for women. In nineteenth-century album art, the drawing room functioned as a semi-public space of feminine refinement, staged theatrically in photocollages. The albums reflected the growing fashion for home decoration, which exerted a considerable influence on the construction of middle-class aesthetics and identity.
Plan over min atelier.

A

B

e et bord

fraa

døre u.

3.75 m.

4 m.

C

skøp

ræmin.

Tønset

Førsteværelse

du lægde korridoren.
Några interiörer från min atelier i nr 9 Rue Campagne première, Paris, år 1903.

Especially middle-class women used home decoration as a means to express themselves.\textsuperscript{780} In contrast to traditional album art, Ellström’s album depicts a more hybrid kind of domesticity. Instead of a drawing room, the pages of her album stage an artist’s combined working and living environment, and they thereby showcase the inhabitant’s professional identity.\textsuperscript{781} Even though this example reaches beyond the temporal focus of the 1880s, it is used as a starting point for this chapter because it renders tangible the symbolic importance of the studio space for the construction of artistic identity. For Ellström, the album was a means to document her journey to Paris and she decided to memorize her personal environment, which she had designed according to her own wishes and needs. Making the album can be understood as an act of claiming that environment, and this possessive act points to the vital importance of this temporary home and work space for the experience abroad as a whole.

Similar practices of documentation also materialize in the preserved archives of many artists from the late nineteenth century. Artists repeatedly provided detailed descriptions of their studios and homes in diaries and letters. For instance, the correspondence of Eva Bonnier and Richard Bergh and the diaries of Marie Bashkirtseff contain detailed descriptions of studios, their architecture, furnishing and atmosphere.\textsuperscript{782} From time to time artists added sketches to their accounts: Newly arrived in Paris in November 1879, Hildegard Thorell included a quickly drawn ground plan of her room in the guesthouse on Rue de Bruxelles in a letter to her husband Reinhold.\textsuperscript{783} She repeated this gesture when she visited Jeanna Bauck and Bertha Wegmann in Munich in February 1883.\textsuperscript{784} Christine Sundberg made several drawings and watercolors depicting interiors from her homes in Sweden and abroad.\textsuperscript{785} These examples suggest that Ellström was no exception in her desire to preserve, in one way or another, the memory of her temporary home abroad.

**The Studio as Imagined and Lived-In Space**

This urge to document one’s living and working environment coincided with the growing symbolic importance of the interior in the nineteenth century. Private or semi-private spaces, from the middle-class home to the writer’s study or the artist’s studio, came...
to be understood as ideal places for retreat or contemplation and as refuges from the ever-changing outside world in an age of rapid modernization and industrialization.\footnote{Walter Benjamin (1892–1940) analyzed this phenomenon in his unfinished *Passagen-Werk* (Arcades Project), in which he famously compared the interior to “a box in the theatre of the world”.\footnote{In this period, the interior turned into a privileged site for the self-fashioning of the middle classes.\footnote{A person’s milieu was believed to be the most truthful, lasting and complete reflection of character and therefore superior to appearance, which was conceived as superficial, ever-changing and ephemeral. The lasting presence of space was charged with meaning and was supposed to reflect the resident’s temperament, creative outlook and personal convictions.}} In this period, the interior turned into a privileged site for the self-fashioning of the middle classes.\footnote{A person’s milieu was believed to be the most truthful, lasting and complete reflection of character and therefore superior to appearance, which was conceived as superficial, ever-changing and ephemeral. The lasting presence of space was charged with meaning and was supposed to reflect the resident’s temperament, creative outlook and personal convictions.} The home of Karin Bergöö Larsson (1859–1928) and Carl Larsson, *Lilla Hyttnäs*, in the province of Dalarna in Sweden, exemplifies this development towards an integration of the home in the self-fashioning of the artist.\footnote{This paradigm shift in the conception of the studio is epitomized in Gustave Courbet’s monumental composition *The Painter’s Studio* from 1855, which, according to the artist’s own titling, constituted *A Real Allegory Summing up Seven Years of My Artistic and Moral Life*. The painting has been subject to countless interpretations, but they all tend to acknowledge that the artist elevated the studio (and thereby himself) to the spiritual center of society. In contrast to depictions of the artist’s workshop in the early modern period, representations of (the artist in) the studio, in the nineteenth century, were characterized by an increased subjectification. The studio space gained a strong symbolic importance in the negotiation of artistic identity,} The home of Karin Bergöö Larsson (1859–1928) and Carl Larsson, *Lilla Hyttnäs*, in the province of Dalarna in Sweden, exemplifies this development towards an integration of the home in the self-fashioning of the artist.\footnote{The artist couple meticulously designed the interior decoration of their tradition-inspired home and showcased the result in watercolors. These images were popularized in the best-selling book *Ett hem* (A Home) in 1899, which promoted the elegant simplicity of *Lilla Hyttnäs* as a model of domestic and social reform according to the principles of the Arts and Crafts movement.} The growing symbolic potential of the interior stimulated a renewed interest in the artist’s studio space. Of course, artists had painted their studios in previous centuries and there is a long iconographic tradition of the self-portrait in the studio.\footnote{However, as Eva Mongi-Vollmer has demonstrated, it was not until the second half of the nineteenth century that the studio gained its own “dense discursive identity”. This paradigm shift in the conception of the studio is epitomized in Gustave Courbet’s monumental composition *The Painter’s Studio* from 1855, which, according to the artist’s own titling, constituted *A Real Allegory Summing up Seven Years of My Artistic and Moral Life*. The painting has been subject to countless interpretations, but they all tend to acknowledge that the artist elevated the studio (and thereby himself) to the spiritual center of society. In contrast to depictions of the artist’s workshop in the early modern period, representations of (the artist in) the studio, in the nineteenth century, were characterized by an increased subjectification. The studio space gained a strong symbolic importance in the negotiation of artistic identity,}
at times being elevated to a quasi-sacred space. The studio as a subject matter not only flourished in painting, but also became a vital theme in literature, criticism and journalism and “the visit to the studio” became a popular genre of the reportage. The flourishing celebrity culture and awakened interest in the persona of the artist led to a growing demand in such “home stories”, with detailed descriptions of artists’ working environments and gossip about their private lives.\textsuperscript{797}

The following chapter explores the symbolic importance and pictorial potential of the studio space in the self-fashioning of the artist, with a special focus on its gendered implications as \textit{a room of one’s own} for the professionalization of women artists.\textsuperscript{798} It asks how women artists employed the studio as a representational arena in which they staged themselves in their professional role, and through which they could orchestrate their professional aspirations and aesthetic convictions. In the late nineteenth century, the studio space occupied a prominent position in the production of Nordic women painters and more precisely among those residing in Paris in the 1880s. The following analysis of the role of spatiality in Nordic women painters’ self-fashioning is informed by Susan Sidlaukas’ study of \textit{Body, Place and Self in Nineteenth-Century Painting}.\textsuperscript{799} Analyzing artworks by Edgar Degas, John Singer Sargent (1856–1925) and Édouard Vuillard (1868–1940), Sidlaukas has read their painted interiors as contested terrains, in which questions of identity were intensely negotiated. She argued that these late-nineteenth-century painters explored subjectivity in painting primarily by means of a charged juxtaposition of figure and space.\textsuperscript{800}

Proceeding from Sidlaukas’ observations, this chapter brings the charged juxtaposition between artist and studio into focus and analyzes the interaction and friction between the artist’s body and her working environment. By doing so, it takes up the key concerns from the two previous chapters, emulation and collaboration, and combines them with the appropriation of the studio space.

The key works in this chapter are the friendship image by Hanna Hirsch-Pauli depicting her friend and colleague Venny Soldan-Brofeldt from 1886–87, the studio interior by Eva Bonnier from 1886 and the self-portrait by Asta Nørregaard from 1883, supplemented by comparative works by Mina Carlson-Bredberg, Anna Nordlander (1843–1879), Jenny Nyström and Lotten Rönquist, among others. Using Hanna Hirsch-Pauli’s friendship image as a central case, this chapter explores the pictorial strategies by
means of which Nordic women artists appropriated and widened spaces of representation, and thereby turned the studio into *a room of their own.*

To a greater extent than the previous chapters, the following analyses draw on diverse primary sources, including contemporary reviews and newspaper articles, previously unpublished letters as well as private and published photographs, which are used as comparative material for the paintings. It is imperative to bear in mind the fundamental differences between these visual sources and their diverse contexts of origin: A private photograph used as a personal memory or souvenir served completely different purposes than a painting, which was employed as an important exhibition piece to be put on display at the Salon in Paris. Nevertheless, both allow for the study of the complex layers of meaning associated with the studio and help to grasp this space as an ideal interior and a real lived-in space. This is not to say that the photographs are not staged, but comparing them with the paintings provides useful insights into the ways in which the studio was fashioned in art. Ultimately, the studio depicted in painting is never a visual documentation of a real lived-in or worked-in space, but always an ideal interior and an imagined space. Consequently, one will rarely encounter an absolute congruence between paintings and other primary sources.

The studio figured as a particularly fruitful site for the staging of identity due to its liminal position between the public and the private sphere. In the studio, the artist can work in solitude, but here s/he can also receive visitors and display or exhibit her/his works. Here s/he can sell works, campaign for and advertise her/his production, and thereby even turn the workshop into a commercial space. The studio functions as a site for contemplation or socialization and can be opened up or closed according to the resident’s momentary needs. As has been demonstrated in the previous chapter, many women artists lived in apartments that were combined living and working spaces, complicating the matter further and calling into question the notion of the home as a private haven, secluded from the sphere of productive labor.

By turning the studio into the subject of a painting and exhibiting the resulting artwork, by making it accessible to the public, artists could bridge the divide between the spheres once more: in the painting they might be depicted in solitude, yet by exhibiting the work, the painting itself becomes a public object for scrutiny. In other words, when an artist paints her-/himself in solitude, s/he ob-
viously anticipates the painting’s public exposure and her/his own exposure as well. As Marc Gotlieb has aptly argued, the studio is a “public stage in the guise of a private arena” and a “symbolic space disguised as a real one.” In other words, the studio is a hybrid space that oscillates between the public and the private, between the real and the imaginary.

Scholarship on the nineteenth century across various disciplines has long been conducted along the lines of a strict dichotomy between the public and the private. In the field of visual culture, the last ten years have seen an increase in scholarship that questions and complicates the public-private dichotomy by studying hybrid spaces. This chapter contributes to this development by studying the studio’s liminality. In art history, Griselda Pollock’s widely received article “Modernity and the Spaces of Femininity” was among the first to draw attention to the importance of space or spatial restrictions on the construction of gender and gendered space in impressionist painting. According to Pollock, the pictorial world of French impressionist women artists was restricted to the private sphere, the homes, the private gardens or the balconies, whereas their male colleagues depicted the buzzing street life of the Parisian metropolis. Margareta Gynning has commented upon the limitations of Pollock’s approach with regard to the Nordic context and highlighted the prominent position of the studio interior in the production of women artists. Gynning remarked that the studio’s function as a semi-public work space ran contrary to the presupposed ideological separation between male-as-public and female-as-private sphere. She emphasized the studio’s symbolic function for Nordic women painters as an expression of a unique life experience, reading the widened space as an expression of a feeling of independence that enabled the artists to disassociate for a period from their upper-middle-class background and sophisticated lifestyle. In similar fashion, Alexandra K. Wettlaufer has reflected upon the gendered implications of the studio’s liminal position that allowed a gradual transition of women from the domestic sphere to the work space, from amateurism to professionalism and from individual isolation in the home to a collective identity with other female colleagues established in shared studios or private academies.

When it comes to the studio space, the dichotomic public-private divide along the lines of gender thus appears problematic. Many (women) artists received guests, buyers, journalists and critics
in their studios during visiting hours, such as the French painters Louise Abbéma (1853–1927) and Eva Gonzalès (1849–1883), who is known to have opened her studio to the public to exhibit a painting that had been refused by the Salon. The Swedish painter Amalia Lindegren (1814–1891) had opening or drop-in hours in her studio in Stockholm for clients who wanted to be portrayed. The French artist Madeleine Lemaire (1845–1928) held a popular salon in her studio in Paris, where she received members of the high society and persons from the intellectual circles of fin-de-siècle Paris. The studios and homes of foreign artists in Paris were often important meeting places for the expatriate communities. Already in the 1870s, the studios of the Swedish artists Christine Sundberg and Mimmi Zetterström (1843–1885) were the place to go for compatriot women painters who had recently arrived in Paris and needed advice regarding training, art schools, studios and housing. The home of the Swedish sculptor Ida Ericson-Molard (1853–1927) and her husband William Molard (1862–1936) turned into an important meeting point for intellectuals and artists in the 1890s. The Parisian studio of the American Salon painter Elizabeth Jane Gardner (1837–1922) became a haven for visiting American artists. Gardner held afternoon teas once a week, private viewings and larger gatherings to launch her Salon paintings. These examples demonstrate that the studio space often fulfilled a variety of public functions in terms of commerce, marketing and sociability.

In order to fully grasp the studio's hybridity and the consequent effects on the self-fashioning of the artist, it is fruitful to employ Erving Goffman’s conceptual pair of the front region and the back region, or backstage. Even though Goffman’s model appears at first sight just as binary as the public-private dichotomy, he explicitly conceptualizes the two regions as unstable and shifting. A certain space can be a front region at one moment and transform into a back region at the next. The studio can be understood as a space in which this transition is particularly fluid and the artist can experiment with this fluidity in the context of her/his artistic self-fashioning. The artist can easily turn the studio into a playground in which s/he can make her audience believe they have entered the back region, the intimate realm of the artist and a site of ostensible authenticity, when in fact they are observing a performance in progress in the front region. Goffman attributes the back region a subversive potential, since here the performer can step out of his role and act out otherwise suppressed behaviors:
A back region or backstage may be defined as a place, relative to a given performance, where the impression fostered by the performance is knowingly contradicted as a matter of course. [...] It is here that the capacity of a performance to express something beyond itself may be painstakingly fabricated; it is here that illusions and impressions are openly constructed. Here stage props and items of personal front can be stored in a kind of compact collapsing of whole repertoires of actions and characters. [...] Here the team can run through its performance, checking for offending expressions when no audience is present to be affronted by them; [...] Here the performer can relax; he can drop his front, forgo speaking his lines, and step out of character.819

In the back region, a front regional behavior can be openly contradicted and the performer can challenge or undermine her/his role as performer. If one considers the performance of the middle-class woman and the performance of the artist as two different and partly opposing performances, one can understand the studio as a space that facilitates a transition between the two. The studio can be conceived as the back region to the performance of the middle-class woman: When she enters the studio, she is able to drop the front of the wife/daughter/sister and to give the performance of the artist. Here, she can step out of the character of middle-class woman and step into the character of the artist. In the studio she can fashion herself as artist. This hybridity of the studio as a real and imaginary, a public and private space, renders it an ideal space in which to stage such shifting notions of selfhood. These two spaces should not be conceived of as static and dualistic, as perhaps this thought experiment might suggest. But rather, access to a studio was an integral precondition for the appropriation of the professional role of the artist.

In her now classic essay *A Room of One’s Own* from 1929, the British writer Virginia Woolf (1882–1941) discussed the interdependence between space and creativity.820 She argued that access to a personal and private space was, alongside money, an essential precondition for creativity and more specifically literary success.821 In accordance with Woolf, the feminist literary scholar Germaine Greer used the appropriate phrase of the “reduced scale of female life” when discussing how women in nineteenth-century society were not allowed to occupy much space, whether figuratively in the
sense of being quiet and modest or literally in the sense of being
denied a personal space in the home. Studying the depictions of
studios in the paintings and epistolary writings of Nordic wom-
en painters in the late nineteenth century demonstrates that these
artists defined the studio as a room of their own long before this was
theorized by Woolf.

The recently rediscovered and published correspondence of the
Swedish painter Anna Nordlander indicates that the studio was a
space that a woman artist needed to earn. Nordlander, who studied
at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Stockholm between 1866 and
1871, was the daughter of a clergyman from Skellefteå in northern
Sweden. The letters to her friend and fellow colleague Kerstin
Cardon (1843–1924) show that she felt torn between her profes-
sional ambition and her obligations towards her family. During a
stay at her parents’ home in the summer of 1871 Nordlander stated:
“Here at home, they don’t seem to be in favor of me painting
in a studio of my own until I am better.” At the same time, she
claimed that her painting skills would decline with each day with-
out a studio at her disposal. In Nordlander’s case, the right to a
studio was questioned by the family and had to be earned on the
basis of artistic skill, which – according to her own account – could
only be achieved when working in a proper studio. The artist’s
comment points towards a dilemma in which access to a studio and
professionalization were intimately intertwined.

Nordlander’s letters to Cardon document the friends’ dogged
search for a suitable studio to share in Stockholm during the winter
of 1871–72 and these joint efforts appear to have been an important
step in acquiring independence and self-confidence. The artists
turned into active agents, who searched for a suitable location, ne-
gotiated the price and rented a studio in their own names. Not only
did the mere possession of a studio confirm the artists’ professional
status, but the practical actions involved in acquiring it were just
as vital in constructing a professional identity. Writing from Skel-
lefteå, Nordlander asked her colleague “to keep her ears open for
the slightest word” about an available studio and “to keep her eyes
looking upwards to spy out some hitherto unknown large window
that could bring us happiness.”

An undated studio interior painted by Nordlander suggests that
the artist friends were eventually successful. The interior depicts a
large room with a high ceiling and the longed-for large northern
window. The walls of the room are decorated with some framed

Fig. 73. Anna Nordlander, Studio Interior, undated.
and unframed artworks, and a portfolio with prints is lying on the studio floor. Even though the interior is furnished with a table, a chair and some other objects that are scattered across the room, it appears spacious with the floor in the foreground left completely empty. By far the most prominent object in the room is a large easel to the right of the composition. The canvas suggests that the artist has only for a moment interrupted her ongoing work. The artist herself or other people are absent from the scene. The large easel turns into a surrogate for the artist, whose presence is implied in the interior, which she has painted herself. A noteworthy detail is the ennobling drapery that separates the interior from the realm of the beholder, making the studio appear like a theater stage framed by velvet curtains. In Nordlander’s interior, the studio becomes a spatialized symbol of the artist’s professionalism.

The practical and metaphorical significance of the studio resonates in the preserved letters and the painted interior by Anna Nordlander. In the letters and diaries of women artists in the period, the studio is a key symbol of personal freedom and professional independence. Marie Bashkirtseff, for instance, described the liberating effect of the studio in an often-quoted passage from her diary: “In the studio everything disappears, you don’t have a name, no family; you are no longer the daughter of your mother, you are yourself, you are an individual and you have art in front of you and nothing else. You are so happy, so free, so proud.” After having married and left her parental home in 1869, the former painter Edma Morisot wrote a longing letter to her sister Berthe, in which the studio is likewise imagined as a space where they can breathe freely: “I am often with you, my dear Berthe. In my thoughts I follow you about your studio, and I wish that I could escape, were it only for the quarter of an hour, to breathe that air in which we lived for many long years.” After her own marriage, Berthe Morisot did not have a studio at her disposal, even though she continued her career as an artist. She used to paint in the living room, and when she received visitors she pushed her easel out of sight into a closet.

The ambivalence in combining professional ambitions and domestic duties is similarly present in the working environment of Hanna Hirsch-Pauli following her marriage to Georg Pauli in 1887. Before agreeing on the engagement to her colleague, she made clear that she would under no circumstances terminate her artistic career. Although Hirsch-Pauli continued to work professionally as a painter during her entire married life as intended,
her studio, or the absence of it, symbolized her torn position as wife, or mother, and artist. This is well exemplified in an article in *Idun* from 1899 by Ernst Högman (1861–1943), describing a visit to the Pauli’s home in Södermalm in Stockholm. As Katarina Wadstein MacLeod has demonstrated, the article and the accompanying photographs associate Georg Pauli with the professional and artistic sphere, whereas Hanna Hirsch-Pauli is presented as the mistress of the household, taking care of the family and children. Högman explains that Georg Pauli is “dressed in brushes, palette and painter’s cloak”, trying out “a proper painter’s pose in front of the large canvas” in his studio. In a photograph published on the front page of the journal, Hanna Hirsch-Pauli is sitting at her easel surrounded by her children. The interior resembles a bourgeois Salon more than a studio, and this impression is supported by the adjoining text stating that she is portrayed “in her milieu – the home”. Hirsch-Pauli is working on the portrait of her daughter Ruth, who is sitting next to the easel, and her art is thereby tightly associated with the home and her maternal role. All other working tools are hidden in a small chest placed on the chair next to the artist, reminiscent of Morisot’s practice of hiding away her working tools in a closet.
A second, yet in the literature on Hirsch-Pauli largely unnoticed, article in the Swedish journal *Svenska hem i ord och bild* from 1918 follows a similar narrative pattern to the *Idun* article, associating the artist with the private sphere. The piece by Mary T. Nathorst (1879–1974) describes the Pauli’s villa in Storängen, accompanied by a series of photographs of the interiors. The reader learns that the villa houses a studio for each artist, but whereas Georg Pauli’s studio is used exclusively as a workspace, Hanna Hirsch-Pauli’s studio frequently serves as a drawing room:

The studios are located side by side on the upper floor and both occupy quite large areas. But whereas Mr. Pauli’s studio is exclusively a work space, which is opened to strangers only in case of emergency and for greater invasions, Mrs. Pauli’s studio often serves as a drawing room. The easels are pushed aside, voilà tout!838

Two accompanying photographs from Hirsch-Pauli’s studio visualize its double function: one showing a sitting area, the other representing several canvases the artist is working on. The division of domestic spaces, with exclusively male areas protected from any intrusion versus the integrative female spheres that served simultaneously as drawing rooms, is common for middle- and upper-class homes in the period.839 Such space usages render tangible
Greer’s notion of the “reduced scale of female life”\textsuperscript{840} and they indicate that women inhabited a limited physical and social space in comparison to men. Womanhood was associated with the drawing room, because it was her duty to turn the family’s dwelling into a cheerful and warm place.\textsuperscript{841} This is also implied in the \textit{Idun} article, which praises Hirsch-Pauli for providing her family with a home of “warm and fine character”.\textsuperscript{842}

The case of Hirsch-Pauli demonstrates the ambivalence of the studio space both as a metaphor for professionalism and personal fulfilment and as a threat to familial duties and societal expectation. For many women artists in the period, only a journey abroad offered them a way to break free from this ambivalence and to establish their own living and working spaces, separated from the enclosed world of the family and its accompanying duties and expectations. As foreigners in Paris, Nordic women artists not only escaped the strictures of their own societies, but were even relatively unaffected by the rules that often restrained the personal autonomy of French women.\textsuperscript{843}
The Appropriation of the Working Studio

In the winter of 1886–87 Hanna Hirsch, who was not yet married at the time, painted a portrait of her friend and colleague, the Finnish artist Venny Soldan, in their shared studio in Paris. Soldan is sitting on the floor of the scarcely furnished room, wearing a simple black dress and slippers. While her right foot is hidden underneath the dress, her left foot is outstretched and displayed prominently with its underside directed at the beholder. Soldan wears her hair in a bun and the sleeves of her dress are rolled up, thereby emphasizing the hands. While the right hand is leaning against the floor and supporting the artist, the left hand is holding a clump of clay. The sculptor’s tools and a preparatory sketch – in the form of a drawing of a female nude – are placed right in front of Soldan, who is thereby identified as both the conceptual and physical source of the artwork that she is about to make. Soldan is sitting in front of a camp chair on large pieces of paper, which protect the floor from paint. Apart from the paper filled with colorful splashes of paint, the painting is dominated by muted tones, grayish-green and grayish-red, some black and ochre.

The sitter addresses the painter with a somewhat dizzy gaze and with her mouth slightly open, as if she is being captured in the moment when she is beginning to interact with her colleague, but has not completely turned her thoughts away from her own work. The immediacy of Soldan’s interaction with Hirsch is enhanced by both her pose and her placement inside the composition. Soldan is positioned in the foreground, almost at the edge of the picture plane, while leaning forward in the direction of the beholder. The sketch is cut off from view at the upper edges, and thereby the compositional divide between the artist and the beholder seems to disappear. A Japanese folding screen decorated with a bird motif is placed behind the artist. To the left, sketches and drawings are pinned onto it. The screen hides half of the room from the beholder’s view. However, in the dark end of the studio one can make out the back of a stretched canvas and a sculpture of a couple united in a tight embrace. While Soldan is positioned diagonally against the picture plane, the planks of the wooden floor provide the room with a vertical drive. Thereby, the studio paradoxically appears both narrow and wide. This impression is enhanced by the ambivalent compositional structure of the painting: while the artist in her deep black dress occupies the majority of the picture

Fig. 77. Hanna Hirsch-Pauli, *The Artist Venny Soldan-Brofeldt*, 1886–87.
plane, the surrounding room seems spacious due to its emptiness and simplicity.

The following analysis focuses primarily on three aspects that I consider central to Hanna Hirsch’s portrait of Venny Soldan: This is, first, the ambivalent spatial structure of the painting and the conflicted relationship between the body of the sitter and the surrounding studio interior, as well as the symbolic implications of the studio’s austerity. Secondly, the importance of touch in the depiction of Soldan in the role of the sculptor and its different layers of meaning. Thirdly, the painting’s dialogic character that can be understood as a materialization of a collaborative competition between artist painter and sitter sculptor.

As noted in the introduction, the portrait of Soldan has gained an iconic status in Nordic art history. It has been subject to numerous interpretations, the most comprehensive contributions being those by Margareta Gynning and Anna Lena Lindberg. Gynning has analyzed the portrait of Soldan as a realistisk miljöporträtt (realist milieu-portrait), in which an artist captures the individual in her/his own environment. In her psycho-biographical reading, Gynning has argued that Hirsch approached her sitter from the sonposition (son position), which allowed her to free herself from her own position as a woman and to depict the friend from “a young man’s perspective”, adopting the point of view of the male norm. Gynning’s reading is based on the feminist theory of the Danish literary scholar Pil Dahlerup, according to which women writers of the “Modern Breakthrough” adopted different symbolic positions in their writing, such as son, daughter, the emancipated woman and so forth, in order to assign themselves a place in patriarchal society. According to Gynning, Hirsch has adopted an ambivalent position: She has disassociated herself from Soldan by depicting her friend “from a patriarchal perspective” as a “foreign being”, who, as a woman artist, is “positioned outside civilization”. At the same time, Hirsch has united the portrayal of her colleague with her own experience of being “a woman artist in a morbid patriarchy”.

In contrast to Gynning, Lindberg has approached the portrait of Venny Soldan from an aesthetic and iconographic perspective. Analyzing the meaning of Soldan’s pose in relation to contempo-
rary depictions of seated figures in Nordic and French art, Lindberg has drawn attention to the fact that Soldan, even though she was mainly working as a painter, was depicted in the role of the sculptor.\(^8\)

The following analysis builds on Lindberg’s important observations, but it will ultimately offer an alternative reading of the painting as a friendship image that enacts a paragone among the arts. Furthermore, Soldan’s hitherto unpublished letters to Hirsch will be analyzed, providing important insights into the controversial reception of the work in Finland.\(^5\)

Hanna Hirsch and Venny Soldan had a comparable upper-middle-class background and both had studied art thoroughly before they embarked on a journey to Paris in 1885.\(^2\) Hirsch studied at Konstakademien between 1881 and 1885, and in her last year she was awarded a prize for her multi-figure composition *By Lamplight*. In her final years at the academy in Stockholm, she was more and more critical of the teaching, evident in the correspondence with Eva Bonnier, who had moved to Paris already in 1883.\(^3\) Hirsch used to eagerly await any news from Paris, as a letter from January 1884 indicates: “The girls at A.K. [Akademi-Klubben] long as much as I do for letters from you and the story about Courtois and your working life aroused general contentment. I told them about some episodes from your comrade life […], which sounded heavenly to our family-home-acclimated ears.”\(^4\) Following her graduation in 1885, Hirsch moved to Paris, where she stayed for one and a half years. Bonnier promised Hirsch’s parents to keep a watching eye over her younger friend and acted as her chaperone during this period.\(^5\) Hirsch returned to Sweden in the spring of 1887, and in October the same year she married her colleague Georg Pauli.

Soldan studied in her younger years with the Finnish painter Maria Wiik (1853–1928), and between 1880 and 1883 at the drawing school of Finska Konstföreningens ritskola (The Finnish Art Association’s Drawing School) in Helsinki, followed by two years at a private academy in Saint Petersburg. Soldan arrived in Paris in 1885 and stayed until 1889. After returning to their home countries, the artists remained friends for the rest of their lives, corresponding frequently and conducting study trips together from time to time.\(^6\)

In Paris, Hirsch and Soldan met in the classes of Académie Colarossi, became close friends and periodically shared accommodation. Soldan later described these Paris years as the period in her
life during which she had the freedom to focus all her attention on her work: “It was inspiring and stimulating to study under the guidance of such prominent artists, and it was wonderful to devote yourself entirely to your work, to your art, without having to think of anything else.” Hirsch painted the portrait of Soldan in the winter of 1886–87 in a combined apartment and studio on the Rue Notre-Dames des Champs 53 in Montparnasse, which they had borrowed from her future husband Georg Pauli. During this period of cohabitation, Hirsch and Soldan decided to collaborate on their contributions for the Salon of 1887. Whereas Hirsch painted the friend in oil, Soldan sculpted a portrait of Hirsch in bas relief. Eva Bonnier visited their studio on several occasions and commented upon their collaboration in her letters to her family in Stockholm:

Hanna is painting “the Finn” in life-size. This generous creature, who has come here to study painting, sacrifices her entire day to sit; during the day she is her model and otherwise her “femme de menage”. But Hanna is also the Finn’s maid in return, for she combs and dresses her up when she is invited out, although it is scarcely worth it. She remains Miss “Soldier” after all.

Apart from the ironic and disdainful tone, which is rather typical of Bonnier’s letters, the comment indicates that the friends’ relationship was trustful and intimate. Further, it draws attention to the selflessness with which Soldan dedicated much of her time to the sittings with Hirsch. According to Bonnier’s accounts, Hirsch painted the portrait first and after she had completed it, Soldan proceeded to model the relief. In a photograph showing the artists in their studio, published in an article in Idun in 1933, the bas relief with Hirsch’s profile is placed on an easel and prominently displayed in the middle of the room. Right next to it, to the left, Hirsch is standing singing to the music that Pauli is playing on the piano. To the right, Soldan is seated on a sofa listening to the music with a facial expression that closely resembles the one in the portrait. Hirsch-Pauli is quoted in the article in Idun as follows:

We didn’t have great demands during this time. The studio was extremely cold and humid, my Finnish friend needed to wear a muff when I painted her. In the bedroom the moisture was dripping down the walls, and there was only a little window in
the ceiling. We cared very little about the material side of life in general, and I personally was extremely unpractical with my clothes and other belongings. […] My friend and I were almost always trudging around in slippers, so we wouldn’t wear out our shoes and it was so comfortable.862

Margareta Gynning has reflected upon the striking incongruity between the photograph and the descriptions in Eva Bonnier’s letters versus the painting and Hirsch-Pauli’s later account. She argued that the artist cleared the studio space in the painting from all signs of comfort, because she wanted to convey an impression of alienation.863 While the studio is richly furnished and looks rather cozy in the photograph, in the interview the artist emphasized its extreme simplicity and discomfort. In the painting, everything that might look homely has disappeared, except for Georg Pauli’s paravent. Whereas Eva Bonnier envied her friend for her “charming calorifère, which is burning all day” and “has dried out the room completely”, Hirsch-Pauli claimed that the room was cold and wet.864 It seems as if it was the painted studio interior that the artist

Fig. 78. Georg Pauli, Hanna Hirsch and Venny Soldan in the studio in Rue Notre-Dames des Champs 53, Paris, around 1886–87.
wanted to remember and the readers to imagine. In the interview, she tried to align the studio as she experienced it in reality with the studio as she imagined it in the painting. Both in the painting from 1887 and in the statement from 1933 the studio is staged as an austere environment in which comfort is clearly subordinate to artistic production. The austerity of the studio space, and the supposedly strenuous working conditions, were a means for the artist to appropriate an artistic ideal of privation and hardship. Although the studio functioned as both a living and a working environment, the artist negated its multifaceted function in the painting, emphasizing its professional purpose alone. This allowed both Hirsch and Soldan to convincingly fashion themselves as professionals. Rather than reading the austere studio as a symbol of alienation, I want to put forward the idea that the studio is supposed to convey the artists’ professional ambitions.

In the period, depictions of studios in painting and art journalism tended to oscillate between the two extremes of the simple and austere working studio or the lavishly decorated show studio. Even though these concepts were linked to contrasting ideals of artistry, both extremes were, in their own ways, well-suited for women artists who wanted to ward off any accusation of dilettantism. In contrast to the amateur artist pursuing the arts in the middle-class home, an austere studio signaled professionalism. Hanna Hirsch staged the studio as a working sphere, clearly separated from the realm of private life. The Parisian working studio allowed the artist to distance herself from the domesticity of bourgeois commodity culture and hence also from her own cultural and class background.

From the opposite perspective, the show studio, which was filled from the bottom up with exotic objects and paraphernalia, symbolized artistic eccentricity and cosmopolitanism as well as social acceptance and monetary success. Jenny Nyström embraced the ideal of the show studio in a series of watercolors and gouaches from Paris and Stockholm, depicting various female models from behind in interiors inspired by japonism and orientalism. After her return from Paris in 1885, Nyström established a successful career as an illustrator. Following her marriage in 1887, through her art she was able to provide for both her husband and her son, contributing the majority of the family income. During that time, Nyström decorated her studio on Tegnérgatan 37 in Stockholm in the abundant style of the show studio, and she printed visiting cards informing on its opening hours. A contemporary critic praised the home

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of Jenny Nyström and Leonard Daniel Stoopendaal (1853–1927) in the following words: “The young couple’s charming home and in particular the artistically sublime studio can be counted among the utmost that our capital is able to accomplish in terms of modern taste and real luxury.”

