Bergson’s Élan Vital as Reflected in Florine Stettheimer’s Orphée of the Quat-z-arts

Michael Neumeister
CUNY City College

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Bergson’s Élan Vital as Reflected in
Florine Stettheimer’s Orphée of the Quat-z-arts

Michael Neumeister

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of the requirements for the degree of
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Abbreviations

FESP – Florine and Ettie Stettheimer Papers. Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

FSP – Florine Stettheimer Papers. Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University Library.


The second libretto variant in the collection of Yale.


The third and latest libretto manuscript. Transcribed in Gammel and Zelazo, eds., 136-139.
Contents

List of Illustrations v
Introduction 1

Chapter I: The Ballet Materials: Context and Content
   1. Inspiration in Europe 11
   2. The Artist’s Libretti 18
   3. Dramatis Personae 22

Chapter II: Philosophy
   1. Orphic Symbolism 35
   2. Bergsonism 40

Conclusion 53
Illustrations 58
Bibliography 123
Appendix 130
List of Illustrations

Note. As part of this research, *Orphée of the Quat-z-Arts* designs are designated by titles provided by the author. Titles originally assigned by the Museum of Modern Art are indicated in brackets.

Figure 1  Florine Stettheimer. *Nude Study, Standing with Hands Clasped*, May, 1895. Oil on canvas mounted on board. 30 1/8 x 18 1/8 in. (76.4 x 45.9 cm). Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York. 1967.23.003

Figure 2  Marsden Hartley. *Painting, Number 5*, 1914-15. Oil on linen. 39 1/4 x 32 in. (99.7 x 81.3 cm). Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. 58.65

Figure 3  Arthur Dove. *Plant Forms*, c. 1912. Pastel on canvas. Overall (Sight): 17 1/4 x 23 7/8 x 1 1/4 in. (43.8 x 60.6 x 3.2 cm). Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. 51.20

Figure 4  Grant Wood. *American Gothic*, 1930. Oil on beaver board. 30 3/4 x 25 3/4 in. (78 x 65.3 cm). Art Institute of Chicago. 1930.934

Figure 5  Charles Demuth. *I Saw the Figure 5 in Gold*, 1928. Oil, graphite, ink, and gold leaf on paperboard (Upson board). 35 1/2 x 30 in. (90.2 x 76.2 cm). Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. 49.59.1
Figure 6  Edward Hopper. *Railroad Sunset*, 1929. Oil on canvas. Overall: 29 5/16 × 48 1/8 in. (74.5 × 122.2 cm). Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. 70.1170

Figure 7  Florine Stettheimer. *Head of Medusa (Head of Ettie Stettheimer as Medusa)*, 1908. Oil on canvas. 16 1/4 x 23 1/8 in. (41.3 x 58.7 cm). Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York. 1967.23.034

Figure 8  Franz von Stuck. *Head of Medusa*, c. 1892. Pastel on paper. 10 1/2 x 13 in. (26.5 x 32.5 cm). Museen der Stadt Aschaffenburg.

Figure 9  Florine Stettheimer. *Portrait of Myself*, 1923. Oil on canvas mounted on composition board. 40 3/8 x 26 3/8 in. (102.7 x 67 cm). Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York. 1967.17.005

Figure 10  Florine Stettheimer. *Self-Portrait with Palette (Painter and Faun)*, n.d. Oil on canvas. 60 x 71 7/8 in. (152.2 x 182.4 cm). Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York. 1967.17.011
Figure 11 Florine Stettheimer. *Portrait of Carl Van Vechten*, 1922. Oil on canvas. 36 x 31 1/2 in. (91 x 80 cm). Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, New Haven.

Figure 12 Henri Matisse. *The Red Studio*, Fall 1911. Oil on canvas. 71 1/4 x 7 ft. 2 1/4 in. (181 x 219.1 cm). Museum of Modern Art, New York. 8.1949

Figure 13 Henri Matisse. *Red Room: Harmony in Red*, 1908. Oil on canvas. 71 x 87 in. (180.5 x 221 cm). State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg. ГЭ-9660

Figure 14 Florine Stettheimer. *Portrait of My Aunt, Caroline Walter Neustadter*, 1928. Oil on canvas. 38 x 26 1/4 in. (96.5 x 66.7 cm). The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City. 51-13

Figure 15 Florine Stettheimer. *New York/Liberty*, 1918. Oil on canvas. 60 x 42 in. (152 ½ x 106 ½ cm). Private Collection.

Figure 16 Florine Stettheimer. *The Cathedrals of Art*, 1942. Oil on canvas. 60 1/4 x 50 1/4 in. (153 x 127.6 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. 53.24.1
Figure 17  Masaccio. *Payment of the Tribute Money*, 1426-27. Fresco. 100 x 235 1/2 in. (255 x 598 cm). La cappella Brancacci nella Chiesa della Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence.

Figure 18  Gustave Moreau. *Orpheus*, 1865. Oil on wood. 61 x 39 in. (155 x 99.5 cm). Musée d'Orsay, Paris. RF 104

Figure 19  Baron Adolf de Meyer. Photograph of Vaslav Nijinsky from the portfolio *L'Apres-midi d'un Faune – Nijinsky*, 1912. Palladium print by Richard Benson, 1977. 8 11/16 × 5 5/16 in. (22.1 × 13.5 cm). Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. 79.4.30

Figure 20  Florine Stettheimer. *Sketchbook for Orphée of the Quat-z-arts*, Fall 1912-1916. Sketchbook containing designs. [Designs for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"]. Museum of Modern Art, New York. 83.1947.1-54

Figure 21  Florine Stettheimer. Detail showing Munchen sticker (inside cover), *Sketchbook for Orphée of the Quat-z-arts*, Fall 1912-1916. Sketchbook containing designs. [Designs for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"]. Museum of Modern Art, New York. 83.1947.1-54
Figure 22  Florine Stettheimer. Detail showing Munchen sticker (inside cover), *Florine Stettheimer’s Diary*, 1913. Diary. FESP Series II, Box 6, Folder 113.

