Two photographs made at nearly the same time in the 1920s, and in the same city, New York, offer the dandy's image to twentieth-century viewers. For studied singly and in their interrelationships, both Alfred Stieglitz's photograph of painter Georgia O’Keeffe dressed with uncompromising and elegant simplicity in an oversized man's hat, dark suit jacket and white shirt open at the neck (Fig. 1), and Man Ray's photograph of Dadaist Marcel Duchamp in drag (Fig. 2) are alluring. As happens generally with portrait photographs, each photograph is a collaboration. In even the most ordinary of such photographs, the sitter poses her-/himself for a photographer who in turn also has a visual agenda. But with these photographs, the situation was intensified, for photographer and sitter were partners in invention. These photographs were more than simply portraits; they are agents in the construction of new artistic, cultural and sexual meanings, even of personal narrative. O’Keeffe once alluded to their passionate love affair when speaking of Stieglitz's photographs of her. Her comment, one made in the 1970s, was an unprecedented one, a rare admission that her sexual life had a life in her art. As for the Duchamp/Ray collaboration, it insinuated the image of Parisian femme fatale into the New York art world of the early twentieth century. That personage, an elegant, alluring and mysterious woman, at ease in a public space, had earlier been a central figure in nineteenth-century European literature and art (in the writing of Charles Baudelaire, and paintings by Gustave Moreau, Dante Gabriel Rossetti and others). The femme fatale is central to what Mary Ann Doane has felicitously termed the 'archaeology of modernism'. As Doane has pointed out, the femme fatale is a nexus for new, early twentieth-century ideas about modernity and urbanization (she inhabits a new urban space of dance halls, streets and restaurants), she figures in Freudian theory, and is central to the new reproductive technologies of photography and film. A 'sign of strength in an unwritten history' of the many feminisms, the femme fatale, as Doane has discussed her epistemology, carries with her the power of masquerade, a privileged, distanced and disruptive anti-knowledge behind a cool façade.4

The Duchamp photograph charts the profound ambivalence about sexual difference characteristic of the late nineteenth century, for it is the image of a disguise, laced with witty subterfuge. Duchamp borrowed his fashionable hat with its wonderful patterned headband from a friend, Grace Ewing, and it was Ewing who posed for the hands. Duchamp finished his creation by retouching Ray's photograph, softening the lens' focus to exaggerate the shadowy, sultry image of a femme fatale's mysterious and elusive mobility.

But downtown Greenwich Village Bohemia 'in the know' recognised another kind of mobility: androgyny. They recognized Marcel Duchamp cut loose from conventional notions of gendered individuation to present himself as the woman he named Rose Sélavy — a woman with veiled and shadowed eyes who has posed as if resting her elbows on a café table. Duchamp, so the image read to his audience, was double gendered, and — seemingly — changed his sexual aspect as easily as he changed clothing. And what of O'Keeffe? If the politics and mores of life in avant-garde circles influenced her dandyism, she also brought with her to New York by 1907 the disposition for cross-dressing not uncommon among middle-class young women born in the last decades of the nineteenth century (Fig. 3).5

These images of gender doubling and role reversal, the one of a man in the guise of a woman, the other one of a woman in Baudelaire's modern man's immaculate linen and stark black suiting (that 'modern hero's' garb, Baudelaire wrote, which has 'its own beauty'),6 once shaped an ambiance, while evoking it for us now: Greenwich Village in the 1910s, where aesthetic experimentation, feminism and other kinds of political activism flourished in a new climate of personal liberation, liberated sexuality, and at least the beginnings of a new sexual freedom for women.7 These photographs of artists all dressed up, with, as one might say (and as their work reveals it), everywhere to go, are versions of a specialized expression of artifice, a modernist icon/pose mode: the dandy. Defined conventionally as male, but also as female, as embodied in the dandyism of turn-of-the-century Gibson Girl Shirtwaist fashions, the dandy was coolly elegant, detached but intensely aware of self and situation. As perhaps the best known among other artists they knew, O’Keeffe and Duchamp, as well as Florine Stettheimer, took up and deliberately altered that dandy's image inherited from the nineteenth century, re-fashioning it to their own needs, and a new avant-garde art.8