In 1887, Nyström painted a gouache depicting a semi-naked model with long blonde hair from behind, reclining on the floor of the artist’s opulently furnished Stockholm studio. The model is lying next to a polar bear fur, a typical accessory of the show studio. The interior is filled with precious art objects and props referencing the owner’s internationalism and savoir vivre. A wide range of exotic collectibles – such as a porcelain vase, a mask, a paravent, a fan, a table with intarsia and ostrich feathers – testify to Nyström’s interest in japonism and orientalism. The overabundance of the luxurious props stands in for the creative inventiveness and financial success of the painter. The pose of the reclining semi-naked model is inspired by the motif of the
Odalisque, a popular iconography in French Salon art in the succession of Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres’ (1780–1867) famous interpretations of the theme. The manner in which Nyström applied the style of the eroticized and exoticized show studio to her own interiors is quite exceptional for a woman artist in the period.

Hirsch and Nyström embraced different ideals of the working and the show studio in their art, and their choices might reflect not only their different artistic outlooks, but also their individual positions at certain moments in their careers, as an unmarried art student in Paris and a married artist and established illustrator in Stockholm respectively. This observation is further supported by a studio interior painted by Lotten Rönquist in 1892, shortly after her arrival in Paris. Although the interior is devoid of any human presence, the northern window, the paintings and sketches on the walls as well as the canvases piled up in the back of the room, clearly identify the inhabitant as an artist. The traveling trunk to the right indicates that one has entered the studio of a foreigner who has just arrived in the French capital. However, the most prominent feature of the painting is the glowing stove in the foreground to the left, indicating the presence of its maker.

In French nineteenth-century painting the humble stove in the studio or garret became a symbol of the hardship suffered by the struggling artist, reappearing prominently in the works of Eugène Delacroix (1798–1863) and Paul Cézanne (1839–1906). Such cutouts from the artists’ studios turned into a popular subject matter in naturalism, which deemed the everyday reality of the artist and his/her surroundings worthy of depiction. In such paintings, the artist is present in absence and his/her personal belongings and spatial surrounding turn the interior into a substitute self-portrait. Rönquist adopted the ideal of the working studio in this painting from her study period in Paris.

As mentioned before, the act of painting the studio is always an act of depicting an imagined environment, a space that does not need to correspond to the real, lived-in space. A preserved photograph of the combined home and studio of Rönquist and her colleague Gerda Ahlm (1869–1956) in Paris shows a much homelier atmosphere than the painted interior from 1892. The imagined studio scenes by Hirsch and Rönquist indicate that the ideal of the working studio had a particular appeal for aspiring women artists who studied abroad, where they were partly disassociated from their familial, class and cultural background.

Fig. 81. Lotten Rönquist, Studio Interior, 1892.
The working studio can be understood as an aesthetic symbol for an all-encompassing artistic ideal, to which every other aspect of its maker’s identity and personal background became secondary. This universal artistic ideal could best be fashioned in the voluntary exile of Paris.

In his review of the portrait of Venny Soldan in the context of the Konstnärsförbundets utställning (Artists’ Union Exhibition) in 1887, the critic Herman Anakreon Ring (1859–1927) stated that the sitter’s simple appearance and the austere studio surroundings had at first made him believe he had entered a prison cell. From Ring’s point of view, the painting’s most striking feature was its “reckless truth and simplicity”. His critique of the portrait is worth quoting at length, as it helps understand the radical nature of the portrayal in the eyes of a contemporary observer:

This painting appeals without any outer means, only through its inherent and striking, indeed, almost reckless truth and simplicity. A young woman in an ordinary, in fact, cheap, black domestic dress is sitting on the floor; that is all. Since the attributes are so shabby, in the beginning one believes one has been led into a prison cell. But if you look for just a moment, but closely, at the face of the figure, you will quickly realize that this is impossible.
The young lady has, in fact, been depicted during her work, in a studio, where people actually work and not only receive visitors. She has for a second paused the modeling and her hands, which hold the plastic clay, rest for a moment. But her soul is not resting, you can see that. Simply look at that thinking, alert and intelligent face! A new idea has presented itself to her and she holds herself back just for a moment before she proceeds to tackle the sketch and give it a whole new form. There is an intelligence in this portrait, which fascinates with an irresistible power. This is how we want to imagine the young American woman sculptor in Louisa Alcott’s novel, who is working on the future woman.880

Ring was obviously fascinated by Hirsch’s portrait of Soldan and particularly by the realism of the image in terms of the depiction of the studio space and the portrayal of the woman artist. He described Soldan as an artist who is entirely occupied with her work, being depicted in a moment of inspiration or creative rest, which prepares her for the next step in her work. The critic was captivated by the intelligence and creativity that he saw captured in the portrait. Whereas Ring sympathized with the naturalist ideals conveyed in the portrait of Soldan, Fanny Churberg was puzzled and repelled by the same aesthetic convictions when she encountered the painting in the Konstnärsgillets julutställning (Christmas Exhibition of the Artists’ Guild) in Helsinki in 1887:

Her [Hanna Hirsch-Pauli’s] other large painting “A Portrait” catches the beholder’s interest and recognition due to the certainty and intelligence with which it is executed and studied. One may find the arrangement somewhat peculiar. The lady portrayed, sitting rather nonchalantly on the floor, is dressed in a fairly sloppy manner and overall without the slightest hint of grace and it is a piece of everyday life of rather prosaic nature. Such a narrow motif for such a large canvas makes the contrast all the more striking. But this is how the extreme realists want to have it and each of them smiles with pleasure about the good artwork. And technically it is, indeed, well understood and completed. We admire it in this respect, and otherwise smile at the rest, as the Danes say and hope that this prose may not spread too much, since in art one seeks primarily beauty.881
This review has hitherto been overlooked in the literature on Hirsch-Pauli, despite the fact that it is a rare example of a female critic’s reaction to a work by a woman artist. As a critic, Churberg frequently advocated the works of women artists and helped to increase their visibility in the Finnish press. However, in striking contrast to Ring, Churberg did not mention with one word that the sitter in the portrait was an artist. Even though she commented on Soldan’s ungraceful appearance, she did not inform the reader about what the sitter is actually doing in the portrait or that she is depicted in a studio. Instead, she referred to the portrait as a “piece of everyday life”, misleading the reader who might have believed that she is reviewing a common commissioned portrait of a female sitter. Churberg did not care for the realism of the portrait of Soldan, a depiction of a woman sculptor in a working situation. In fact, it seems as if Churberg, who was a painter herself, wanted to disassociate herself from the sitter by refraining to identify her as an artist. By ignoring Soldan’s occupation, Churberg deprived her of affiliation with her own profession.

As a landscape painter trained in the idealist tradition of the Düsseldorf School, Churberg criticized the painting for its realism and its lack of delicacy and decorum. Riitta Konttinen has highlighted how Churberg, in her late career as a critic, was involved in the heated debates on idealism versus realism in art, arguments fought out between the different generations of Düsseldorf- and Paris-trained artists. Churberg’s own view becomes most apparent in her claim for beauty towards the end of her critique, and it can be understood as representative of her artistic outlook based on the ideal of beauty in art, and the conviction that the artist should elevate nature. Some Swedish critics commented on Hirsch’s portrait from a similar viewpoint when it was exhibited in the Artists’ Union Exhibition in 1888, criticizing the “unrefined” and “affected” pose as well as the painting’s overall “simple impression” and lack of “taste”.

The depiction of the artist-craftsman as low, commonplace and humble placed the portrait of Soldan in a realist tradition. In 1909, Hirsch-Pauli wrote an obituary for Eva Bonnier, in which she argued that the ideals of their artistic youth were to “blow away the ‘silly old philistinism’ in art and morality” in favor of a “search for truth”. She stated that “one did not yet care or have time for beauty as such, as form, but only for the idea, the idea”. The portrait of Soldan is indebted to this ideal of truthfulness, and thereby
it forms a strong contrast to the idealism advocated by Churberg. From the Finnish critic’s point of view, the subject matter of the painting was much too narrow, limited and ordinary to be worthy of depiction on such a large canvas. Indeed, Hirsch not only depicted her colleague in an everyday working situation, but she did so on an unusually grand scale.

The Touch of Clay

Sculpture, in comparison to painting, is a more physical and space-consuming art form that requires a studio or a work space separated from the home. A sculptor’s studio is by definition simple and functional, since as the dirt and dust from working fills the room, any sumptuous furnishing would be damaged. As a more laborious art form, sculpture in the nineteenth century stood in contrast to “drawing room art” that could be executed in the home, and hence it constituted a particular threat to traditional female roles. Indeed, the spatial setting was crucial for the social acceptance or disapproval of middle-class women’s engagement with art. Since it was the most physically demanding of all the fine arts, debates erupted as to whether women were physically capable of pursuing sculpture. As already mentioned in the previous chapter, pioneering women sculptors like Harriet Hosmer were accused of letting studio assistants execute their work, even though this was common practice at the time for both male and female artists.

In contrast to stone, clay was relatively easy to form and its tractability lacked all the implications of the subjugation of the material traditionally associated with sculpting in marble, which rendered it in some sense a more acceptable material for women. The production of smaller sculptures in bronze, by means of the lost-wax technique, was technically relatively undemanding for the artist, because experienced craftsmen realized the model in bronze. Therefore, this practice was particularly popular among painters, like Venny Soldan, who only occasionally experimented in sculpture.

The emergence of the exhibition artist and the burgeoning celebrity culture brought about a “fetishization of the celebrity sculptor”, according to which the traces of the artist’s fingerprints were supposed to symbolize the originality of the work, even in times of increased multiplication of bronze casts. As Angela Dunstan
has argued, “the preoccupation with sculpture’s authenticity esca-
lated just as the art was increasingly conceived as a collaborative
creative process rather than the production of a sole genius.”\textsuperscript{898} The
notion of touch was central to nineteenth-century debates about
authenticity and the sculptor’s versus the workmen’s handling of
the sculpture.

At the same time, the artist’s forming touch had strong erotic
implications shaped by classical narratives, such as the Pygmalion
myth, according to which the act of sculpting initiated a love affair
between a male artist and his female creation.\textsuperscript{899} In Hirsch’s por-
trait, Soldan is about to model a sculpture after a sketch of a female
nude, possibly drawn from a live model. During the 1880s, wom-
en’s participation in the life class was still regarded as controversial,
and many commentators in the period considered it indecent if
women sculptors modeled the nude from life.\textsuperscript{900} The erotic impli-
cations in sculpting are referenced in Hirsch’s and Soldan’s shared
studio in the form of the sculpture of a couple united in a tight em-
brace in the corner of the room. In that sense, the scene challenged
prevalent prejudices about women in art on several levels.

In Hirsch’s portrait the notion of touch is implied in Soldan’s
gesture of holding a piece of clay in her hand. While the right hand
is leaning on the paper, the other is holding the clump of clay in
dirty fingers. Obviously, the artist is not afraid to soil her hands
with clay. Hirsch has chosen not to idealize her friend’s hands, but
rather she has realistically rendered the dirty hand and the strong
fist with which Soldan supports herself. The left hand that is hold-
ing the clay is highlighted by means of the outstretched arm that
seems to reach in the direction of the beholder. In this pointed
act of showing the material of her work, craft is emphasized, and
Soldan is staged as the maker of her own work. This gesture, the
artist’s touch of the piece of clay, refutes any questions regarding
the artist’s capability and the authenticity of the artistic process.

As the historian Constance Classen has pointed out in her cul-
tural history of the touch, the handling of sculptures was common-
place in museums and galleries until the middle of the nineteenth
century, when the touching of the objects began to be prohibited.\textsuperscript{901}
In this period, the sense of touch was relocated to the artist’s work-
shop. In that sense, Soldan’s touch of the clay and the seemingly
inviting gesture of the outstretched hand renders tangible the os-
tensible authenticity of the studio as a space where the beholder
can come closer to the creative process than anywhere else.
According to Mary D. Garrard, the hands are “the locus of agency, both literally and symbolically” and therefore they have a certain gendered dimension. In representations of women artists, strong forearms or firm hands imply agility, power and self-confidence and can be understood as a claim to professionalism. The motif of the rolled-up sleeves, firm grips and acting hands not only shapes Hirsch’s portrayal of Soldan, but can be found in other representations of women artists in the period. In 1889, Mina Bredberg exhibited a self-portrait at the Exposition Universelle, showing herself at work at the easel in her Parisian attic studio. Bredberg addresses the beholder with a direct and self-confident gaze, while she holds palette and brush in her hands. It seems as if she is collecting some yellow paint from her palette, but at the same time the brush is directed towards the lower right corner of the canvas, where artists usually sign their work. If this is the case here, the artist indicates the completion of the painting inside the painting. This potential gesture of authorship is repeated on the stretcher frame, on which Bredberg has signed and dated her self-portrait. Meanwhile, the canvas on which she is working is invisible to the beholder’s eye. Bredberg is dressed in a long gray painter’s smock. The sleeves of the cloak are rolled up, signaling the industriousness and vigor of the painter’s engagement with her art. The artist’s right hand runs parallel to the picture plane, and its lively flesh tones are highlighted against the gray smock. She is holding her brush firmly in the grip of her relatively large hand, thereby underlining her role as the maker of her own work. In the works of Bredberg and Hirsch, emphasis is placed on craftsmanship, the artistic process and in particular on the working hand.

The realism with which the material aspects of art making and the handling of the material are addressed in the portrait of Soldan is notable, especially given the fact that cleanliness was an important class signifier of the bourgeois comme il faut. As an artist portrait, however, the painting by Hirsch is a typical example for the nineteenth century, when representations of sculptors tended to combine material and physical aspects of production with intellectual and the idea behind the work. For instance in Elisabeth Jerichau Baumann’s (1819–1881) portrait of her husband Jens Adolf Jerichau (1816–1883) from 1846, the sculptor is represented in a moment of inspiration. He is sitting on a chair, gazing into the distance and he is holding a clump of clay as well as a wooden modeling tool, the same sculptor’s attributes as in the portrait of
Soldan. In the back of both portraits, the beholder gets a glimpse of a completed creation. The portraits stage working in clay as a manual labor based on an inner idea. In both cases the raw and untreated material figures as a central attribute signifying the profession, while the modeled plastic in the shadowed background of the composition plays only a subordinate role. The portraits by Hirsch and Jerichau Baumann thereby emphasize the processual and material aspects of art making.

The same applies to a studio scene painted by the Canadian artist William Blair Bruce (1859–1906) in Rome in 1891, portraying his wife, the Swedish sculptor Carolina Benedicks-Bruce (1856–1935), in her workshop. Benedicks-Bruce is depicted in profile in a moment of contemplation, standing a few feet away from her work. Her hands are covered in clay, indicating that she is the maker of the sculpture in front of her. The studio is characterized by the same austere atmosphere as Hirsch’s interior, while the sculptor’s simple gray smock recalls Bredberg’s self-portrait, even though the
waist is here accentuated by a belt. The grayish palette of Bruce’s monumental painting (about $2 \times 2$ meters in size) corresponds to the monochrome sculpture created by his wife.

Hirsch and Bruce place their artist sitters in the professional environment of a working studio in which the processual, material and craft aspects of sculpting are emphasized. In both cases, the sense of touch is highlighted and the sculptors’ hands are inextricably interlinked with their material: Soldan’s hand is holding the clump of clay while Benedick-Bruce’s forefinger is covered in clay. The touch of clay on the artists’ hands can be understood as material imprints of authenticity and authorship.\textsuperscript{910}
**Venny Soldan as Worker-Artist**

The nineteenth century saw the rise of the “myth of the worker-artist”, and since sculptors already had the status of workmen, the practice of sculpture gained a certain standing and enjoyed renewed popularity.\(^9\) The emphasis on craftsmanship and the artisanal and material aspects of artistic creation in the representation of the sculptor, in combination with the frugal and unhomely studio environment, enabled Hanna Hirsch and Venny Soldan to strip off their upper-middle-class background and to stage themselves as worker-artists. In later years, Hanna Hirsch-Pauli admitted that she used to feel a strong urge to identify with her male colleagues of working-class background. She stated in an interview with the Swedish women’s journal *Svensk Damtidning* in 1937:

> We used to lead a hard-working and simple life [...]. Many of us were very poor, and I myself, who actually, and unromantically, received an allowance from home, of course lived in the same way. It went so far that my father began to feel seriously concerned over the little sums of money I asked for.\(^9\)\(^1\)

The statement indicates that the artist tried to adapt to the lifestyle of her colleagues with working-class backgrounds, and it appears as if she believed that the life of a proper artist should be simple and ascetic.\(^9\)\(^3\) In her obituary of Bonnier, Hirsch-Pauli later claimed that her friend likewise sympathized with socialist ideals and chose the same strategy of showing her solidarity with “the poor colleagues”.\(^9\)\(^4\) As mentioned before, Hirsch-Pauli and Bonnier had a similar family background. Both of them came from the Jewish upper middle class of Stockholm and their families belonged to the capital’s cultured elite. They knew one another since childhood and followed the same path in their artistic education until they arrived in Paris in the 1880s. In the correspondence with her family, Bonnier repeatedly emphasized that she led a simple lifestyle during her stay in Paris, which in turn prompted Georg Pauli to wonder why someone “who has such an elegant home” would not want to furnish her studio “a bit more ‘artisement’”.\(^9\)\(^5\) It seems likely that Bonnier, who came from a wealthy family of publishers, felt a need to disassociate herself from her social background and to merge with the lifestyle of her colleagues abroad.
Lindberg has noted that Soldan was notorious among her Finnish colleagues because of her radical and secular views. Soldan might have been initially influenced by her father, the engineer and philosopher August Fredrik Soldan (1817–1885), who sympathized with socialist ideals and had traveled to Paris in 1848 to participate in the revolution that led to the creation of the French Second Republic. Already during her time as a student in Maria Wiik’s drawing school in Finland, Soldan came into conflict with the more conservative and devout art student Hanna Frosterus (1867–1946), because of her “socialist” and “radical ideas”. Frosterus recalled that Soldan “hated all unnecessary things and luxury items”. The previously unpublished letters from Soldan to Hirsch reveal that the two friends frequently discussed issues of class and the role of the artist in society during their period of cohabitation and collaboration in Paris. After her return to Helsinki in the autumn of 1887, Soldan confessed to her friend:

The socialist seeds that you sowed in me begin to grow deep roots. It manifests itself in the fact that I am irritated by this snug coziness. I enter a beautiful room and feel disgust, and, I generally find it disgusting that we eat our dinner in perfect tranquility and with great pleasure before we pick ourselves up and give a crust of bread to the beggar who is waiting at our door, smelling our food. I forget all this when I am working but now and then art appears to me like the flowers on a nice dinner table, the dessert, or the icing on a cake, and now I have not worked for a long time. Besides, I find all my old ideas empty and useless. Can we afford to grow flowers when we should be growing rye? But flowers are the joy of the people. But who can rejoice when the body is screaming for bread and the soul for justice?

This statement shows that Soldan reflected upon her own privileged position and empathized with the poor in society. Social injustices prompted her to question the overall purpose of art. According to Soldan’s own account, these feelings of doubt were a direct result of her discussions with Hirsch. It does not seem far-fetched to conclude from this statement that the artists discussed issues of social injustice pertaining to class and financial privilege during the sittings for the portrait. In fact, the statement further indicates that the two artists were committed to the claim of the
French realists to redefine the purpose of art as a political means to bring about social improvement.920

On another level, Soldan’s statement points to the dialogic potential of the friendship image, according to which one must understand both the act of painting a portrait and the act of sitting for a portrait as a negotiation of a shared artistic message. According to her own account, Soldan redefined her view of art during the sittings with Hirsch, prompting her to reflect on the reality of her own position in society and her role as an artist. Ultimately, the letter by Soldan points again to the vital importance of the friendship image in the negotiation of Nordic women painters’ professional identity and artistic outlook in the 1880s, as discussed in the previous chapter.

In light of Soldan’s statement, the austere studio space in Hirsch’s painting fulfilled a double function in terms of gender and class identity. Its emptiness and simplicity distinguished the studio from the “well-mannered pleasantness” of the middle-class home.921 In their imagined Paris studio, Hirsch and Soldan turned from upper-middle-class dilettantes into serious working-class artists. Whereas Margareta Gynning has proposed in her reading of the painting that Soldan is positioned “outside civilization” and appears “classless,” I would suggest that Hirsch and Soldan associated themselves with the working classes by transforming their home into a working studio, and by staging themselves as worker-artists.922

Soldan’s pose, sitting on the floor with outstretched feet, is a central element in the artist’s identification with the working classes.923 This seemingly genuine and uncontrived pose violated norms of feminine decorum and must have been conceived as improper by the majority of contemporary observers.924 The artist’s unconventional position on the studio floor has received much scholarly attention and caused a debate on whether or not the pose was inspired by Jules Bastien-Lepage’s genre painting Haymaking from 1877.

In retrospect, Georg Pauli stated that many of the foreign artists who traveled to France in the 1880s considered Bastien-Lepage the “focal point and the leading name” of the development towards “truthfulness” in art.925 The comprehensive memorial exhibition dedicated to the artist at the École des Beaux-Arts in 1885 contributed to Bastien-Lepage’s fame and his popularity among Nordic artists in Paris.926 Even though Hirsch did not arrive in Paris until
after the exhibition had closed, it is very likely that she knew about the painting and had seen it, at least in reproductions.\textsuperscript{927} Further, Hirsch’s paintings from her student years in France were repeatedly compared to Bastien-Lepage’s work by critics and colleagues alike.\textsuperscript{928}

Although Gynning has acknowledged the enormous impact of the \textit{juste-milieu} artists on Nordic painting during these years, she has objected to any connection between Hirsch’s portrait of Soldan and Bastien-Lepage’s genre scene.\textsuperscript{929} According to Gynning’s argument, the peasant woman is represented in a passive pose of rest, whereas Soldan is represented in an active engagement with her art.\textsuperscript{930} Interestingly, the exhausted appearance of the peasant woman irritated Bertha Wegmann, who commented on the painting in a letter to Hildegard Thorell in 1889:

\begin{quotation}
I know the painting by Bastien-Lepage in the Luxembourg very well – it is among the most beautiful in terms of color, but actually, I don’t much like the peasant woman who is sitting and gaping – I think she looks like an idiot, but her hands and arms, and the colors and the whole atmosphere are really wonderful.\textsuperscript{931}
\end{quotation}

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{Fig_86_Jules_Bastien-Lepage_Haymaking_1877.png}
\caption{Jules Bastien-Lepage, \textit{Haymaking}, 1877.}
\end{figure}
Wegmann’s statement suggests that the painting was discussed as a controversial artwork in Nordic art circles. Despite the ambivalent reception of Bastien-Lepage’s portrayal of the peasant woman, Soldan is depicted in a quite similar state of absorption, immobility and motionlessness. The rendering of Soldan’s body and her pose, her frontality and several details in her portrayal – the worn soles of the shoes, the untidy hair and the peculiar facial expression with the staring gaze and half-open mouth – bear close resemblance to Bastien-Lepage’s peasant woman. The horizon line of the landscape and the studio floor are situated remarkably high in the picture, while the sitter is positioned prominently in the foreground. In light of these numerous similarities, it appears likely that the representation of Soldan was informed by Bastien-Lepage’s genre scene.

Anna Lena Lindberg and Lena Johannesson have argued that the impact of Bastien-Lepage’s Haymaking can be considered central to our understanding of Hirsch’s portrait of Soldan. They have convincingly demonstrated that the motif of the seated figure on the floor with outstretched feet recurred frequently in the art of the period, and became a trope of exhaustion and alienation as well as a common signifier of the lower social strata in society. Consequently, Hirsch and Soldan decided on a pose that was strongly associated with the lower classes and manual labor. In this fiction of a pose, Soldan is fashioned as a worker-artist. However, as Lena Johannesson has observed, Soldan’s pose deviates in one important respect from the depiction of the peasant woman and portrayals of other working-class people in the art of the period: Soldan crosses her legs underneath her skirt and moderates her otherwise provocative pose. In doing so, Soldan maintains a sense of feminine refinement and respectability, while at the same time adopting a worker-artist ideal that runs counter to the same traditional conceptions of womanhood.

Returning to the relationship between Soldan’s body and the surrounding studio space, it is notable that she occupies the majority of the picture plane. The artist’s compositional presence is further intensified by the black dress visually dominating the scene. In her seated pose, Soldan appears grounded on the studio floor, an impression further enhanced by her outstretched left foot and by the fist of her right hand that is leaning against the ground. Soldan’s possessive pose and her unusual compositional presence can be understood as a bodily appropriation of the studio space,
making it *a room of her own*, adding another symbolic dimension, in addition to its possible emulation of the work of a renowned French artist. I will return to this observation at the end of this chapter.

The Paragone of the Sister Arts

At first glance it appears self-evident that Hirsch portrayed Soldan in the role of the sculptor because she was working on the relief portrait at the time the painting was made. This seemingly obvious explanation might justify why that choice has rarely been addressed in previous research on the painting. Only Lindberg has offered an interpretation where she understands the depiction of Soldan as a sculptor as an important element in the aesthetic program of the painting. Lindberg has suggested that we read the portrait of Soldan as a modernized personification of *La Scultura*, the art of sculpture, and as an attempt to unite the classical iconography with a pictorial language inspired by Bastien-Lepage and French naturalism.936

While I agree that the depiction of the role of the sculptor in the painting has a deeper programmatic meaning apart from the current circumstances, in what follows I want to offer an alternative reading. This reading directs attention towards the interaction between the painter and the represented, based on the assumption that it had a specific appeal for Hirsch to represent her friend and colleague in the role of the sculptor, while claiming the role of the painter for herself. I want to propose that the interrelationship between painting and sculpture is a central theme of the painting, in which the artist friends enact a dialogic encounter or paragone between the arts. Collaborative and emulative competition, as demonstrated in the previous chapter, was a crucial aspect in the making of a friendship image. In light of this understanding of the friendship image, the following analysis proposes that the portrait of Soldan stages a competitive dialogue or a paragone between the arts and the artist friends.

The concept of the paragone was developed in Renaissance Italy and described the fruitful competition between the arts, such as painting versus sculpture or painting versus poetry. Whereas paragone is traditionally understood as a rivalry and artistic conflict, it can also positively connote a productive and dialogic concept
of comradeship, according to which the comparison of one’s own work with works by other artists or different artforms can turn into an inspiring and collaborative stimulus that helps to improve and develop one’s artistic practice. The paragone was intensely discussed in the French academy under Roger de Piles (1635–1709) during the seventeenth century, and by the nineteenth century the notion of the paragone had turned into a vital theme in art historical scholarship and art theory. Recently, Sarah J. Lippert has studied how the paragone motif gained a particular currency among nineteenth-century French and British painters and sculptors.

The decision by Hirsch and Soldan to each submit a painting and a sculpture to the Salon of 1887 can be understood as a starting point for the paragone to be eventually enacted in the portrait. In the painting, the drawing of a nude is lying prominently on the studio floor, placed right in front of Soldan and opposite Hirsch at the lower edge of the composition. According to Renaissance art theory, both painting and sculpture had their roots in drawing or disegno, the origin of both art forms. This shared origin is addressed in the painting: Soldan is about to form the clay after the drawing, which is placed on the paper filled with splashes of color, referencing painting in return. The colored sheets of paper or fabric, on which Soldan is sitting, consequently symbolize colore, and thereby one central feature that, in the eye of the painter, legitimized the superiority of painting over sculpture. In contrast, the unique quality of sculpture is symbolized by the clump of clay in Soldan’s hands, referencing the sense of touch and the haptic qualities of the three-dimensional art form. The visual entanglement of painting and sculpture reappears in the back of the composition, where a sculpture is placed right in front of a canvas with its back turned towards the viewer. It seems as if Hirsch wanted to decide the paragone in favor of painting, as her spontaneous color spots in the front occupy a much more prominent position in the painting than the completed sculpture in the shadowy corner of the room. In the end, it is the portrait itself that best exemplifies the qualities of the art of painting. The dialogical or paragonal character of the portrait of Soldan is mirrored in the pose and facial expression of the sitter, who seems to have just been interrupted in her work. The open mouth and the pose, as if Soldan was about to speak while leaning forward in the direction of the friend, symbolize the dialogue between the artists and the sister arts.
The unique and inherent qualities of the different artforms were widely discussed in art theory up until the nineteenth century. In her reading of the portrait as a personification of *La Scultura*, Lindberg has argued that well-established iconographies, such as the personifications of the arts, were familiar to the artistic generation of the 1880s. The Norwegian art historian Lorentz Dietrichson (1834–1917), who was an influential art theorist and professor at *Konstakademien*, discussed the character and quality of sculpture and painting in his popular aesthetics *Det sköns verld: Estetik och konsthistoria* (The World of Beauty: Aesthetics and Art History) from 1870. Here, he described color as central to the art of painting and touch as integral to the nature of sculpture: “This is the sculptor’s way of seeing: he sees with a sensitive eye, he senses with seeing hands. The sense of touch is as effective as the sense of sight; for him light only exists to reveal the forms: the plastic artist thus ignores color.” Although Dietrichson had already left the academy in Stockholm when Hirsch took up her studies, it appears safe to say that such basic considerations about color versus touch remained common knowledge among the students at the academy.

Similar discussions were eventually revitalized in Paris, where more and more painters began to experiment with sculpture or addressed sculpture in painting. In an article about the Swedish submissions to the Salon of 1885, the journalist Johan Christian Janzon, alias “Spada”, commented upon works exhibited by Carl Georg Arsenius (1855–1908), who had sent in both a painting and a sculpture to the annual exhibition. Janzon believed the choice to be a result of the French influence:

We know that numerous French painters are quite good sculptors and vice versa. Gérôme, for instance, has received a first-class medal in sculpture, Meissonier often models his subjects before he puts them on canvas. Dubois, Falguière, Mercié are also ranked as painters. Not to speak of the deceased Michelangelo, although he certainly wasn’t born in Montmartre.

During their stay in Paris both Soldan and Hirsch were working in sculpture. Not only Soldan worked on her relief portrait of Hirsch for the Salon, but Hirsch, too, experimented with sculpting in clay. Hirsch’s interest in sculpture is evident in the correspondence of Eva Bonnier, who already in the spring of 1886 described
their first attempts at modeling in clay at *Académie Colarossi*, and under the supervision of their Swedish colleague, the sculptor Per Hasselberg (1850–1894):

Hanna and I have started to model a little Italian boy and will continue with it tomorrow and maybe a few more days, if we find it worth the effort. I have been thinking about taking a model and sculpting, to have some variation and rest from painting for a while, and Hanna has tried it out once at Colarossi, too, with a mask and found it very amusing. Yesterday she came to me in the morning as usually on Sundays, and […] we paid Hasselberg a visit, because Hanna wanted to see his old man. There, we copied a little head together, of which Hanna tired quickly and she started making fantasy figures in relief on the blackboard on the wall, which were very funny. Then we both felt the inclination to sculpt and decided to take a model and get some clay for the next day. Hasselberg may come and court us.951

In the beginning, such experiments in clay were a welcome change and distraction from painting, but soon Bonnier focused more seriously on sculpture, partly because she believed she would have a better chance at being accepted by the Salon jury with sculpture than painting.952 This strategy proved successful and Bonnier exhibited two busts at the Salons of 1887 and 1888.953

While the sculptures are lost, Bonnier’s eclectic engagement with painting and sculpture is epitomized in a studio interior painted in 1886. It represents the bust of the little Italian boy whom Bonnier and Hirsch had hired as a model in March of the same year.954 As with Hirsch’s allusion to the concept of the paragone in her portrait of Soldan, Bonnier, in her interior scene, revitalized an ancient iconography about the interrelationship between painting and sculpture and placed it in a contemporary studio context.

**Eva Bonnier’s Studio Interior:**

**An Allusion to Pygmalion**

In Eva Bonnier’s studio interior, the bust of the boy is placed on the modeling stand, suggesting that the artist painted the head while she was still working on the depicted sculpture. Although the artist herself is not present, the tools placed right next to
the bust indicate that she might soon proceed with the work. The painting, with its sketchy execution, mirrors the unfinished condition of the sculpture. The scene is set in Bonnier’s studio on the Rue Humboldt in Montparnasse. A painting and a canvas in the back indicate that the owner of the studio is a versatile artist, working as both a painter and a sculptor. A tambourine to the right further signals the artist’s interest in music. The same instrument reappears in several of Eva Bonnier’s studio interiors from Paris.955

In light of the studio’s pivotal importance as a marker of professionalism, it is worth noting that the interior was known under the title Studio Interior (Per Hasselberg’s Studio) when it entered the collection of Nationalmuseum in 1910.956 In the catalog of Eva Bonnier’s memorial exhibition in 1961, the painting was still entitled In Hasselberg’s Studio, and the sculpture depicted in the scene was attributed to the Swedish sculptor Verner Åkerman (1854–1903).957 According to Sixten Strömbom, who wrote the only essay in the catalog, the painting was an expression of Eva Bonnier’s admiration for and emotional attachment to Per Hasselberg, who had inspired her to her various attempts in sculpture.958 As a consequence of this false attribution, Bonnier was disentitled in a twofold way: she lost authorship of her work and ownership of the space that was integral to her professional identity. Eventually, in her doctoral dissertation from 1999, Margareta Gynning reattributed both the sculpture and the studio to Bonnier on the basis of the artist’s correspondence.959 The history of the studio interior demonstrates that women artists risked being deprived of their studio spaces, their authorship and consequently their professional identity even long after their death.