Figure 23  Florine Stettheimer. *Studies of Classical Figures*, c. 1914. Pencil on paper. FESP Series III, Box 8, Folder 142.

Figure 24  Florine Stettheimer. *Sketch of Mars with Beast*, Fall 1912-1916. Gouache, watercolor, metallic paint, and pencil on paper. 15 1/8 x 9 1/8 in. (38.4 x 23.2 cm). [Costume design (Mars) for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"). Museum of Modern Art, New York. 83.1947.23

Figure 25  Florine Stettheimer. *Sketch of Mars Brandishing Sword*, Fall 1912-1916. Watercolor, metallic paint, and pencil on paper. 15 1/8 x 9 1/8 in. (38.4 x 23.2 cm). [Costume design (Mars Brandishing Sword) for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"). Museum of Modern Art, New York. 83.1947.18

Figure 26  Florine Stettheimer. *Sketch of Bolm as Mars on Horse*, c. 1916. Gouache and pencil on paper. 15 1/8 x 9 1/8 in. (38.4 x 23.2 cm). [Costume design (Bolm) for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"). Museum of Modern Art, New York. 83.1947.50
Figure 27  Florine Stettheimer. *Sketch of Bolm as Mars*, c. 1916. Gouache and pencil on paper. 15 1/8 x 9 1/8 in. (38.4 x 23.2 cm). [.a: Costume design (Bolm); .b: Costume design; for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"]. Museum of Modern Art, New York. 83.1947.49a-b

Figure 28  Florine Stettheimer. *Mars on Horse*, c. 1916. Modeling putty and pigmented shellac-based paint on wire armature with brass sheet and wood. sculpture: 12" (30.5 cm); base: 7 1/2 x 4 14 x ½ in. [51: Mars. Maquette for the artist's ballet Orphée of the Quat'z Arts; 52: Horse. Maquette for the artist's ballet Orphée of the Quat'z Arts]. Museum of Modern Art, New York. 83.1947.51 and .52

Figure 29  Florine Stettheimer. *Sketch of Avenue des Champs-Élysées*, Fall 1912-1916. Gouache, watercolor, and pencil on paper. 9 1/8 x 15 1/8 in. (23.2 x 38.4 cm). [Scenery design for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"]. Museum of Modern Art, New York. 83.1947.28

Figure 30  Florine Stettheimer. *Georgette in Gown*, 1914-1916. Oil, cloth, fur, yarn, and hair on canvas. 17 1/4 x 15 1/8 in. (43.8 x 38.4 cm). [Costume design (Figure of a woman) for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"]. Museum of Modern Art, New York. 83.1947.8
Figure 31  Florine Stettheimer. *Georgette Dancing*, 1914-1916. Gouache and lace on paper on wood. 18 x 12 7/8 in. (45.7 x 32.7 cm). [Costume design (Figure of a woman) for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"]. Museum of Modern Art, New York. 83.1947.7

Figure 32  Florine Stettheimer. *Sketch of Georgette Dancing*, Fall 1912-1916. Pencil, watercolor, and metallic paint on paper. 15 1/8 x 9 1/8 in. (38.4 x 23.2 cm). [Costume design (Georgette) for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"]. Museum of Modern Art, New York. 83.1947.24

Figure 33  Florine Stettheimer. *Sketch of Nijinsky as Orpheus*, Fall 1912-1916. Gouache and metallic paint on paper. 15 1/8 x 9 1/8 in. (38.4 x 23.2 cm). [Costume design (Nijinsky) for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"]. Museum of Modern Art, New York. 83.1947.10

Figure 34  Florine Stettheimer. *Sketch of Orpheus Leading the Procession with Eurydice*, Fall 1912-1916. Gouache, metallic paint, watercolor, and pencil on paper. 9 1/8 x 15 1/8 in. (23.2 x 38.4 cm). [Costume design for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"]. Museum of Modern Art, New York. 83.1947.42
Figure 35  Florine Stettheimer. *Sketch of Orpheus*, Fall 1912-1916. Gouache and pencil on paper. 15 1/8 x 9 1/8 in. (38.4 x 23.2 cm). [Costume design for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"]. Museum of Modern Art, New York. 83.1947.45

Figure 36  Florine Stettheimer. *Orpheus*, 1914-1916. Oil, cloth, and gold braid on canvas. 18 1/2 x 15 3/8 in. (47 x 39.1 cm). [Figure. Costume design for the artist's ballet Orphée of the Quat-z-arts]. Museum of Modern Art, New York. 83.1947.5

Figure 37  Florine Stettheimer. *Procession of Zizim of Persia, Agnes of Bourganeuf, and Pierre d'Aubusson*, 1914-1916. Oil, fabric, and beads on canvas. 17 1/8 x 35 1/8 in. (43.5 x 89.2 cm). [Costume design (Procession: Orpheus...) for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"]. Museum of Modern Art, New York. 83.1947.6

Figure 38  *The Lady and the Unicorn*, late 15th-early 16th century. Woven tapestry. Musée national du Moyen Âge, Paris. Cl. 10832
Figure 39  Florine Stettheimer. *Sketch of Zizim of Persia and Agnes of Bourganeuf*, Fall 1912-1916. Gouache, watercolor, and pencil on paper. 9 1/8 x 15 1/8 in. (23.2 x 38.4 cm). [Costume design (Agnes de Bourganeuf, Pierre d'Aubusson and Zizim of Persia) for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"]. Museum of Modern Art, New York. 83.1947.37

Figure 40  Photograph of *Orphée of the Quat-z-arts*, installation view for Florine Stettheimer [MoMA Exh. #332, October 1-November 17, 1946]. Museum of Modern Art, Museum Archives Image Database, New York.