It is hardly surprising that the model of Baudelaire's dandy translated so easily from French into
English, from Paris of the boulevards, to the newer and more raw avenues and cross-streets of New York of the 1910s. Clothed in his ‘eternal black suit’, the dandy, a product of his fin de siècle history, transcended it. Whether or not avant-garde artists in New York knew of the Baudelairean dandy’s connections with utopian socialism, the Eight and Ashcan School painters, as well as artists of the Stieg-
litz and Arensberg circles, were predisposed to a vision of artistic identity as being 'of the moment', and of modernity as heroic. And lively models for dandyism existed: Stieglitz in his well-known black cloak and Duchamp (both as male and as female) with his consummate elegance. (O'Keeffe once remarked on it.) The dandy's persona was seen as a vehicle for breaking with convention: New York artists shared Baudelaire's dandy's 'burning need to make of oneself something original'.

Now why was it that the dandy's image had such cogency for avant-garde art production in New York in the early twentieth century? It may be that the persona of the dandy is especially suited to urban modernism, beginning with Baudelaire's Paris, because, as we know it from his pronouncements, the type so clearly emerges as a composite: the flaneur/dandy, stroller/observer, 'passionate spectator', and the painter of modern life who can be identified as 'the perfect flaneur'. In the 1930s, Siegfried Kracauer commented on Baudelaire's thinking: 'On the Boulevards, the dandies lived, so to speak, extraterritorially.' Kracauer's exile's emphathies for dandyism surface in Walter Benjamin's flaneur/dandy, composedly present but 'out of place', as Benjamin puts it, on city streets.

Kracauer's and Benjamin's glosses on Baudelaire can suggest ways of looking at art produced earlier in the century in New York; for Duchamp, O'Keeffe
and Stettheimer each made work which draws attention to congruencies between the persona of the dandy and a climate of shifts and dislocations, that is, the paradox of the invigorating and empowering loss of belief in the certainties of past traditions, the intellectual and aesthetic loss of ‘place’ within accepted conventions, which is generally assumed in modernism’s beginnings.

Perhaps we need to remind ourselves that, as with post-modernism now, modernism too was once defined not in relation to formal concerns, but rather was structured in cultural terms, and was oppositional. New York art circles in Greenwich Village forged pragmatic definitions of modernism which were later submerged in discussions of self-contained and purified modes of modernism applied mostly to painting.

Greenwich Villagers in the teens were proud of their distance from bourgeois life and conventional politics and celebrated their marginality: it was much more interesting where they were. Thus it is no surprise that the attempts of New York modernists to relocate these new worlds within the shifting boundaries of their own art seem to inscribe the strolling dandy’s fascination with boundary lines and moving across them, her/his familiarity with being marginal, ‘out of place’, which also gave a new place on which to stand.

Representations of dandies in nineteenth-century paintings make marginality explicit, for they are rendered visible to us now in images of their up-to-the-minute fashion statements, for example, those declassés artists and intellectuals self-defined by dress, whose presence Baudelaire pointed out in the work of Constantin Guys, Eugène Lami and Gavarni, and which we have learned to recognize in paintings by Tissot, Caillebotte and Manet. Manet’s barmaid of the Bar at the Folies Bergère, beautiful in her black Parisian dress, is their female equivalent. T. J. Clark has described this woman and other dandies, compelling personalities whose elegant appearance punctuated nineteenth-century images of urban capitalism. Elegance, masking, and self-construction loosened their class ties. If the Folies Bergère barmaid is a person ‘whose demeanour’, as Anne Hanson has noted, is blunt and indifferent, at the same time as Clark writes, her face has a ‘character [which] derives from its not being bourgeois — and having that fact almost hidden’. With their class status disguised by their fashionable appearance, barmaid and flâneur had a new, if tenuous and chancy, social mobility; with their class not quite identifiable, some crossed class lines. A linguistic concept that illuminates their new, late nineteenth-century freedom of motion is that of the ‘shifter’, a free floating linguistic sign like ‘he’/‘she’, or ‘this’/‘that’, a word which takes on specific meaning only when used in context.