A central feature of Bonnier’s studio interior is the bluish light that enters the room through the window in the upper back corner, dramatically illuminating the bust of the boy. Although his eyes are closed, the boy’s facial expression seems extraordinarily lively, as if the first beams of sunlight to touch his skin will soon wake him. The rendering of the sleeping adolescent has a strong sensual appeal that, in part, derives from his relative passivity, exposure and bodily display. The sleeping boy in the studio is immersed in a bluish, lunar color that recalls depictions of Endymion, the lover of the goddess Diana, who was put into an eternal sleep by godfather Zeus.960 The atmospheric painting and the expressiveness of the sculpture address the artist’s role as creator, who is capable of bringing the inanimate to life both in the medium of painting and

Fig. 87. Eva Bonnier, Interior of a Studio in Paris, 1886.
in the medium of sculpture. The sacralization of art and art production is implied in the seemingly otherworldly rays of light that enter the room. A certain aura seems to surround the sculpture, whose modeling stand takes on the ennobling effect of a pedestal. Bonnier’s vigorous brushwork in the execution of the painting coalesces with the lifelike nature of the depicted sculpture, bringing to mind the idea of the paragone outlined above.

Eva Bonnier’s studio interior cannot only be read as a reflection on the fruitful interrelationship of painting and sculpture as it is expressed in her own oeuvre, but can also be understood as a free interpretation or pictorial allusion to the myth of Pygmalion about the Cypriot sculptor who made his sculpture come to life. In his *Metamorphoses*, Ovid tells the story of Pygmalion, who fell in love with the female statue in ivory that he had carved. He prayed to Venus, who helped him bring the sculpture to life. Pygmalion eventually became a symbol of the artist’s dream to create a living work. Bonnier alludes to the iconography of the myth by making the sculpture of the boy appear animate, as if undergoing the transformation into a living human being.

Traditionally, representations of the Pygmalion myth emphasize the erotic aspects of the narrative, according to which the male hero desired his own female creation. The strong sexual connotations of the iconography might explain why the subject was never directly addressed by women artists in the nineteenth century. The myth about the sculptor, and his fetishized statue, served as a “powerful symbol of the male artist’s subjecthood” and was so influential in shaping the perception of the sculptor as “naturally” male that it had an exclusionary impact on women’s entrance into the profession. As Alexandra K. Wettlaufer has observed, the Pygmalion iconography gained increasing popularity at that moment in postrevolutionary France, when women became more visible in the public sphere. The currency of the myth in art and literature can thus be understood as a reaction to women’s “anxiety-inducing new roles as producers and consumers of art.” According to Wettlaufer, inherent to the metamorphosis of Galatea was the threat that she would transform from sculpture to human being, or from passive object to active subject. The renewed popularity of the myth of Pygmalion was symptomatic of “a crisis of male identity and a fear of female subjecthood”.

In her studio scene, Bonnier does not directly claim the role of Pygmalion for herself, she rather relocates it into her studio space
and transfers it to the sculpture on the modeling stand in its sensual expressiveness and aliveness. The studio space thus enabled Bonnier to allude to the trope of the sculptor as magician and to subversively appropriate an imagery from which women as artists had traditionally been excluded. In that sense, Bonnier’s studio interior can be understood as a mediated self-fashioning in the role of Pygmalion. Employing the argument that the studio interior can be conceived of as a self-portrait, Bonnier’s presence is not only implied, but even visually embodied in the sculpture on the modeling stand and its imagined awakening. In her study of the empty studio as self-portrait, Rachel Esner has argued:

To depict the empty studio is no mere exercise or stock-taking, but rather a form of philosophical reflection on one of the most fundamental problems of the artist in the modern world: the conflict between autonomy and engagement, between the demands of the discourse of the modern artist and the reality of actually being one.

There is a gendered implication to this conflict, to which the subject matter of the empty studio provided a pictorial solution. The fundamental conflict between the idea of the artist and the reality of being one was particularly pronounced for an artist like Eva Bonnier, who was a Jewish woman of upper-class background. Her father Albert Bonnier (1820–1900) was the founder of the successful Bonnier publishing house and acted as an important patron of some of the artists belonging to Eva Bonnier’s close circle of colleagues and friends. According to Margareta Gynning, the expectations that were linked to this conflicted identity kept Bonnier from staging herself in the role of the artist, with the studio interior being the only exception. Gynning further argued that working in sculpture was a welcome change from painting and an artform with which Bonnier could exercise more freedom without the pressure resulting from strong ambitions. Therefore, the artist “dared” to portray a work of art she had made herself and to position it in the very center of her own studio. While Gynning identified the painting as a sketch, even though it is prominently signed in the upper left corner, I would rather read it as a finished and programmatic work. Bonnier’s studio interior alludes to the idea of the paragone and the Pygmalion myth, while at the same time exhibiting the artistic versatility of its maker. Rather than reading sculpting
in clay as a distraction from greater ambitions, Bonnier’s studio interior enacts a fruitful dialogue between the practices of sculpture and painting.

The myth of Pygmalion remained a popular theme in painting and literature throughout the nineteenth century, where it was predominantly used by artists as a means to reflect on themselves and their profession. The myth about the artist Pygmalion, who created a sculpture of his own accord and without commission, stood in for an altered self-awareness among artists who produced independently for a liberalized art market. When employed by painters, the use of the subject matter usually served to illustrate the superiority of painting over sculpture, and representations of Pygmalion often turned into painted comments on the paragone. To stage the Pygmalion myth in painting was thus an ideal opportunity to reflect upon the sister arts of painting and sculpture.

In the late nineteenth century, the iconography of Pygmalion appeared in the work of French and Nordic artists alike. In the years around 1890, the influential Salon painter and professor at
Jean-Léon Gérôme painted and sculpted variations on the theme of Pygmalion and Galatea. While Gérôme never depicted himself in the painter’s studio, he created several self-portraits in the role of the sculptor that revolve around the conjunction of artist, live model and sculpture and allude to the myth of the Cypriot sculptor. Gérôme’s self-portraits were never exhibited at the Salon, and some of them were even created a few years after the paintings by Hirsch and Bonnier, but all of them can be placed in the same vital late-nineteenth-century discourse about the interrelationship between the arts and the paragone between painting and sculpture.

In the Salon of 1887, the same year in which the portrait of Soldan was displayed, the French artist Édouard Dantan (1846–1897) exhibited the painting Casting from Life, depicting the interior of a sculpture workshop. A sculptor and his assistant are about to take a cast of a female model, who is standing in contrapposto on a pedestal. The two men are depicted in the process of loosening the cast from the model’s leg, inviting the beholder to compare the nude woman’s lively flesh color with the gray plaster. Although the
painting offers a seemingly truthful depiction of the work in the studio, the scene evokes associations to the Pygmalion myth and the men’s touch of the woman’s naked body may also insinuate erotic undertones.

Already in 1887, the studio scene was acquired by the Gothenburg collector Pontus Fürstenberg, one of his most expensive purchases.975 Fürstenberg was an important patron for the Swedish artists in Paris in the 1880s, and he stood in close contact with the Opponents, especially with Georg Pauli, who had already advised him on some of his acquisitions.976 Pauli later recalled that Fürstenberg bought the painting by Dantan “to throw a bridge” between the more radical artworks in his collection and the more conservative, enjoyment-seeking public that was invited to visit his gallery in Gothenburg on Sundays. With its juste-milieu artistic language, the painting by Dantan was supposed to “conciliate” the visitors with the art of the Opponents.977 Lennart Waern has categorized Fürstenberg’s acquisition policies during the 1880s as guided by a “borgerlig realism” (bourgeois realism), in which representations of labor rarely represented a harsh social reality.978 The statement by Pauli indicates that the subject matter of Dantan’s studio interior appealed broadly and across artistic camps. The case of Casting from Life supports the argument that the iconography of Pygmalion and the motif of the paragone were popular themes among artists associated with the juste milieu, the Salon jury, collectors, as well as the public in Paris and Sweden around the time when Bonnier and Hirsch painted their studio scenes.

The notion that such classical themes as the paragone and the Pygmalion myth had great currency among the Opponents and their wider artistic circle is further supported by Carl Larsson’s decorative program for the Fürstenberg Gallery from 1888–89, for which he reinterpreted the iconography of Pygmalion in the context of naturalism. In the painting Modern Art, Larsson has depicted himself in the role of the sculptor, turning his back to the viewer and modeling a female nude in clay. The sculpture has already come to life, gazing down at her maker and taking him by her hand. Thereby, the notion of touch is emphasized. In the background Larsson has depicted himself once more and this time in profile, painting en plein air under the guidance of a personification of Japanese art.979 For the decorative program of the Fürstenberg Gallery, Larsson painted not only a triptych, but also executed the reliefs and the surrounding wall decoration. By including himself
in the final scene as both painter and sculptor, Larsson fashioned himself as a universal artist, who incorporated the paragone in his own artistic persona.

The above examples suggest that the paragone between the arts was a vital theme in the art of the time, especially among those artists who pursued a “negotiated modernism” according to juste-milieu ideals, an artistic stance that would appeal to both an international and a Nordic audience.980

Rather than staging the paragone as a single individual’s struggle with different materials, like Bonnier and Larsson, Hanna Hirsch staged artistic creation in her friendship image as an emulative and collaborative effort between herself as the painter and her colleague and friend Venny Soldan as the sculptor. Instead of mythically elevating the paragone with her sister art, Hirsch literally takes sculpture down from its pedestal and lets it sit on the wooden floor of a humble studio. This is a radical move given the traditional role of woman as the artist’s model and the female body as the subject for sculpture. Soldan’s pose is not only provocative in the

Fig. 90. Carl Larsson, *Modern Art*, 1888–89.
sense that it counteracts feminine decorum by appropriating the ideal of the worker-artist, it is also unusually proprietorial in the sense that it stages an act of appropriation of the studio as a professional space and hence turns Soldan into the creator of sculpture.

The Sitter’s Share or the Sitter’s Risk

How radical the portrayal of Venny Soldan in the role of the sculptor actually was at the time is expressed in a letter written by the sitter a few months after the portrait was completed. After having been exhibited at the Salon, prominently positioned on the *cimaise*, the painting was shown in the *Konstnärsgillets julutställning* in Helsinki. A previously unpublished letter from December 1887 that Venny Soldan sent to Hanna Hirsch-Pauli, who had married in October, reveals how the negative reception of the painting upset the sitter:

> You see, I am so angry that I cannot sit still and draw but have to unburden myself a little! It requires an immense amount of self-confidence not to be crushed by the weight of the accusations; the portrait you see; the wretched portrait; and it is I who have to carry it all even though it is you who should be held responsible for having painted such a pigish thing. The indignation is increasing; Now even the accessories are indecent. (To say nothing about the frame.) Although I cannot understand why people do not feel ashamed to talk one on one about such things. Certainly, some of the lady artists are completely satisfied, but “the gentlemen look at it with different eyes, of course.” If it is an honor to be on everyone’s lips, you have, indeed, been honored here in our beloved, dull-witted homeland. They think it is good, but nevertheless they want to haggle away every single thing that apparently makes it good. But now I am so tired of the topic that I cannot stand talking about it anymore. By the way, it has never happened that a Swede came here without moving heaven and earth.

The open-hearted letter, with its unusually indignant tone, not only reveals the sitter’s personal perspective on the controversial reception of the painting, but also complicates the issue of shared authorship in the context of the friendship image and artistic collaboration.
First, Soldan admits that she is profoundly hurt by the criticism directed at the portrait. It seems as if she is not only referring to the official criticism in the reviews, but also to the private gossip amongst the visitors, and in particular the male visitors, to the exhibition. The remarks must have been rude given the artist’s rather shocked reaction. The letter also shows that the criticism was primarily directed at the sitter’s appearance, such as the position on the floor, the pose with the outstretched leg, the simple clothes and the slippers. Soldan’s letter suggests that the criticism at large was comparable in content and tone to the reviews in the press, such as Fanny Churberg’s remarks about her “fairly sloppy dress” and her “ungraceful” appearance, or the comments by Herman Anakreon Ring about her “ordinary” and “cheap dress” and “shabby accessories”.983

Since the Finnish audience considered Soldan’s appearance indecent, the painting from Paris eventually turned into a threat to the artist’s reputation in her home country. Soldan’s strong reaction can be understood in light of “the internalized sense of shame” that many women felt who sought public recognition in the period. According to Jan Marsh, such feelings derived from the still prevalent opinion that women should not be talked about by strangers. It was irrelevant if it was their portraits or their bodies that were exposed to insults.984 The moralizing equation between the person and her representation was already indicated in the previous chapter in the context of the conflicts between Bertha Wegmann and her occasional models, and in relation to the harsh critique of the portrait of Jeanna Bauck from 1881. The reception of Hirsch-Pauli’s portrait of Soldan in Finland is comparable to the criticism directed at Wegmann’s likeness of Bauck in Denmark. In both cases the reception circled around ideas of respectability versus impropriety, and the poses played a crucial role in the debates, since both artists were seated improperly, according to dominant taste: Bauck seated on a table, Soldan positioned on the floor. The overall positive reception at the Salon in France was followed by harsh criticism from the public in the artists’ homelands.

In light of the scandal surrounding the portrait, Soldan considered it unjust that the accusations were only directed at her, the sitter, rather than at Hirsch-Pauli, who had painted the portrait. The comment “it is I who have to carry it all even though it is you who should be held responsible” addresses some of the key issues discussed in the chapter about the friendship image, such as mediated
self-representation, collaboration and shared authorship. Soldan’s
comment can further be read in the context of Harry Berger Jr.’s
theoretical approach that understands portraits as “representations
of both the sitters’ and the painters’ self-representation” and as “vi-

sual narratives for which […] sitters and painters are, in varying de-
grees, responsible”. In Soldan’s view, Hirsch-Pauli bore the main
responsibility because she had painted the portrait. In contrast, the
Finnish audience considered Soldan, as the sitter in the portrait,
responsible for the ungraceful representation. The controversy sur-
rounding the exhibition of the painting in Helsinki raises the ques-
tion of who bore the main responsibility for the friendship image:
the artist who painted or the artist who posed? The indignant letter
suggests that Soldan was under attack, because it was nonetheless
she herself whom the audience encountered in the portrait, where-
as Hirsch-Pauli remained partly invisible and uncompromised by
her own work.

Even though the friendship image is a collaborative effort, it
eventually poses a greater risk to the sitter, as the portrayed, who
is the person exposed to public scrutiny in a more immediate man-
ner than the painter. Returning to Erving Goffman’s argument
about back and front regional behavior, the back region has an experimen-
tal character that allows the team to practice its performance,
“checking for offending expressions when no audience is present
to be affronted by them”. As soon as the studio turns from back
to front region and the painter, as the sitter’s implied counterpart, is
replaced with the beholder, the meaning of the painting and the ef-
fect of the scene changes dramatically and the audience is affronted
by the performance. Employing this argument on Hirsch-Pauli’s
portrait and its reception as it is documented in the letter, Soldan
was caught in between the two contradictory performances of the
middle-class woman and the worker-artist. Goffman has elaborat-
ed on the conflict that occurs when a performer gives inconsistent
presentations: “The answer to this problem is for the performer to
segregate his audiences so that individuals who witness him in one
of his roles will not be the individuals who witness him in another
of his roles.” What Goffman calls “dramaturgical success” can
only be obtained through “front region control”:

It should be clear that just as it is useful for the performer to
exclude persons from the audience who see him in another and
inconsistent presentation, so also is it useful for the performer
to exclude from the audience those before whom he performed in the past a show inconsistent with the current one. Persons who are strongly upward or downward mobile accomplish this in a grand manner by making sure to leave the place of their origins.988

This argument complicates the importance of space in relation to Nordic women painters’ self-fashioning as professionals and adds another dimension to it. Not only did the studio enable a transition between the two performances of middle-class woman and artist, but also the city of Paris and the detachment from home. The ambiguous reception of the portrait of Soldan renders tangible that transition and the difficulties of successfully performing the role of the artist on the domestic art scene.

The reception of Hirsch-Pauli’s portrait of Soldan in Finland reveals the risks and challenges involved in representing the woman artist at work and the threat this representation could potentially pose to the sitter’s middle-class identity. From the perspective of the artist friends, the friendship image could be conceived as a joint artistic project, symbolizing their companionship, collaboration and artistic exchange across different media. However, amongst those positioned outside the emotional community of the artists and their shared studio space, the naturalistic portrayal of the sitter was considered common and inappropriate. Soldan’s letter renders strikingly visible the otherwise often intangible limits that society posed for women artists’ fashioning of professionalism in painting, and it decisively enriches our understanding of the portrait and its reception.

The Self-Portrait Extended into Space

In the fall of 1882 the Norwegian painter Asta Nørregaard wrote several letters from Paris to her friend Hildegard Thorell, informing her colleague in Stockholm about her progress in painting the altarpiece for the Gjøvik church in Norway. At the end of December, she reflected upon the seclusion of her solitary work in the studio: “I think of myself most of the day, because there is not a single soul here to worry about – Je suis toute seule encore – I have it cozy in my studio – oh, how much I enjoy painting for myself.”989 A few weeks later, in mid-November she stated:
Don’t you think that autumn is sad – I am happy that I am so busy with work so that I do not have the time to see the leaves fall – gray sky and dreary streets – Luckily my temper is so balanced and good right now that loneliness does not affect me – and when one is content, everything is well. […] Besides, there is no loneliness that is unbearable when you have work and books.990

During this period of creative solitude and concentrated work, Nørregaard painted a small-scale self-portrait, a cabinet piece in old-masterly technique to commemorate the prestigious commission of the altarpiece. Nørregaard was the first woman artist in Norway to ever receive an official commission for a religious work.991 The self-portrait documents this important step in her career, figuring as a pictorial manifestation of the artist’s claim to professional recognition. The beholder encounters an artist at the height of her career, celebrating her breakthrough after more than ten years of committed study in Kristiania (Oslo), Munich and Paris.992

Asta Nørregaard is standing in the center of her Parisian studio, which she had rented in the fall of 1882, in close proximity to the guesthouse Villa Beaucour on the Rue Faubourg St. Honoré, where she lived at the time. The artist has depicted herself contemplating her altarpiece from a critical distance. She is wearing a simple dark blue and high-necked day dress, which is highlighted by a red scarf. Nørregaard’s chestnut-brown hair is arranged in a knot behind her back, while her shadowed face is framed by a fringe. She is looking at her canvas and holding a fine brush in her right hand, ready to make some changes to the canvas and add a bit of color, which is distributed neatly on the edges of the huge palette in her left hand. According to Frances Borzello, in the late nineteenth century the palette turned into the “symbol of seriousness” in self-portraits by women artists, playing “an extremely assertive role in these paintings, highly visible and apparently larger than life.”993 In Nørregaard’s case, the palette is so prominent that it almost resembles a shield protecting the artist from the beholder’s gaze. Thereby, artist and artwork seem to be captured in an intimate dialogue from which the viewer is partially excluded.

The monumental canvas almost reaches the ceiling, occupying the entire vertical plane of the picture. Nørregaard has depicted the altarpiece in extreme foreshortening, granting the viewer only
an obstructed view of her work. The size of the canvas does not seem to overwhelm the artist, who appears rather small in comparison to her work. One of the self-portrait’s central appeals is the dialogue it enacts between the gigantic canvas represented inside the composition and the tiny painting itself. Next to the altarpiece the artist has placed a ladder, which helps her to reach the top of the composition. The steps are filled with various utensils, such as paintbrushes, a rag, a bowl and a bottle, underlining the work-in-progress character of the scene.

Barbro Werkmäster analyzed Nørregaard’s painting in a survey article about women artists’ self-portraits in 1991. Here she argued that the painting symbolizes the artist’s isolated position. According to Werkmäster, Nørregaard seems to be enclosed in a constructed room, while the closed door and the crossbars of the window evoke imprisonment: “Freedom is outside” and “loneliness is the price she pays for the freedom to paint.” In Werkmäster’s view, the enclosed room, in combination with the artist’s puppet-like and rather stiff pose, make the studio appear like a doll’s house. Anne Wichstrøm, who has published extensively on Nørregaard, proposed reading the self-portrait as a “representation of self-affirmation and professional achievement”, whereas the studio space mirrored “the dilemmas of female professionalism” and conveyed an “impression of isolation and limited scope of action”. According to Wichstrøm, the “sense of isolation” in the painting “is reinforced by our knowledge of Asta Nørregaard as a person”, who “appears to have been an outsider with relatively few friends”. The belief that Nørregaard was a loner is contradicted by the rediscovered letters to Thorell, which indicate that the friends interacted frequently with the Scandinavian artistic community in Paris. These letters further suggest that Nørregaard did not primarily suffer from the isolation and loneliness of her work in the studio, but that she also enjoyed the concentrated work.

The letters to Thorell from the fall of 1882 even provide detailed accounts of the making of the altarpiece. The correspondence indicates that Nørregaard was satisfied with her new working environment and the progress she had made in recent time. During the month of September, she adjusted the composition to the altered light situation in the new studio, she reduced the number of figures and decided on the biblical source (Luke 4:18) for the composition. She had problems finding a suitable model for the figure
of Christ during that period. In November of 1882, Nørregaard complained about the hard physical labor involved in working on a canvas of that size: “I walk up and down the ladder all day long – and it tires twice as much to paint large paintings – it is nevertheless enjoyable – it seems as if I can be finished by summer.” Indeed, the artist managed to complete the painting for the following summer, and in July 1883 she informed Thorell about a journey to Gjøvik, where she made some final changes to the work in situ.

Even though the studio scene at first glance seems to portray the artist’s actual work on the altarpiece, one can study the painting as an aesthetic statement, rather than as a biographical document. Although the cause for painting the scene was the commission of the altarpiece, Nørregaard used this occasion to fashion a much broader picture of herself as an artist. As Wichstrøm has demonstrated, all objects surrounding the painter in the self-portrait can be read as symbols of her professionalism. In the foreground, right in front of the easel, Nørregaard has placed a paint box filled with tubes and paintbrushes, forming a virtuoso still life. The hand mirror, with which the artist probably has painted her self-portrait, is prominently displayed on top of the pile and symbolizes the self-reflection involved in self-portraiture, in both its literal and its metaphorical sense. Whereas the paint box is executed in an academic manner, the autumn landscape, seen through the strutted window, is rendered in impressionist brushstrokes and painted much more loosely than the meticulous depiction of the still life. When viewing the original, it was impossible to make out any reflection of the foliage in the hand mirror as postulated by Wichstrøm.

The sophisticated interweaving of two opposing painting styles – the sketchy execution of the landscape versus the trompe l’œil effect of the still life – can be understood as a reflection on the ability of a painting to tame and embellish or elevate nature. Consequently, the still life stands in for nature as it is restrained, controlled and formed, while the landscape outside the studio represents untouched nature. At the same time, the interweaving of fine, detailed brushwork in one area of the composition with a looser painting style in another testifies to the artist’s technical and stylistic versatility. In this combination of different painting styles, Nørregaard followed juste-milieu ideals, and possibly in order to underline this affiliation, she alluded to the signature of Jules Bastien-Lepage by signing her own work in big antiqua letters in the lower right corner of the canvas.
Apart from the genres of landscape and still life, history painting and portraiture are also present in Nørregaard’s studio. History painting is represented not only through the prominent altarpiece to the left, but also through a copy of Titian’s *The Madonna of the Rabbit* on the opposite wall, which she probably had painted during a visit to the Louvre.\(^{1009}\) In positioning the copy of Titian opposite her own biblical painting, Nørregaard placed her own work in a venerable art historical tradition.\(^{1010}\) The dialogic display of the copy of the old master and her own independent work recall the notion of emulation outlined in the first chapter in the context of Julia Beck’s self-portrait. As has been discussed in the second chapter about the friendship image, the insertion of works by admired predecessors or colleagues in a studio scene is a common feature of the artist portrait in the nineteenth century. Underneath the copy of Titian, one can get a glimpse of a portrait head and a large gilded exhibition-frame, indicating Nørregaard’s success in the French art scene. In the right corner of the room, a Biedermeier chair and drapery refer to her engagement with portrait painting, implying that the painter executed commissioned portraits in her Parisian studio.\(^{1011}\)

Consequently, Nørregaard combines all genres in a single self-portrait: history painting, portraiture, still life, interior and landscape. In doing so, she stages herself as a universal artist who masters all aspects of her craft. By means of the self-portrait, the artist demonstrates her skill and versatility. The painting thereby turns into a painted manifesto and a *carte de visite* advertising its maker.\(^{1012}\) Ultimately, Nørregaard’s self-portrait is not about self-questioning, but about self-representation: Instead of depicting herself scrutinizing her reflection in the mirror, she presents herself from a distance and as the professional artist that she wanted to be perceived as by her audience.\(^{1013}\) Nørregaard chose to exhibit the self-portrait already in the summer of 1883 at the important *Kunst- og Industrudstilling* (Art and Industry Exhibition) in her home town of Kristiania, which indicates that she employed it as a marketing instrument, combining the representation of her Parisian studio with the prestigious commission in her home country.\(^{1014}\)

In the Norwegian journal *Udstillings-Tidende* Jonas Rasch (1834–1887) praised the painting:

> Miss Asta Nørregaard has likewise depicted herself in her studio. In the middle of a poorly equipped room, which gets its light

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\(^{1009}\) Rasch, Jonas: *Udstillings-Tidende*, no. 16, 1883, p. 6.

\(^{1010}\) Rasch, Jonas: *Udstillings-Tidende*, no. 16, 1883, p. 6.

\(^{1011}\) Rasch, Jonas: *Udstillings-Tidende*, no. 16, 1883, p. 6.

\(^{1012}\) Rasch, Jonas: *Udstillings-Tidende*, no. 16, 1883, p. 6.

\(^{1013}\) Rasch, Jonas: *Udstillings-Tidende*, no. 16, 1883, p. 6.

\(^{1014}\) Rasch, Jonas: *Udstillings-Tidende*, no. 16, 1883, p. 6.
from a high window over the door, through which one can see the tops of green trees, the artist herself stands in a simple dress with the brush in her right hand and a big palette in the thumb of her left hand. […] This small and really interesting painting we have here of the artist herself and her studio is entirely good in tone and effect. The light falls well, the interior and the figure stand free and naturally in the room with the wide top light falling over her head. Miss Nørregaard is already a well-esteemed artist, who surely has good prospects.1015

The critic commented twice upon the simplicity of the portrayal of the artist and the depiction of her studio, and he also highlighted the light effects, as well as the moody atmosphere of the painting. Indeed, there is a peculiar air of ceremony to the motionless and introspective presence of the artist, who is standing upright in the middle of her studio, scrutinizing the monumental canvas to her right. The “visual austerity” of the delicate painting creates a dense atmosphere, which inevitably seizes the beholder’s attention.1016 The scene appears peculiarly frozen and static. The artist’s quiet and reverential inspection of her canvas is the only action displayed. Nørregaard is studying her work from afar, maybe anticipating its later effect in the church interior.

The distanced and concentrated examination of the work is reminiscent of Rembrandt’s painting *The Artist in His Studio* from 1626.1017 Victor Stoichita has offered a poetic description of the tension between the artist and his easel in Rembrandt’s painting, which can also be applied to Nørregaard’s self-portrait:

The scene is polarized between the painting on the easel and the painter. There is tension suggested within the space that separates them. A struggle between two unequal forces seems to be unfolding silently before our eyes: the struggle between the immense canvas and the tiny painter, between the “art” – mysterious, gigantic, overwhelming and its servant.1018

Even though the disparate and disharmonious juxtaposition of the immense canvas and the tiny painter imply tension, Nørregaard’s upright posture, her vigilant gaze and the brandished brush signal that she is up to the task. The atmosphere of concentration and meditation in Nørregaard’s self-portrait emphasizes the mental aspects of creation and the artist’s invention rather than the manual
labor. Art making is staged as a mental achievement accomplished alone and in total seclusion.

While the artist is contemplating her work, the light enters the room through the window above, shining right onto the altarpiece and illuminating the figure of Christ. By employing such a spotlight, the artist can demonstrate her skill in handling the chiaroscuro, but at the same time this dramatic handling of light and shade can be read as a symbol of inspiration and invention. As the light reaches the painting, the entire scenery is immersed in a mystical and almost transcendental atmosphere, and the studio seems to transform into a cathedral-like space. By means of the spiritual elevation of artistic creation and the reclusiveness in the depiction of the workshop, the interior resembles studio scenes in romantic art.

In the wake of romanticism, the studio transformed from a busy workshop shared by several artists, apprentices and pupils into a sacred space for secret, lonely and contemplative creativity. The romantic notion of the studio emphasized the individual artist’s aesthetic autonomy, conceptualized as a counter model to the restricted and controlled life of the middle classes. As several scholars have highlighted, the studio functioned as a token for the artist’s withdrawal from society and as a crucial guarantor for his creative ingenuity. The idealization of the artist’s workshop in the nineteenth century prompted Franzsepp Würtenberger to compare the studio to a sanctuary and aesthetic space of worship. According to Würtenberger, the studio was surrounded by a shroud of mystery and only accessible to some initiated few. Only in the studio could the visitor come close to “the mystery, the root and the origin of art”. Only here could the visitor witness the “wonders of becoming, […] the descent of the artistic idea, the inspiration”. Nørregaard refers to this notion of the studio as a sanctuary in her self-portrait, staging the artist’s workplace as an almost sacred space, where the painter creates her religious work in solitude.

In light of this argument, it was a bold step for a woman artist to appropriate the romantic iconography of the studio as sanctuary, given that the concept of the romantic genius was considered genuinely and exclusively male. In her study Gender and Genius, the philosopher Christine Battersby has demonstrated that women were systematically excluded from romantic conceptions of genius, according to which “genius was male – full of ‘virile’ energy”, whereas the creative woman was an “anomaly”. According to Battersby, woman’s status as beautiful object in art confined her to “social
Fig. 92. Georg Friedrich Kersting, 
*Caspar David Friedrich in His Studio*, ca. 1812.

roles that involve artistic *display*, rather than artistic *invention*. Consequently, women who wanted to create had to “manipulate aesthetic concepts […] that were profoundly anti-female.”

By alluding to the iconography of the studio as sanctuary, Nørregaard adopted the romantic idea of the lonely and self-sufficient artistic genius. The notion of the studio as sanctuary and divine space of creation was particularly prevalent in German romanticism, which staged the artist as a solitary *man*, seemingly dedicating *his* entire existence to art. The ascetic, enclosed and contemplative atmosphere of Nørregaard’s self-portrait, and the stillness of her pose, are evocative of the studio interiors painted by romantic artists at the beginning of the century, such as Georg Friedrich Kersting’s (1785–1847) variations on the theme of Caspar David Friedrich in the studio. According to Uwe Fleckner, the austere studio interiors of romanticism are manifestations of the artists’ strong ethical and artistic convictions, as well as visual documents of their deep spiritual engagement with their working environment. In her self-portrait, Nørregaard appropriated the romantic ideal of introspection and employed the dramatic lighting as a symbol of inspiration. The act of painting is thereby transformed into a
ceremonial ritual in a manner that is quite similar to the romantic studio interiors of Kersting and others.\textsuperscript{1030}

The closed door and window, and the overall inwardness of the interior, mirror the artist's absorption in her work. Nørregaard appears like a nineteenth-century version of a \textit{pictor doctus}, a learned wo/man enclosed in her study.\textsuperscript{1031} The idea of the artist's studio as a shelter from the hustle and bustle of the city life was a recurring theme in art journalism in the period. According to Rachel Esner, who studied a series of studio reportages in the widely-circulated French magazine \textit{L'Illustration} from the second half of the nineteenth century, the artist's studio was imagined as distinct from the world of everyday life and it required “an almost ritualistic action” to enter into the realm of the artist.\textsuperscript{1032} Art critics and journalists tended to emphasize the studio's strange other-worldliness and imagined it as a silent place where time had stood still.\textsuperscript{1033} Such \textit{mediatizations} of the studio, as a mysterious space of creation, seem to have informed Nørregaard's self-representation.\textsuperscript{1034}

Conceptualizing Nørregaard's self-representation as an aesthetic statement rather than a biographical document means to acknowledge the \textit{constructedness} of the self-portrait and to study how the artist wanted to be seen, and what image of herself she wanted to fashion. Speaking in Harry Berger Jr.'s terms, this means to study the self-portrait as an index of \textit{what Asta Nørregaard had in mind}.\textsuperscript{1035} Against this backdrop, Nørregaard’s studio scene stages a self-chosen, creative solitude and introverted contemplativeness that does not need to be congruent with the \textit{artist's mind} or her actual emotional state at the time when she painted the work.

Taking a second look at the painting’s compositional structure, it seems as if the scene is constructed in a way that reflects its own \textit{stagedness}. The beholder is looking slightly down at the scene, which allows her or him to analyze the room in its entirety and register all the artworks, objects and working tools that surround the painter. The compositional structure of the interior bears some resemblance to a proscenium stage, with three walls and a floor serving as the frame through which the audience observes the performance from a more or less unified angle. The composition oscillates between the stage-like setting that allows the artist to display her painterly skill and versatility, as opposed to the introversion of her contemplative encounter with the work, seemingly oblivious to the beholder’s presence. The self-portrait is characterized by an ambivalence between the stage-like depiction of the studio and the
artist’s reluctance to directly confront the viewer. This ambiguity of the studio space in between a theater stage and a self-sufficient painterly world brings Erving Goffman’s conceptual pair of the front and back region back to mind. The structure of the composition seems to communicate the studio’s spatial ambivalence. From this point of view, the painting can be understood as a reflection on the studio’s liminal position between the back and front region, or between the artist’s introspection and her public self-fashioning.

Apart from this spatial ambivalence, the purpose-built studio is staged as a professional environment, which is the ultimate token to Nørregard’s professionalism and artistic success. Every object and every detail in this carefully composed studio scene are connected to her profession as a painter, and there are no personal belongings or signs of comfort or sociability that could potentially distract her.

In its simple workshop atmosphere, Nørregaard’s interior shows some resemblance to the studio surroundings in the portrait of Venny Soldan. Whereas Soldan was occupying the majority of the picture plane and claiming the studio space through her bold positioning in the foreground, seated on the floor, Nørregaard appears rather distanced and aloof. Positioned in the center of the composition, Nørregaard appears quite small in relation to the room, with her face lying almost unrecognizable in shadow. The scene is polarized between the monumental painting on the easel and the body of the painter. There is a tension suggested within the space that separates them.