Figure 41  Florine Stettheimer. *Sketch of a Goddess with Reveler and Faun*, Fall 1912-1916. Gouache and pencil on paper. 9 1/8 x 15 1/8 in. (23.2 x 38.4 cm). [Costume design for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"]. Museum of Modern Art, New York. 83.1947.27

Figure 42  Florine Stettheimer. *Music*, c. 1920. Oil on canvas. 69 x 50 1/2 x 1 3/4 in. (175.26 x 128.27 x 4.45 cm). Rose Art Museum at Brandeis University, Waltham. -.1038

Figure 43  Florine Stettheimer. *Picnic at Bedford Hills*, 1918. Oil on canvas. 40 5/16 x 50 1/4 in. (102.39375 x 127.635 cm). Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Philadelphia. 1950.21
Figure 44  Florine Stettheimer. *Ariadne and Dionysus*, 1914-1916. Oil, putty, fabric, and beads on canvas. 17 1/8 x 25 in. (43.5 x 63.5 cm). [Costume design (Ariadne on Panther...) for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"]. Museum of Modern Art, New York. 83.1947.2

Figure 45  Johann Heinrich von Dannecker. *Ariadne on the Panther*, 1803-1814. Marble. Height: 57 1/2 in. (146 cm). Liebieghaus Skulpturensammlung, Frankfurt.

Figure 46  Florine Stettheimer. *Androcles and the Lion*, 1914-1916. Oil, yarn, fabric, and lace on wood. 11 7/8 x 17 7/8 in. (30.2 x 45.4 cm). [Costume design (Woman on Lion) for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"]. Museum of Modern Art, New York. 83.1947.3

Figure 47  *Relief Panel*, Neo-Assyrian, c. 883-859 BC. Gypsum alabaster. 92 1/4 x 92 x 4 1/2 in. (234.3 x 233.7 x 11.4 cm). Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. 32.143.4

Figure 48  Florine Stettheimer. *Aphrodite and Wave*, 1914-1916. Oil, lace, beads, and silver foil sewed and pinned to canvas. 17 x 24 7/8 in. (43.2 x 63.2 cm). [Costume design (First-Rush, Esclave) for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"]. Museum of Modern Art, New York. 83.1947.1
Figure 49  Florine Stettheimer. *Sketch of Aphrodite and Wave*, Fall 1912-1916.  
Gouache and pencil on paper. 9 1/8 x 15 1/8 in. (23.2 x 38.4 cm).  
[Costume Design (Wave and Aphrodite) for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"]. Museum of Modern Art, New York. 83.1947.35

Figure 50  *Relief from the temple of Hatshepsut showing Egyptian soldiers*, Dynasty 18, Egypt, 1479-1458 BC. Limestone. 13 x 23 in. (33 x 58.5 cm).  
ÄM 14507

Figure 51  *Bust of Queen Nefertiti*, New Kingdom, Dynasty 18, Egypt, c. 1340 BC.  
Limestone, gypsum, crystal and wax. Height: 19 3/5 in. (50 cm).  
ÄM 21300

Figure 52  Florine Stettheimer. *Profile Studies*, Fall 1912-1916. Pencil on paper.  
15 1/8 x 9 1/8 in. (38.4 x 23.2 cm). [Costume design for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"]. Museum of Modern Art, New York.  
83.1947.30
Figure 53  Florine Stettheimer. *Sketch of Female Model*, Fall 1912-1916. Gouache, metallic paint, and pencil on paper. 15 1/8 x 9 1/8 in. (38.4 x 23.2 cm). [Costume design (First Rush) for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"]). Museum of Modern Art, New York. 83.1947.14

Figure 54  Florine Stettheimer. *Sketch of Male Model*, Fall 1912-1916. Gouache, watercolor, and pencil on paper 15 1/8 x 9 1/8 in. (38.4 x 23.2 cm). [Costume design (Modele homme) for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"]). Museum of Modern Art, New York. 83.1947.16

Figure 55  Gustav Klimt. *The Kiss*, 1908-1909. Figural area: gold leaf, silver, platinum, lead, oil on canvas primed with zinc. Background: brass and glaze. 71 x 71 in. (180 x 180 cm). Belvedere Museum, Vienna. 912

Figure 56  Florine Stettheimer. *Sketch of Female Apache*, Fall 1912-1916. Watercolor and pencil on paper. 15 1/8 x 9 1/8 in. (38.4 x 23.2 cm). [Costume design (Apache girl) for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"]). Museum of Modern Art, New York. 83.1947.29

Figure 57  Wassily Kandinsky. *Improvisation 28 (Second Version)*, 1912. Oil on canvas. 43 7/8 x 63 7/8 in. (111.4 x 162.1 cm). Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. 37.239
Figure 58  Florine Stettheimer. *Fortune Telling Cards*, n.d. Pencil and watercolor. FSP Box 2, Folder 1a.

Figure 59  Florine Stettheimer. *San Paolo fuori le Mura*, January 25, 1900. Pencil, watercolor and pastel. FSP Box 1, Folder 5.

Figure 60  Florine Stettheimer. *Sketch of St. Francis of Assisi*, Fall 1912-1916. Gouache, watercolor, and pencil on paper. 15 1/8 x 9 3/8 in. (38.4 x 23.8 cm). [Costume design (St. Francis of Assisi) for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"]. Museum of Modern Art, New York. 83.1947.12

Figure 61  Florine Stettheimer. *Sketch of Eurydice, the Apaches, and St. Francis of Assisi*, Fall 1912-1916. Gouache, watercolor, metallic paint, and pencil on paper. 9 1/8 x 15 1/8 in. (23.2 x 38.4 cm). [Euridice and her Snake, Two Tango Dancers and St. Francis. Costume design for the artist's ballet Orphée of the Quat'z Arts]. Museum of Modern Art, New York. 83.1947.32

Figure 62  Florine Stettheimer. *Henry McBride, Art Critic*, 1922. Oil on canvas. 30 x 26 in. (76.2 x 66.04 cm). Smith College Museum of Art, Northampton. SC 1951:198
Figure 63  Florine Stettheimer. *Lake Placid*, 1919. Oil on canvas. 40 1/8 x 50 1/8 in. (101.92 x 127.32 cm). Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. 47.1541

Figure 64  Florine Stettheimer. *Heat*, 1919. Oil on canvas. 50 x 36 1/2in. (127 x 92.7cm). Brooklyn Museum. 57.125