The notion of a ‘shifter’ is useful in explaining another aspect of the fit between dandyism and modernism, between dandyism as self-defining artistic strategy, as absorbed into the ethos of New York’s avant-garde. It is not only that the avant-garde encouraged shifting sexual freedom. There was also a significant distinction between New York’s avant-garde and earlier ones: its many women artists. The notion of the ‘shifter’ goes a long way in suggesting why the persona of the dandy was such a useful one tactically for women of the avant-garde in the early modern period — and why female dandies abounded in early modernism. For if, like the men, avant-garde women relished their place apart from conventional art institutions, they differed from them in being doubly displaced, that is, intensely aware of the need to negotiate, to assert individuality within what was still ‘male’ avant-garde culture.

O’Keeffe wrote in 1930, ‘I have had to go to the men as sources in my painting because the past has left us so small an inheritance of women’s painting.’ Stettheimer once commented ironically on a male photographer’s arrogance, and his female subject’s artistic revenge. Although the protagonists are un-named, they are clearly Stieglitz and O’Keeffe.

The presence of women put new pressure on androgyny. In a climate in which women’s images and actions as independent artists were without precedent, they made themselves up as they went along, defining themselves in new — and shifting — contexts. Thus women’s dandy’s images took on meanings which were empowering. They framed a challenge to the dominant mode of male discourse by using its own symbols against it. The early twentieth century inherited such images as photographer Frances Benjamin Johnston’s 1896 self portrait smoking a cigarette which mimics and flaunts male attributes and body language, and undermines the view that stereotypic male behaviour was unnatural for a woman. Although Johnston chose to show herself in women’s clothing, her constructed pose was that of a cross-dresser, and her image operated then in the sense that Susan Gubar has discussed it: ‘Cross-dressing becomes a way of ad-dressing and re-dressing the inequities of culturally-defined categories of masculinity and femininity.’ As Sandra M. Gilbert has written, ‘Feminist modernist costume imagery is radically revisionary in a political sense, for it implies that no one, male or female, can or should be confined to a uni-form, a single form or self.’

Female cross-dressers sometimes functioned as sex symbols for nineteenth-century men who attempted to eroticize and thus possess independent women or who repressed homosexual fantasies. But the New York avant-garde also inherited the examples of middle-class professional women. Dr Mary Walker wore men’s clothing as a Civil War doctor, and described its importance to her: it gave her the power to do her job. ‘While bodies are caged in the petticoat badge of dependence,’ she wrote, ‘minds and souls . . . cannot command themselves.’ Her choice of men’s clothing for freedom of
action was a tactic taken up by early feminists such as Mme Bernard Trouser, who lent her name to her sartorial invention, pants for women — ‘trousers’.34 Women in Greenwich Village may have had warm feelings for the stories of earlier women in the art world, for example, the French painter of animal subjects, Rosa Bonheur, who obtained permission from the Prefecture of the City of Paris to wear men’s clothing when she needed to visit barnyards and stables.35

Late nineteenth and early twentieth-century images of female cross-dressing in America included photographs of fresh-faced, wholesome-looking beauties like the popular actress, Maude Adams, who was famous at the turn of the century for playing men’s roles on stage. These images, and similar Gibson Girl advertising images of women in men’s hats and shirts, almost suggest a utopian vision of sexual equality, if only in consumerism. The photograph portrait of O’Keeffe in costume in men’s formal clothing for a 1907 New York Art Students’ League Ball alluded to above (Fig. 3) can be placed within a tradition of snapshots depicting high-spirited friendships among middle-class young women who wear men’s clothing. The photograph’s high-jinks evoke O’Keeffe’s youthful self, and are predictive.

Markedly absent in O’Keeffe’s photograph is the expression of pain Gubar has discovered in many well-known late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century images of women dressed like men, as for example, in a self portrait of 1920 by expatriate painter Romaine Brooks.36 The image is startling in its similarities to Stieglitz’s photograph of O’Keeffe, but it offers very different emotional messages. Brooks presented herself against a background of charred, bombed-out ruins, and her painting reveals obvious signs of strain in her shaded eyes and face and tense posture. The pose may suggest Brooks’ sympathies with Radclyffe Hall, who constructed an ambivalent and troubled fictional characterization of the bachelors much in the way one poses for a portrait.37 Hall’s analysis of her sense of freakishness repeats itself ... [in many women’s biographies].38