A spatial tension is also implied in the painting by Hanna Hirsch-Pauli. Here, it seems as if the interior is slightly closing in on the sitter, Soldan, who is crammed into the composition with her body almost reaching to the edges on all four sides of the canvas. Behind her back the room suddenly expands and appears spacious and wide. Apart from this dichotomy between narrowness and spaciousness, Soldan appears connected to the room and rooted to the floor by means of her unconventional pose. As she sits on the floor in such a seemingly natural and spontaneous manner, she takes possession of the space that surrounds her. Soldan is not only sitting on the floor, but she is extensively and possessively sitting on the floor with her foot outstretched and the black-dressed body dominating the foreground of the composition.

Whereas Soldan seems to be in bodily connection with her space, Nørregaard is in mental control over her environment. In both acts
of portrayal, in the friendship image and in the self-portrait, the depicted artists appropriate the studio space and stage it as a room of their own.¹⁰³⁶

Both representations of the artist in the studio are characterized by a peculiar equivalence between body and space, between the figure of the artist and the surrounding studio environment, represented in a balanced equilibrium, where neither party is taking over all control or attention. In both paintings, artistic identity is negotiated through a tension-filled juxtaposition of figure and space. Paraphrasing Susan Sidlaukas, in the paintings by Hirsch-Pauli and Nørregaard the studio is staged as a contested terrain that needs to be seized, controlled and made one’s own and the portraits enact the appropriation by their makers.¹⁰³⁷ Whereas Nørregaard fashions this appropriation by means of her self-determined and autonomous aloneness, Hirsch-Pauli mediates her appropriation of the studio space through her collaborative painterly interaction with Soldan, who has entered the paragone as sculptor. Ultimately, in these paintings the studio is no longer just a setting or mere background, it is rather conceived as an entity in its own right, which interacts with the artists and mediates their professionalism. In that sense, the studio scene can be understood as a (mediated) self-representation extended into space.
Concluding Discussion

Like no other work analyzed in this book, Hanna Hirsch-Pauli’s portrait of Venny Soldan-Brofeldt unites all the central concerns that have run as a common thread through this investigation. I have suggested that the portrait of Soldan-Brofeldt can be read as a performative enactment between the sister arts of painting and sculpture in the medium of the friendship image. The artist friends enacted a competitive collaboration among themselves, and at the same time they inscribed themselves in a long artistic tradition of emulative practice. As a friendship image, the portrait conveyed the significance of collaboration and mediated self-representation for the fashioning of identity in painting.

This study has shown that the exchange between artists could take many different forms, including emulation, collaboration, competition and rivalry. It has demonstrated that a pronounced sense of community was integral to Nordic women artists’ self-fashioning as professionals in the 1880s. On a pragmatic level, community facilitated their personal freedom, their mobility, their access to suitable housing, studios, free models and collegial tutoring. On a metaphorical level, community also had a legitimizing function for women artists, as it enabled them to define themselves as a conspicuous occupational group. Rather than staging themselves as *exceptional women* in Mary D. Sheriff’s terms, Nordic women painters fashioned themselves in the late nineteenth century as *team-mates* and equals in the pursuit of shared artistic ambitions.

Finally, the case of Hirsch-Pauli and Soldan-Brofeldt has revealed the charged symbolic meaning of the studio space as a *room of their own*. Besides staging the studio as *a room of one’s own* in Virginia Woolf’s sense as a place for solitary, creative and con-
templative activity, Nordic women painters often represented their studios as sites of collegial and competitive endeavors. Access to a studio eventually meant entry into a profession. For Nordic women artists, the studio was tantamount to professionalism and, consequently, it was a space that needed to be appropriated, earned, conquered and defended both in life and in art. In its representation in painting, the studio turned into a metaphorical vessel for the artists’ ambitions, but it was also an experimental arena in which they could inscribe themselves into iconographic traditions and position themselves in relation to the contemporary artistic discourse. The studio came to symbolize the essence of the artists’ voluntary foreign exile, which allowed them to focus uncompromisingly on their artistic ambitions. Ultimately, the portrait of Soldan-Brofeldt unifies the three central strategies of artistic self-fashioning – emulation, collaboration and appropriation – that Nordic women artists employed in their pursuit to become artists in the 1880s.

Emulation
The first chapter on Julia Beck and her self-portrait from 1880 has explored how emulation was used as a vital strategy to inscribe the artist into a pictorial tradition. Emulative acts in portraiture involve pose, gaze, dress, color and style of execution and make recourse to the art and artists of the past and the present. The practice of emulation extends far beyond copying or imitation. Instead, it means entering into a dialogue with one’s profession, thereby legitimizing affiliation with the same. When employed by women artists, emulation creates frictions that allow them to expand and redefine who can become an artist. Pigman’s notion of emulation as admiring rivalry, oscillating between homage and competition, has been applied in both the dialogue with the art of the past and the collaboration with an artist friend or a colleague. In Beck’s case, the use of emulation in self-portraiture was intended to introduce the artist to an international audience at the Salon of 1880, and to visually display the academic training and professional experience of its maker.

While the art historiography on those artists who traveled to Paris in the 1880s has traditionally emphasized their break with tradition, symbolized by their opposition to the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Stockholm, this analysis of their emulative strategies has demonstrated that they, in fact, aimed to associate themselves with tradition and the artists of the past.
Proceeding from Oskar Bätschmann’s concept of the *exhibition artist*, who had to create a persona or a personal brand in public exhibitions, the first chapter has further analyzed how Julia Beck and Jenny Nyström used the Salon in Paris as a stage where they could promote themselves by exhibiting their self-portraits. Self-portraits had a double function in showcasing the persona of the artist and generating commissions for portraits.

Looking back on how women artists from the eighteenth century onwards fashioned themselves in painting, it becomes evident that emulation had long been a vital strategy that allowed them to inscribe themselves into the professional tradition of the painter. Consequently, Beck’s emulation of a Baroque artistic ideal can also be understood as an emulation of the strategy of *ma(s)king claims* that has been used by many women artists of the past.

Furthermore, the first chapter has explored Beck’s attempts to pursue her career simultaneously in France and in Sweden, eventually being caught in an in-between position that has long contributed to her exclusion from the canon of Swedish art. The analysis of her previously unpublished correspondence with the journalist John Neander, and of the donation letter to the academy, has demonstrated that Beck actively tried to shape her own reception in Sweden. Finally, the donation of her self-portrait from 1886 to *Konstakademien* has been studied as an attempt to inscribe herself into the history of the Swedish academy, and simultaneously, to secure her own legacy as an artist in her home country. The object history of this painting points to the vital importance of the self-portrait in the self-fashioning of the artist, both in her own lifetime and beyond.

**Collaboration**

The second chapter was dedicated to the artistic partnership of Jeanina Bauck and Bertha Wegmann and their friendship with Hildegard Thorell. The painters’ all-female network was used as a central case to explore the importance of friendship and community for the professionalization of Nordic women artists in the late nineteenth century. The comprehensive correspondence of Hildegard Thorell with her artist friends and her husband Reinhold Thorell has been thoroughly analyzed and it has proven to be a rich source that dramatically extends our understanding of the importance of networking for Nordic women artists’ professional development in the period under consideration. This correspondence has allowed
us to uncover the life and work of Bauck, Wegmann and Thorell during a period of forty years, providing a much fuller and complex picture of their international careers and artistic outlooks than has previously been possible. This correspondence has offered the rare opportunity to study how women artists developed a sense of community in their epistolary practice around the turn of the century.

This study has suggested that we can approach such intimate networks by employing Barbara H. Rosenwein’s concept of emotional communities rather than using the misleading term sisterhood, which is modeled on the male brotherhood. The networks of these women artists were private and informal, and were based on mutual affection and support rather than on any official aesthetic program, which renders emotional community a more appropriate concept.

This book has further introduced the genre category of the friendship image, conceptualized as a representation of a fellow artist based on collaboration and shared authorship. Employing Harry Berger Jr.’s notion of the act of portrayal and Ewa Lajar-Burcharth’s concept of the mediated self-representation, allows one to redirect attention to the sitter’s share in the making of the friendship image. The friendship image is, to a high degree, a dialogic endeavor. Here, two artists fashion their professionalism in collaboration. By analyzing collaborative acts in painting, this study has explored how Nordic women painters invented one another as professional artists in friendship images and actively partook in one another’s self-fashioning.

The friendship image was the most vital genre for Nordic women artists’ self-fashioning in the 1880s. In a period when women artists pursued painting as a profession in rapidly growing numbers, they began to negotiate the process of becoming artists collaboratively, depicting a shared experience in painting. Whereas women artists in previous periods had tended to highlight the hierarchical order from teacher down to student and constructed a line of succession in painting, in the late nineteenth century women artists began to depict one another truly as equals, emphasizing the reciprocity of their relationships. Staging friendship and community in painting was a means to resolve the supposed paradox of being a woman and an artist by fashioning the woman artist not as an exception, but as a normality through mutual portrayal.

Studying personal testimonies by Nordic and international artists in the form of unpublished epistolary writing, as well as published memoirs and travel writing, has revealed that mutual peda-
gogic instruction and emulation was a vital classroom practice that shaped women artists’ professional development more than the occasional teaching by male artists at the private academies in Paris and elsewhere. This study has given a nuanced account of these classroom practices that were based on support and affection, but also involved rivalry and conflict.

Friendship and community allowed Nordic women artists to build social safety nets outside the family or marriage, and to create alternative living arrangements that enabled them to pursue their careers in a more unimpeded manner. In a period when the public perception of intimate friendships between women changed dramatically, Nordic women artists like Bauck and Wegmann engaged in long-term partnerships that defy any simple categorization. These were queer relationships in the sense that they cannot be grasped by hetero- versus homosexual categorizations. Studying the queer dissonance in the artists’ epistolary writing reveals how they subverted the heteronormative ideals of their day in the realm of their emotional community.

The analysis of the artistic partnership of Bauck and Wegmann has further demonstrated how the two artists redefined the idea of the artist in the medium of the friendship image. Bauck created a double portrait in the form of a studio scene in which the friends could act as artists at the same time, in a simultaneous act of portrayal. At the same time, Bauck’s work commemorated the submission of Wegmann’s portrait of the physician Peter Dethlefsen to the Salon of 1889, celebrating the professionalism of her colleague. By fashioning two versions of Bauck for the Salons of 1881 and 1886, Wegmann expanded the possibilities of the female portrait, reconciling the notion of the femme comme il faut with the idea of the artist. The analysis of Wegmann’s Salon portraits of Bauck has shown that the artist is not a stable or static category, but that it is malleable, fragmented and refashioned in every act of portrayal.

Even though it is always bold to speak of exceptional cases, the extent to which it has been possible to uncover the collaborative practices of Bauck and Wegmann is extraordinary. This study has demonstrated that the artists systematically collaborated on portrait commissions in secret, while painting some of their studies more openly together, even encapsulating their shared authorship in a composite signature. Further, it has shown that parallel phenomena occurred both in their dialogic painting and in their
epistolary practice. In both friendship images and letters, Bauck tended to act as the mediator of Wegmann’s self-fashioning. Their case invites a reconsideration of the importance of community and collegial exchange for artistic practice in the nineteenth century. It raises the question whether the ubiquitous focus on the individual artist and oeuvre still prevailing in art history has made us overlook other instances of collaboration and the potential of shared authorship. Ultimately, one cannot help but wonder how exceptional or commonplace the collaborative partnership of Bauck and Wegmann really was.

The case of Bauck and Wegmann has exposed the limitations of the idea of the artist, which is still dominant in the discipline of art history with its omnipresent emphasis on the individual artist. Rather than understanding the artist as a stable category or solitary entity and the artwork as its immediate expression, this study has introduced an alternative approach to artistic identity as flowing between subjects. The idea of the solitary artist, fighting a lone struggle, and the ahistorical conception of the avant-garde without precedent, present themselves as modernist myths that still prevail in much art historical writing. By introducing emulation and collaboration as two central strategies of artistic self-fashioning, this book, and the artists represented in it, have offered an alternative draft of the idea of the artist as positioned in and defined by a wider historical and social framework. Becoming artists means positioning oneself in a complex field of references. Hence, the idea of the artist-outsider presents itself as a myth.

Against this backdrop, the concept of the friendship image functions as a deconstructive analytical tool, which counteracts notions of solitary artistic identity and individual genius by highlighting the effects of collectivity and collaboration in art. Ultimately, the friendship image figures as a means to problematize the category of the artist from a feminist-performative perspective. The analysis of artists’ epistolary practices can take on a complementary function in such critical reconsiderations of the artist, if they are understood as collaborative acts. If professional identity is conceptualized as relational and flowing between artists and media, and as a practice which is constantly negotiated in interaction and exchange, it is possible to reach a more inclusive and nuanced understanding of the artist and artistic practice, beyond the legend and the trope.
Appropriation
The final chapter of this study has combined the central concerns and genres of this study. It has analyzed the function of the studio space in Nordic women painters’ self-fashioning in the 1880s in self-portraits, friendship images and studio interiors. It has explored the charged juxtaposition of figure and space in studio scenes and analyzed how the artists appropriated the studio in their work and made it *a room of their own*.

The twofold analysis of the studio, as a lived-in and an imaginary space has separated the actual experience of space from the fashioning of space in painting. The studio has been introduced as a vital site for artistic self-fashioning, which complicates the public-private divide in nineteenth-century visual culture and offers new insights into women’s transgression of these supposedly separate spheres. The studio’s liminality has been explored by means of Erving Goffman’s conceptual pair of *front* and *back stage*. It is a space that oscillates between these categories and therefore it offered women artists transitional spaces of representation that facilitated their appropriation of the idea of the artist. In their work, the studio turned into a space of disruption, in which they could gain the prerogative over their own representation. At the same time, the studio’s liminality and the charged juxtaposition of figure and space stand in for the conflicted position of the woman artist, in between social conventions and professional fulfillment.

The analysis of Hanna Hirsch-Pauli’s portrait of Venny Soldan-Brofeldt has shown how the artists appropriated the idea of the *working studio* in order to fashion their Parisian voluntary exile as an all-encompassing artistic existence devoted solely to art. The austere studio interior allowed the artists to distance themselves from the domesticity of bourgeois commodity culture, and hence also from their own cultural and class background. The artist’s touch of clay and the pointed act of showing the material of her work fashioned Soldan-Brofeldt as an artist-craftsman and emphasized her role as the maker of her own work. The artist’s touch of clay can be understood as a material imprint of authenticity and authorship.

Furthermore, the final chapter has highlighted the tension-filled interrelationship between painting and sculpture in the fashioning of the artist in late nineteenth-century French and Nordic art. It has offered an alternative reading of Hirsch-Pauli’s portrait of Soldan-Brofeldt as a revitalization of the paragone motif. In their friendship image, the two artists enacted a dialogic and emulative
encounter between the sister arts of painting and sculpture. This encounter was shaped by the *admiring rivalry* between the two artists, oscillating between collaboration and competition.

Eventually, the previously unpublished letters by Soldan-Brofeldt provided crucial insights into the ambivalent reception of her portrait in Finland. The tension expressed in her letter, in which she accused Hirsch-Pauli of having exposed her and compromised her integrity in the portrait, summarizes the unresolved conflicts and frictions, inherent in Nordic women artists’ (mediated) self-representations in the period, resonating subtly throughout this study.

Whereas Hirsch-Pauli and Soldan-Brofeldt appropriated and reinterpreted the paragone motif, Eva Bonnier fashioned herself as Pygmalion by seemingly bringing to life the bust of the boy on the modeling stand in her studio. Rather than immediately fashioning herself as a female Pygmalion, Bonnier chose to relocate the appropriation of the antique artist myth into her studio space. Hence, the studio space mediated Bonnier’s appropriation of the myth, subtly alluding to the trope of the sculptor as magician and appropriating an imagery from which women as artists had traditionally been excluded.

Finally, Asta Nørregaard’s self-portrait from 1883 celebrated the professionalism, skill and artistic versatility of its maker. In contrast to previous readings that have emphasized the loneliness expressed in the studio scene, this analysis has proposed reading the painting as a self-conscious appropriation of the romantic ideal of the artist as solitary genius. This reading is representative of all the analyses in this book. Rather than studying the artists’ (mediated) self-representations as biographical documents, this study has chosen to grasp them as aesthetic objects and to acknowledge the *constructedness* of artistic self-fashioning as inevitably caught in between the real and the imaginary.
Notes

1. Hanna Hirsch-Pauli, *By Lamplight*, 1885, oil on canvas, 109 x 130 cm, private collection.

2. The artist’s maiden name is used, when the work that is analyzed was made before the artist’s marriage. When the artist and her oeuvre are analyzed in more generalizing terms the married name is used, because it is often the name by which the artist is best known.


7. The myth of the artist genius denotes, in short, the idea of the artist


9. On the appropriation of the artistic persona by the individual artist see Soussloff, Absolute Artist, 21.

10. The use of the term middle classes (the plural form is used to stress the relative heterogeneity) follows the broad definition given by the historian Jürgen Kocka, according to which “the concept comprises merchants, manufacturers, bankers, capitalists, entrepreneurs and managers, as well as rentiers, together with their families. It also comprises the families of doctors, lawyers, ministers, scientists and other professionals, professors of universities and secondary schools, intellectuals, men and women of letters, and academics, including those who serve as administrators and officials in public and private bureaucracies.” This study gives the more neutral term middle classes preference over the more tendentious term bourgeoisie, which has a more critical, polemical and political usage. When bourgeoisie is used, it is supposed to indicate the more evaluative notion of the middle classes. Following Kocka, the middle classes across Europe developed “common interests and experiences and a certain degree of self-understanding and common ideologies”, which turns the middle classes into a social formation that shaped the individuals that are discussed in this study. The middle classes defined themselves by their culture and their sociabilité, they put great emphasis on education and a specific ideal of the family. A sense of female-influenced privacy was essential to their self-understanding. Jürgen Kocka, “The Middle Classes in Europe,” The Journal of Modern History 67, no. 4 (1995): 783–806, in particular 783–788.

11. Their social background conforms to the great majority of professional women artists in the period, if compared to Ingelman’s results in her study
on the women students at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Stockholm. Ingrid Ingelman, Kvinnliga konstnärer i Sverige: En undersökning av elever vid Konstakademien inskrivna 1864–1924, deras rekrytering, utbildning och verksamhet, PhD diss., Uppsala University (Borås: Centraltryck, 1982), 38–44. For the Danish context, a survey of Weilbachs Kunstnerleksikon, which included 200 women, likewise showed that the artists’ family background was the “borger-skabet” or middle classes, with fathers working as civil servants, intellectuals such as writers or scholars, artists and wholesalers. Mona Jensen and Birte Møller Nielsen, “Tidens malende damer,” in Kvindfolk: En danmarkshistorie fra 1600 til 1982, ed. Anne Margarete Berg, Lis Frost and Anne Olsen (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1984), 293.


13. The head of the family was Moritz Gerson Melchior, a businessman and owner of the trading house Moses & Son G. Melchior. He became Wegmann’s most important patron. According to the artist’s own account, Melchior’s sister Cecilia Trier convinced members of the family and friends to support her artistic education financially, which eventually allowed her to travel to Munich. E. D., “Da jeg var pige – malerinden Bertha Wegmann fortæller,” Vore Damer, no. 24 (1925); Niels Vinding Dorph, “Bertha Wegmann,” Politiken, December 16, 1917.

14. Bertha Wegmann’s parents Eberhard and Cathrine Wegmann (née Mini) were members of the Reformed Church (Tysk Reformert Kirke). See the note by the reformed church from March 10, 1897, Weilbachs arkiv: Bertha Wegmann, Kunstbiblioteket, Søborg.


17. Even though the portrait of Melchior was very popular among visitors to the Charlottenborg exhibition, Wegmann decided not to send it to the Salon in Paris, because she deemed the quality of the work insufficient: “Jeg er desværre heller ikke blevet færdig med nogen Salontavle. Herreportrættet var jeg bange for at det ikke var godt nok. Du veed man bliver saa træt og kjed af et Arbeide inden man bliver færdig dermed at man nesten kunde kæres, og saa er der Ingen jeg riktig har Fortroendhed til som jeg kunde spørge tilraads. Her paa Udstillingen gjør det stormende Lykke, Alle ere henrykte derover, og alle Mennesker vil males, saa jeg har nok at gjøre med bare at holde Folk fra Livet. Jeg selv er aldeles utilregnlig, jeg synes forresten ganske godt om Hovedet og Stillingen, men ellers kan jeg ikke see noget godt ved det.” Ber-
tha Wegmann, letter to Hildegard Thorell, April 11, 1884, Nordiska museets arkiv, Stockholm.


22. In her biography of Eva Bonnier, Görel Cavalli-Björkman has argued that there was no clear border between Jewish tradition and Swedish culture in the Jewish Stockholm circles: “Under den tid som Eva Bonnier växte upp hade många av de äldre judiska familjerna hunnit bli väl assimilerade i det svenska samhället. Några klara gränser mellan judisk tradition och inhemsk kultur fanns egentligen inte i den judiska stockholmskretsen.” Cavalli-Björkman, *Eva Bonnier*, 17. Birgitta Sandström draws similar conclusions in her biography of Emma Zorn (née Lamm, 1860–1942), describing the social background of Anders Zorn’s wife as shaped by wealth and high social status, Jewish traditions and a strong sense of family cohesion. Birgitta Sandström, *Emma Zorn* (Stockholm: Norstedt, 2014), 23.

23. Soldan-Brofeldt’s husband, the writer Johannes Bofeldt (Juhani Aho), is counted among the fellow artists.


25. Ingelman, *Kvinnliga konstnärer*, 81. In Sweden it was not until 1921, with the elimination of coverture, that a married woman gained full right to her property and to enter a profession.

26. All translations are my own unless otherwise indicated. Quotations
which are not translated in the body text but only paraphrased are included in the original language in the footnotes as background information for the specifically interested reader. These quotations are of minor importance and not translated into English due to lack of space.

27. The literary estate of Hildegard Thorell is divided between the archives of Nordiska museet and Kungliga akademien för de fria konsterna. It includes 52 letters by Bauck and Wegmann, some of them written jointly, 19 letters by Asta Norregaard and two letters by Julia Beck. Hildegard Thorells arkiv: brev från konstnärer, Nordiska museet, Stockholm; Hildegard Thorells brevsamling, Kungliga akademien för de fria konsternas arkiv, Stockholm.

28. The 18 letters by Asta Norregaard were written between 1882 and 1889. Apart from the 49 letters written to her Finnish friends Lina and Walter Runeberg between 1888 and 1920 (preserved in the Walter and Lina Runeberg collection in Svenska Litteratursällskapet in Helsinki), Norregaard has left few personal traces behind. Therefore, the letters in Nordiska museet are a crucial source, especially when it comes to her work in the early 1880s.

29. From the period 1881 to 1924, 52 letters by Bauck and Wegmann are preserved, 37 in the archive of Nordiska museet and 15 in Konstakademien. The letters in Danish by Wegmann to her Swedish friends are cited in the footnotes in their original orthography, characterized by the repeated use of Swedish words and spellings.

30. Bertha Wegmann’s letters to the Melchior family: En samling breve til Moritz, Dorothea og Louise Melchior, 1867–1920, håndskriftssamlingen, Det Kongelige Bibliotek, Copenhagen; Bertha Wegmann’s letters to the Hirschsprung family: Heinrich Hirschsprungs brevsamling, håndskriftssamlingen, Den Hirschsprungske Samling, Copenhagen. The correspondence at the Royal Library contains 27 letters and 19 postal cards from the period 1868 to 1918 and the correspondence with the Hirschsprung family in the Hirschsprung Collection archives comprises only three letters. Wegmann wrote most of the letters to Danish addressees in Kurrent, an old form of German-language handwriting.


32. Hildegard Thorell, letters to Reinhold Thorell, 1870–1912, Nordiska museets arkiv, Stockholm. This study focuses on the correspondence from the study trips to Paris and Munich, whereas the entire correspondence would be worth a study of its own.

33. Eva Bonnier, letters to her family, Eva Bonniers korrespondens, 1875–1929, Bonniers arkiv, Centrum för näringslivshistoria, Stockholm.


35. Fourteen letters by Hanna Hirsch are preserved from the years 1881 to 1885. Hanna Hirsch, letters to Eva Bonnier, Eva Bonniers korrespondens, 1875–1929, Bonniers arkiv, Centrum för näringslivshistoria, Stockholm. The archive collection further includes letters by other artists that are relevant for this study, such as Julia Beck and Richard Bergh.
36. Venny Soldan-Brofeldt, letters to Hanna Hirsch-Pauli, private archive, Stockholm. This private archive contains 35 letters and 10 postal cards from the period 1886 to 1938. Hirsch-Pauli’s letters in return have been published in Pauli, *Cher monsieur*. The original letters from Hirsch-Pauli to Soldan-Brofeldt are preserved in the National Archives of Finland in Helsinki. I have consulted the originals as microfiches, but I will cite from the catalog, because it documents the complete letters.

37. Maria Görts has shown that only ten percent of the works that *Nationalmuseum* in Stockholm acquired directly from the artists between 1873 and 1892 were by women. Maria Görts, *Det sköna i verklighetens värld: Akademisk konstsyn i Sverige under senare delen av 1800-talet*, PhD diss., Stockholm University (Bjärnum: Typsnittsarna prepress, 1999), 106–107.


39. Initially, the Hirschsprung Collection owned two works by Bertha Wegmann: the portrait of Petrea Hirschsprung, the mother of the collector Heinrich Hirschsprung, from 1888 and the portrait of Jeanna Bauck from 1885, which entered the collection in 1912 and 1913 respectively. In 2007, the museum supplemented its collection with the undated portrait of Hanna Lucia Bauck. Between 2017 and 2020, the museum expanded its collection with nine additional works. Information from the collection documentation of *Den Hirschsprungske Samling* provided by curator Lene Bøgh Rønberg via e-mail, January 4, 2021.


43. The painter and her sister shared a household at Wilhelmstrasse 23 in Munich and died in quick succession: Jeanna Bauck died on May 27 and Hanna Lucia Bauck on September 22, 1926.

44. The Bavarian authorities were unable to localize an heir to the sisters and installed an executor for their shared estate who sold or destroyed
their entire property. The authorities recorded the procedure meticulously, compiling detailed lists of the sisters’ belongings from cutlery to paintings. Staatsarchiv München, AG München NR 1926/1845, Nachlass-Sache Bauck.


48. In March 1885, the Opponents signed a petition for the reform of the academy. The same year, they arranged two now famous independent exhibitions at Blanch’s Art Salon in Stockholm entitled From the Banks of the Seine and The Opponent’s Exhibition. The names of the signatories are listed in: Sixten Strömbom, Konstnärsförbundets historia I: till och med 1890 (Stockholm: Bonnier, 1945), 197. Six out of 84 artists were women: Julia Beck, Emma Löwstädt (1855–1932), Jenny Nyström, Hildegard Thorell, Julia Strömberg (1851–1926) and Anna Nordgren (1847–1916). The name of Anna Palm (1859–1924) was crossed out. For a concise overview of the Swedish secession and its history see Alexandra Herlitz, “From ‘The Paris Boys’ to the Artists’ Union: A Swedish Secession in the Late 19th Century and its Art History,” in Swedish Art History: A Selection of Introductory Texts, ed. Ludwig Qvarnström (Lund: Lunds universitet, 2018), 229–244.

49. As a result of the authoritarian climate in the Artists’ Union, Svenska konstnärernas förening (The Society of Swedish Artists) was founded in 1890. The development towards fragmentation extends beyond the scope of this study.

50. As Charlotta Nordström and others have pointed out in recent years, the historiography on the Opponentrörelsen (Opponent Movement) is characterized by theheroizing and polarizing narrative of the Opponents rising against the academy. This historiography, which often is of anecdotal character, has primarily been shaped by the art historians Sixten Strömbo, Georg Nordensvan and the artists themselves, in particular Georg Pauli. Charlotta Nordström, Up the Stylish Staircase: Situating the Fürstenberg Gallery and Art Collection in a Late Nineteenth-Century Swedish Art World, PhD diss., Stockholm University (Gothenburg: Makadam, 2015), 36–49. On Pauli as a cultural political writer and debater see Per Ljungberg, “Georg Pauli: En kulturpolitisk skribent och debattör” (master’s thesis, Uppsala University, 2012). In his writings, Nordensvan over drew the contrast between the Opponents and the academy and widely ignored the continuities or similarities in artistic outlook: Georg Nordensvan, “Konstnärschisimen: 1880-talet,” in Svensk konst och svenska konstnärer i nittonde århundradet, II, Från Karl XV till sekelslutet (Stockholm: Bonnier, 1928), 244–263. For an overview of recent reconsider-
ations of the Opponent movement and its historiography see the section on previous research in the introduction.

51. Alexis Clark and Frances Fowle have argued that the capitalization of artistic movements, in particular “Impressionism”, has produced and upheld a hierarchy that privileges art and artists from artistic centers, most notably France and Paris, while diminishing the contributions of artists from other regions, such as the Nordic countries. Further, capitalization suggests a “chronological primacy and stylistic supremacy” of the -isms following the “teleology of modernism”. As this study is concerned with what one might call a relative “artistic periphery” as well as with painters whose work contradict a teleological notion of artistic developments, all -isms remain lowercase. Alexis Clark and Frances Fowle, “Introduction: ‘What is Impressionism’,” *Globalizing Impressionism: Reception, Translation, and Transnationalism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2020), n.p.


56. The year 1881 marks a major turning point in the history of the Salon, with power shifting from the State to the French artists, who constituted the *Société des Artistes Français* that became responsible for the organization of and admissions to the Salon. This shift in power had relatively little effect on the content of the exhibition, as it still largely excluded the more radical

57. An example to understand the scope of the exhibition: In 1882, a total of 7311 objects were exhibited at the Salon, 3956 of them paintings. Brauer, *Rivals and Conspirators*, 46.

58. Margareta Gynning has employed the term “backlash” to describe the reactionary marginalization of women artists at the turn of the century. Margareta Gynning, *Det ambivalenta perspektivet: Eva Bonnier och Hanna Hirsch-Pauli i 1800-talets konstliv*, PhD diss., Uppsala University (Stockholm: Bonnier, 1999), 137–168. See further Margareta Gynning, “Konstnärspår kring sekelskiftet 1920,” *Konstnärspår kring sekelskiftet 1900* (Stockholm: Nationalmuseum, 2006), 8–19, here in particular 12–16. Recent years have seen an increase in research on women artists in Nordic symbolism, including reconsiderations of Tyra Kleen (1874–1951) and Agnes de Frumerie (1869–1937), who successfully maneuvered their international careers despite the prevalent misogynist attitudes. For an introductory account of their work see Daniel Prytz, Karin Sidén and Anna Meister, eds., *Symbolism och dekadens* (Stockholm: Prins Eugens Waldemarsudde, 2015). Birte Bruchmüller is currently preparing a doctoral dissertation with the working title “Nordic International Symbolists and the Concept of Androgyny” at the University of Gothenburg, which will offer new perspectives on Nordic women artists in the symbolist movement. Vibeke Röstorp is working on a monograph on the sculptor Agnes de Frumerie.


63. The exceptions are those artists who were also active as writers, such as Kitty Kielland in Norway and Helena Westermarck in Finland. Kielland was one of the founders of the Norwegian Women’s Society in 1884 and she focused on women’s issues in her writing. In 1886 her most important feminist text entitled Kvindespørgsmålet (The Woman Question) was published in Norway. Westermarck became a board member of the Finnish women’s organization Unionen in 1892 and she was a writer and editor for the women’s journal Nutid. See Øystein Sjåstad, “Kitty Kielland as a ‘New Woman’,” Scandinavian Studies 92, no. 4 (2020): 492–520; Julia Dahlberg, “Konstnär, Kvinna, Medborgare: Helena Westermarck och den finska bildningskulturen i det moderna genombrottets tid 1880–1910” (PhD diss., University of Helsinki, 2018).


68. Lena Holger is currently working on a publication about Nordic women artists who studied in Paris between 1867 and 1889 with the working title Nordiska kvinnliga konstnärer i Paris före 1889. Her latest count from April 2020 is 121 artists (59 Swedish, 23 Norwegian, 24 Finnish, 15 Danish). The criteria for inclusion are that the artists had prior education in the arts in their home countries and studied art in Paris and/or exhibited in the city. Lena Holger, e-mail to the author, April 15, 2020. Anna Lena Lindberg quoted Anne Wichstrom as having estimated 150 Nordic women artists active in Paris during the 1880s, but the latter recently confirmed that her latest estimation is 100

69. This observation is affirmed by the comprehensive correspondences of Hildegard Thorell, Eva Bonnier and Richard Bergh and it is shared by other scholars. See Hedström, Swedish Reception, 74.


72. The concept of career migrants was initially coined by the sociologist Charles Tilly and has been applied to foreign artists in Paris by Susan Waller and Karen L. Carter, “Introduction,” in Strangers in Paradise: Foreign Artists and Communities in Modern Paris, 1870–1914 (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), 3.


75. This attitude appears to apply to expatriate groups in Paris in general. See Burns, “Puritan Parisians,” 136–137.


78. Greenblatt, Renaissance Self-Fashioning, 2.

79. Greenblatt, Renaissance Self-Fashioning, 2.


81. John Jeffries Martin, Myths of Renaissance Individualism (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 5–6. According to Martin’s reading of Greenblatt, “self-fashioning is not the way in which autonomous subjects fashioned themselves but rather the way in which specific political and religious centers of authority (the monarchy or the church, for example) created the fiction of individual autonomy and/or interiority.” Martin, Myths of Renaissance Individualism, 16. Martin has criticized Greenblatt’s reading of Renaissance identity from a postmodern standpoint for being ahistorical, because it insufficiently recognizes genuinely early modern notions of selfhood and identity and overemphasizes the impact of politics and power on the cultural production of the time. John Jeffries Martin, “Inverting Sincerity, Refashioning Prudence: The Discovery of the Individual in Renaissance Europe,” American Historical Review 102, no. 5 (1997): 1309–1342.