Figure 65  Photograph of stage set for *Four Saints in Three Acts*, March 10, 1934. Sets and costumes designed by Florine Stettheimer. Black and white photographic print. 11 x 14 in. (28 x 35.5 cm). FESP Series IV, Box 11, Folder 182.
Introduction

The versatile American artist Florine Stettheimer (1871-1944) is best known today for her distinctive paintings. The artist’s expressive and colorful compositions reflect an acquaintance with a wide range of European artworks, as experienced in her extensive international travels. Despite Stettheimer’s lifelong devotion to the medium, she was not exclusively a painter; often overlooked is her affinity for the performing arts. Although not a performer herself, her work in the arena of scenography and costume design reveals a multitalented artist with considerable range. The artist’s ballet *Orphée of the Quat-z-arts* (Fall 1912-16) marks a turning point in her career. Though never performed, Stettheimer’s ample work on the project, including the production of fifty-four artworks, as well as three libretti drafts, signifies her enthusiasm for the ballet and its impact as a component to her creative vision.1 Prior to 1912, her canvases show the budding artist’s engagements with historical art movements, including post-impressionism. The *Orphée* designs are the first indicators of Stettheimer’s abandonment of academic training in favor of a novel aesthetic, marked by a flattened perspective, ornamental embellishment, and the incorporation of her trademark androgynous figures.

The ballet’s narrative proposes art and creativity as means to achieve freedom from societal restraint. This concept demonstrates an affinity with the ideas of contemporary French philosopher Henri Bergson (1859-1941). Stettheimer’s interest in Bergson is supported by a diary entry describing her intention to attend his lecture at the Collège de France in April 1912.2 The philosopher’s writings, particularly his *Creative

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1 The total number of works might vary depending on how they are accounted for (e.g. two distinct sculptural figures are assigned unique catalogue numbers by the Museum of Modern Art, although they are meant to be displayed together).

2 For an unknown reason, the philosopher did not lecture that day. FESP Series II, Box 6, Folder 112.
Evolution, privilege creativity and intuition above analytic rationality. This is exemplified by Bergson’s concept of the “élan vital” or vital impulse, the vibrant and necessary creative force that impels evolutionary progress. In its employment of imaginary creatures, irrational narrative, and a dreamlike scenario, Stettheimer’s first ballet suggests a Bergsonian component in the artist’s mature oeuvre that has yet to be thoroughly explored.

Scholarship on the ballet is currently limited. The works are maintained at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, and were donated by Florine’s sister Ettie after the artist’s death. Selections have been shown by the museum at various times and in diverse contexts, including most recently as part of a presentation on Dada. The designs have also been lent by the museum to other institutions; the ballet was first prominently featured in the Whitney Museum of American Art’s Stettheimer retrospective in 1995 (Manhattan Fantastica, July 13-November 5, 1995), and strongly factors into the Jewish Museum’s exhibition in 2017 (Florine Stettheimer: Painting Poetry, May 5-September 24, 2017). Despite its recognition, presently no catalogue of the materials exists.

The Museum of Modern Art ascribes broad titles to the designs, which frequently do not reflect the contents of the works. In the absence of a catalogue raisonné, and lacking a protracted examination of the materials associated with the ballet, the author proposes a twofold investigation for the purposes of this thesis: first, an examination of the formal characteristics of the individual works created by Stettheimer for the Orphée, their inspirational sources, as well as their artistic and historical context; and second, a contextual analysis of the work as reflective of Stettheimer’s embrace of Bergsonian

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3 Two works, Ariadne and Dionysus and Eurydice and the Snake were on view in 2016 as part of the museum’s rotating presentation of its permanent collection.
philosophy. Through formal, contextual, and historical analysis, this thesis considers the 
*Orphée* as a stylistic breakthrough and a work thematically coinciding with Bergsonism.

The third of five children, Florine Stettheimer was born in August 1871 in Rochester, New York. Her father Joseph abandoned the family while Florine was still young, leaving his wife Rosetta (née Walter) to care for her brood. Eldest daughter Stella married at nineteen and moved to California; lone son Walter also headed West shortly thereafter. Florine, older sister Caroline (Carrie), and youngest Henrietta (Ettie) agreed to look after their mother for the rest of her days. It was not until 1935, after Rosetta’s death and when the artist was already in her sixties, that Stettheimer lived independently.

The family’s significant wealth enabled the Stettheimer clan to travel extensively in Europe, as the sisters were not required to work. They were capable of pursuing their interests freely, and in this regard they did not lack ambition: Ettie graduated from Barnard College of Columbia University, earned her Master’s in psychology in 1898, and received a Ph.D. at the Albert-Ludwig University in Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany. She published two autobiographical novels under the pseudonym Henrie Waste, inspired by her formation as a doctor of philosophy. Carrie, who was primarily charged with arranging the family’s affairs, worked for two decades on an elaborate dollhouse,

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5 Ibid. 210 - 211.
6 Ibid. 12.
complete with miniature recreations of prominent contemporary artworks. Meanwhile, middle sister Florine’s calling was art.

Stettheimer enrolled in the Art Students League of New York in 1892, and was elected to its Governing Board in 1895. There she studied under established artists James Carroll Beckwith, Kenyon Cox, and H. Siddons Mowbray. During this time the young painter produced competent anatomical studies in an academic tradition (fig. 1). Though these early pieces lack a personal stylistic voice, they demonstrate Stettheimer’s technical aptitude. Her formative years as an artist were further marked by the absorption of classic and contemporary art historical developments and concepts, stimulated by a long and wide exposure to art in Europe. Her European sojourns were extensive, and her study of art was wide-ranging: she lived at various periods in Stuttgart, Munich, and Paris; she also visited major European cultural centers, including Rome, Madrid, London, Berlin, and Vienna. The family returned to New York sporadically, where Stettheimer maintained a studio at the Beaux Arts Building. The artist’s diaries describe frequent visits to museums, as well as to performances and artist studios. There is no doubt that Stettheimer was seriously engaged with art, and that she was well acquainted with European cultural trends. It is this knowledge that informed the development of the artist’s mature style, and that separated her work from her contemporaries.