But O’Keeffe’s image, like Duchamp’s masquerade, is exuberant. We recall that in Duchamp’s image as Rosé Sélay even the name he made up for his alter-ego was a joke, a pun: Rosé Sélay translates as ‘love — that’s life’, if one gets it that ‘love/eros’ is Rosé with its doubled ‘r’s rolled out French style, and ‘c’est la vie’ has been anglicized — ‘that’s life’. And as with O’Keeffe’s, the image gives us Duchamp’s own wonderful good looks. His genuine allure as a woman departs from the nineteenth-century tradition of men dressed up as women who often look as gawky or deliberately awkward as New York Ash Can School painter, John Sloan, once did when in 1894 he dressed up as ‘Twillbe’ in a theatrical spoof of Trillbe,39 the victim/heroine of a popular Victorian pot-boiler. Even Duchamp allowed himself to look awkward in one particular Ray/Duchamp photograph collaboration of 1921, a perfume bottle label for a Duchamp ‘readymade’, Belle Halene: Beautiful Breath, Veil Water, in which the image-makers leave no doubt that Duchamp really is a man.40 Images of the androgynous body multiplied in New York’s avant-garde circles in a climate linking the artist’s body and artistic radicalism. Both Stieglitz circle artists, many of whom explored organic imagery, and Dadaists, who took the mechanical world as a point of departure, constructed androgynous images as a format for unconventional, intimate portraits. Duchamp’s Large Glass/The Bride Stripped Bare By Her Bachelors, even (1915–23)40 opened the possibilities for this new bridging, even for a new mode of sexuality, for the Large Glass, which offered contemporaries transparent images of the activities of amorous robots, featured ‘Bachelors’ who were dandies of sorts. Even though Duchamp provided a different identity for each of them,41 all of the bachelors wear abstracted versions of what is clearly the same generic ‘morning’ coat.

Their suitting is proper wedding attire and more. Duchamp characterized it as a ‘livery of uniforms’, a phrase which vividly evokes Baudelairean’s comments on the modern hero.42 As with Baudelaire, Duchamp’s list of professions even includes an undertaker.43 And if, as with Baudelaire, who observed that ‘A uniform livery of affliction bears witness to equality’,44 Duchamp’s bachelor dandies in their ‘livery’ are representatives of Baudelaire’s ‘public soul’,45 their representations are also Baudelairean because they are ‘outer husks’.46 Duchamp’s construction in the Large Glass seemingly took Baudelaire literally, for in his eccentric system, the uniforms are empty clothing,47 clothing, that is, as a receptacle, which waits for an identity to be supplied. It is amusing to suppose that viewers of the glass, spectators who for Duchamp functioned as part of the tableau, offered their own diverse identities to the bachelors much in the way one poses for a joke to be photographed behind false painted billboard identities at a carnival. Even more than this borrowing, though, there is the fact that the bachelors are ‘moulds’ and they are ‘hollow’.48 Their livers have the possibility of filling with mysterious essences that Duchamp invented (‘illuminating gas’, ‘provisional color’)49 which he called ‘eros’ matrix’.50 Duchamp’s is far from being the only double-gendered image produced in New York avant-garde circles in the 1910s and 1920s. Paintings by Florence Stettheimer suggest how readily the implications of Duchamp’s practices found acceptance. Stettheimer’s 1923 Portrait of Marcel Duchamp even documents Duchamp in his dandy’s doubled manifestations.
Stettheimer painted Duchamp seated facing his alter ego, Rrose Sélavy, whom she chose to represent as a stylish female sylph who balances with impeccable poise on a stool at the top of a spring in a Rube Goldberg-like contraption that Duchamp manipulates.51

Stettheimer’s paintings bring us New York in the 1920s and 1930s, taking in Greenwich Village and 42nd Street, downtown Bohemia, the ‘upper crust’, and popular culture; they offer a new mix of subject matter, for as Linda Nochlin has pointed out, Stettheimer populated her paintings of the city with personal friends, a ‘shifting’ dandy-esque world of public and private.52 A lively participant in New York cultural life whose pictures contradict conventionally held ideas that she was a recluse,53 Stettheimer gave parties which indexed the contemporary art scene.54 Carl Springehorn’s informal group portrait of art world guests at a party at the Stettheimer sisters’ apartment includes Charles Demuth, Arnold Genthe, Carl Van Vechten, Isabel Lachaise and Georgia O’Keeffe.55

And Stettheimer herself was no stranger to the tactics of cross-dressing and dandyism. In androgynous self-portraits, among them Portrait of Myself (1923) (Fig. 4), and in her cameo appearance in Family Portrait No. 2 (1993) (Fig. 5), the one-

Fig. 4. Florine Stettheimer: ‘Portrait of Myself’, 1923, oil on canvas, 101 × 65 cm. Columbia University in the City of New York, Gift of the Estate of Ettie Stettheimer.