84. On the self-portrait as psycho-biographical document versus the


86. Griselda Pollock, “Artists Mythologies and Media Genius, Madness and Art History,” *Screen* 21, no. 3 (1980): 58–59. Mieke Bal and Norman Bryson have criticized the superimposition of *work* upon *life* upon *subject* in much art historical scholarship, which implies a causal relation between these units: “everything the subject experiences or makes will be found to signify his or her subjecthood. […] In art history, and particularly through the formula of the monograph, the narrative genre of the man-and-his-work has exercised a hold over writing that is perhaps unparalleled in the humanities,” Mieke Bal and Norman Bryson, “Semiotics and Art History,” *The Art Bulletin* 73, no. 2 (1991): 182. For a more recent critical discussion of the relationship between the artwork and the biography of the artist see Sandra Kisters, *The Lure of the Biographical: On the (Self-) Representation of Modern Artists* (Amsterdam: Valiz, 2017).


88. The understanding of the relationship between self and agency in this study is informed by J. David Velleman, “The Self as Narrator,” in *Self to Self: Selected Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 203.

89. Carola Muysers, “Warum gab es berühmte Künstlerinnen? Erfolge bildender Künstlerinnen der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts,” in *Profession ohne Tradition: 125 Jahre Verein der Berliner Künstlerinnen*, ed. Dietmar Fuhrmann and Carola Muysers (Berlin: Berlinische Galerie, 1992), 21. For similar observations see Irit Rogoff, “Tiny Anguishes: Reflections on Nagging, Scholastic Embarrassment, and Feminist Art History,” *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 4, no. 3 (1992): 38–65. In 2000, Frances Borzello commented on the paradoxical trope of the marginalized female artist in feminist art history as follows: “One of the problems of the ground-breaking research that has revealed the inconveniences faced by women, […] is that it has dictated our approach to women artists. These days it is heresy to discuss women artists without referring to the fact that they were excluded from life classes, had to give up work on marriage, were judged differently from men. This way of seeing women has become an orthodoxy which sits like spectacles over our eyes as we look back into the past. Ironically the research into the conditions women faced has turned them into victims instead of the survivors they so clearly were.” Frances Borzello, *A World of Our Own: Women as Artists* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2000), 9. In 2009, Rachel Mader still argued


92. The approach to self-fashioning and to fashion is inspired by the edited volume *Fashioning Professionals*, which examines “the reflexive position of creative professionals as both fashioned and fashioning subjects. Thus, fashioning can be utilized as a conceptual tool to problematize the relationship between the cultural and self-representation over time and across space.” Leah Armstrong and Felice McDowell, “Introduction: Fashioning Professionals: History, Theory and Method,” in *Fashioning Professionals: Identity and Representation at Work in the Creative Industries* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018), 2.


100. Harrison and Cynthia White have demonstrated that the Academic/Salon system based on state-sponsored institutions and commissions shifted in the period towards a free market system with dealers and critics. Harrison White and Cynthia White, *Canvases and Careers: Institutional Change in the French Painting World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993 [1965]).

101. “Central to the market in ‘old masters’ was the rarity value of the ‘great’ works. Through the specification of an individualised personality expressed in art the biographical approach transformed the means of measurement from the rarity of the object to the uniqueness of the artist. The market in modern art was reorientated around the buying and selling of individual painters.” Nicholas Green has studied the economization of art and the creative individualism during the second half of the nineteenth century. He argued that dealers and journalists built an alliance in promoting certain artists and carving out their public persona. Nicholas Green, “Dealing in Temperaments: Economic Transformation of the Artistic Field in France during the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century,” *Art History* **10**, no. 1 (1987): 72.


109. The sculptor and engraver Antoinette Vallgren (1858–1911) is the only woman artist represented in Birger’s group portrait. As Herlitz has ar-
gued, she is included because she was the wife of the Finnish sculptor Ville Vallgren, alongside the other portrayed artists’ wives Gerda Hagborg (1863–1934) and Matilda Birger. See Herlitz, “Paris Boys,” 232.


111. The title of this subsection is inspired by Ann Middleton Wagner, Three Artists (Three Women): Modernism and the Art of Hesse, Krasner and O’Keeffe (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 2, 5–6. The parenthetic title of the book refers to the paradox inherent in the term “woman artist” and raises the question whether the problematic relationship between artistic and female identity can ever be fully resolved.


113. Meskimmon, Women Making Art, 2.


117. Judith Butler, “Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory,” Theatre Journal 40, no. 4 (1988): 519–531. Obviously, Butler further developed her theory in later publications, most notably Gender Trouble (1990) and Bodies That Matter (1993), but this early essay offers the central ideas of her performative approach to gender identity and is therefore sufficient to outline my use of her theoretical stance. Butler provides a theoretical point of departure for this study, but she does not offer specific operative approaches or terminologies for the study of the empirical material.


120. “When Beauvoir claims that ‘woman’ is a historical idea and not a natural fact, she clearly underscores the distinction between sex, as biological facticity, and gender, as the cultural interpretation or signification of that facticity. To be female is, according to that distinction, a facticity which has no meaning, but to be a woman is to have become a woman, to compel the body to conform to an historical idea of ‘woman’, to induce the body to become a cultural sign, to materialize oneself in obedience to an historically delimited possibility, and to do this as sustained and repeated corporeal project.” Butler, Performative Acts, 522.


122. Here I am paraphrasing: Meskimmon, Art of Reflection, 8.


125. Lawler, *Identity*, 106. In Goffman’s own words this means: “The self, then, as a performed character, is not an organic thing that has a specific location, whose fundamental fate is to be born, to mature, and to die; it is a dramatic effect arising diffusely from a scene that is presented, and the characteristic issue, the crucial concern, is whether it will be credited or discredit ed.” Goffman, *Presentation of Self*, 245. Butler criticizes Goffman for positing a “self”, arguing that she, by contrast, defines the “self” as “constituted in social discourse”. Cf. Butler, “Performative Acts,” 528. Since Goffman explicitly refuses the idea of an inner essence and conceptualizes the “self” as performatively constituted by dramatic performances, I argue that their theories are compatible and can be fruitfully combined in the context of this study.


136. In 2003, Kirsten Frederickson criticized the way that “many single-artist studies […] are theoretically or at least linguistically complicit with sexist, masculinist structures of traditional art history in their overreliance on biographical details to explain artwork, their trivializing use of women artists’ first names, or their tendency to describe art by women primarily in terms of a male artist’s proposed influence.” Kristen Frederickson, “Introduction: Histories, Silences, and Stories,” in *Singular Women: Writing the Artist*, ed. Kristen Frederickson and Sarah E. Webb (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 4. In 2011, Fastert et al. spoke of an (auto-)biographical turn in art history, meaning a renewed upswing in research on the figure of the artist. In contrast to previous research, those new approaches tend to acknowledge “the relationship between biography, social status, psychological constitution,

145. Lajer-Burcharth, “Pompadour’s Touch,” 55.
147. Lajer-Burcharth, “Pompadour’s Touch,” 58.
149. François Boucher, The Marquise de Pompadour, 1758, oil on canvas,
32 × 25 cm, Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, inv. no. 1966.47.


151. Lajer-Burcharth “Pompadour’s Touch,” 59.


162. Adamson and Goddard have highlighted this problem primarily in relation to the official statements of contemporary artists, but they argue that their criticism even applies to statements about the work made in private letters or diaries, which was the habitual mode of expression of the artists covered in this study. Natalie Adamson and Linda Goddard, “Introduction: Artists’ Statements: Origins, Intentions, Exegesis,” *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 48, no. 4 (2012): 363 and 368.


180. An example of this is the correspondence between the artists Anna Nordlander and Kerstin Cardon. See Anna Jörgensdotter, ed., *Skrif om vad du målar: Breven från Anna Nordlander till Kerstin Cardon* (Skellefteå: Museum Anna Nordlander, 2019).


183. Hildegard Thorell repeatedly referred to herself as her husband’s “hustrubarn” in her letters to Reinhold Thorell.

184. Changing views of female friendship are discussed in the subchapter *Women’s Friendships in the Nineteenth Century*.


191. “Reflecting current autobiographical theory, writing a letter is now conceived as a mediated act of self-projection where, conforming to historically-specific letter-exchange conventions, the writer constructs multiple personae determined by the addressees s/he is writing to.” Simon-Martin, “Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon’s Travel Letters,” 226.


195. Anna Lena Lindberg och Barbro Werkmäster, eds. *Kvinnor som konstnärer* (Borås: LT pocket, 1975); Lindberg and Werkmäster, “Hon har talang – tyvärr.” The following article provides a useful overview of the first twenty years of feminist art history in the Nordic countries: Eva-Lena Bengtsson
and Barbro Werkmäster, “Forskning om kvinnliga konstnärer: En introduc-
63–70.

196. Anne Wichstrøm, Kvinner ved staffeliet: Kvinnelige malere i Norge før
1900 (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1983). The book has been reprinted in a
revised edition in 1997, which is referenced in the current study: Wichstrøm,
Kvinneliv, kunstnerliv.

197. Bengtsson and Werkmäster, Kvinn och konstnär.

198. Lise Svanholm, Marie Krøyer, 1867–1942: En kunstnerskæbne omkring
århundredskiftet: Dagbogsblade og breve (Copenhagen: Herluf Stokholms For-
lag, 1987); Lise Svanholm, ed., Agnes og Marie: Breve mellem Agnes Slott-Møller
og Marie Krøyer, 1885–1937 (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1991); Lise Svanholm,
Breve fra Anna Ancher (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 2005); Lise Svanholm,
Damerne på Skagen (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 2006). Riitta Konttinen, Suoma-
laissia naistaiteilijoita 1880-luvulta (Helsinki: Otava, 1988); Riitta Konttinen,
Totuus enemmän kuin kauneus: naistaiteilija, realismi ja naturalismi 1880-luvulla:
Amelie Lundahl, Maria Wiik, Helena Westermarck, Helene Schjerfbeck ja Elin Dan-
dielson (Helsinki: Otava, 1991). Since Konttinen’s scholarship is mostly pub-
lished in Finnish, it has unfortunately not been possible to study her scholarly
work in its entirety.

199. Ingelman, Kvinnliga konstnärer.


201. Gynning, Det ambivalenta perspektivet, 1999. Recently, Margareta Gy-
nning has published an essay about her work as a feminist scholar, curator
and pedagog: Margareta Gynning, “Transformative Encounters: Prior and
Current Strategies of a Feminist Pioneer,” in Curating Differently: Feminisms,
Exhibitions and Curatorial Spaces, ed. Jessica Sjöholm Skrubbe (Newcastle upon


203. Patrik Steorn, Nakna män: Maskulinitet och kreativitet i svensk bildkul-
tur 1900–1915, PhD diss., Stockholm University (Stockholm: Norstedts akad-
emiska förlag, 2006).

204. Anna Lena Lindberg, En mamsell i Akademien: Ulrica Fredrica Pasch
och 1700-talets konstvärld (Stockholm: Signum, 2010).

og kultur 84 (2001): 2–13; Anne Wichstrøm, “Asta Nørregaard: Aspects of
Professionalism,” Woman’s Art Journal 23 (2002), 3–10; Anne Wichstrøm, Asta
Nørregaard: En livshistorie (Oslo: Pax förlag, 2011).

206. Cavalli-Björkman, Eva Bonnier.

207. Wadstein MacLeod, “Disrupted Perspectives”; Katarina Wadstein
MacLeod, “The Painted Home as Heritage: Fanny Brate and the Home at the
Turn of the Nineteenth Century,” Konsthistorisk tidskrift/Journal of Art History
85, no. 3 (2016): 256–269; Katarina Wadstein MacLeod, Bakom gardinerna:
Hemmet i svensk konst under nittonhundratalet (Stockholm: Bokförlaget Atlas,
2018).

209. Sjåstad, “Kitty Kielland.”


212. Fogelström and Robbert, De drogo till Paris.


216. Both exhibitions are scheduled to open in 2022 and will be accompanied by research-based publications.

217. Görts, Det sköna i verklighetens värld.

218. Nordström, Up the Stylish Staircase.


223. Bierlich, “Excentriske slægtskaber.”


230. Jessica L. Fripp, Portraiture and Friendship in Enlightenment France (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2021). Due to its recent publication date, this relevant contribution could not be considered in the present study.


240. Mader, *Beruf Künstlerin*.


250. Here I employ a concept from Doe Stone, “Relocating Anders Zorn’s ‘Ice Skaters’.”


253. Rachel Mader has termed the employment of a decisively masculine portrait tradition by means of masquerade or stylistic emulation through female artists “emancipative appropriation” (emanzipative Aneignung). My understanding of appropriation as a strategy for inscription into a professional tradition is informed by Mader’s concept. Mader, Beruf Künstlerin, 117.


260. Alison McQueen, The Rise of the Cult of Rembrandt: Reinventing an Old Master in Nineteenth-Century France (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2003), 16 and 18. For instance, Gustave Courbet identified Rembrandt as a suitable role model and emulated his style in some of his early works, such as his self-portrait Self-Portrait with a Black Dog from 1842. See Stephanie Marchal, Gustave Courbet in seinen Selbstdarstellungen, PhD diss., Heidelberg University (Paderborn: Fink, 2012), 47–49.


262. Since copies are only occasionally signed by the copyist and often preserved in private collections, it can be presumed that the number is much higher than the few signed copies that I have been able to trace indicate: Mina Carlson-Bredberg, Rembrandt, oil on canvas, 100 × 81 cm, private collection (sold at Bukowskis, Stockholm, 7 May 2010); Ernst Josephson, Nattvakten, copy after Rembrandt, 1876, oil on wood, 49 × 61 cm, Prins Eugens Waldemarsudde; Ernst Josephson, Lisbeth, Rembrandt’s Sister, oil on canvas, 65 × 54 cm, private collection (sold at Stockholms Auktionsverk, 5 April 2020); Julius Kronberg, Copy after Rembrandt, Rembrandt and Saskia, 1876, oil on canvas, Nordiska museet; Maria Röhl, Portrait after Rembrandt (signed and dated: Rembrandt, copia på Louvre, 1854, M. Röhl, Paris), pastel on paper, 55 × 41.5 cm, private collection (sold at Bukowskis, Stockholm, 23 May 2012); Albert Edelfelt, Portrait of Rembrandt, etching, signed AE in the plate, 14.5 × 10.5 cm, private collection (sold at Bukowskis, Stockholm, November 6, 2016); Venny Soldan-Brofeldt, Copy of Rembrandt’s Painting The Holy Family, 1892, oil on canvas, 117.5 × 92 cm, Ateneum, Finnish National Gallery; Dora Wahlroos, Porträtt av Rembrandt (signed a tergo: Portrait de Rembrandt van Ryn peint par lui-même. L’original au musée du Louvre à Paris, Copie Dora Wahlroos), oil on canvas, 61 × 64 cm, private collection (sold at Bukowskis, Stockholm, May 22, 2017). For Harriet Backer’s copies after Rembrandt see Erling Lone, Harriet Backer: Med en skildring av barndoms- og ungdomstiden av hende selv og med et forord av Jens Thiis (Oslo: Aschehoug, 1924), 71.

264. Self-portraits by Rembrandt in the Louvre include: Rembrandt, *Self-Portrait with Golden Chain*, 1633, oil on oak panel, 61 × 48 cm inv. no. INV1744; Rembrandt, *Self-Portrait Wearing a Toque and a Gold Chain*, 1633, oil on oak panel, 70.4 × 54 cm, inv. no. INV1745; Rembrandt, *Self-Portrait Wearing a Toque with an Archictural Background*, 1637, oil on oak panel, 80 × 62 cm, inv. no. INV1746; Rembrandt, *Self-Portrait in front of the Easel*, 1660, oil on canvas, 114 × 97 cm, inv. no. INV1747. Lundin stated that Beck copied in the Louvre, but he did not mention which works or artists. See Lundin, “Julia Beck,” 210.


266. Léon Bonnat, carte de visite with note to Harriet Backer, undated, Brevs. 563, Nasjonalbiblioteket, Oslo. See also Challons-Lipton, *Scandinavian Pupils*, 102.

267. “Hans elever voro alltid välkomna till honom på söndagsmorgonen mellan kl. 9–10 […]. Han visade då sällan sina egna verk, utan huvudsakligen de rika skatter han ägde av renaisance-konst och äldre fransk konst, och han kom då alltid ihåg, vad var och en särskilt kunde behöva iaktta. Han plöckade fram en teckning av Rafael eller Michel Angelo, av Ingres eller Delacroix och med dessa som exempel demonstrerade han vad han menade.” Prince Eugen, “Om Bonnat som lärare,” unpublished manuscript for the article “Souvenirs sur Léon Bonnat” to be published in *La revue de l’art ancien et moderne LXV* in 1924, Prins Eugens Waldemarsuddes arkiv, Stockholm.


275. Raupp, *Untersuchungen zu Künstlerbildnis*, 181–220. Rembrandt employed this pose in many of his portraits and in some he combined it with a shadowed three-quarter profile as in Beck’s self-portrait.

276. Raupp, *Untersuchungen zu Künstlerbildnis*, 181–182 and 194. Raupp traced the use of the motif from the Renaissance to the Baroque, stating that it is primarily employed in portraits of creative individuals, not only artists, but also writers and intellectuals or in depictions of *Pictura*. Further, he studied art theoretical texts, which associate the pose of the turn of the head with the character of the depicted person and his ingenuity.

277. On genius as gendered male see Battersby, *Gender and Genius*.


279. As Albert Boime has argued in his now classic study on the academy and French painting in the nineteenth century, the independent movements emerged out of the training offered by the academy rather than being developed apart from these more conservative institutions. Boime, *Academy and French Painting*. On the ambivalence between emulation and originality in the nineteenth century and the artists’ struggle to escape the “authority of the past” see further Marc J. Gotlieb, *The Plight of Emulation: Ernest Meissonier and French Salon Painting* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).


288. Laura Auricchio, “The Laws of Bienséance and the Gendering of Emulation in Eighteenth-Century French Art Education,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 36, no. 2 (2003): 231. See also the following publication that discusses the concept of emulation in relation to the admission policies of the *Académie Royale* and its restrictions on women members: Nicholas Mirzoeff, “Revolution, Representation, Equality: Gender, Genre, and Emulation in the Académie Royale de Peinture et Sculpture, 1785–93,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 31, no. 2 (1997–98): 153–169. To my knowledge, these are the only articles that explicitly address the gendered implications of emulation with regard to women artists, whereas other studies referenced in this context study emulation as an exclusively, and partially implicit, male preserve.


293. In her study on Ulrica Fredrica Pasch and the eighteenth-century art world, Lindberg demonstrated that the majority of Swedish and international women artists in the period were educated in the father’s or brother’s workshop. Lindberg, *Mamsell i Akademien*, 33–37.


297. *Palett-Skrap*, no. 1, May 9, 1877, Akademien för de fria konsternas arkiv, Stockholm.

298. Eva Bonnier, letter to her family, November 30, 1883, Bonniers arkiv, Centrum för näringslivshistoria, Stockholm.


306. Hildegard Thorell mentioned in a letter to Reinhold Thorell that Beck intended to study at *Académie Trélat* after Christmas 1879, where Léon Bonnat was teaching. Letter from Hildegard Thorell to Reinhold Thorell, November 18, 1879, Nordiska museets arv, Stockholm.


308. Eva-Lena Bengtsson and Barbro Werkmäster have suggested that the Swedish artist Gerda Tirén (1858–1928) wore a similar hat in a portrait painted by Anna Nordgren: Anna Nordgren, *Gerda Tirén*, 1880s, oil on canvas, 61 × 51 cm, private collection. See Bengtsson and Werkmäster, *Kvinna och konstnär*, 164–165.


316. The portrait was also exhibited under the title *Flagbearer (Fanbäraren)*. Brummer, *Ernst Josephson*, 99–100.
317. On Josephson’s educational journeys to the Netherlands and Italy and his studies of the works of the old masters see Brummer, *Ernst Josephson*, 57–64.
322. According to Ruth Iskin, the Parisienne figured as “a widespread icon both in the mass media and in high art” and she came to be associated with French fashion and femininity. The Parisienne epitomizes the ideal of bourgeois femininity in the nineteenth century and was integral in promoting the French fashion industry through fashion plates, even internationally. Ruth E. Iskin, “The Chic Parisienne: A National Brand of French Fashion and Femininity,” in *Modern Women and Parisian Consumer Culture in Impressionist Painting* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 184.
325. “Grefven är nog äfven så godhetsfull att medge, dit jag hvad flit och ansträngning beträffat, arbetat som få. Jag kom ej ut förran i November 1882, till våren hade jag utfört den stora kopian, endast för att ha något att hemsän- da genast, och hvilken kostade mig betydligt, på våren 83 sjuknade jag olyck-
ligtvis i tyfoidfeber, men så fort jag börjat återhemta krafter något, grep jag ånyo genast in, studerade flitigt ute, gjorde oafbrutna framsteg i teckning efter naturen, studerade aqvarellen, utförde åtskilliga fina saker i illustrationsväg för barnaverlden, gjorde studier i både aqvarell och olja och flitigt sådana å atelier och ute, utförde den samling aqvareller jag hemsände, ett par aqvareller af de bästa har stannat i Göteborg, vidare nedlade jag mycket arbete och ansträngning på mitt stora porträtt och så slutligen den hemsända taflan i olja, detta under en tid af 18 månader, som jag nu varit ute.” Jenny Nyström, letter to Georg von Rosen, May 21, 1884, Kungliga akademien för de fria konsternas arkiv, Stockholm.


328. Gynning, Jenny Nyström, 18–19.
329. Andrea Kollnitz has conceptualized dress as a liberating and confining performative marker in her studies on the Swedish modernist artists Sigrid Hjertén and Siri Derkert and their self-staging in painting and photography. Kollnitz, “Look at Me,” 180 and 188. See further Kollnitz, “Rollspel.” I will return in greater detail to the meaning of fashion for the artist’s self-fashioning in the subchapter Fashioning Two Versions of Jeanna Bauck.

331. Borzello, Seeing Ourselves, 35.
332. Meskimmon, Art of Reflection, 8.
333. Lindberg, Mamsell i Akademien, 76.
334. Lindberg, Mamsell i Akademien, 77.
341. Kauffman used a similar strategy in the painting Angelica Kauffman Hesitating Between the Arts of Music and Painting from 1794, in which she appropriated the iconography of Hercules at the crossroads combined with the Three Graces. For a detailed analysis of the two paintings see Rosenthal, “Angelica Kauffman Ma(s)king Claims.”


352. Rosenthal, “Angelica Kauffman Ma(s)king Claims.”


354. In the letters to her brother Gustaf, Christine Sundberg regularly mentioned her copying practice. Christine Sundberg, letters to Gustaf Sundberg, 1871–1884, private archive of Lars Lodmark, Söderhamn.


356. This shows in the letters by both Eva Bonnier and Richard Bergh. See for instance: Eva Bonnier, letter to her family, November, 12, 1883, Bonniers arkiv, Centrum för näringslivshistoria, Stockholm; Richard Bergh, letters to Helena Klemming, January 26 and 28, 1884, Ingelmanska samling, Richard Berghs arkiv, Thielska Galleriet, Stockholm.


360. Julia Beck was the subject of two related monographic exhibitions at Zorn Museum in Mora in 2012 and Sven-Harrys Konstmuseum in Stockholm in 2013. She was richly represented in Waldemarsudde’s exhibitions *Ljusets magi* as well as *Grez-sur-Loing* and the latter was also accompanied by a smaller presentation of seven works from her late production. See Anna Meister and Karin Sidén, eds., *Ljusets magi: Friluftsmåleri från sent 1800-tal* (Stockholm: Prins Eugens Waldemarsudde, 2016); Anna Meister, Carina Rech, Karin Sidén, eds., *Grez-sur-Loing: Konst och relationer* (Stockholm: Prins Eugens Waldemarsudde, 2019).


368. Herlitz has argued that Beck was excluded from the Opponent and Artists’ Union exhibitions. See Alexandra Herlitz, “Paris Boys,” 236 and 240. It is beyond the scope of this study to provide a full documentation of Beck’s participation in these exhibitions, but at least in the early years of the movement she exhibited with the group, as the reviews quoted above from 1885 and 1888 demonstrate.


371. Röstopr, Mythe du retour, 48. The participation in these open exhibitions cannot necessarily be used as an indicator of professional or financial success. Brita Ellström commented in a polemic manner on the varying quality of the contributions to the Union’s exhibitions as follows: ”Man vet sannerligen ej om man bör skratta eller gråta åt dessa tusental blomstermålningar samt porträtter af småleende, balklädda unga damer, hvilka hålla hufvudet på sned och som för det mesta haft och mun på sned i olika riktningar. Visserligen fins [sic] det några målningar, som äro bra, men dessa blifva alldeles förstörda i detta dåliga sällskap. Efter ett besök i denna utställning är man benägen att komma till den slutsatsen, att kvinnliga konstverksamheten är en farsot, som gripit omkring sig i oroväckande grad.” Brita Ellström, stipendiatbref, February 25, 1903, Konstakademiens protokoll och handlingar, A, 1903.

372. ”Af de svenska damer, som i år deltaga i utställningen, intas främsta platsen utan all fråga af fröken Julia Beck. Bland de jämförelsevis få landskapen på denna salong känner man vid första ögonkastet igen hennes starkt per-
sonliga, af en fin, poetisk stämning mättade dukar. [...] Det är höst- och vinterbilder, vaporösa i tonen, känsligt och harmoniskt affattade, af en personlig lyrik, hvars veka mollackorder dock icke verka sentimentalt. [...] Också är det kanske denna intima bekantskap med naturen, som utgör den största tjuven i fröken Becks konst. Låt vara, att hon kanske ser den med en poets öga, naturen, sådan hon poetiserar den, blir aldrig förvanskad.” Volmar (Erik Rusén), "Från damernas salong i Paris (Brev från SvD:s korrespondent),” Svenska Dagbladet, February 16, 1902.


381. Herlitz, “Paris Boys,” 242–243. In Sixten Strömbom’s comprehensive study on the Artists’ Union, Beck is only mentioned on the side and her work is not discussed, apart from a single mention referring to negative reviews of her work: “Nordströms liksom Julia Beck:s blonda, impressionistiskt behandlade landskapsbilder hade ännu ej upphört att förarga mera konserna: askådare.” See Strömbom, Konstnärsförbundets historia I, 279. Julia Beck’s work was not even included in more recent comprehensive surveys on Swedish art, such as: Eva-Lena Bengtsson, ed., Signums Svenska konsthistoria, Konsten 1845–1890 (Lund: Signum, 2000).


387. The likeness from 1880 remained the artist’s only preserved self-portrait in oil. Apart from the painting, there only exists an undated charcoal drawing in the collections of Nationalmuseum (Julia Beck, Self-Portrait, undated, charcoal on paper, 62.5 × 47.3 cm, NMH 235/1988) that shows the artist in a relaxed pose and almost in full-size. In contrast to the informal charcoal sketch, the self-portrait for the Salon is her only formal self-portrait.


392. En gådefuld musiktime. Anna Petersen was the title of a minor exhibition at the Hirschsprung Collection, Copenhagen, February 2–August 30, 2009. The wall texts stated that Jeanna Bauck had lived together with Bertha Wegmann in Copenhagen in the spring of 1890, which is when they might have sat for Petersen’s composition. Further, the curators compared the physiognomy of the women in the painting with portrait photographs and concluded that the female couple on the sofa closely resembled Bauck and Wegmann.

393. Here and in the following I employ Ewa Lajer-Burcharth’s concept of mediated self-representation as presented in the introduction. See Lajer-Burcharth, “Pompadour’s Touch.”

394. I would like to thank Charlotte and Fredrik Klingberg and Lars Engelhardt who helped me to identify the students.


397. Art theory normally distinguishes clearly between a portrait subject/sitter and an artist’s model. See West, Portraiture, 37. While the sitter’s individual identity is fundamental to the creation of a portrait, the identity of a model is irrelevant to the purpose it serves. In friendship images this division between sitter and model can be rendered indistinct. Even when an artist friend serves as a model, for instance as staffage figure in an interior, her individual identity can play a role for the reading of the image.

398. Wettlaufer has remarked that “by disrupting and reconfiguring artistic genres”, women “proposed new ways of seeing and understanding art, society, and gender”. See Wettlaufer, Portraits of the Artist, 9. In the late nineteenth century, the blurring of genres and the overthrow of the genre hierarchy can be traced in the work of many artists, in particular among avant-garde artists like the impressionists, who tended to fuse landscape and genre. See Ewa Lajer-Burcharth, “Modernity and the Condition of Disguise: Manet’s Absinthe Drinker,” Art Journal 45, no. 1 (1985): 24.


401. Lankheit, Freundschaftsbild der Romantik, 7–9.


403. Some rather randomly chosen examples: Oskar Bätschmann has used the term “Freundschaftsporträt” in a section on Manet’s portraits of fellow impressionist painters in his monograph on the artist; Oskar Bätschmann, Edouard Manet (Munich: Beck, 2015). For the use of the term kamratporträtt in the Swedish context see for instance Werkmäster, “Fruntimmers-Afdelningar,” 64. Gynning uses the term kamratporträtt repeatedly in her dissertation on Eva Bonnier and Hanna Hirsch-Pauli, but she does not reflect on the terminology: Gynning, Det ambivalenta perspektivet. In Anglophone art history, the terms friendship and portrait are not as frequently combined to form one term, but Hannah Williams used the term friendship-portrait, when studying the portraits of members of the Académie Royale who were friends. Hannah Williams, “Academic Intimacies,” 351.


406. The pronoun is deliberate and leaves out the female case because the Aristotelian notion of friendship was limited to men. Only men were deemed capable of experiencing true friendship. This idea was readopted in Renaissance portraiture, in which the visual display of friendship was likewise associated with masculinity. Hannah Baader, Das Selbst im Anderen: Sprachen der Freundschaft und die Kunst des Porträts, 1370–1520, PhD diss., Freie Universität Berlin (Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink, 2015), 13–14. See further Ulrich Pfisterer, “Freundschaftsbilder – Liebesbilder: Zum visuellen Code männlicher Passionen in der Renaissance,” in Freundschaft: Motive und Bedeutungen, ed. Esther Pia Wipfler and Sibylle Appuhn-Radtke (Munich: Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte, 2006), 239–259.

408. Helm, Love, Friendship and the Self, 162.

409. Helm, Love, Friendship and the Self, 162.

410. Helm, Love, Friendship and the Self, 10 and 12.


412. C. S. Lewis, The Four Loves (Glasgow: Collins, 1987), 75.

413. Lewis, Four Loves, 75. Philosopher Alexander Nehamas has used the argument by Lewis to discuss the rebellious potential of friendship. Alexander Nehamas, On Friendship (New York: Basic Books, 2016), 51–56.

414. The historian Nancy F. Cott has argued in a now classic book that female friendship both confirmed women’s domestic role in the United States and was a precondition for the feminist movement and helped to increase educational and professional opportunities for women. Nancy F. Cott, The Bonds of Womanhood: ‘Woman’s Sphere’ in New England, 1780–1835 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), 167–188.


416. Marcus, Between Women, 56.


418. Faderman, Surpassing the Love of Men, 160.

419. Faderman, Surpassing the Love of Men, 159.

420. Marcus, Between Women, 26. The same attitude was prevalent in the Nordic countries; see Eva Borgström and Hanna Markussen Winkvist, “Om kärlek, kamratskap och kamp,” in Den kvinnliga tvåsamhetens frirum: Kvinnor i kvinnoväsendet 1890–1960, ed. Eva Borgström and Hanna Markussen Winkvist (Stockholm: Appell förlag, 2018), 15. As Joan Perkin has pointed out in relation to the British context, romantic friendships between women were also encouraged by conservative writers of conduct books. Joan Perkin, Victorian Women (London: J. Murray, 1993), 156.

421. Marcus, Between Women, 30–31. Marcus also criticized Rosenberg for not having differentiated between platonic friendships and erotic relationships or sexual partnerships. Furthermore, it is important to note that intimate friendships were not confined to an exclusively female world, since men also cultivated deeply felt friendships. David Tjeder, The Power of Character: Middle-Class Masculinities, 1800–1900, PhD diss., Stockholm University (Stockholm: Författares bokmaskin, 2003), 279–280; Anthony Rotundo, “Romantic Friendship: Male Intimacy and Middle-Class Youth in the Northern United States, 1800–1900,” Journal of Social History 23, no. 1 (1989): 1–25. In comparison to women’s friendships in the nineteenth century, still relative-


423. Even though sexual relations between women had been legally criminalized in Sweden in 1864 as “fornication against nature” and in Denmark as “intercourse against nature” in 1866, it was not until the turn of the century that the term “lesbisk” (lesbian) in today’s meaning as female homosexuality came into wider use. Jens Rydström, “Introduction: Same-Sex Sexuality and the Laws in Scandinavia, 1842–1999,” in Criminally Queer: Homosexuality and Criminal Law in Scandinavia 1842–1999, ed. Jens Rydström and Kati Mustola (Amsterdam: Aksant, 2007), 21; Ulvros, Sophie Elkan, 89.

424. The literary scholar Eva Borgström has studied how the changing views on female sexuality were reflected in the writing of August Strindberg, who was one of the most outspoken and influential misogynic critics of women’s emancipation in the Nordic countries: Eva Borgström, “August Strindberg: Emancipation and perversion,” in Kärlekhistoria: Begär mellan kvinnor i 1800-talets litteratur (Göteborg: Kabusa böcker, 2008), 185–240.


427. Faderman, Surpassing the Love of Men, 248. At the turn of the twentieth century, women who neglected or refused marriage, children and family for other life goals were defined as biologically abnormal and therefore a whole new gender category was invented. The German physician and sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld (1868–1935) popularized the category of the third sex through his theory of homosexuality as an intermediate point on a gender continuum. Marti M. Lybeck, Desiring Emancipation: New Women and Homosexuality in Germany, 1890–1933 (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2014), 18.