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8 Carrie’s role as “social organizer of the Stettheimer household” is cited in Bloemink, Life and Art, 11. Carrie’s dollhouse is in the collection of the Museum of the City of New York. For more information see Sheila W. Clark, The Stettheimer Dollhouse (Petaluma: Pomegranate, 2009).

9 Bloemink, Life and Art, 12 - 15.

10 Bloemink writes in support of this notion, “Although the topic has never been fully explored, her mature paintings, which have often been dismissed as ‘too childish’ and ‘overly feminine,’ are in fact the product of the artist’s thorough understanding and intimate knowledge of both historic and contemporary European painting.” “European Influences,” in Florine Stettheimer, Matthias Mühling, Karin Althaus, and Susanne Böller, eds. (Munich: Lenbachhaus, in association with Hirmer, 2014, published in conjunction with the exhibition of the same name, shown at Lenbachhaus und Kunstbau), 44.

11 It is difficult to ascertain an exact chronology of Stettheimer’s journeys. This is largely due to the substantial editing that the artist’s diaries and papers underwent at the hands of Ettie, prior to their donation to Yale University. Many pages have been entirely removed, leaving large gaps of time unaccounted for.
Stettheimer repudiated the tendency toward abstraction that typified the works of her American compatriots. Despite her close relationship with Marcel Duchamp, she was not susceptible to the influences of cubism, a trait otherwise evident in contemporaneous pieces by Marsden Hartley and Arthur Dove (figs. 2 and 3).\textsuperscript{12} Though her subject matter was sometimes explicitly American, as an urbanite her work finds no kinship with the regionalist aesthetic of Grant Wood (fig. 4). Likewise, Stettheimer ultimately rejected the stark geometricizing of Charles Demuth’s precisionism, as well as the painterly realism of Edward Hopper (figs. 5 and 6).

Yet despite the artist’s individuality, her work is not without its sources and points of reference, largely European in origin. Stettheimer’s portrayal of Ettie as Medusa has a potential source in a portrait of the same subject by Munich secessionist Franz von Stuck (figs. 7 and 8).\textsuperscript{13} The work stands as an early indicator of Stettheimer’s appreciation for symbolist subjects. Additionally, the artist’s fascination with Stuck was encouraged by the German painter’s association with the decorative arts, and the Wagnerian ideal of the Gesamtkunstwerk.\textsuperscript{14} Stuck often designed his own frames, and meticulously planned and arranged his home as a total work of art.\textsuperscript{15} Showing a similar interest in immersive installation, Stettheimer decorated the gallery space of her only solo exhibition, “to

\textsuperscript{12} Duchamp tutored the Stettheimer sisters in French. The fact is indicated by Ettie in a correspondence from 1917. His likeness also appears regularly in Stettheimer’s mature paintings. FESP Series II, Box 7, Folder 128.
\textsuperscript{13} Bloemink reiterates Stettheimer’s admiration of Stuck in “European Influences,” 46.
\textsuperscript{14} On the subject of Gesamtkunstwerk in Stettheimer’s era, Modris Eksteins writes: “The search for the Gesamtkunstwerk - for the holy grail that is the ‘total art form’ - was actually a universal one by the end of the nineteenth century. The arts, in part because of the enormous influence of Wagner, had moved steadily toward each other.” \textit{Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age} (Boston, New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2000), 25.
replicate her own rooms where the paintings usually hung.”16 The artist writes in her
diary of intentions to incorporate a white canopy with a “transparent fringe,” and
mentions the use of “white muslin” for the gallery walls.17 Stettheimer’s desire to create a
total work of art is manifest in her ballet, which incorporates elements of all the arts into
a single, elaborate production.

Also evident in the *Orphée* is the adoption of an arbitrary use of color and
flattened perspective. This can be traced to the influence of the fauves, particularly Henri
Matisse. Matisse’s impact is evinced in Stettheimer’s preference for the usage of red,
exemplified in works such as *Portrait of Myself* and *Self Portrait with Palette (Painter
and Faun)* (figs. 9 and 10). The flattened red interior depicted in *Portrait of Carl Van
Vechten* finds a basis in such Matisse paintings as *The Red Studio* and *The Desert:
Harmony in Red* (figs. 11, 12 and 13).

Another feature of Stettheimer’s mature work is a strong concern with texture.
Paintings such as *Portrait of My Aunt, Caroline Walter Neustadter* show the artist’s
utilization of a palette knife to score decorative flourishes into the paint (in this example,
the knife work is evident in the curtains that frame the scene; fig. 14). Frequently,
Stettheimer incorporates thickly impastoed surfaces to add a physical dimension to the
essential flatness of her compositions. Such techniques are evident in *New York/Liberty*,
where the gilded Statue of Liberty protrudes in relief (fig. 15). In the later work, *The
Cathedrals of Art*, the gilded frills of a canopy framing the artist’s likeness, positioned at
lower right, appear raised from the canvas (fig. 16). The designs for the *Orphée* ballet

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16 Bloemink, *Life and Art*, 73.
17 Diary entry dated October 10th, 1916. FESP Series II, Box 6, Folder 114.
allowed Stettheimer an early opportunity to explore a similar decorative and textural emphasis.

In terms of content, the ballet’s loosely-defined plot signals the artist’s preference for an atemporal narrative approach. Stettheimer’s mature works show a tendency to duplicate figural subjects within the same picture, engaging in unique situations and transcending a linear timeline. Dubbed “multiplication virtuelle” by her confidante Duchamp, Stettheimer revived the trope from medieval and Renaissance art.\(^\text{18}\) For Renaissance painters like Masaccio, repeated figures within a composition completed a linear narrative (as in *Payment of the Tribute Money*; fig.17). In Stettheimer’s art, the repetition generates an overall impression of events and experiences; in the case of her portraits, the technique serves to emphasize the personality of the sitter. The characteristic is exemplified by her portrait of Carl Van Vechten.