Fig. 5. Florine Stettheimer: ‘Family Portrait, II’, 1933, oil on canvas, 117.5 × 164.1 cm. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Gift of Miss Ettie Stettheimer.
gendered aspect of Stettheimer's imaged self-construction enriches, plays against, and almost, but not quite, hides the other. Stettheimer's self portraits offer new images of the androgynous body. Portrait of Myself gives us Florine in her female persona in diaphanous flaming red, who doubles as male in the black beret she wears, an accessory borrowed from among the attributes of the nineteenth-century romantic male artist. A garland of flowers circles, while concealing, the point of sex. Later, in Family Portrait, she is male in her black painting clothes — actually fashionable lounging pyjamas modelled on a man's suit. Except she also has on high-heeled red shoes. As with the earlier portrait, the accessory, here the fancy woman's footgear, gives doubled gender to her image. Stettheimer was highly conscious of her sense of disguise. As one of her poems describes it: ‘Occasionally / A human being / Saw my light / Rushed in / Got singed / Got Scared / Rushed out / Called fire’ she wrote, ‘Or it happened / That he tried to extinguish it / Never did a friend / Enjoy it... / So I learned to turn it low... a protection...’

But even 'turned low', Stettheimer's cross-dressed self-images in paintings, self-constructions of a consummate dandy's personifications, offer evidence of the very acceptability of role and rule changes in the New York art world of the 1910s and 1920s, among a crowd which prized personal and artistic leeway and room to manoeuvre. Duchamp's famous urinal, R. Mutt's Fountain (1917) was, as William Camfield has argued very convincingly, known in Stieglitz and Dadaist circles both as a male Buddha and a female Madonna. Influenced by Duchamp, Man Ray's Dadaist 'readymades' also embodied the new Dadaist aesthetic in which sexual tensions and ambiguities resulted in a charged personal imagery. One of Ray's choices for a 'readymade', or claimed object, was a kitchen utensil, an egg beater with even life (birth, the egg), and scrambled destruction. Ray photographed it and then called identical prints 'Man'.

Another Ray and Duchamp collaborative photograph, Rotary Glass Plates, offers us Duchamp subsumed within the transparent body of a machine. This machine and other Dadaist mechanomorphs were almost invariably defined as female in the iconography of New York Dada. 'Man has made the machine in his own image,' wrote Dadaist participant Paul Haviland in 1915, and went on to describe her lungs, her limbs. In a climate where both men and women sought to define themselves in terms of the other sex, Haviland's comment apparently seeks to annex some perceived notion of fixed gender — are particularly modern. These are paintings of unmistakable but indefinable sexual content, whose sexual valences are impossible to pin down. Even if one were to apply the Freudian biologically-based theories of gender often resorted to in avant-garde circles in the 1910s, the shapes in such paintings are simultaneously phallic and womblike.

Freudian definitions were not always taken seriously in the Greenwich Village art world, and were often mis-applied. Perhaps they lost credence because they had become popular and over-used so quickly. In 1915, Susan Glaspell and George Cram Cook of the Provincetown Players even wrote a play, Suppressed Desires, spoofing the use of Freudian definitions, which was billed as a Freudian Comedy. And Alfred Stieglitz repudiated Freudianism as passé in a well publicized exhibition statement of 1921. Even so, Freudian ideas were part of a common language in the New York art world throughout the 1910s and 1920s, and beginning in the 1910s, O'Keeffe's art was often defined in essentialist Freudian terms. These were definitions she was reluctant to accept ("I would hear men saying, "She is pretty good for a woman; she paints like a man." That upset me.")