432. Bertha Wegmann, letter to Dorothea Melchior, December 3, 1868, Håndskriftssamlingen, Det Kongelige Bibliotek, Copenhagen. Yet, the identity of Wegmann’s friend Rosie is unknown. Since Wegmann was writing to her patron in Copenhagen, who supported her financially during her studies in Munich, she probably wanted to appear hardworking and serious in her education.

433. In her study of Marie Bashkirtseff’s diaries, Voigt has argued that seriousness and diligence in education are topoi specific for women artists autobiographical writing as opposed to male artists’ anecdotes, which emphasize talent, genius, ingenuity and self-teaching. Such ideals appeared inappropriate to women’s writing, as they would have matched with prejudices about female amateurism. Voigt, Tagebücher der Marie Bashkirtseff, 79.

434. Wichstrøm, Kvinneliv, Kunstnerliv, 172.

435. “Det som under studietiden i en elevateljé är av mycket stor betydelse för nybörjarna, är att de där få se längre hunna kamraters arbeten och därigenom kunna lära sig åtskilligt.” Helena Westermarck, Mina levnadsminnen (Turku: Åbo tidnings och tryckeri aktiebolag, 1941), 109. Most of the time, the students were alone with the models, without the teachers attending the sittings. Some of the teachers came in twice a week, others just once a month. Westermarck, Mina levnadsminnen, 102. Léon Bonnat directed inexperienced students to more advanced ones for help. Such a “paternal support system” was an important basis of the academic training at the private academies. Challons-Lipton, Scandinavian Pupils, 53.


438. “Fra Tid til anden kommer der 2 andre Malerinder, Fröken Unger Veninder i Arteliet og maler med os, der er nemlig den Regel, at alle Medlemmerne skal males indbyrdes, og da det er Fröken Unger Veninder har de ogsaa tilladelse til at portraitere os, men kun paa den Betingelse at de ogsaa maa sidde og lade dem male.” Bertha Wegmann, letter to Dorothea Melchior, July 9, 1868, Håndskriftssamlingen, Det Kongelige Bibliotek, Copenhagen.

The sisters Emmy (1852–1935) and Ludovica Thornam (1853–1896) accounted for a similar practice during their studies in Paris in the mid-1880s. See Emmy Thornam, Min Søster og jeg: Barndoms og Ungdomserindringer (Copenhagen: Schønberg, 1932), 34–35; Mona Jensen and Birthe Møller Nielsen, “Emmy og Ludovica Thornam: To malende søstre,” Carlsbergsfondets Årsskrift, 1987: 35–44. The practice of students sitting for one another was not limited to the women’s studios. For instance, Jacques-Louis David encouraged the students in his atelier to pose for each other, because such a practice would increase the number and types of physiognomies they encountered. Susan S. Waller, The Invention of the Model: Artists and Models in Paris, 1830–1870 (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 17.


446. On the (auto-)biographical writings of Westermarck see Git Claesson Pipping, Men arbetet! Mitt arbete! Identitet och berättande i Helena Westermarcks yrkeskvinnobiografier (Gothenburg: Makadam, 2007).


449. Eva Bonnier studied at the women’s department of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Stockholm between 1878 and 1883 and Hanna Hirsch between 1881 and 1885. Before entering the academy, both had studied at August Malmström’s private drawing school.


451. “Fanny är den bästa af alla och jag tycker att hon går mycket framåt. Jag ville önska att hon kunde göra sin tafla bra och slå ihjäl Gerda W:s.” Hanna Hirsch, letter to Eva Bonnier, January 23, 1884, Bonniers arkiv, Centrum för näringslivshistoria, Stockholm. Hanna Hirsch is here probably referring to her colleagues Fanny Brate, née Ekbom and Gerda Wallander (1860–1926), who like Hirsch herself were in their final year at the academy in 1884 and were among the most experienced and accomplished students. See Elevmatriklar, Kungliga akademien för de fria konsternas arkiv, Stockholm.


455. The sisters’ estate records in the Staatsarchiv in Munich prove that Hanna Lucia Bauck was no blood relative to Jeanna Bauck, but the illegitimate daughter of a woman named Johanna Svala, who – according to the accounts of a German friend and the records of the Katarina församling in Stockholm – had died early. Schlussbericht in der Nachlasspflegschaftssache Hanna Lucia Bauck, Neustadt an der Saale, June 26, 1929, Amstgericht München, Staatsarchiv München, AG München NR 1926/1845, Nachlass-Sache Bauck.

456. Portraits of Hanna Lucia Bauck include: Bertha Wegmann, Portrait of the Swedish Pianist Hanna Lucia Bauck, undated, oil on canvas, 70.5 × 53.5 cm, Den Hirschsprungske Samling, Copenhagen, inv. no. 3169; Jeanna Bauck, The Artist’s Sister with a Dog, around 1890, oil on canvas, 66.5 × 47.5 cm, Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich, inv. no. G 13161; Jeanna Bauck, The Artist’s Sister in a Ball Gown, 1891, oil on wood, 23.8 × 14.5 cm, Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich, inv. no. G 13162; Jeanna Bauck, The Artist’s Sister, 1898, oil on canvas, 102 × 81 cm, Nationalmuseum, Stockholm, inv. no. NM 1722; Bertha Wegmann, Portrait of the Swedish Artist Jeanna Bauck’s Sister in a Blue Dress and with a Little Dog on her Lap, 1898, 102 × 84 cm, private collection (sold at Bruun Rasmussen Bredgade Auktion 754, 2006, Lot 1072); Bertha Wegmann, Portrait of Hanna Lucia Bauck, undated, oil on canvas, 49 × 45 cm, private collection (sold at Lauritz.com Auction, Lot number: 4712477, July 31, 2017).


459. “People lived – and live – in what I propose to call ‘emotional communities.’ These are precisely the same as social communities – families, neighborhoods, parliaments, guilds, monasteries, parish church memberships – but the researcher looking at them seeks above all to uncover systems of feeling: what these communities (and the individuals within them) define
and assess as valuable or harmful to them; the evaluations that they make about others’ emotions; the nature of the affective bonds between people that they recognize; and the modes of emotional expression that they expect, encourage, tolerate, and deplore.” Rosenwein, “Worrying about Emotions,” 842. See further Barbara H. Rosenwein, “Problems and Methods in the History of Emotions,” *International Journal for the History and Theory of Emotions* 1 (2010): 1–32.


463. Rosenwein’s definition of emotional community is not socially narrow or historically limited. She has argued that emotional communities exist in “any given society at any period of time”, covering a longue durée from 600 to 1700 in her book *Generations of feelings*. Here, she used “the upper-class English society in the nineteenth century” as an example for an emotional community. Rosenwein, *Generations of Feelings*, 3. The Swedish historian Ina Lindblom has recently applied the concept of emotional communities (“emotionella gemenskaper”) to the early modern Nordic context in her dissertation on the culture of sensibility as it was expressed in the everyday practices and social relations of the Gjörwell family in Sweden. Lindblom, “Känslans patriark,” 12–14.


467. Wegmann is by far the best known of the three artists, and the previous research on her life and work has already been outlined in the introduction. Apart from my own previously published articles based on this dissertation project, the literature on Bauck and Thorell is extremely limited. Bauck has only featured in brief lexicon and exhibition-catalog entries or in the literature on Wegmann. See Bettina Baumgärtel, ed., *Die Düsseldorfer Malerschule und ihre internationale Ausstrahlung 1819–1918: Bd. 2 – Katalog* (Petersberg: Imhof Verlag, 2011) 60, cat. no. 26; Verein der Berliner Künstlerinnen, ed., “Bauck, Jeanna,” in *Käthe, Paula und der ganze Rest: Künstlerinnenlexikon* (Berlin: Kupfergraben, 1992), 17. The archives of the Academy of Fine Arts in Berlin house a documentation on the artist that was formed during the preparations for the above-mentioned lexicon: Akademie der Künste – Archiv.

468. Bauck’s mother was Friederike Bauck, née Hansson, according to a typewritten manuscript of a biography of Jeanna Bauck in Elisabeth Barneckows arkiv, EB 2, manusript och egna verk, Nationalmuseums arkiv, Stockholm.


471. It is beyond the scope of this study to present the contemporary reception of Bauck’s work in the German press, but here are two examples: *A Group of Trees* exhibited in 1868 in Munich showed a “power unusual in the hands of a woman”. Anonymous, “Rezension zur Schulausstellung des Kunstvereins in München,” *Die Dioskuren: Deutsche Kunst-Zeitung* 9, March 1, 1868, 72–73. It can be traced from press articles in *Kunstchronik* that she exhibited with the association in 1868, 1874, 1877 and 1882. In 1882, her *Fishers’ Village on the Coast of Brittany* was well received as a “brilliant achievement”. R., “Sammlungen und Ausstellungen: Münchener Kunstverein,” *Kunstchronik: Wochenschrift für Kunst und Kunstgewerbe*, January 16, 1881.

472. Bertha Wegmann, letter to Dorothea Melchior, December 26, 1871, Håndskriftssamlingen, Det Kongelige Bibliotek, Copenhagen.

473. In Copenhagen, Wegmann studied at the drawing school of Frederik Ferdinand Helsted (1809–1875) and took private lessons from the painters Heinrich Buntzen (1803–1892) and Frederik Christian Lund (1826–1901). In Munich, Wegmann first enrolled at the drawing school of Johanna Unger and studied later for the painters Edouard Kurzbauer (1840–1879) and Wilhelm Lindenschmit the Younger (1829–1895). Wegmann has described these early years in two interviews: Agnes Lung, “Bertha Wegmann,” *Vore Damer*, 1917; E. D., “Da jeg var pige.”


478. Bertha Wegmann, letters to Dorothea, Louise and Moritz Melchior, håndskriftssamlingen, Det Kongelige Bibliotek, Copenhagen.


480. Elevmatrikel 692, Kungliga akademien för de fria konsternas arkiv, Stockholm.

481. The guesthouse (and the artists) moved later in April 1880 from 23 Rue des Bruxelles to new premises at 29 Boulevard de Batignolles. Thorell


488. Hildegard Thorell mentioned in a letter to her husband that the teachers at Académie Trélat came in only once a month to correct the students’

489. “Også længes jeg efter engang igjen at see Dig og tale lidt med Dig, men der kan ikke være Talen om at nu igjen at tage til Paris, det har jeg slet ikke Raad til, men jeg vilde nok synes om at male sammen med dig der en Vinter igjen, helst paa en Skole som dengang, jeg syntes dog det var saa hyggelig og morsomt det Tin hos Madame Trélats, og vi tog alskulig saadan det gik rigtigt fremad. […] Jeg troer nu ikke at nogen anden Skole vil være saa god som Madame Trélats, endskjæmmelig, men dog var dog gode Lærere, og det hele var dog ikke saa forretningsmæssig som paa de andre skoler. Jeg betragter dog den Tin der som en af de behageligste i mit Liv, og for den Periode jeg gjorde de stærkeste Fremsteg. […] Der var også saa mange flinke Elever denne Tid, og det hjælper mere end at have Lærere i 10 aar.” Bertha Wegmann, letter to Hildegard Thorell, November 12, 1886, Nordiska museets arkiv, Stockholm.


491. Thorell bequeathed the portrait to Nationalmuseum in 1930.


493. Hildegard Thorell’s niece Märta Tamm-Götlin interviewed the artist’s former colleagues and friends in 1932, planning to write a biography about her aunt. According to a summary of one of these interviews, Wegmann had learned the technique she introduced to Thorell from Kitty Kiaelund: “Bertha Wegmann had a method to dash fine light paint against the canvas as a base in order to improve the color effect. She could sweep over
it with a knife, when it was half-dry and then she would paint on top of it. It was pleasant to paint on it. Bertha Wegmann was supposed to have taken over this method from Miss Kielland. Probably, they mixed the color with something that made it dry quickly, and then they could start to paint on top of the smooth surface. Hildegard Thorell was influenced by Bertha Wegmann, when she painted the American lady Miss Gay, with which she made herself a name, probably painted with Wegmann’s method. Miss Gay was displayed advantageously at the Salon and was later sold to the Gothenburg Museum.” Märta Tamm-Götlin, “Ur Hildegard Thorells konstnärliv och umgänge. Paris 1879 enl. fru Stapelmoehr f. Bergmanson (upptäckat 1932 av M.T.-G.),” in “Målariinnan Hildegard Thorell född Bergendal 1850–1930. En konstnärinne med temperament. En kort studie med historia av hennes systerdotter Märta Tamm-Götlin,” unpublished manuscript, 48. Biografica: Hildegard Thorell, Nationalmuseums arkiv, Stockholm.

494. Thorell stated that the painting was hung at eye-level. Hildegard Thorell, letter to Reinhold Thorell, April 30, 1880, Nordiska museets arkiv, Stockholm. For the contemporary reception see Georg Nordensvan, “Till Hildegard Thorells porträtt,” Ny Illustrerad Tidning 45, November 8, 1884.


496. Emilie Boe Bierlich has argued that Wegmann modified her name to make it sound French, because she wanted to avoid being mistaken for a German due to the anti-German sentiments in France in the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian war. Bierlich, “Excentriske slægtskaber,” 156. Wegmann mentioned in an interview that she found the French unfriendly and she believed that they mistook her for a German: “Senere var jeg i Paris, der er en Luft saa smuk som ingen andre steder i Verden – men jeg holdt ikke af Paris, og jeg synnes, Franskmandene er uhofflige. Det kom nu vist af, at de tog os for Tyskere, og det var jo kort efter 70.” V. Sv.-P., “Malerinden Frøken Bertha Wegmann fylder 70 Aar,” Kvinden och Hjemmet, 1917. She also noted in another interview that her art was considered “German” in the 1870s and 1880s: “Man hade netop opdaget Paris! Og alt hvad der ikke kom fra Paris, var ikke riktig vel anskrevet. Om mig og min Kunst sagde man dengang, det var i 70–80erne at jeg var ‘germansk’.” E. D., “Hvordan føles det at blive gammel?” Hver & Dag, May 15, 1924.


499. Letter from Hildegard to Reinhold Thorell, August 1 or 7, 1881. The whereabouts of this painting are unknown.

500. “Du kan ej föreställa dig hur varmt intresserad hon är för min mål-
ning & huru väl hon förstår mig, aldrig hade jag kunnat träffa på en för mig lämpligare lärare.” Hildegard Thorell, letter to Reinhold Thorell, August 22, 1881, Nordiska museets arkiv, Stockholm.


502. “Ja, saadan en stakkels Konstnersjæl er en forunderlig Ting... snart gaer det op, snart gaer det ned, snart er man i den syvende Himmel, og snart i Skærsilden! Du kan tro jeg længes efter at komme til München og vise Jeanna mine Arbeider, og hvor jeg saa skal studere!” Bertha Wegmann, letter to Hildegard Thorell, October 5, 1882, Nordiska museets arkiv, Stockholm.


504. In a letter from December 1883, Wegmann stated that she had eight students, whom she instructed twice a week. Bertha Wegmann, letter to Hildegard Thorell, December 19, 1883, Nordiska museets arkiv, Stockholm. Two years later she noted that the tuition fees that she received from her students would finance a stay in Paris the next year. Bertha Wegmann, letter to Hildegard Thorell, April 9, 1885, Nordiska museets arkiv, Stockholm. In 1886, she gave up on her drawing school, which was taken over by Peder Severin Krøyer. Bertha Wegmann, letter to Hildegard Thorell, December 27, 1886, Nordiska museets arkiv, Stockholm.


“Vi saknade dig rätt hjertligt, du var på ditt aldra älsvärdigaste här i München, och gerna gerna hade vi behållit dig längre, och med nöje hade vi sett ditt vackra hyggliga ansikte titta in genom dörren vid alla tider på dagen – vi voro alla tre så eniga om att Hildegard är verkligen bra snäll och treflig och det är tomt efter henne. Men artister äro flyttfåglar utan någon varaktig stad.”

Jeanna Bauck, letter to Hildegard Thorell, June 19, 1883, Nordiska museets arkiv, Stockholm.

“Hon är öfver öronen i fullt jägtande med sin ‘mor med barnet’ i trädgården, du vet, den är helt och hållet öfverarbetad igen, är något alldeles briljant bifvit, men måste om tre dagar hufvudstupa bort och ännu fattas åtskilligt, det är för utställningen i Köpenhamn – det är egentligen redan för sent, men det heta att om man inte frågar, men taflan kommer förre öppnan-det, så kommer den med ändå – nu gäller det att vara rask! […] Hon står som bäst och målar och suckar över sin tafla – ute öser regnet nu sedan fyra dagar och nätter, det är mörkt och usel belysning, så att hon stundtals måste hålla opp – trött är den stackare och önskar att det väl vore slut med den evinnerliga taflan! Ja, något för något – hon offrar allt för sin konst och då är det inte mer än rätt att hon har sådan framgång.”

Jeanna Bauck, letter to Hildegard Thorell, June 19, 1883, Nordiska museets arkiv, Stockholm.

G–g N. (Georg Nordensvan), “Till Bertha Vegmans tafla ‘En moder med sitt barn’,” Ny Illustrerad Tidning, No. 16, April 19, 1884.

Bertha Wegmann, letters to Hildegard Thorell, September 19, October 17 and December 19, 1883, Nordiska museets arkiv, Stockholm.

“Jag är alldeles förtjust i Bertha’s porträtt af sin syster, det är det bästa jag någonsin sett i porträttväg, och jag är så högmodig öfver att min vän gjort det, att jag ser hela verlden öfver axeln.”

Jeanna Bauck and Bertha Wegmann, letter to Hildegard Thorell, July 19, 1883, Nordiska museets arkiv, Stockholm. Likewise, when Luitpold, Prince Regent of Bavaria (1821–1912) bought a work by Jeanna Bauck at the International Exhibition in Munich, Wegmann pridefully commented that the acquisition pleased her enormously.

Bertha Wegmann, letter to Moses Melchior, undated, Håndskriftssamlingen, Det Kongelige Bibliotek, Copenhagen.
altfor mørkt, men nu tænker jeg ordentlig at tage fat og det vil hjælpe mig at komme over al den Smaalighed her hersker.” Bertha Wegmann, letter to Hildegard Thorell, December 28, 1881, Nordiska museets arkiv, Stockholm.

517. Newspaper clipping, undated, Mikael Wivels Bertha Wegmann arkiv, Den Hirschsprungske Samling, Copenhagen.


521. The artists’ correspondence with Thorell and Wegmann’s letters to the Melchior family from the mid-1880s until the early-1910s includes regular mentions of joint study periods.


527. Bertha Wegmann, ink drawing, from a letter to Peter Dethlefsen, October 24, 1889, private archive. I wish to thank Emilie Boe Bierlich who located the correspondence of Peter Dethlefsen and generously shared her photographic documentation with me.

528. “Vi tecknade hvar sin skizzbok full, men inte med veduter, utan med stämmningar, interiörer, hvarjehanda som vi tyckte om – det är ett ro-


531. Toni Müller was born in 1864 in Silesia and her birthname was Müller. Sometimes in the sources the Danish spelling “Møller” is used. Bauck called her “Möller” in her letters and mentioned that she was a writer. Jeanna Bauck, letter to Hildegard Thorell, October 16, 1898, Akademien för de fria konsternas arkiv, Stockholm. Apart from what is mentioned in these letters, very little information is as yet available on the painter’s companion, who died in 1947. As noted in the introduction, the material on Müller and Wegmann, which is in private ownership, was not accessible at the time this manuscript was completed. This private archive might offer further information on the couple’s relationship.


536. Boston marriage is a historical term that originated in New England in the late nineteenth century, describing “a long-term monogamous rela-

537. In an interview in 1917, Wegmann stated that she lived in Silesia for five years. V. Sv.-P., “Malerinden Frøken Bertha Wegmann.” She wrote also about the villa in her letters, stating that it housed a “deiligt atelier til min disposition”. Bertha Wegmann, letter to Moses Melchior, October 4, 1895, Troensegaard autografssamling, handskriftssamlingen, Det Kongelige Bibliotek, Copenhagen. She further stated to have worked in the studio in a letter from 1911. Bertha Wegmann, letter to Sigurd Müller, April 13, 1911, Den Hirschsprungskes samling, handskriftssamlingen.


541. The portrait was sold at an auction at Bruun Rasmussen in Denmark on May 30, 2011, where it was dated to 1879 following a note on the stretcher frame. According to Wegmann’s own accounts in the letters to Thorell, she met Müller first in 1892. The stylistic execution of the portrait further supports a later date, as the artist experimented with a freer expression and more vibrant brushwork in later works. Müller’s youthful features suggest that the portrait was painted in the mid-1890s, shortly after she met Wegmann, 28 years old.


543. “Överallt är det samma historia att de målande damerna skuffas undan så mycket som möjligt af de ridderliga herrarna – förut föraktades damer na som målade, de dugde också inte mycket, med några undantag. Nu sedan
en hel mängd betydande talanger uppträdt, finner man målarinnor obevä-
ma medtäfare, och nu är deras dukthet en ny orsak att trycka ned dem.
En hel massa af de yngre målarinnorna göra sig tyvårr också lögliga genom
sitt karlaktiga uppträdande, dricka, röka, soira – man bedömer hela ståndet
efter dem eller vill åtminstone göra det för att skada – och de anständiga
konstnärinnorna hålla sig mycket retirées.” Jeanna Bauck, letter to Hildegard
Thorell, April 10, 1910, Akademien för de fria konsternas arkiv, Stockholm.

544. In a letter from 1918, Bertha Wegmann compared her private ex-
istence with a “nun’s life”, but it remains unclear whether she was referring
to reclusiveness or sexual abstinence. Bertha Wegmann, letter to Hildegard
Thorell, June 18, 1918, Akademien för de fria konsternas arkiv, Stockholm.

545. Sharon Marcus has argued that same-sex partnerships were most ac-
ceptable “when their sexual nature was least visible as such but was instead
manifested in marital acts such as cohabitation, fidelity, financial solidari-
ity, and adherence to middle-class norms of respectability.” Marcus, Between
Women, 49.

546. Bertha Wegmann, letters to Hildegard Thorell, August 15 and De-
cember 5, 1891, Nordiska museets arkiv, Stockholm. Furthermore, in 1886,
Wegmann mentioned once that she had a crush on Erik Werenskiold. Bertha
Wegmann, letter to Hildegard Thorell, November 12, 1886, Nordiska mu-
seets arkiv, Stockholm.


548. Ulvros has refused any strict categorization into lesbian, bisexual
or heterosexual in her study of Sophie Elkan and her intimate friendship
with Selma Lagerlöf, since contemporary conceptions about love, desire and
friendship were more fluid at the time than they might be today. Ulvros, So-
phie Elkan, 92. In her recent biography of Selma Lagerlöf, Anna-Karin Palm
has analyzed the letters to Elkan and argued that Lagerlöf had difficulties
finding an appropriate vocabulary for her feelings, calling her infatuation det
(it), her desire ogräset (weed) or falling back on a heteronormative language.
Anna-Karin Palm, “Kärlek och kamratskap,” in ’Jag vill sätta världen i rörelse’;
En biografi över Selma Lagerlöf (Stockholm: Bonnier, 2019), 189–233. The ana-
lysis of the relationship between Lagerlöf and Elkan can be applied to the
relationship between Bauck and Wegmann. On the complexity of women’s
emotional vocabulary in the period see further Borgström and Markusson

549. “Mit Liv har staaet i Venskabets Tegn, jeg er bleven meget elsket, – i
fem Aar boede jeg saaledes i de schlesiske Bjerge, hvor en ung Venindes Fa-
der havde bygget mig et Atelier”. V. Sv.-P., “Malerinden Frøken Bertha
Weg...”

550. “Det som slår en i det tidiga 1890-talets erotiska synsätt bland
kvinna är att de fasta kategorierna blir o brukbara. I så måtto är fördoms-
 friheten och öppenheten större i den här perioden än i vår tid. Inte homo-
sexualitet och heterosexualitet utan en glidande skala.” Birgitta Holm, “Det
Margaretha Fahlgren and Elisabeth Møller Jensen (Höganäs: Wiken, 1996), 280.


552. Marcus, *Between Women*, 44.


554. Manns, “Synlighet och läsbarhet.”


559. Toni Müller donated in total four works by Wegmann and one painting by Bauck on two occasions, August 30, 1930 and September 30, 1931. Both Bauck’s undated studio scene depicting Wegmann (NM 2826) and Wegmann’s portrait of Bauck from 1881 (NM 2828) were included in Müller’s donations. See *Meddelanden från Nationalmuseum* 55 and 56 (1930 and 1931).


Bauck’s portrait entered the collection of Nationalmuseum in 1911 through the mediation of Mina Carlson-Bredberg after it had been exhibited in the exhibition of Svenska konstnärinnors förening (Association of Swedish Women Artists). Letter from Jeanna Bauck to Mina Carlson-Bredberg, March 24, 1911, Bilaga J, Nämndprotokoll, April 4, 1911, Nationalmuseums arkiv, Stockholm. In a letter to Georg von Rosen, former director of Konstakademien and member of the acquisition committee, Bauck explained that it meant much to her to be represented at Nationalmuseum. Jeanna Bauck, letter to Georg von Rosen, April 14, 1911, Kungliga akademien för de fria konsternas arkiv, Stockholm.


“Hvor gjerne vilde jeg ikke male sammen med Dig kjære Hildegard, hvor kunde det være forfriskende at male sammen efter Modell, men jeg har ikke Midler til det, jeg maa desværre tænke paa at sælge og da maa jeg ikke male Studier for dem vil ingen Menneske kjøbe.” Bertha Wegmann, letter to Hildegard Thorell, December 27, 1887, Nordiska museets arkiv, Stockholm.

Bertha Wegmann, letters and postal cards to the Melchior family, December 21, 1911; January 4, 1912; February 20, 1912 and April 22, 1912, Håndskriftssamlingen, Det Kongelige Bibliotek, Copenhagen.

In 1918, Wegmann remarked that she had not seen Bauck for six to seven years. Bertha Wegmann, letter to Hildegard Thorell, June 18, 1918, Akademien för de fria konsternas arkiv, Stockholm.


In an undated letter, probably from 1922, Wegmann stated her age as seventy-six and mentioned that she was incapable of making long journeys. Bertha Wegmann, letter to Hildegard Thorell, undated, Akademien för de fria konsternas arkiv, Stockholm.

“Sorgligt att vi äro så långt från hvarandra – de mesta kära vännerna äro longt borta, du i Stockholm, Bertha i Köpenhamn […] – så oåtkomliga

Lise Svanholm postulated that Wegmann painted about twenty portraits of Bauck, but mentioned only the three works in Swedish and Danish public collections (Nationalmuseum, Den Hirschsprungske Samling and ARoS Aarhus Kunstmuseum). Lise Svanholm, “Bertha Wegmann,” in De drogo till Paris. Nordiska konstnärinnor på 1880-talet, ed. Lollo Fogelström and Louise Robbert (Stockholm: Liljevalchs konsthall, 1988), 213. This unsubstantiated assertion has been repeated in following publications. However, it is possible that more works exist or have existed, since the majority of the artists’ production has remained in private ownership.


Bertha Wegmann, ink drawing, included in a letter to Peter Dethlefsen, 24 October 1889, private archive.

On the back of Agathe Röstel’s portrait of the Archduchess Gisela of Austria (Gisela von Österreich im mittelalterlichen Kostüm, oil on canvas, 116 x 84 cm, private collection, auction Karl & Faber, Alte Meister/19. Jahrhundert, 13.11.2015, Lot 81) is a stick-on label “Agathe Roestel/40 Landwehrstr./Munich”.

Bertha Wegmann, The Painter Agathe Röstel, 1879, oil on canvas, 32.5 x 28.5 cm, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Neue Pinakothek, Munich, inv. 10199. See the photograph of Bertha Wegmann’s studio in 1917, with the portrait of Röstel hanging behind the artist, in Bierlich, “Excentriske slægtskaber,” 185.

In her letter to the museum, Müller stated that she had promised the artists to donate their works to Nationalmuseum. Toni Müller (Toni Agnes Møller-Wegmann), letter to Axel Gauffin, Director General of Nationalmuseum, October 20, 1931, typewritten transcript, Biografica: Jeanna Bauck, Nationalmuseums arkiv, Stockholm.

I have argued for this myself in Rech, “Friendship in Collaboration,” n.p.

The artistic relocation from Munich to Paris around the year 1880 has been described as a fundamental turning point in Nordic art. In the literature on Wegmann, the artistic production of the 1870s is characterized by the “dark colors of the Germany period”, while the production of the 1880s
is described as being “influenced by the art of Paris to a high degree”, with colors turning “bright and light”. Svanholm, “Bertha Wegmann,” 216.


582. Jeanna Bauck and Bertha Wegmann, letters and postal cards to Peter Dethlefsen, 1889–1903, private archive, Denmark.

583. Peter Dethlefsen studied neurology in Paris in 1891 which further supports that he is “P.D.” Bertha Wegmann, letters to Hildegard Thorell, August 15 and December 5, 1891, Nordiska museets arkiv, Stockholm.


586. Bertha Wegmann, Woman in Black, oil on canvas, 51 × 42 cm, 1872, Nationalmuseum, Stockholm, inv. no. NM 7088.


589. The total number of preserved images is 375 documenting 237 studios, but the original total amount is estimated to have been even higher. See Langer, Münchner Künstleratelier des Historismus, 10. The negatives are preserved at Bildarchiv Foto Marburg.

590. “Women painted their studios, too, and the rooms that doubled as studios, sometimes as backgrounds to their self-portraits. [...] But what they never did was reverse the male painter’s inclusion of a woman and include a man.” Borzello, World of Our Own, 152–153.

591. Wettlaufer, Portraits of the Artist, 10.


593. Meskimmon, Art of Reflection, 14.

594. Lajer-Burcharth, “Pompadour’s Touch.”

595. Here I am paraphrasing Goffman, Presentation of Self, 158–159.


In the Salon catalog the painting was entitled “tableau représentant feue Mme. Vincent (élève de son mari)” and the following description was offered: “Elle est occupée à faire le portrait de M. le Sénateur Vien, comte de l’Empire et membre de l’institut de France, regénérateur de l’Ecole française actuelle, et maître de M. Vincent. L’auteur qui s’est représenté chargeant sa palette, a placé dans ce tableau les principaux élèves de M. Vincent.” Quoted after Gaëhtgens, “Gemalte Künstlergenealogie,” 213–214.

Hannah Williams, “Academic Intimacies,” 345.


Whereas Heather Belnap Jensen speaks of a “father-daughter dynamic” and argues that Capet’s studio scene documents the active roles of male artists such as Vien and Vincent in the promotion of the women painters, I would postulate that the painting stages teacher-student relationships that include both male and female teachers and students, without making any apparent difference between the sexes. Heather Belnap Jensen, “Picturing Paternity: The Artist and Father-Daughter Portraiture in Post-Revolutionary France,” in Interior Portraiture and Masculine Identity in France, 1789–1914, ed. Temma Balducci, Heather Belnap Jensen and Pamela Warner (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 40.


Wettlaufer, Portraits of the Artist, 40 and further Mirzoeff, “Revolution, Representation, Equality,” 155.


In short, Sheriff has defined the exceptional woman as “the woman whose achievements required a dispensation from and strengthening of the laws that regulated other women.” Sheriff, The Exceptional Woman, 2. The notion of the exceptional woman can be traced back to Giorgio Vasari (1511–1574) and his account of the life and work of Sofonisba Anguissola (1532–1625). See Frederika H. Jacobs, “Woman’s Capacity to Create: The Unusual Case of Sofonisba Anguissola,” Renaissance Quarterly 47, no. 1 (1994): 74–101.
Bettina Baumgärtel has claimed that Labille-Guiard's portrait “rejects the idea of the exceptional artist, since she is succeeded by a group of students.” I would argue instead that the teacher has represented herself at least as a primus inter pares, which turns her into the exceptional woman after all. Cf. Bettina Baumgärtel, “Künstlerpaare des 18. Jahrhunderts,” in Künstlerpaare: Liebe, Kunst und Leidenschaft, ed. Barbara Schaefer and Andreas Blühm (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2008), 41.

The portrait was created as a pendant to Bouliard’s portrait of Chevalier Marie Alexandre Lenoir (1761–1839), who was Binart’s husband. The portraits of husband and wife were exhibited at the Salon in 1796. They represent the couple in their individual professional roles rather than highlighting their marital status. For a discussion of the two portraits as pendants see Angela Rosenthal, Angelica Kauffman: Art and Sensibility (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 100–102. There is little research on Bouliard, but the following publications provide useful introductions to her work: Laura Auricchio, “Artist Biographies,” in Royalists to Romantics: Women Artists from the Louvre, Versailles and Other French National Collections, ed. Jordana Pomeroy and Laura Auricchio (Washington: National Museum of Women in the Arts, 2012), 59–61; Yuriko Jackall, “Recovering the Work of Marie-Geneviève Bouliar: The Invention of Self in Revolutionary France,” Les cahiers d’histoire de l’art 7 (2009): 48–60.


Harriet Backer and Kitty Kielland both came from wealthy families. After studies at private drawing schools in Norway, Backer traveled to Munich in 1874 and Kielland arrived a year later. Both became students of Eilif Peterssen. In 1878, Backer left for Paris and Kielland joined a year later. They shared an apartment and studio on the rue de l’Université. In 1888 and 1889 respectively, they returned to Norway. The most comprehensive studies about Harriet Backer’s life and work are Kielland, Harriet Backer and Lange, Harriet Backer. The life and work of Kielland has recently been presented in a major monographic exhibition and exhibition catalog: Inger M. L. Gudmundson, ed., Kitty Kielland (Stavanger: Stavanger Kunstmuseum, 2017). At the moment, Gudmundson is working on a doctoral dissertation on Kielland at the University of Oslo with the working title “Frihet i Kitty L. Kiellands kunst og tekster”.