Van Vechten was a prolific music critic, author, and cultural savant based in New York; like all of Stettheimer’s sitters, he was also a friend of the artist. Stettheimer’s painting shows him surrounded by his most familiar accoutrements: a typewriter and a stack of his own publications, illustrating his status as writer; a piano, signifying his interest in music; and the Café d’Harcourt, a Parisian café, hinting at Van Vechten’s international exploits (as detailed in his autobiographical novel *Peter Whiffle: His Life and Works*).\(^\text{19}\) Demonstrating the artist’s employment of “multiplication virtuelle,” a stockier Van Vechten is shown in the background, dressed in chef’s whites and presenting a plate of food. The painting disregards classical perspective entirely, as the Café and Belasco Theater appear in miniature, situated on the floor of Van Vechten’s

\(^{18}\) Bloemink, *Life and Art*, 84.

interior surroundings. Similarly, the artist eschews temporal linearity, with the sitter depicted in two distinct scenes, engaged in diverse activities.

Stettheimer’s atemporal approach to narrative, expressed by her rendering of events and individuals in fluid and concurrent timelines, is buttressed by the philosophical ideas of Bergson and his conception of duration (“la durée”). Likewise, performances by the Ballets Russes – the preeminent modernist ballet troupe of the early twentieth century, and a major influence on Stettheimer – are positioned as “Bergsonian” by the scholar Barbara Bloemink. Bloemink describes the link between the philosopher’s ideas and Stettheimer’s mature work: “Bergsonian concepts increasingly find their way into Stettheimer's painting style after 1914, as memory, subjectivity, and temporality formed the content of much of her work.”

Bergson’s concepts of duration and the élan vital both reject mechanistic views of reality and call for a turn to metaphysics. Noting the limitations of scientific inquiry, Bergson writes: “The systems marked off by science endure only because they are bound up inseparably with the rest of the universe.”

Bergson contends that human intellect acts only to inform our experience of the world so that we might better perform within it; science operates accordingly, and “carries this faculty to the highest possible degree of exactitude and precision.”

Yet scientific knowledge, based on quantitative repetition, cannot account for the qualitative nature of consciousness. The limits of intellectual analysis are combated by intuition, which

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22 Ibid. 29.
Bergson proffers as the appropriate vehicle by which one might attain “true knowledge.”  

Bergson was popular and well-regarded in his time; his influence was so widespread that near the end of his life he was granted exception to anti-Semitic restrictions imposed by the Nazis. His most famous works were translated into English shortly following publication, and he frequently gave lectures at the international level, including a series at Columbia University in New York in 1913. Further evidence of Bergson’s international repute is documented by his appointment as President of the Society for Psychical Research in that same year; the society, an academic organization devoted to the investigation of psychic phenomena, was headquartered in London.

Bergson’s emphasis on creativity supports the importance of the role of artists that is favored by Stettheimer in the Orphée. The philosopher’s ideas are shown to be an important inspirational source for Stettheimer’s ballet and her subsequent oeuvre.

Chapter one discusses all formal matters regarding the Orphée, as well as the significance of its content. The first section, “Inspiration in Europe,” studies the cultural sources that acted as key inspirations for the artist’s project, provoking an understanding of the ballet set against the backdrop of early twentieth century modernism. It also tracks the historical chronology of the ballet from its origin to its abandonment, with the proposal of a more succinct dating. The influence of the Ballets Russes production of L'Après-midi d'un faune is discussed, and further comparisons are drawn to

24 That is, knowledge not informed exclusively by analytic intelligence.
26 Ibid. location 147.
contemporaneous European artworks. The second section, “The Artist’s Libretti,” assesses the available textual materials related to the production, and elucidates the ballet’s narrative. It makes note of the context of the Bal des Quat’z-Arts, upon which Stettheimer based the setting. The chapter’s final section, “Dramatis Personae,” examines the content of the ballet works, and provides an analysis of their formal characteristics and themes of eroticism, artistic liberation, and personal transformation.

Chapter two considers the ballet’s themes, outlined in the libretti and designs, as indicative of Bergson’s influence. The first section, “Orphic Symbolism,” includes an elucidation of the Orphic mythos, its ties to the symbolist art movement, and its importance for Stettheimer. It positions the artist’s contribution as a response to the philosophical ideas of her era. The second section, “Bergsonism,” formally aligns the ballet’s thematic conceit and aesthetics with Bergson’s philosophy. The ballet is presented as a Bergsonian attempt to utilize creative and intuitive means to broach an essential understanding of life. Stettheimer’s mature oeuvre is described as exemplary of expressive art, influenced by the modernist tenets in the arts apparent in the early twentieth century.

The conclusion reflects on the reasons why the ballet was ultimately abandoned. It summarizes the findings of the thesis, as well as reiterates the topic’s relevance. It considers the artist’s creation of the ballet as an experience informing her later work on the Virgil Thomson and Gertrude Stein opera, *Four Saints in Three Acts* (1934), for which she created the sets and costumes. The *Orphée* is discussed in light of one of Stettheimer’s late projects, the second ballet *Pocahontas*, which remained incomplete at the time of her death in 1944.
Chapter I - The Ballet Materials: Context and Content

1. Inspiration in Europe

The year 1912 was a transformational one for Stettheimer. In April, she visited the Gustave Moreau Museum in Paris, where she was exposed to a large collection of the symbolist’s works. Stettheimer writes that she is impressed with Moreau’s substantial output, and cautiously compliments his work while remarking, “not one [painting] in particular has remained with me as particularly beautiful.”28 Yet the choice of subject reflected in Stettheimer’s ballet, namely the Orphic myth, is one that Moreau often treated (fig. 18). The positioning of art as antidote to the finality of death was a preoccupation of the symbolists, and Moreau’s depiction of Orpheus, dating to 1865, serves as one statement of this conceit. The painting depicts the dismembered head of the deceased mythical poet, resting on his lyre, cradled in the arms of a young girl. Following Orpheus’ death, his head is said to have continued its song as it floated to the island of Lesbos.29 At the upper left of Moreau’s painting, a group of musicians is seen playing their instruments. This inclusion signals the ability of music to thrive despite the death of the antecedent poet and musician, serving as a testament to art’s immortal nature.