Photographs which document O'Keeffe's paintings raise other quite obvious questions about the climate for criticism in New York in the 1910s and 1920s, questions like 'Whose Freudianism?' or 'Who is doing the interpreting?' If phallic suggestions in O'Keeffe's sculpture and drawings in the 1910s seemed inescapable to her viewers then, still, it is useful to remember that it was Alfred Stieglitz who took the photographs which promote this reading, and that O'Keeffe and Stieglitz often disagreed on the work's meaning. O'Keeffe's statements about her work deny a specific essentialist sexual content.

Sexual images in O'Keeffe's art offer us a pervasive sexuality, one which floats loose from ties to fixed notions of gender; her imagery also shifts terms constantly to construct and re-construct images. It is useful to recall that O'Keeffe's life-sized, breakthrough, abstract drawings of the 1910s were charged with unusual somatic resonances: O'Keeffe drew some of them while crawling on the floor over them. These drawings were among O'Keeffe's first to take their cues from the generative forces in plant life. O'Keeffe, who designed Arts and Crafts movement Art Education programmes when she taught in Texas public schools, adapted particularly the image of the budding, sprouting plant in her abstractions. While reminding us that flowers are...
Fig. 6. Georgia O’Keeffe: ‘Two Calla Lilies on Pink’, 1928, oil on canvas, 101 × 76 cm. Alfred Stieglitz Collection, Bequest of Georgia O’Keeffe, Philadelphia Museum of Art.
double-sexed, the sexuality in O’Keeffe’s flower imagery randomizes human impulses and anatomy, as for example in Two Calla Lilies on Pink, 1928 (Fig. 6). What is one to make of the petals in Two Calla Lilies on Pink? Are they female? And the yellow protrusions from the flower centres? Are they phallic?

Serial painting ensembles in black and white, which are typical of O’Keeffe’s work beginning in the 1910s, pare away form to conflate a shifting and charged bisexuality with the studied presentation of the dandy’s self-making. O’Keeffe, who had read Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s articles on simplified clothing for liberated women in The Forerunner, in the 1910s began to dress exclusively in black or white, paring down and refining her fashion life at about the same time she reduced her palette.69 In the Shell and Old Shingle70 series of 1926, successive paintings — significantly — lose their green pigment to leave us with the colours of a dandy’s white linen and stark, black suiting. A suite of black and white paintings of c.1930, brought together for an exhibition at Stieglitz’s gallery71 in 1932 is another celebration of the absence of colour (Fig. 7). In these paintings, elegance alone remains. Stripped to the barest edge of legibility, they etch vibrating outlines with the rudiments of a flickering and pervasive human and vegetal sexuality.

It is instructive to compare the aesthetic dandyism of O’Keeffe and Stettheimer. If at first the two seem to have little in common, each carried over the dandy’s artifice and shifting ambiguities from her person to her art. Unlike O’Keeffe, Stettheimer played with ultra-feminine tropes as if with masks, re-vamping the clichés of the feminine: jewels, flounces, lace. She claimed cellophone as an artistic material in sets she created in 1934 for the opera, 4 Saints in 3 Acts, written by Gertrude Stein with music by Virgil Thompson.

Stettheimer’s assumed naïve imagery offers us an art which is dense, packed. She destroyed spatial illusion in order to leave room for things, describing her paintings in poems which are like lists: they are non-hierarchical with a lateral spread. Here is one in which Stettheimer describes herself in terms of objects, a set of desires:

I like slippers gold
I like oysters cold
and my garden filled with flowers
and the sky full of towers
and traffic in the streets
and Maillard’s sweets
and Bendel’s clothes
and Nat Lewis hose
and Tappes window arrays
and crystal fixtures
and my pictures.72

All this abundance would seem to be quite different from O’Keeffe’s stripped-down sensibility, until we take note of their similarities. In both, we have an art crafted out of excess — in the one, Stettheimer’s, an extreme materiality; in the other, O’Keeffe’s, an extreme reserve.

Perhaps the best way to suggest the importance of the dandy’s persona as an artistic tactic in the art of O’Keeffe and Stettheimer is to compare paintings that both made in the 1920s and 1930s in which startling objects float, dislocated, in the sky. In O’Keeffe paintings, these are mostly flowers (Fig. 8), though she also chose bones and cow and deer skulls.73 These paintings take on new meanings when compared with Stettheimer’s Family Portrait, No. 2, where numerous things, including a chandelier and its near look-alike in the form of a glowing and crystalline image of the Chrysler building, are suspended. As with O’Keeffe, Stettheimer levitates silk flowers, crafted emblems of a stereotyped femininity.