When Else Christie Kielland wrote the first monograph on Harriet Backer in 1958, the artist’s nephew Fridtjof Backer-Grøndahl transcribed the letters that had remained in the ownership of the family and had not been donated to the university library in Oslo (today: Nasjonalbiblioteket). According to Lange, he censored Backer’s correspondence with her family from 1874 to 1882 as well as the correspondence with her sister Agathe Backer Grøndahl and with Kielland. The originals are lost. See Kielland, Harriet Backer, 6 and Lange, Harriet Backer, 6.

For an overview of Kielland’s interior paintings see Marit Ingeborg

615. They lived together between 1881 and 1887. Lange, Harriet Backer, 77 and 94.


619. Backer repeatedly portrayed Kielland. These works have in common a pronounced realism in the rendering of the sitter’s facial features, while at the same time depicting the friend as a respectable woman with dignity. This applies to a pencil drawing from Munich in the collection of Nasjonalmuseum in Oslo (Harriet Backer, The Painter Kitty Kielland, March 4, 1877, Munich, pencil on paper, 198 × 345 mm, inv. no. NG.K&H.1987.0084) and to an undated portrait in Oslo Museum (Harriet Backer, Portrait of Kitty Kielland, undated, oil on canvas, 41.2 × 35.1 cm, Oslo Museum, inv. no. OB.00498). Kielland appears numerous times in Backer’s sketchbooks, which indicates the close interaction between the artists. Kielland is seen sewing by lamp light in Munich in 1876 or drawing under a tree in the French countryside near Rochefort in 1881. Harriet Backer, sketchbooks – depositum, Reol I.33, Nasjonalmuseum for kunst, arkitektur og design, Oslo.


622. Lange, Harriet Backer, 112.

623. Lange, Harriet Backer, 94.

624. Kitty Kielland, Interior from Paris, 1881, oil on canvas, 64 × 46 cm, private collection.

625. Harriet Backer, Portrait of Kitty Kielland, undated, oil on canvas, 41.2 × 35.1 cm, Oslo Museum, inv. no. OB.00498.

626. Alison Strauber, “At Home in the Studio: The Group Portraits of Artists by Bazille and Renoir,” in Interior Portraiture and Masculine Identity in


629. The intellectual atmosphere of the artists’ home is even underscored in another interior from their Parisian apartment, in which Kielland has portrayed their mutual friend, the writer Arne Garborg (1851–1924) reading a manuscript. Kitty Kielland, Interior from Paris with Arne Garborg, 1887, oil on canvas, 65.5 x 46.5 cm, Nasjonalmuseum for kunst, arkitektur og design, Oslo, inv. no. NG.M.04169.


635. Harriet Backer, Blue Interior, 1883, oil on canvas, 84 x 66 cm, Nasjonalmuseum for kunst, arkitektur og design, Oslo, inv. no. NG.M.02582.


638. According to Buchloh the “rapidly changing conceptions of the subject and the equally rapid disintegration of the traditional pictorial categories” were mutually dependend developments in the late nineteenth century. Benjamin Buchloh, “Residual Resemblance: Three Notes on the Ends of Por-


641. Apart from the short-lived period of sensibility in the eighteenth century, rules of conduct disapproved of the opening of the mouth to express feelings in most social situations, which in turn had a profound impact on the conventions of portraiture. Colin Jones has studied the changing societal norms or “facial regimes” that controlled the cultural acceptance or rejection of the smile. See Colin Jones, *The Smile Revolution in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014). The open mouth and even the previously highly rejected display of teeth becomes more common in painting towards the end of the nineteenth century; see for instance Christian Krohg’s informal portrait of his wife Oda Krohg (1860–1935) with hands-on-hips and a broad smile. Christian Krohg, *The Painter Oda Krohg*, 1886, oil on canvas, 86.4 × 68.8 cm, Nasjonalmuseum for kunst, arkitektur og design, Oslo, inv. no. NG.M.02147.

642. When it was exhibited at the Charlottenborg exhibition in Copenhagen in 1883, the painting was praised for its execution in light. Anonymous, “Konsthandel,” *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning*, November 20, 1883.


646. The relaxed pose is a pictorial constant of the nineteenth-century friendship image and occurs already in Romantic portraits, such as the Danish artist Christen Købke’s (1810–1848) friendship image of the landscape painter Frederik Sødring (1809–1862): Christen Købke, *Portret af landskabsmaleren Frederik Sødring*, 1832, oil on canvas, 42 × 38 cm, Den Hirschsprungske Sam-
ling, Copenhagen. The painting was a birthday gift from Købke to Sødring and the interior shows the studio the two artists shared in Copenhagen. See further David Jackson, *Christen Købke: Danish Master of Light* (Edinburgh: National Galleries of Scotland, 2010), 65–66.

647. John M. Krois has offered the following definition of *Pathosformel*:


650. An example for the “proper” way of sitting is Anders Zorn, *Mrs. Walter Rathbone Bacon*, 1897, oil on canvas, 170.8 × 108 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, accession no. 17.204.

651. Tamar Garb, *Bodies of Modernity: Figure and Flesh in Fin-de-Siècle France* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1998), 125.


656. Gustave Courbet, *The Painter’s Studio: A Real Allegory Summing Up Seven Years of My Artistic and Moral Life*, 1855, oil on canvas, 361 cm × 598 cm, Musée d’Orsay, Paris, inv. no. RF 2257.


Hildegard Thorell, letter to Reinhold Thorell, June 22, 1881, Nordiska museets arkiv, Stockholm.


660. “Jeg foragter de Danske med deres Spidsborgerlighed, der er gennemgaaende i hele deres Smagsretning. Tænk bare de fandt Jeannas Portrait ‘forfløient’, det vil sige saa meget som paa svensk ‘rusket’ og bare derfor fordi hun ikke mønt glat friseret sidder i en Stol med Hænderne mønt paa Skjødet, som alle deres andre Portræter.” Bertha Wegmann, letter to Hildegard Thorell, September 8, 1882, Nordiska museets arkiv, Stockholm. Wegmann repeatedly stated having her problems with the Danish public. When she had a solo show at the *Konstforeningen* in Copenhagen in autumn 1886, where she showed the studies she had made during summer, she was unable to sell a single work, since people considered them too radical. Bertha Wegmann, letter to Hildegard Thorell, December 27, 1886, Nordiska museets arkiv, Stockholm.

661. For an analysis and contextualization of the popular antagonism of the philister versus the bohemian artist see Eckhard Neumann, “Zur Gruppendifen dynamik des Philister-Bohème-Antagonismus,” in *Künstlermythen: Eine psychohistorische Studie über Kreativität* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus-Verlag, 1986), 242–263.


663. “[…] tværtimod, man traadte denne ganske nær, man var ikke alene i Stue med ham, men i direkte personlig Underholdning: disse Øjne mødte Ens med intrængende Forsken, denne Mund talte og smilte til En, og denne Skikkelse var saa noje iagtaget i Udtryk og Bevægelse, at man følte sig overbevist om, at dette var Manden, netop saadan virkede han i sit Væsen paa


665. Carola Muysers has conducted a study on the perception of the portrait in middle-class society in Germany in the late nineteenth century and related attitudes concerning morality and taste. Although her study focuses on the German context, the Danish public showed a similar critical attitude towards realism in portraiture. Carola Muysers, Das bürgerliche Portrait im Wandel: Bildnisfunktionen und auffassungen in der deutschen Moderne 1860–1900, PhD diss., Goethe University Frankfurt (Hildesheim: Olms, 2001), 11–13.

666. See Röstorp, “Third Culture Artists.” Steffen Linvald has also described the reluctance of Danish museums to acquire works by Bertha Wegmann and the public notion that her paintings were not Danish enough, which left her isolated. Charlotte Marie Steffen Linvald, “Receptionsteoretiske og historiske overvejelser over kunstneren Bertha Wegmann” (Master’s thesis, University of Copenhagen, 2009), 60–64. Görts made a similar observation regarding female artists in the late nineteenth-century Swedish art scene. Their works were either considered too French by their contemporaries or too conservative by later critics. See Görts, Det sköna i verklighetens värld, 101 and 108. For the Danish context, Mednick has pointed out that the art scene was experiencing a period of crisis from the 1850s onwards, when academic training was still based on Golden Age ideals, rather than developing new modes of expression: “The result was an approach to painting that idealized clarity and detail at the expense of atmosphere and mood.” Peder Severin Krøyer’s painting Italian Village Hatters from 1880 succeeded at the Salon, but was perceived as “dirty, dreadful and utterly uncharming” by the Danish public. This zeitgeist may explain in part the difficulties that Wegmann met and the dissatisfaction she felt with the art scene in her home country. See Thor J. Mednick, “Danish Internationalism: Peder Severin Krøyer in Copenhagen and Paris,” Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide 10, no. 1 (2011): n.p.


668. “Saa var det dog de Svenske som skulde have min Tafle, og glad er jeg dog for det, da jeg synes de Svenske har bedre Omdömme end de Danske. Det er underligt at just Ni, som har sa megen Lighed i Eders Smag med de Franske skulde kjøbe min Tafle, men det er det jeg siger, man er aldrig Prophet i sit eget Land, og havde de ikke givet mig den Medaille i Paris, da
var jeg her lige saa ubekendt och uandset end en fattig Graaspurv.” Bertha Wegmann, letter to Hildegard Thorell, December 19, 1883, Nordiska museets arkiv, Stockholm.


670. According to a document by the Danish foreign office from 1951 in the Weilbach archive, Wegmann never obtained Danish citizenship: Note by the Danish Foreign Office, April 19, 1951, Weilbachs arkiv: Bertha Wegmann, Kunstbiblioteket, Søborg.


676. “Midt i all denna bedröfvelse målade hon icke dessmindre ett serdel- les fint och vackert porträtt av mig, så utmärkt, att icke blott kritici och åfven min obetydighet, utan också den värsta af alla, hon sjelf, då vi nyligen voro på Salongen, och hade blifvit riktigt kräsmagade af allt det goda der är (Herre- min Gud, hvad dessa menniskor kan måla!!) och så på en gång tråde framför mitt porträtt, verkligen måste tillstå att det var bra! Formatet är helt litet, ansiget 14 centimeter, jag sitter i en stol, helt comme il faut, i svart med svart kapotthatt och svart handske på den venstra handen, som med min pincenez vid läppen, högre handen håller handsken och ligger på mitt knä, det hela är knästycke – varm ljusgrå bakgrund. Men det var ett konststycke att måla i ett vanligt rum, der solen sken in, så ofta det var någon sol, och utan några ate- lierbegvämllighet.” Jeanna Bauck, letter to Hildegard Thorell, June 25, 1886, Nordiska museets arkiv, Stockholm.

677. “Det är en sådan summa af talang så att man kunde gå ett helt år och bara studera och lära. Och det är den der äkta ultramoderna feta våta tekniken, blödt och saftigt och läckert […] – ingenting annat än det smakar oss, man går omkring som en riktig läckermun och föraktar allt som ej är utmärkt. […] Så lät det vi hålla af Franskmännen, men deras konst är makalös – och den nobless i koloriten och deras öfverlägenhet i teckning är någonting hiskligt att se!” Jeanna Bauck, letter to Hildegard Thorell, June 25, 1886, Nordiska museets arkiv, Stockholm. The vocabulary that Bauck used to describe artistic technique might sound strange to the contemporary reader, but words like “läcker” (delicious) were common in the art criticism at the time, for instance, in the writing of the art historian and critic Georg Nordensvan. See Görts, *Det sköna i verklighetens värld*, 183 and 191.


680. “Hun er en intensive Skønhedselsker, men foretrækker dog de Modeller, hvis Typer er karakteristiske, og som Livet har sat sitt Præg paa. ‘Det er

681. The expression reappears, for instance, in Hildegard Thorell’s letters to her husband or in the correspondence of Eva Bonnier, who uses it several times in her letters to her family, referring to a woman’s decent behavior: “Men hennes fru tog emot henne med att hon hade väl ej gått ensam ty det var ej ‘comme il faut’ för en ung flicka.” Eva Bonnier, letter to her family, October 18, 1885, Bonniers arkiv, Centrum för näringslivshistoria, Stockholm. The phrase *comme il faut* is used by Marie Bashkirtseff in her diary in the same way. See Voigt, *Tagebücher der Marie Bashkirtseff*, 76 and 203.


693. The concept of *conspicuous consumption* was developed in 1899 by the economist and sociologist Thorstein Veblen (1857–1929), who argued that the newly emerged bourgeois class expressed its wealth through conspicuous consumption and employed fashion as a tool to mark its social standing. Following Veblen, a woman’s dress was supposed to display the husband’s pecu-


698. Édouard Manet, *Antoinon Proust*, 1880, oil on canvas, 129.5 × 95.9 cm, Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo, inv. no. 1925.108; Édouard Manet, *Portrait of Théodore Duret*, 1868, oil on canvas, 46.5 × 35.5 cm, Petit Palais, Paris, inv. no. PPP485. Manet prominently used black also in portraits of female sitters: Édouard Manet, *The Parisian*, 1883, oil on canvas, 192 × 125 cm, Nationalmuseum, Stockholm, inv. no. NM 2068.


703. Two eighteenth-century examples are Jean-Siméon Chardin, *Self-Portrait with Spectacles*, 1771, pastel on paper, 46 × 38 cm, Musée du Louvre, Paris; Anna Dorothea Therbusch, *Self-Portrait*, 1776–1777, oil on canvas, 151 × 115 cm, Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. Chardin is depicted with a pince-nez and Therbusch is wearing a monocle.


706. Corson, Fashions in Eyeglasses, 147.

707. When Marie Bashkirtseff participated in a meeting of the women’s rights movement Droit des Femmes, she chose a pseudonym and a masquerade consisting, among other things, of a pince-nez. She seems to have associated the glasses with the women who were active in the suffragette movement. See Voigt, Tagebücher der Marie Bashkirtseff, 119.


713. A woman from the upper middle classes, who posed as a model, violated class norms, since posing was associated with the lower working classes and the demimonde. On the social differentiation between the femme honnête and fille publique, with which artist’s models, actresses, singers and the like were associated, see Abigail Solomon-Godeau, “The Legs of the Countess,” October 39 (1986): 102–103.

714. In the spring of 1881, Hildegard Thorell mentioned a model who was double-booked on several occasions by Wegmann and Académie Trélat. Hildegard Thorell, letters to Reinhold Thorell, March 21 and April 6, 1880, Nordiska museets arkiv, Stockholm.

716. Similar problems with models reappear in the correspondence of other Nordic women artists. According to Marit Lange, Harriet Backer complained in her correspondence with her family that the models were unreliable. Lange, *Harriet Backer*, 40–41.


713. Jeanna Bauck stated in a letter in 1922 that Wegmann wanted to quit painting portraits, but she kept on working simply because she needed to provide for her family. Jeanna Bauck, letter to Hildegard Thorell, June 4, 1922, Akademien för de fria konsternas arkiv, Stockholm.


724. “Saadan en Mand kan jo ogsaa vare ganske morsom at male, men saasnart det skal vare hans Egendom saa begynder Folk at kritisere, og synes aldrig at man gjor dem smukke nok, saa det er bedst jeg bliver borte fra den Leg. Jeg har ikke begyndt at male noget endnu i Vinter, det vil sige jeg maler Studier, bestendig Studier for at vaske mig reen for alt det daarlige der er kommet til at klæbe ved mig af at male Portrætter. Jeg har hele Sommeren kun malt Studier, mest Landskabsstudier. Du veed jeg kan ikke komme ud af det med det franske Folk, og er blevet uvenner med alle Modeller saa til-
sidst blev der Intet tilbage end den deilige Natur.” Bertha Wegmann, letter to Hildegard Thorell, November 12, 1886, Nordiska museets arkiv, Stockholm.


730. “Jeanna Bauck, the sensitive artist owes her great skillfulness in the
portrait genre to her friend Bertha Wegmann. With the ability to discern the souls, the likable Swede has internalized her much-admired friend’s principle of truthfulness. In her portrait painting, she combines the personal trade of the subtle with her teacher’s sense of grandeur.” The German original goes as follows: “Jeanna Bauck, die feinsinnige Künstlerin dankt ihrer Freundin Berta [sic] Wegmann ihr großes Können im Porträtfach. Mit der Fähigkeit, die Seelen zu erkennen, hat sich die sympathische Schwedin das Wahrhaftigkeitsprinzip ihrer vielbewunderten Freundin zu Eigen gemacht. In ihrer Bildnismalerei verbindet sich ein persönlicher Zug des Subtilen mit dem Grandsinn ihrer Lehrmeisterin.” Anonymous, “Jeanna Bauck,” *Moderne Kunst: Illustrierte Zeitschrift*, Heft 25 (Künstlerinnen-Nummer), 1900: 398.

731. “Both these artists are trying to work their way along by the same road. […] Absolute veracity was that which they strove to achieve, yet they never forgot that this very veracity is only an outcome of the capacity for looking into the soul of mankind, of the power of penetrating into that which lies below the surface of hard realities, and beyond the crude facts of everyday life. Consequently, in truly womanly manner they developed in their portraits a great minuteness and accuracy of detail. But they have entirely broken loose from that sentimental smoothness of touch and that anecdotal fussiness, that circumstantial garrulity which are still to be met in a great deal of so-called ‘beautifying’ painting in Germany. They have acquired to a surprising degree that power of discerning what is essential to the making up of the picture and what is not.” Louise Hagen, “Lady Artists in Germany,” *The International Studio* 4 (1898): 92.


733. Bertha Wegmann, *Queen Alexandrine*, 1923, oil on canvas, 121 × 102 cm, Dronning Alexandrines Gigtssanatorium, Middelfart.


736. “[…] men at i det hela taget disse to saa mange mange aar (siden omkring 1864) saa inderlige Vener og Kunstfeller ved mange lange Tiders hyppige Studierejser og Atelierfællerskab med hinanden havde fundet der gjensidige Malemaade at ligne sig saa forbausende […] at de ligefrem morede
sig med at male enkelte Stykker i hinandens Billeder.” Toni Müller (signed Toni Agnes Møller-Wegmann), letter to Axel Gauffin, Director General of Nationalmuseum, October 20, 1931, typewritten transcript, Biografica: Jeanna Bauck, Nationalmuseums arkiv, Stockholm. The transcript was written on a Swedish typewriter and is full of mistakes, misspelling and corrections executed with a pencil. It seems as if the secretary who transcribed the letter had problems deciphering the author’s Danish handwriting. Obvious errors were therefore corrected in this and following quotations to facilitate the understanding of the letter’s content. According to the archivarians the original letter is not preserved.


738. “B. W. sagde altid om J. B. at hun havde i sin lillefinger mere Talent end alle andre Kunstnere tilsammen i hele deres Hænder, men at hun manglede Taalmodigheden og naar hun var bleven ked af en Opgave sendte hun Simpelthen Billedet over til Kbj til B.W. for at hun skulde række en hjælpende Hånd & male færdigt hvad J.B. ikke længere havde Lyst til at fulende over en anden ny Opgave.” Toni Müller (signed Toni Agnes Møller-Wegmann), letter to Axel Gauffin, Director General of Nationalmuseum, October 20, 1931, typewritten transcript, Biografica: Jeanna Bauck, Nationalmuseums arkiv, Stockholm.


The strategy of discrediting the work of women artists by calling into question its originality has a long tradition. At the Salon of 1792, Adélaïde Labille-Guiard was confronted with allegations that her contributions were completed by her lover François-André Vincent. See Mirzoeff, “Revolution, Representation, Equality,” 167.


747. Elisabeth Fabritius, Michael Ancher og det moderne gennembrud 1880–1890 (Skagen: Helga Anchers Fond, 1999), 114.

748. “Ellers interesserer det os kun i denne Tid at male paa et lidet Billede, hvor vi maler hinanden paa; det er saa dejlig velgjorende at komme lidt bort fra de almindelige Fiskerfolk og tage fat paa civiliserede Mennesker, som forresten jo er meget mere maleriske end de andra.” Anna Ancher, letter to Martha Møller, November 27, 1882, quoted after Svanholm, Breve fra Anna Ancher, 68.

749. Fabritius, Michael Ancher, 116.


754. Dianne W. Pitman, “Overlapping Frames,” in Monet and Bazille: A
Collaboration, ed. David A. Brenneman (Atlanta, Ga.: High Museum of Art, 1999), 59.


756. According to Karin Gludovatz, the act of signing a painting is an act of initiation through which the artist and the artwork reciprocally confirm one another (“ein Akt der Initiation, durch den Autor und Werk sich wechselseitig bestätigen.”) Karin Gludovatz, Fährten legen – Spuren lesen: Die Künstlersignatur als poietische Referenz, PhD diss., Universität Wien (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2011), 11.


760. Women’s creative partnership and collaboration have as yet been primarily addressed by literary scholars, who have employed it as a means to question notions of solitary authorship and artistic genius. See London, Writing Double; Lorraine Mary York, Rethinking Women’s Collaborative Writing: Power, Difference, Property (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002); Carey Kaplan and Ellen Cronan Rose, “Strange Bedfellows: Feminist Collaboration,” Signs 18, no. 3 (1993): 547–561.

761. York, Rethinking Women’s Collaborative Writing, 69.

762. London, Writing Double, 18.


764. “Det er jo nok sandt at jeg er en daarlig Skribent, og jeg vil ikke negte at jeg ti, tusind Gang hellere vilde foretrække at sidde midt imod for Dig, og snakke med Dig medens jeg seer paa dine store Barneöine end sidde her med det kolde Papir og en grim sort Blækflaske, og lade Ordene krybe henad Papiret som en langsom Snegl. Alt hvad man siger forekommer en saa gammelt og forslidt, saa lidt umagen værdt at nedskrives, og det bliver endnu
mere gammelt ved Pennens Langsomhed, saa jeg kunde omkomme af Utaalmodighed inden jeg faaer sagt det almindeligste Ting. Bare man kunde udtrykke sine Tanker ved at male saa skulde det gaa meget lettere, men hvorledes skulde jeg forestille Taknemlighed billelig?” Bertha Wegmann, letter to Hildegard Thorell, October 26, 1883, Nordiska museets arkiv, Stockholm.


767. “Hade jag varit i Köpenhamn, så skulle jag ha varit hennes sekreterare, som så många gånger förr.” When Wegmann celebrated her seventieth birthday, she received hundreds of telegrams and Bauck stated that she would have wanted to help her with the answers. Jeanna Bauck, letter to Hildegard Thorell, August 17, 1918, Akademien för de fria konsternas arkiv, Stockholm.


772. The collaboration in portraiture and epistolary writing shows some parallels to the artistic partnership between Rosa Bonheur and Anna Elizabeth Klumpke, whose painting and writing practices were also bound together. Klumpke both painted portraits of her companion and wrote Bonheur’s (auto)biography according to her instructions. In an article about the (auto)biography, Maria Tamboukou has highlighted the similarities between portraiture and life writing as “narrative technologies” in the mediated construction of the self. See Maria Tamboukou, “Relational Narratives: Auto/biography and the Portrait,” Women’s Studies International Forum 33 (2010): 170–179.

773. Brita Ellström’s collection entered the archive in 1965 through a pri-
vate donation according to B-protokoll, 14/2, 1965; Enskilda brevsamlingar: Brita Ellström's samling, Kungliga akademien för de fria konsternas arkiv, Stockholm. Brita Ellström studied at the academy in Stockholm between 1894 and 1899. In her final year she won the annual price for the best history painting. See Anonymous, “Två Pristagarinnor,” *Idun: Illustrerad tidning för kvinnan och hemmet*, June 7, 1899. Between 1902 and 1905, Ellström held the academy’s prestigious Jenny Lind scholarship, which allowed her to study abroad in France and Italy. She copied by order of Konstakademien in the Louvre and in the Uffizi Galleries. After returning to Stockholm in the autumn of 1905, Ellström specialized primarily in illustration for journals and children’s books. Apart from short mentions and biographical notes in survey books, no further research is available on the artist. The most valuable source on her study period in Paris and Florence are the 27 letters she wrote to Carl Ludwig Looström (1848–1922), the secretary of the academy in Stockholm. In contrast to the private correspondence among artist friends discussed in the previous chapter, these stipendiabrev (scholarship holder’s letters) are official reports that served to control the educational progress abroad. Brita Ellström, stipendiabrev, Konstakademiens protokoll och handlingar, 1902–1905, Kungliga akademien för de fria konsternas arkiv, Stockholm.

774. In the end of the album the interiors from the studio are followed by a selection of photographs with street scenes and portraits of local people from Ellström’s journey to Brittany in the summer of 1903.


776. The young dark-haired Italian girl is shown topless, dressed only in a long skirt and simple slippers, holding a broom and looking in the direction of the camera. Apart from this image, which is pasted into the album, the booklet contains other photographs representing the same girl, which are loosely placed inside.


It is interesting to contrast Ellström’s photographic album with the album created by the British artist Mary Ellen Best (1809–1891) about fifty years earlier, containing watercolors of her home. According to Balducci these images reflect the conflict between Best’s artistic identity and her class status, between professionalism and the home. See Temma Balducci, “Negotiating Identity: Mary Ellen Best and the Status of Female Victorian Artists,” *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide* 2 (2002): n.p. In Ellström’s case, this conflict seems resolved.

Richard Bergh provided detailed descriptions of his studio in Paris in his correspondence with his wife-to-be Helena Klemming. Richard Bergh, letter to Helena Klemming, October 18, 1883 and undated letter from October 1883, Ingelmanska samling, Richard Berghs arkiv, Thieliska Galleriet, Stockholm. Eva Bonnier’s studio practice in Paris is recorded in the letters to her family. After having lived in a pension during the first period after her arrival in France, the artist convinced her parents of the economic advantages of renting a combined apartment and studio space. Eva Bonnier, letter to her family, June 25, 1884, Bonniers arkiv, Centrum för näringslivshistoria, Stockholm. Between 1884 and 1889 Bonnier rented three different studios in Paris and every time she moved into a new space she informed her family about the furnishing and renovation process. Eva Bonnier, letters to her family, October 24, 1884 and December 19, 1888, Bonniers arkiv, Centrum för näringslivshistoria, Stockholm. In 1885 she moved to a studio on Rue Humboldt (today Rue Jean Dolant) in Montmartre. For the location of the studios see the map in Cavalli-Björkman, *Eva Bonnier*, 80. Regarding Bashkirtseff’s accounts of her studio in her diary see Voigt, *Tagebücher der Marie Bashkirtseff*, 222.

Hildegard Thorell, letter to Reinhold Thorell, November 12, 1879, Nordiska museets arkiv, Stockholm.

Hildegard Thorell, letter to Reinhold Thorell, Munich, February 18, 1883, Nordiska museets arkiv, Stockholm.


Christoph Asendorf, “The Interieur, or Things in the Everyday Life of the Bourgeoisie,” in *Batteries of Life: On the History of Things and their Percep-


794. Gustave Courbet, The Painter’s Studio. A Real Allegory Summing up Seven Years of My Artistic and Moral Life, 1855, oil on canvas, 361 cm × 598 cm, Musée d’Orsay, Paris, inv. no. RF 2257.


796. Katja Kleinert has argued in relation to the Dutch seventeenth-century context that depictions of artists in their studios were a category in genre painting, in which artists were represented as types rather than individuals. See Kleinert, Atelierdarstellungen in der niederländischen Genremalerei, 159. Regarding the nineteenth-century French context, Ingeborg Bauer has identified a certain interiority in the representation of the artist and an increased subjectification, which finds its parallel in the Nordic art of the period. See Bauer, Das Atelierbild in der französischen Malerei, 23. Rachel Esner has compared dictionary entries, demonstrating that the studio in the romantic period turned from a space of collective work into an individual and solitary place. Esner, “Presence in Absence,” 244–245.

797. A survey of Swedish journals from the turn of the century, such as Idun and Svenska hem i ord och bild, shows that visits to artists’ studios were popular. The same applies to the French context. Numerous articles were written in the French press on the studios of contemporary artists, including women painters such as Louise Abbéma, Rosa Bonheur or Eva Gonzalès. See
Mader, *Beruf Künstlerin*, 68. The newspaper *L’Illustration* published a series on
studios featuring the workshop of Rosa Bonheur. See Esner, “In the Artist’s
Studio with ‘L’Illustration’” and Rachel Esner, “At Home: Visiting the Artist’s
Studio in the Nineteenth-Century French Illustrated Press,” in *The Mediatization of the Artist*, ed. by Rachel Esner and Sandra Kisters (Cham: Spring

798. The notion of a *room of one’s own* is based upon Virginia Woolf, *A
Room of One’s Own and Three Guineas*, ed. Morag Shiach (Oxford: Oxford Uni-
versity Press, 1998 [1929]).

799. Sidlaukas, *Body, Place and Self*. A similar study with comparable re-
sults regarding the conflicted nature of the interior in turn-of-the-century
painting has been conducted by Felix Krämer, *Das unheimliche Heim: Zur In-
teriormalerei um 1900* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2007).

800. Sidlaukas, *Body, Place and Self*, x.

801. Irene Anderson et al. have claimed that many scholars choose to un-
derstand the situation of women as a varied but continuous repetition of the
theme of structural subordination. As opposed to this, they suggest speaking
of the alienation and marginalization of women and their attempt to circum-
vent, rescind or counteract discrimination by widening the space or finding
new spaces. (“Många forskare väljer att förstå kvinnornas situation som en
visserligen varierad men dock ständig upprepning av temat strukturell un-
derordning. Vi talar mera om kvinnornas utanförskap och marginalisering
och om deras försök att kringgå, upphäva eller motverka detta genom att
vidga rummet eller finna nya rum.”) This study conceptualizes the studio as
such a space, which women artists claimed and widened in order to counter-
act their professional alienation and marginalization. See Irene Andersson,
Sif Bokholm et al., “Det vidgade rummet – och det låsta: Kvinnor, moral
och modernitet,” in *Rummet vidgas: Kvinnor på väg ut i offentligheten 1880–1940*,
ed. Eva Österberg and Christina Carlsson Wetterberg (Stockholm: Atlantis,
2002), 12.

802. This conceptual pair is inspired by Penny Sparke, “Introduction,” in *Interior Design and Identity*, ed. Susie McKellar and Penny Sparke (Manches-

803. Marc Gottlieb, “Creation and Death in the Romantic Studio,” in *In-
ventions of the Studio: Renaissance to Romanticism*, ed. Michael Cole and Mary

804. The public-private divide has been a highly influential concept in so-
cial theory regarding the emergence of a bourgeois culture. Numerous schol-
ars have highlighted the notion of a distinct separation between public and
private. Among the most influential studies, and one to which most subse-
quent work responds, is Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the
Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burg-
er and Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989). To give a
complete account of the scholarship on this topic is impossible in the context
of this study. See instead the comprehensive introduction by Diane E. Boyd

805. For the history of gendered notions of public and private in art and their reevaluation in current scholarship see the important recent edited volume: Balducci and Belnap Jensen, *Women, Femininity and Public Space*. Another study that complicates the divide between public and private and the supposedly male and female spheres is Heidi Brevik-Zender, *Fashioning Spaces: Mode and Modernity in Late-Nineteenth-Century Paris* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014).


807. Recently, Temma Balducci has criticized Pollock’s selective choice of impressionist artworks and claimed that impressionist artists of both sexes predominantly painted similar motifs such as gardens, still lifes and interiors. See Balducci, *Beyond the Flâneur*, 4. When it comes to the material in this study, it is impossible to discern a clear difference in motifs. On the contrary, male and female Nordic artists attended to similar subject matters – landscapes, genre scenes, portraits and interiors – while being relatively uninterested in urban themes. Another problematic aspect of Pollock’s approach is the association of the public with the modern. Rita Felski has criticized that the “identification of the modern with the public was largely responsible for the belief that women were situated outside processes of history and social change.” Although the private sphere was as much a site of modernization and social change, it has often been portrayed as a “sphere where natural and timeless emotions hold sway”. Rita Felski, *The Gender of Modernity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995), 3 and 16.


814. In her letters to her sister Hildur, the Swedish painter Amanda Sidwall (1844–1892) described her visits to the studios of Christine Sundberg and Mimmi Zetterström, whom she asked for advice shortly after her arrival in Paris. Amanda Sidwall, letters to Hildur Sidwall, October 14, 1874 and December 4, 1874, transcriptions in: Biografica: Amanda Sidwall, Nationalmuseums arkiv, Stockholm.


818. “However, while there is a tendency for a region to become identified as the front region or back region of a performance with which it is regularly associated, still there are many regions which function at one time and in one sense as a front region and at another time and in another sense as a back region. […] In general, then, it must be kept in mind that in speaking of front and back regions we speak from the reference point of a particular performance, and we speak of the function that the place happens to serve at that time for the given performance.” Goffman, *Presentation of Self*, 127 and 129.


820. Woolf, *Room of One’s Own*.

821. “A woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction.” Woolf, *Room of One’s Own*, 4 and 67. Woolf suggested that material conditions execute a great influence on a person’s ability to produce art. Thereby, she opposed then prevalent notions of a transcendent art that was independent from conditions of production. See Ellen Bayuk Rosenman, *A Room of One’s Own: Women Writers and the Politics of Creativity* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1995), 46–47. The notion of the *room of one’s own* has previously been applied to the visual arts and it has been employed by art historians in the study of the studio. See Deborah Cherry and Janice Helland, “Local Places/Global Spaces: New Narratives of Women’s Art in the Nineteenth Century,” *Local/Global: Women Artists in the Nineteenth Century* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 2.


823. Elevmatrikel 464, Kungliga akademien för de fria konsternas arkiv, Stockholm.


829. “A l’atelier tout disparaît, on n’a ni nom, ni famille; on n’est plus la fille de sa mère, on est soi-même, on est un individu et on a devant soi l’art et rien d’autre. On se sent si content, si libre, si fier.” Marie Bashkirtseff, *Mon

830. Edma Morisot, letter to Berthe Morisot, March 15, 1869, quoted after Denis Rouart, Correspondence of Berthe Morisot, 27.