The influence of mythological subjects on Stettheimer was further supported by a visit to the Museo del Prado, less than three weeks after viewing Moreau’s paintings. It was there that the artist was captivated by the works of Titian. She remarks specifically on his renderings of Venus and Danae, which she calls “intoxicatingly beautiful.”30 So enamored with the works on view, Stettheimer made several visits to the museum in the...

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28 Diary entry dated April 23, 1912. FESP Series II, Box 6, Folder 112.
30 Diary entry dated May 9, 1912. FESP Series II, Box 6, Folder 112.
spring of 1912. At that time she also explored Madrid’s Archaeological Museum, taking note of its collections of Greek vases.\(^{31}\) The artist’s enthusiasm for Titian is exceeded only by her enjoyment of *L’après-midi d’un Faune*, the Ballets Russes production which Stettheimer witnessed in Paris on June 7, 1912.

In its references to ancient Greek myth and its aesthetic appeal to Stettheimer’s personal conception of beauty, the Ballets Russes served as a culmination of the artist’s topical interests. In her diary, Stettheimer gushes:

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I saw something beautiful last evening. The Russian ballet - *L’après-midi d’un Faune*. Nijinski [sic] the Faun was marvelous – he seemed to be true half beast if not two thirds. He was not a Greek faun – for he had not the insouciant smile of a follower of Dionysus – he knew not civilization – he was archaic, so were the nymphs. He danced the Dieu bleu and “The Rose” – in which he was as graceful as a woman – And Sheherazade [sic]. He is the most wonderful male dancer I have seen – and I imagine the rest of the world has never seen better…Bakst the designer of costumes and painter is lucky to be so artistic and able to see his things executed.\(^{32}\)

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Stettheimer’s reference to Dionysus in her interpretation of Vaslav Nijinsky’s performance indicates an acute awareness of mythological themes, and represents an attentive analysis of artistic subject. The entry is frequently cited by scholars as evidence supporting the claim that the Ballets Russes served as catalyst to impel Stettheimer’s work on the *Orphée*; indeed, her admiration of Bakst suggests that the artist sought similar recognition for herself.\(^{33}\) Stettheimer’s ballet takes cues from the Ballets Russes in terms of its subject, loosely-articulated narrative, erotic themes, and employment of a flattened aesthetic.

\(^{31}\) Diary entry dated May 13, 1912. Ibid.

\(^{32}\) Diary entry dated June 8, 1912. Ibid.

\(^{33}\) The diary entry is referenced in a similar capacity in Judith Pratt, “Florine Stettheimer’s ‘Orphée des Quat’z’ Arts,’ c. 1912: A Personal Passage into American Modernism” (master’s thesis, Christie’s Education, 2007), 9; Bloemink, *Life and Art*, 42; and Elisabeth Sussman, *Florine Stettheimer: Still Lifes, Portraits and Pageants 1910 – 1942* (Boston, San Antonio, and Poughkeepsie: The Institute of Contemporary Art, Marion Koogler McNay Art Institute, and Vassar College Art Gallery, 1980, published in conjunction with the exhibition of the same name, shown at The Institute of Contemporary Art, Marion Koogler McNay Art Institute, and Vassar College Art Gallery).
The influence of the Ballets Russes is exemplified in Stettheimer’s adoption of androgynous figuration. Nijinsky’s onstage persona was typically feminized; when Stettheimer presented the Russian-born dancer Adolph Bolm with her plans for the *Orphée*, he expressed disappointment at his unsuitableness to play the lead, deeming it too “effeminate…for that means Nijinsky.”34 In *Faune*, Nijinsky’s costume was little more than a skin-tight bodysuit painted with dark spots, with a wreath placed over his pelvis (fig. 19). The image of the dancer’s lithe frame in a body-hugging leotard, with genitals accentuated, exudes an erotic sensibility that was bolstered by the contents of the narrative. The brief piece featured the distinguished choreographer in a hyper-eroticized role as feral faun in lust after a group of wood nymphs. Upon successfully pilfering an article of clothing from the objects of his desire, the faun engages in an autoerotic display, culminating the performance. A similar erotic subtheme finds its way into Stettheimer’s own production.

Stettheimer’s enthusiasm for her ballet project is exhibited in diaries and correspondence. Although the *Orphée* goes unmentioned in the extant records until 1916, it is evident that the artist was eager to realize its production.35 It was in that year that Stettheimer arranged a meeting with Bolm to discuss the potential for the dancer’s endorsement. In preparation for Bolm’s visit, the artist arranged an elaborate presentation of the ballet’s designs. She fashioned a model stage from a travel case, painted it blue,
and outfitted it with gold curtains and an electric light.\textsuperscript{36} Bolm responded positively to the showing, and set out to find a composer in his effort to produce the ballet on stage.

It is unclear how Stettheimer initially befriended Bolm (their meetings in New York were arranged by Stettheimer’s lawyer of the time, Benjamin Tuska), but her pursuit of the Ballets Russes star demonstrates the artist’s ambitions for the project. Indicated by inscriptions on the works, Stettheimer created designs with the intention of casting Bolm and Nijinsky – dancers of significant international repute. The artist saw her production as a serious creative undertaking, fit for the preeminent Ballets Russes.

The sketches created for the \textit{Orphée} are culled from a dedicated sketchbook, which the artist kept for the purposes of drafting designs for the ballet (fig. 20).\textsuperscript{37} Many of the sketchbook’s pages include Stettheimer’s inscriptions, which help in the identification of the dramatis personae. While numerous characters are drawn from mythological and religious sources, others represent unique creations by the artist. Stettheimer turned several of these preliminary sketches into maquettes on wooden panel and canvas. The maquettes incorporate materials such as lace, beads, fabric, yarn, and putty to produce a distinctive vision of the ballet’s scenario. Additionally, Stettheimer fashioned four sculptural figures from modelling putty.