These objects with their novel locations also have undergone disconcerting scale changes. Literally ungrounded, enormous, they are observed as spectacle, as panoply. And with this vision, artificed, ambiguous and shifting, we are returned to the elegant and strolling flâneur/dandy, who takes on an

Fig. 7. Georgia O’Keeffe: ‘Black and White’, 1930, oil on canvas, 91.4 × 61 cm. 50th Anniversary Gift of Mr and Mrs R. Crosby Kemper, Collection of Whitney Museum of American Art.
artist's body. Stettheimer's self-image spells it out for us. If, in *Family Portrait, No. 2* (as in other paintings), Stettheimer identifies herself as a painter, here where her mannish painting pyjamas separate her from her jewelled and begowned family, there is also the *flâneur*'s location she has chosen for herself at the side of her own painting — at its margin — which offers her the most complete view of the panorama she has constructed for us.

Such dandyism in the work of both artists is a dandyism of locations, both psychic and physical, and a resultant dandyism of vision. In each case, objects have been drawn very close: the giant flowers and other floating things have been pushed to the foreground, nearly into our space. At the same time, the imagery, which looms against glowing skies, crowds the canvas. Stettheimer and O'Keeffe both suggest that certain things cannot be contained within boundaries, and so, psychologically, their images seem to push viewers back, displacing them. Thus, the viewers of Stettheimer's and O'Keeffe's paintings are brought to share the vision of the modernist artist, the *flâneur*/dandy 'out of place', who privileges the view from the sidelines in images of distancing and dislocation while investing them with insight — and, perhaps, with the glamour of the unattainable.

And it is this dandy's consciousness of self and position which made that persona so useful an appropriation for all sorts of modernist dandies and cross-dressers, and especially for women artists, a persona which is inscribed in Stettheimer's dense narrations, in O'Keeffe's resonant severities, and the destabilizing spatial disjunctions seen in both. Each in her own way gives us images of modernism's mobile spaces in a vision of a world no longer grounded in certainty, no longer marked out in traditional perspective or rules of painting — or in clichéd sexual roles. If, as one might argue, modernism and the dandy constructed each other, women artists of New York's *avant-garde* shaped that construction to their own purposes as specially suited to their own paintings. The visual imagery of dislocation that these early modernist dandies mapped out has come down to us now in a shifting, sometimes recalcitrant, subversive and provocative masquerade.

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This paper is dedicated to my parents and to Milton W. Brown.

**Notes**

3. Doane, p. 3.
4. Doane, pp. 33–43. Although female masquerade has been conceptually discussed as relicitation as a norm of femininity, I am using the alternate reading Doane's analysis provides: as a way of breaking with clichés and a destabilizing tactic.
5. For a discussion, see Martha Banta, *Imaging American Women* (Columbia University Press, New York, 1987); and Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America* (Oxford University Press, New York and Oxford, 1985), pp. 245–96. See also Doane’s discussion, in *Femmes Fatales*, pp. 24–5, of Freud’s and Cixous ideas about female transvestism, including ‘mastery over the image’ and ‘the ease with which women can slip into male clothing’. For an exemplary analysis of the cultural and political resonances of 1920s clothing which sheds light on the American version of the phenomenon, see Mary Louise Roberts, *Samson and Delilah Revisited: The Politics of Women’s Fashion in 1920s France*, *American Historical Review*, vol. 98, no. 3, June 1993, pp. 657–84. As Roberts points out, p. 684, ‘Fashion was not “politics” as we are used to conceiving of it, but the debates over its meaning were profoundly political.’ My thanks to Jacqueline Dirks for giving me the Roberts article.
7. O’Keeffe’s art as we now know it took shape in Greenwich Village circles which included Emma Goldman, Neith Boyce, and Charlotte Perkins Gilman. A letter of August 1915 to Anita Politzer reads, ‘then 291 [the Stieglitz Gallery publication] came and I was so crazy about it that I sent for Number 2 and 3 — and I think they are great — they just take my breath away — it is almost as good as going to 291 [Gallery]. I subscribed to it — it was too good to let it go by — and I had to have the Master too. I got Jerome Avery [Cubists and Post Impressionism, 1913] a long time ago and sent for Kandinsky. . . . I got Floyd Dell Women at World Builders a few days ago and got quite excited over it.’ Letter with permission from the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University and the Georgia O’Keeffe Estate. For a study of Greenwich Village in the 1910s, see Julie Sohmen, The New Woman, Feminism in Greenwich Village, 1910–1920 (Quadrangle Books, New York, 1972).