831. Higonnet, Berthe Morisot’s Images, 80–81.

832. “You talk about my art and say you do not want to stop it – That I have never thought, for it is such an obvious matter that all the going on about it is unnecessary. I shall never be content to live for one matter only – that is why I hang on to my painting, and I have noticed that there is nothing like it to focus my interest and take away my woes. To live for one person only I cannot; it is not in my nature to love in that way, and never will be. If you want me to like you – never let me feel a tie – for it is only in freedom that I can enjoy being with someone.” Hanna Hirsch, letter to Georg Pauli, March 1887, quoted after Pauli, Cher monsieur, 39–40. The English citation follows the translation by Lars Norén. See the same publication for the Swedish original.


834. Wadstein MacLeod, “Disrupted Perspectives,” 157. See also Wadstein MacLeod, Bakom gardinerna, 64–83.

835. “...Jo, därför att svenska folket vill se, hur pappa och mamma se ut’, kom det från fadern som inklädd penslar, palett och målarblus, framför den stora duken prövfade en lämplig konstnärsättityd för Iduns och svenska foljets räkning.” Högman, “Från en artistbo.”


837. Wadstein MacLeod has identified the item in Hanna Pauli’s hands as a canvas, but I suggest that she is holding a palette and the canvas she is working on is standing on the easel in front of her. Cf. Wadstein MacLeod, “Disrupted Perspectives,” 157.


840. Greer, Obstacle Race, 158.

841. Kleinberg, “Gendered Space,” 144. With regard to the Swedish context Frykman and Löfgren have stated: “During the Oscarian era the qualities

842. Högman, “Från en artistbo.”


844. On the basis of Eva Bonnier’s letters which mentioned the colleagues’ collaboration, Gynning has proposed that the painting was begun in the fall of 1886 and completed right before the submission date for the Salon. Gynning, *Det ambivalenta perspektivet*, 236f.n.42.

845. See the drawing in the collection of *Nationalmuseum* that seems to be a study for the head and already displays the peculiar countenance: Hanna Hirsch-Pauli, *Mrs. Vendla (Venny) Soldan-Brofeldt, the wife of the writer Juhani Aho*, undated, charcoal on paper, 58.5 × 41.6 cm, Nationalmuseum, Stockholm, inv. no. NMH 156/1929 recto.


Here, Lindberg has also outlined the differences between her own and Gynning’s reading. See pages 80–81.

851. The previously unpublished letters by Venny Soldan-Brofeldt are in private ownership, while Hanna Hirsch-Pauli’s letters are published in: Pauli, *Cher monsieur*.


856. See Pauli, *Cher monsieur*.


859. “[…] då Hanna håller på med att måla ‘Finskan’ i naturlig storlek. Den hyggliga varelsen, som är här för att studera målning upphörra hela sin dag för att sitta; om dagen är hon hennes modell för öfrigt hennes femme de menage. Men så är Hanna hennes kammarjungfru i stället ty hon kammar och snittar till finskan då hon skall bort, ehuru det lönar sig föga. Hon blir ändå frk. ‘Soldat.’” Eva Bonnier, letter to her family, February 8, 1887, Bonniers arkiv, Centrum för näringslivshistoria, Stockholm.

Nu skall Finskan modellera H. i basrelief för att hinna färdigt till salonen, den 5te april. De äro så angelägna så…” Eva Bonnier, letter to her family, March 16, 1887, Bonniers arkiv, Centrum för näringslivshistoria, Stockholm.

861. The whereabouts of Soldan’s relief portrait are unknown.


863. Gynning, Det ambivalenta perspektivet, 70.


866. In her study of the series of visits to artists’ studios in the French newspaper L’Illustration, Rachel Esner found that the working studio or atelier de travail – a space that demonstratively contains only what is strictly necessary for art – was a popular artistic ideal and it was often contrasted with the richly decorated show studio. Esner, “In the Artist’s Studio with ‘L’Illustration’.” A Nordic example for the phenomenon of the show studio are Julius Kronberg’s studios: The Swedish artist maintained various luxurious and richly furnished studios in Rome and Stockholm. In Rome, he owned two studios, one of which was called emotagningsatelier (reception studio) and it solely served the purpose to receive visitors in a show setting. It turned into a popular “attraction site” for Nordic artists visiting Rome. Kronberg’s later Stockholm studio on Djurgården was musealized in 1921 after the artist’s death and incorporated into the open-air museum Skansen. Tomas Björk, Julius Kronberg: Målarets triumfator (Stockholm: Atlantis, 2016), 47–50.

867. On the association of dilettantism with the home see Mongi-Vollmer, Das Atelier des Malers, 198; Berger, Malerinnen auf dem Weg, 60 and 176.

868. Jenny Nyström painted three known watercolors and gouaches representing her studios. The work not illustrated here is From My Studio in Paris...
II, 1884, watercolor on paper, 42 × 27 cm, Kalmar Läns Museum. See Stig Lindholm, Med penseln som trollspö: Jenny Nyströms samlade verk (Stockholm: CKM, 2004), 16. Forsberg Warringer has claimed that one of the watercolors from 1884 was exhibited at the Salon, but it was not listed in the catalog: “En av akvarellerna från 1884 hade varit med på salongen och Gustav Retzius hade en gång recenserat den med orden: Vill man se hur akvarellen skall se ut så hänvisa vi till Jenny Nyströms förträffliga lilla bild ‘I min atelier’.” Forsberg Warringer, Jenny Nyström, 48.


871. The polar bear fur appears, for instance, in an interior depicting the famous studio of the painter Hans Makart (1840–1884) in Vienna: Eduard Charlemont, Hans Makart in His Studio, 1882, oil on canvas, 140 × 85 cm, Wien Museum, Vienna.


875. Esner has read the stove as an “embodiment” of the artist’s presence. It is further understood as a metaphor for artistic inspiration or as a symbol for the artist’s temperament. Esner, “Presence in Absence,” 250.


878. Esner, “Presence in Absence.”
886. “Hanna Hirschs stora tafla, som föreställer en ung dam (påtaglig ett porträtt af en af våra yngre målarinnor), hvilken sitter på golvvet i en atelier i en ställning, som icke precis kan kallas vald, men är så mycket mera okonstlad. Taflan är utan tvifvel, hvad man plågar säga, väl målad, men om


888. “Den ‘fåniga gamla brackigheten’ i konst och moral skulle sprängas bort, för att nya sanningar måtte fram i ljuset. Sanningssökere! se där tidens lösen och de ungas käpphäst”. Hanna Hirsch-Pauli, “Eva Bonnier: Några minnesord,” Dagny: Tidning för svenska kvinnorörelsen, February 4, 1909. Hirsch-Pauli wrote this obituary only a few weeks after Eva Bonnier had died under tragic circumstances. She fell from the balcony of a hotel in Copenhagen on January 14, 1909. It remains unresolved whether her death was a fatal accident or suicide caused by depression. Gynning has assumed, on the basis of Karl Otto Bonnier’s correspondence, that Eva Bonnier was suffering at the time from deep depression caused by severe influenza and strong fever, which led to an unplanned suicide. Gynning, Det ambivalenta perspektivet, 18fn20. Cavalli-Björkman has agreed with this analysis in her biography of the artist. Cavalli-Björkman, Eva Bonnier, 327.


893. Katarina Wadstein MacLeod has analyzed the sphere of the home in relation to artistic professionalism. See Wadstein MacLeod, “The Painted Home as Heritage,” 263.


903. Wilhelmina (Mina) Bredberg had a middle-class background and she received her first artistic training in the private drawing schools of Kerstin Cardon and Amanda Sidwall in Stockholm. In 1877, she married the notary Wilhelm Swalin, but the couple was divorced only three years later. In 1883, Bredberg moved to Paris and studied at Académie Julian. In 1890, she returned to Sweden and began to teach at the private drawing school of Elisabeth Keyser (1851–1898) in Stockholm. In 1895, Bredberg married the civil servant Georg Carlson and today she is best known by her married name Carlson-Bredberg. She was a founding member of *Föreningen Svenska Konstnärinnor* (Association of Swedish Women Artists) and was elected its secretary in 1912. She was mainly active as a portrait painter, in particular of children, but she also painted interiors and landscapes. On the artist’s biography see further: Emmy Melin, “Elsa Flensburg om Mina Carlson-Bredberg,” in *Föreningen Svenska Konstnärinnor, 1910–1960: En historik sammanställd av

904. Perrot, Fashioning the Bourgeoisie, 125–128. The importance of cleanliness for the bourgeois self-conception shows in Eva Bonnier’s letters to her family in which she repeatedly complained about the untidiness of the studio shared by Hirsch and Soldan. According to Bonnier, every object that came from their studio was “smeared with oil paint and other dirt, so it was disgusting to touch anything.” In 1886, when Bonnier was sculpting in clay in her studio together with Hirsch, she admonished the friend to not drop clay on the floor, but when Hirsch had left, one still found traces of her everywhere. Eva Bonnier, letters to her family, December 7, 1888, and March 29, 1886, Bonniers arkiv vid Centrum för näringslivshistoria, Stockholm.


907. In Jerichau’s case it is a preparatory work for the sculpture Hercules and Hebe that marked his artistic breakthrough in 1845. See Larsen, “Verkstad och rum,” 118. The group in Hanna Hirsch’s painting is probably lost.

908. Lindberg was first to highlight the combination of manual work and inspiration in the portrayal of Soldan. Lindberg “Det möjligas rum,” 72 and “Kvinnoforskning till genusperspektiv,” 85.

909. For biographical information on the artist-couple see Johanna Pietikäinen, Heartists: Konstnärspar Carolina Benedicks-Bruce och William Blair Bruce (Visby: Gotlands museum, 2019).


913. When Hirsch-Pauli later stated that “most of us were very poor”, she was probably referring to colleagues with working-class background such as Carl Larsson and Per Hasselberg; the latter, who started his career as a carpenter, gave her and Bonnier advice on sculpting. However, Hirsch-Pauli’s statement appears slightly exaggerated in light of the fact that most artists in her circle came from town-dwelling merchant families and the educated middle class (this applies to e.g. Richard Bergh, Nils Kreuger, Bruno Liljefors (1860–1939), Karl Nordström and Georg Pauli).

914. "I Paris ordnade Eva sitt lif och sitt arbete i enlighet med sin demokratiska smak. Till ytterligard anspråkslös för egen del, utan bekvämlighetsbehov, var det henne endast en njutning att ställa sig solidarisk med de fattiga kamrater, både manliga och kvinnliga, hon där kom i beröring med. […] Helst tror jag Eva önskat att vara verkligt fattig, fått skura sitt golf själfl och laga sin mat utan att, som nu blef fallet, behöfva strida om rätten därtill eller känna sig orättvist bedömd. De kamrater, som af tvång förde samma lif, skulle helt naturligt känt sig mera tilltalade af att hemma hos henne finna det mått af komfort och skönhet, som de själflva saknade, men det förstod Eva ej då – hon var allt för naivt uppgående i socialismens och förbrödringens idéer.” Hirsch-Pauli, "Eva Bonnier."

915. “Jag tror att det förargar dem att jag bor i en så billig atelier och har det så enkelt. Som ni minns sade ju också Pauli något dyl. der hemma: När man har det så fint hemma, kunde han inte begripa att man inte inrättade sig litet mer ’artistement’.” Eva Bonnier, letter to her family, February 23, 1887, Bonniers arkiv, Centrum för näringslivshistoria, Stockholm.


917. Juhani Aho, En idéer nu man: Biografi öfver August Fredrik Soldan (Helsinki: Svenska litteratursällskapet i Finland, 1901).


921. Here, my analysis is in line with Lindberg’s reading. See Lindberg, “Det möjligas rum,” 66.


930. Gynning, Det ambivalenta perspektivet, 237 fn50. Before Gynning, Söderlund had argued that the greatest difference between the two paintings
is the activity versus the passivity in the rendering of the figure. Söderlund, “Hanna Hirsch-Pauli,” 13.


934. Here I am paraphrasing Berger, “Fictions of the Pose: Facing the Gaze.”


941. This argument was revitalized in the nineteenth century when Charles Baudelaire and other modernist critics perceived sculpture as “antimodern” due to its lack of color. Jacqueline Lichtenstein, The Blind Spot:


945. Lorentz Dietrichson, Det skönas verld: Estetik och konsthistoria med specielt afseende på den bildande konsten populärt framställda af L. Dietrichson (Stockholm: Jos. Seligmann, 1873 [1870]).


947. According to Gynning, Lorentz Dietrichson belonged to the Bonnier and Hirsch families’ circle of friends. Eva Bonnier attended his lectures even before enrolling at the academy. See Gynning, Det ambivalenta perspektivet, 14. Consequently, it is likely that Hirsch had read Dietrichson’s book.

948. Gerhard Finckh, “Die Maler und ihre Skulpturen: Beobachtungen zu Grenzgängen und Seitensprüngen,” in Die Maler und ihre Skulpturen: Von Edgar Degas bis Gerhard Richter, ed. Gerhard Finckh (Cologne: DuMont, 1997), 8–20. A famous example in the period of a crossover artist in the French context is Edgar Degas and in the Swedish context Anders Zorn, who – although best known as a painter – chose to depict himself in the role of the sculptor in his self-portrait for the Uffizi Galleries: Anders Zorn, Self-Portrait with the Bust of his Wife, 1889, oil on canvas, 74.5 × 62.5 cm, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence. Zorn’s self-portrait is remarkable in another respect: by inserting a bust of his wife Emma in his self-portrait, Zorn claimed it to be his work, even though it was initially executed by Eva Bonnier. Zorn had only completed the sculpture after Bonnier had refused to finish it. See Vibeke Röstorp, Zorn och Frankrike (Mora: Zornmuseet, 2017), 56–57.


953. In 1887 Bonnier exhibited a bust of an elderly man and the following year a bust of a girl. Both works are lost.


955. The tambourine is also included in Vid ateljédörren (1885) and Dambesök i ateljén (1886).

956. Cavalli-Björkman, Eva Bonnier, 135.

958. In Strömbom’s essay, every step that Eva Bonnier took in her professional development is attributed to the influence of the sculptor Per Hasselberg, to whom Eva Bonnier had a tragic romantic attachment. Her most productive period in the second half of the 1880s is described as the direct result of the relationship with Hasselberg, as are her decisions to work in sculpture and later in applied arts: “Att förbindelsen med Hasselberg haft verkligt positivt betydelse för Evas konstnärliga utveckling och produktionsförmåga under 1885–1889, vill man gärna finna bekräftelse på i de utmärkta arbeten, hon då genomförde. […] Hasselbergs närhet gav henne impulser i plastisk riktning. […] Det ligger dessutom nära till hands att anta att Hasselberg uppmuntrat hennes intresse för konsthanter, vilket senare skulle framträda i en följd av smakfulla objets d’art.” Strömbom, *Eva Bonnier*, 10–11.


967. Eva Bonnier’s father Albert Bonnier and later on her brother Karl Otto Bonnier were important commissioners for book illustrations. Carl Larsson, for instance, received his first commission from Bonniers already in 1878 and in this early stage of his career he was financially dependent on his illustration work. Gedin, *Litteraturens örtagårdsmästare*, 378–379.

968. Gynning referred to Bonnier’s studio interior as the only image in which she acknowledged her own artistry (“den enda bilden där hon erkänt det egna konstnärskapet”). Gynning, *Det ambivalenta perspektivet*, 33 and 81.


971. Blühm, Pygmalion, 140.


974. Working in Marble or The Artist Sculpting “Tanagra” was displayed prominently in Gérôme’s painting studio, where it would have been seen by visitors. Waller, “Fin de Partie.”


976. On the history of the Fürstenberg collection, the Fürstenberg Gallery and the collector’s involvement with the Opponent movement see Nordström, Up the Stylish Staircase.


980. Thor J. Mednick has coined the term “negotiated modernism” in relation to the art of Peder Severin Krøyer, arguing that the artist “was trying to create a visual style calibrated to be effective not only in Copenhagen but in Paris, as well: a negotiated modernism that would be at once comfortably familiar and intriguingly exotic to both audiences.” Mednick, “Danish Internationalism,” n.p.

983. -y (Fanny Churberg), “Konstnärsgillets julutställning.”; Ring, “Konstnärsförbundets utställning, Göteborg.”


987. Goffman, Presentation of Self, 137.

988. Goffman, Presentation of Self, 137–138.


990. “Er ikke Hösten trist du – jeg er glad, jeg er saa optaget af Arbeide, at jeg ikke har Tid at se paa det faldne Löv – graa Himmel og triste Gader – Lykkeligvis er mit Humeur for Tiden saa pas jevnt og godt – at ikke engang Ensomheden tager paa det – og er man tilfreds saa er alt vel da […] Og desuten ingensomhelst Ensomhed er uudholdelig, naar man har Arbeide og Bøger.”
Asta Nørregaard, letter to Hildegard Thorell, November 14, 1882, Nordiska museets arkiv, Stockholm.

991. Anne Wichstrøm, “Asta Nørregaard,” in De drogo till Paris: Nordiska konstnärinnor på 1880-talet, ed. Lollo Fogelström and Louise Robbert (Stockholm: Liljevalchs konsthall, 1988), 149. At the Salon of 1881, Nørregaard was represented with the religious painting L’Attente de Christ. The work was shown the same year in the Kristiania Artist Association, where it was favorably reviewed by the Norwegian press. According to Anne Wichstrøm, the positive reception led to the commission of the altarpiece. Wichstrøm, “Asta Nørregaard: Aspects of Professionalism,” 5. As Stark has argued, religious commissions for women artists were very rare in Europe during the nineteenth century. Barbara Stark, “Die Altar- und religiösen Wandbilder von Marie Ellenrieder,” in Einfach Himmlisch! Die Malerin Marie Ellenrieder 1791–1863, ed. Tobias Engelsing and Barbara Stark (Stuttgart: Arnoldsche Art Publ., 2013), 113.

992. Asta Nørregaard came from a middle-class family and began her artistic education in Knud Bergslien’s Drawing School in Kristiania in 1872. Between 1875 and 1878 she studied privately in Munich with Eilif Peterssen. Between 1879 and 1885 Nørregaard lived in Paris, where she studied periodically at Académie Trélat. After her return to Norway, she worked as a portraitist, mainly painting the upper class of Kristiania. Due to its academic style, Nørregaard’s oeuvre was largely ignored after the turn of the century, before it was brought back to attention by Wichstrøm’s comprehensive research on the artist. For a detailed biographical account see Wichstrøm, Asta Nørregaard: En livshistorie.

993. “The symbol of their seriousness is the palette, which tends to play an extremely assertive role in these paintings, highly visible and apparently larger than life. ‘Apparently’ because palettes had in fact grown bigger by the end of the nineteenth century. A larger range of colors, oil paint in tubes and a faster, freer style of applying paint had all contributed to change the palette’s shape from the neat rectangle of the sixteenth century to the curved expanse of the nineteenth, a development traceable through self-portraits.” Borzello, Seeing Ourselves, 128.


997. “Ser vi på I atelieret som en selvfremstilling, er figuren merkelig liten i rommet. Det er tomt og stille omkring henne og hennes urorlighet bidrar ti et intrykk av isolasjon i et avgrenset handlingsrom.” Wichstrøm, “Isenesatt: Asta Nørregaard,” 8. In the 2002 article, Wichstrøm has described the scene as follows: “Although a representation of of [sic] self-affirmation and profes-
sional achievement, the Nørregaard figure is strangely small in the room, her stillness contributing to an impression of isolation.” See Wichstrøm, “Asta Nørregaard: Aspects of Professionalism,” 5.


1000. For a more detailed analysis of Nørregaard’s letters to Thorell see Rech, “Revisiting Asta Nørregaard.”


1006. Wichstrøm has stated that the foliage of the tree is reflected in the hand mirror. When I viewed the original painting, I found that the mirror is left blank with just a gray stripe running through it. I could not make out any reflection. Cf. Wichstrøm, “Iscenesatt: Asta Nørregaard,” 5.


1015. “Ogsaa Frøken Asta Nørregaard har fremstillet sig selv i sit Atelier. Midt i et tarveligt udstyret Værelse, der faar sit Lys fra et høit Vindue over Døren, og gjennem hvis Ruder man ser Toppene af grønne Trær, staar Kunstnerinden selv i en tarveligt Dragt med Penselen i høire Haand og en stor Palet paa venstre Haands Tommelfinger. I Forgrunden til Venstre skim-


1024. Battersby, *Gender and Genius*, 3. Battersby has demonstrated that the notion of genius is a sexualized concept rooted in ideas of male procreativity. Paradoxically, in romanticism the male artist is ascribed characteristics of the feminine. While the feminine came to be incorporated into genius, females themselves were emphatically excluded. See also Carolyn Korsmeyer, “Battersby, Christine: Gender and Genius: Towards a Feminist Aesthetics,” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 1991: 383–384.


1027. In the nineteenth century loneliness was considered a typical character trait of the artist. See Adeline Walter, “Die Einsamkeit des Künstlers als Bilddhema 1770–1900” (PhD diss., Goethe University Frankfurt am Main, 1983), 43.
1028. In total, three versions of this theme exist. See further Joseph Leo Koerner, *Caspar David Friedrich and the Subject of Landscape* (London: Reaktion, 2009), 220–222.


1032. The studio was often well hidden and the visitor had to pass through some sort of transitional space (such as a garden) in order to enter the realm of the artist. See Esner, “In the Artist’s Studio with ‘L’Illustration’” and Rachel Esner, “Visiting Delaroche and Diaz with ‘L’Illustration,’” *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide* 11, no. 2 (2012): n.p.

1033. Esner, “In the Artist’s Studio with ‘L’Illustration’.”

1034. On the *mediatization* of the artist and the studio see Esner and Kisters, *Mediatization of the Artist*.

1035. Here I am paraphrasing: Berger, “Fictions of the Pose: Facing the Gaze,” 89.

1036. Here I am paraphrasing: Woolf, *Room of One’s Own*.

1037. Sidlaukas, *Body, Place and Self*, x.
Att bli konstnär: Nordiska kvinnliga konstnärers självporträtt, vänskapsbilder och ateljéscener under 1880-talet

Under 1880-talet blev nordiska kvinnliga konstnärer alltmer synliga på konstscenen, samtidigt som de verkade inom en nästan uteslutande manlig sfär. Denna avhandlings syfte är att analysera hur nordiska kvinnliga konstnärer förhandlade och utvecklhade sin professionella identitet under 1880-talet i måleriet genom självporträtt, vänskapsbilder och ateljéinteriörer. Studien undersöker hur konstnärlig identitet gestaltades genom självframställningar, genom samarbeten kollegor emellan och genom målningar föreställande ateljéinteriörer där den avporträtterade konstnären samtalar med bildrummet, vilket konstituerar konstnärens professionella identitet. Undersökningen skiljer mellan å ena sidan yrket konstnär och å andra sidan kulturellt betingade föreställningar och narrativa troper om konstnärsrollen som sådan.

Avhandlingen fokuserar på idén om konstnären och dess övergripande frågeställningar är: Hur positionerade de nordiska kvinnliga konstnärerna sig själva i relation till föreställningar om konstnären som i stort sett exkluderade kvinnor? Vilka konstnärliga strategier använde de sig av för att skriva in sig i en manscentrerad yrkestradition? Vilken roll spelade nätverk, vänskap och ömsesidigt porträtterande för deras professionella identitetskonstruktion? Hur integrerades ateljén i konstnärernas självscensättning?

Undersökningen är baserad på omfattande arkivstudier om mer eller mindre välkända kvinnliga konstnärer från Norden. Den förhåller sig till feministisk konsthistorisk forskning och till en aktuell kritik av de modernistiska narrativ, de uppfattningar om enkelriktat inflytande och den nationalistiska konsthistoriskt framtagning som tidigare präglat forskningen om det sena 1800-talets konst i Norden. Studien presenterar nya perspektiv på den så kallade aka-

I avhandlingen kombineras bildtolkningar av ett antal målningar med analyser av ett omfattande och opublicerat arkivmaterial, i synnerhet konstnärernas korrespondens med varandra. En kombinerad analys av vänskapsbilder och korrespondens gör det möjligt att undersöka hur konstnärerna konstruerade en gemensam yrkesidentitet i dialog med varandra genom måleri och i skrift.


Undersökningens fokus på kvinnliga konstnärer från Norden motiveras av att de i sina verk gestaltade sin professionella identitet på ett särskilt tydligt och självmedvetet sätt, jämfört med konstnärer från andra länder under samma period. Denna självmedvetenhet berodde på att kvinnliga konstnärer i Norden var ovanligt starkt utpräglade i sin yrkesroll. Denna professionalitet hade möjliggjorts genom tillgång till utbildning vid Konstakademien i Stockholm och vid privata konstskolor, genom möjlighet att delta i offentliga konsttävlingar och utställningar, samt genom internationell mobilitet. Detta var en utveckling som kulminerade under 1880-talet.


Studiens teoretiska utgångspunkt är begreppet self-fashioning som myntades av litteraturvetaren Stephen Greenblatt. Self-fashio-
förstås i denna avhandling som en konstnärlig och social process där konstnärer iscensätter sig själva genom sitt måleri och använder sig av sina verk för att marknadsföra och positionera sig i det offentliga livet och på konstscenen. Begreppet self-fashioning omfattar följaktligen såväl estetiska som sociala aspekter samt målingarnas objekthistoria. För att analysera det sena 1800-talets celebritetskultur och konstnärernas ökade närvaro i offentligheten används konstvetaren Oskar Bätschmannsbegrepp utställningskonstnär, vilket även understryker utställningsmediets betydelse för konstnärernas professionella framgång.

Ett feministiskt perspektiv synliggör problematiken med begreppet ”kvinnlig konstnär” (”woman artist”) eftersom det implicerar en skillnad mellan den manlige konstnären som norm och den kvinnliga konstnären som avvikelse. Denna problematik blir än mer påtaglig i en undersökning som ämnar belysa kvinnliga konstnärens appropriation av konstnärsrollen. Avhandlingen be möter denna problematik genom att tillämpa feministisk och performativ teori utifrån sociologerna Judith Butler och Erving Goffman. Därmed synliggörs de genuserelaterade associationer som följer med begreppet konstnär, och med hjälp av feministisk teori ersätts essentialistiska föreställningar om konstnärsrollen med ett performativt synsätt som tar hänsyn till de sociokulturella aspekter som följer med konstnärlig själviscensättning.

Mot bakgrund av konstvetarna Harry Berger Jr:s och Ewa Lajer-Burcharths teorier förstås vänskapsbilder och ömsesidigt porträtterande som kollaborativa praktiker och performativa akter där två konstnärer konstruerar en gemensam och medierad självbild.

Metodologiskt bygger avhandlingen på närgångna, hermeneutiska bildtolkningar som förmedlas genom ekfraser samt på en källkritisk läsning av konstnärernas brevväxlingar. Breven analyseras både som ett empiriskt material och som ett medium för själviscensättning i sin egen rätt.

konstnärers erövrande av konstnärsrollen. *Aemulatio* förstås som en dialog med både historien och samtidigen genom konkurrerande imitation. Det var en viktig aspekt för tillkomsten av vänkapsbilder, där samarbeten och konkurrens, hommage och rivalitet småler samman.

*Aemulatio* som konstnärlig praktik ifrågasätter det vedertagna narrativet om en radikal brytning mellan de så kallade Opponenterna och Konstakademien under 1880-talet. Konstnärer som bland andra Julia Beck hade sina första framgångar i Paris att tacka för den gedigna utbildning de hade med sig från Konstakademien.


Den intima kvinnliga vänkapsens historia under 1800-talet berlyses mot bakgrund av samhälleliga förändringar vid århundradets slut, då kvinnors nära vänkapsrelationer alltmer kom att betraktas som ett hot mot patriarkala normer i samhället. Kapitlet undersöker vänkapsens betydelse för kvinnliga konstnärers professionalisering både på en praktisk och på en känslomässig nivå. Vidare studeras hur konstnärerna själva beskrev sina relationer i memoarer, dagböcker, artiklar och framför allt i brev. I kapitlet föreslås att ersätta begreppen *systerskap* respektive *sisterhood*, som ibland används för att beskriva kvinnliga konstnärers nätverk, med historikern Barbara H. Rosenweins begrepp *emotionella gemenskaper* respektive
emotional communities. Rosenweins begrepp fungerar som ett redskap för att studera de kvinnliga konstnärernas nära känslomässiga relationer och deras utveckling av en gemensam yrkesidentitet under sent 1800-tal.


Kapitlet avslutas med en analys av Baucks och Wegmanns konstnärliga samarbeten, gemensamt brevskrivande och delade upphovsmannaskap. Avhandlingen visar att Bauck och Wegmann systematiskt samarbetade kring både porträttdetaljering och fria landskapsstudier, där de två konstnärerna utförde detaljer i var-


Undersökningen visar att de kvinnliga konstnärernas professio- nalisering påverkades av om de hade tillgång till en ateljé eller inte. En ateljé erbjöd i realiteten optimala arbetsförhållanden och utgjor- de i måleriet en passande iscensättning som professionell konstnär. Genom en analys av hur ateljérummet gestaltades i måleriet och beskrevs i pressen och i brev analyseras platsens ambivalenta be- tydelse för nordiska kvinnliga konstnärers liv och verk i slutet av 1800-talet. Ateljén förstås som en hybridplats i gränslandet mellan det privata och det offentliga livet och är en passande iscensättning som professionell konstnär.

Genom en analys av hur ateljérummet gestaltades i måleriet och beskrevs i pressen och i brev analyseras platsens ambivalenta be- tydelse för nordiska kvinnliga konstnärers liv och verk i slutet av 1800-talet. Ateljén förstås som en hybridplats i gränslandet mellan det privata och det offentliga livet och är en passande iscensättning som professionell konstnär.

Tre konstverk analyseras mer ingående i kapitlet och det mest betydelsefulla verket i sammanhanget är Hanna Hirsch-Paulis vänskapsbild av Venny Soldan-Brofeldt i deras ateljé i Paris, som ställades ut på Salongen 1887. Analysen tar fast på relationen mel- lan den avbildade och det omgivande ateljérummet, vars avskalade enkelhet kan läsas som ett sätt att avsäga sig sin borgerliga identi- tet för att istället appropriera ett allomfattande konstnärligt ideal. Venny Soldan-Brofeldts pose, sittande på golvet med en lerklump i handen, tolkas som en iscensättning i rollen som konstnär-hantver- kare och som en bekräftelse av det egna arbetets autenticitet. Den
implicita dialogen mellan målaren Hanna Hirsch-Pauli och skulptören Venny Soldan-Brofeldt tolkas som en performativ iscensättning av en *paragone* mellan konstarterna, en konstnärlig tävling i Renässansens anda som utgjorde ett populärt tema inom det sena 1800-talets franska och nordiska konst. Venny Soldan-Brofeldts hittills opublicerade brev till Hanna Hirsch-Pauli studeras här för första gången, och de visar att porträttet blev kontroversiellt mottagen i Finland. Temat med en *paragone* mellan måleri och skulptur återkommer också i Eva Bonniers ateljéinteriör från 1886, där konstnären verkar ha velat anspela på myten om Pygmalion och skulptörenens förmåga att väcka liv i sin skapelse. Kapitlet avslutas med en analys av Asta Nørregaards självporträtt i ateljén i Paris från 1883, i vilket hon iscensätter sig själv i rollen som det ensamma geniet i enlighet med romantikens konstnärsideal.
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Detail of fig. 60.


Fig. 1. Hanna Hirsch-Pauli, *The Artist Venny Soldan-Brofeldt*, 1886–87, oil on canvas, 125.5 x 134 cm, Göteborgs konstmuseum, Gothenburg, inv. no. GKM 0444. Photo: Hossein Sehatlou/ Göteborgs konstmuseum. Identical with fig. 77.

Fig. 2. Jeanna Bauck (1840–1926). Photo: Nationalmuseum.

Fig. 3. Julia Beck (1853–1935). Photo: Björn Strömfeldt/ Kungliga Akademien för de fria konsterna.

Fig. 4. Eva Bonnier (1857–1909). Photo: Bonniers arkiv/ Centrum för näringslivshistoria.

Fig. 5. Hanna Hirsch-Pauli (1864–1940). Photo: Private archive.

Fig. 6. Asta Nørregaard (1853–1933). Photo: Oslo Museum.

Fig. 7. Venny Soldan-Brofeldt (1863–1945). Photo: Daniel Nyblin, Collection of Aho family/ Finnish Heritage Agency.

Fig. 8. Hildegard Thorell (1850–1930). Photo: Nationalmuseum.

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Fig. 12. Albert and Betty Bonnier with their three children Jenny, Karl Otto and Eva. Photo: Bonniers arkiv/ Centrum för näringslivshistoria.

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Fig. 42. Hermann Tietz, Bertha Wegmann and Toni Müller with their dog Fuggi in Berlin, 1904. Photo: Mikael Wivels Bertha Wegmann arkiv/ Den Hirschsprungske Samling.

Fig. 43. Bertha Wegmann, *Portrait of a Young Woman in a Blue Dress (Toni Müller)*, undated, oil on canvas, 100 x 73 cm, private collection. Photo: Bruun Rasmussen Kunstauctioner.

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Fig. 63. Christian Krohg, *Charles Lundh in Conversation with Christian Krohg*, 1883, oil on canvas, 35.5 x 29 cm, Skagens Kunstmuseum, Skagen, inv. no. SKM654. Photo: Skagens Kunstmuseum.

Fig. 64. Bertha Wegmann, *Portrait of the Swedish Painter Jeanna Bauck*, 1885, oil on wood, 49.2 x 31.5 cm, Den Hirschsprungske Samling, Copenhagen, inv. no. 504. Photo: Den Hirschsprungske Samling.

Fig. 65. Helene Schjerfbeck, *Portrait of Helena Westermarck*, 1884, oil on canvas, 37.5 x 22.5 cm, Gösta Serlachius Fine Arts Foundation, Mänttä, inv. no. 163. Photo: Gösta Serlachius Fine Arts Foundation, Mänttä.

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