9. For a discussion, see Steele, pp. 92–6.

10. Stieglitz wears his cloak in Florine Stettheimer’s 1928 portrait of him. See, for another example, Marius de Zayas’s caricature of Stieglitz, which has the double allusion of a cloak and a camera cover cloth. See Douglas Hyland, Marius de Zayas, Conjuror of Souls (Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, 1981).


19. John Sloan’s etching, Arch Conspirators, 1917, set on top of Washington Square Arch, commemorates a New Year’s Eve party joke when Greenwich Villagers including Sloan and Duchamp decided to declare the Village an independent nation and secede from the United States.


23. For a lively account, see Margaret Anderson, My Thirty Years War (Horizon Press, New York, 1978).


32. For an illustration, see Banta, Imaging American Women, p. 36.

33. For a compilation of Bonheur bibliography, see Whitney Chadwick, Women, Art and Society (Thames and Hudson, London, 1990), p. 371.

34. See Adelyn Breeskin, Romains Broek: Thérèse de Lis (Smithsonian Institution Press for the National Collection of Fine Arts, Washington, DC, 1971).


38. Duchamp worked on the Large Glass in New York studios which included one adjacent to the 67th Street apartment of his patrons, Louise and Walter Arensberg.


41. The others are a Priest, Department store delivery boy, Gendarme, Cuirassier, Policeman, Flunkey, Busboy. See Schwarz, Notes and Projects, p. 144.


46. I am indebted to Nina Felshin for the useful term.

47. See Duchamp, Notes and Projects, p. 146.


49. See Duchamp, Notes and Projects, p. 146.

50. Duchamp appears in earlier Stettheimer paintings, La Fête à Duchamp (1917) and Picnic at Bedford Hills (1918). For illustrations, see Henry McBride, Florine Stettheimer (Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1946), pp. 12, 15, 27; this catalogue was for Stettheimer’s memorial exhibition at the museum for which Duchamp was Guest Director.


52. For a contemporary account see Mervyn Hartley, ‘The paintings of Florine Stettheimer’, Creative Art, July 1931, pp. 18–23.

53. See McBride, Florine Stettheimer, pp. 12, 14.

54. For an illustration, see Parker Tyler, Florine Stettheimer, following p. 146.

55. See Stettheimer, Crystal Flowers.

56. William A. Camfield, Marcel Duchamp Fountain (Houston Fine Arts Press, Menil Collection, Houston, Texas, 1989).

57. For an illustration, see Arturo Schwarz, New York Dada (Prestel-Verlag, Munich and Tübingen, 1974), Pl. 71.

58. For an illustration, see Arturo Schwarz, New York Dada, Pl. 77.


61. Among Dow’s paintings are: Based on Leaf Forms and Spaces (1914), Penetration (1926), and Dancing (1934).
64. O’Keeffe, as quoted in ‘Is Art Life? Is Life Art? They Disagree’.
65. For examples, see Stieglitz’s photograph of O’Keeffe with a rare sculpture of 1917, and his photograph of the sculpture with her painting, Pink and Blue Music, both in the Wastebasket Collection, The Beinecke Rare Book Library, Yale University.
67. O’Keeffe described making drawings by ‘crawling on the floor till I have cramps in my feet’. Letter to Anita Pollitzer, 13 December 1913, with permission from the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, and the Georgia O’Keeffe Foundation.
70. For illustrations, see Georgie O’Keeffe, Georgia O’Keeffe (Viking Press, New York, 1978), Pl. 47–51.
71. For an installation photograph, see Waldo Frank, America and Alfred Stieglitz (Literary Guild, 1932), Pl. XXVII.
72. Steetheimer, Crystal Flowers...
73. See Ram’s Head — White Hollyhock — Little Hills, N.M. (1935) and from The Faraway Nearby (1937).
74. There are very interesting parallels in this respect between O’Keeffe’s art and the painting of her contemporary, Canadian artist Emily Carr, active in Vancouver.