\textsuperscript{36} Diary entry dated October 4\textsuperscript{th}, 1916, FESP Series II, Box 6, Folder 114; also discussed in a letter of the same date from Florine Stettheimer to her sisters and mother, FESP Series I, Box 5, Folder 88.
\textsuperscript{37} The book’s cover features writing in Ettie Stettheimer’s hand; it reads: “Florine’s Ballet for 1) Carl Van Vechten or 2) Jo Solomon 3) Kirk Askew.” The inscription indicates Ettie’s uncertainty as to the handling of her sister’s materials following her death (ultimately, the book was donated to the Museum of Modern Art). Each of the men mentioned was a close acquaintance of the Stettheimer sisters: Van Vechten, a longtime confidant; Joseph Solomon, the sisters’ lawyer, who assisted with estate planning and accompanied Ettie in the scattering of Florine’s ashes; and Kirk Askew, art dealer and friend, who was briefly considered as a potential agent for Florine near the end of her life. Bloemink describes Askew’s role in \textit{Life and Art}, 239 - 240; Solomon’s involvement in the scattering of ashes is discussed in the same publication, IX. Ettie’s pencil markings recur on numerous papers in the collections of Yale University, Columbia University, and the Museum of Modern Art.
The Museum of Modern Art dates all the materials c. 1912. The assumption is echoed by Bloemink, who proposes that Stettheimer began work on the ballet immediately following her initial experience of the Ballets Russes in Paris.\(^38\) There is reason to believe, however, that the artist commenced work on the *Orphée* in Munich; the sketchbook Stettheimer used for the designs bears a sticker tracing its purchase to the German city (fig. 21).\(^39\) Stettheimer’s diary of 1913 has a similar sticker (fig. 22). The diaries also indicate that the artist began an extended stay in Munich in late October 1912, and that she kept a studio there; given this information, one can infer that fall 1912 is the earliest possible date at which Stettheimer might have initiated the ballet designs.\(^40\)

The artist worked on the project over the course of several years. Following the outbreak of the Great War, Stettheimer was forced to leave some of her personal possessions, including artworks, in storage in Paris.\(^41\) As the ballet’s sculptural figures and maquettes appear too delicate and cumbersome to have accompanied Stettheimer on her hasty crossing of the Atlantic, it is likely these items date to 1914, at the earliest.\(^42\) Further evidence of the project’s long gestation is documented in sketches found on stationery from the Hotel Majestic, New York (fig. 23). These suggest that the artist worked on the ballet designs in the United States, where she returned in 1914.\(^43\) Like those found in the *Orphée*, the subjects of these sketches are classical in origin; similarly posed figures are apparent in the proper ballet materials. On the same stationery,

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\(^39\) The sticker traces the book’s location to Adrian Brugger, an art supply store in Munich which is mentioned in “A List of Establishments and Shops in Munich, that deserve special recommendation,” in *Guide to Munich and its Environs* (Munich: Hermann Manz, Printseller to the Court, 1875), 7.
\(^40\) An October diary entry with unclear date, following an entry dated October 27, 1912. FESP Series II, Box 6, Folder 112. The previous month, the family had visited Munich to look for an apartment.
\(^41\) Ibid.
\(^42\) Pratt also suggests that the sculptures and maquettes were made in New York in “A Personal Passage,” 45.
\(^43\) Sketches located in FESP Series III, Box 8, Folder 142.
Stettheimer records lists of books on ancient Greek and Roman history and culture, signifying the artist’s active research of subjects relevant to the *Orphée* upon her return to New York.  

It is also apparent that designs were created by the artist as late as 1916, in preparation for the ballet’s proposed production. Stettheimer describes her meeting with Bolm in two letters to her mother and sisters (the family was vacationing without Florine, who remained in Manhattan to prepare for a solo exhibition at the Knoedler Gallery). The artist remarks: “It sounds as if he [Bolm] wanted new things in a hurry.” The inference is that Stettheimer had not arrived at conclusive representations of the characters by the time of her presentation to Bolm. The artist recounts a discussion with the dancer, where she revealed her plan to cast him as “the Indian prince.” Bolm replied that the role was too “effeminate” to suit his sensibilities, echoing his frustration at not being able to play Orpheus; in turn, Stettheimer comments that she must “create something more appropriate” for him. Consequently, two closely related sketches of Mars are marked emphatically with Bolm’s name. The works differ from presumably earlier and decidedly less masculine sketches of the same subject.

In *Sketch of Mars with Beast*, the figure is shown with a light blue skin tone, wearing only a loin cloth and headband. Here the character rides atop an elaborate, imaginary beast with an elongated head (fig. 24). The animal possesses large, orange wings, and is commandeered by Mars via blue reins and a collar tied around its neck. The result is in the spirit of abandon, which is replaced by the more virile depiction in *Sketch of Mars Brandishing Sword* (fig. 25). This sketch shows the figure completely in black,

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44 Indicated by Bloemink in *Life and Art*, 46.
45 Florine Stettheimer to her sisters and mother, October 5th, 1916. FESP Series II, Box 5, Folder 88.
46 Florine Stettheimer to her sisters and mother, October 4th, 1916. FESP Series II, Box 5, Folder 88.
with facial features obscured except for peering, pupil-less eyes. Mars is seated on a white horse, wielding a sword high above his head that breaks the edge of the sheet. Despite this inclusion of the weapon, Stettheimer’s later Sketch of Bolm as Mars on Horse represents the definitively masculine iteration of the character, with the figure’s skin colored in the red of war (fig. 26). In this work, the artist’s use of violent line suggests rapid motion. Mars peers out at the viewer with furrowed brow, while the horse’s eye and mane seem to emit fire. These aggressive traits signify Stettheimer’s modification of the character to appease Bolm and are recapitulated in a second sketch with the dancer’s name inscribed (fig. 27). The essential pose on horseback is utilized as the model for the sculptural work, Mars on Horse, though the ferocity of the sketch is somewhat tempered by the attenuated design of the figure (fig. 28). Given the disparities between these distinct depictions of Mars, coupled with the artist’s inscriptions and correspondences, it is inferred that the ballet designs were produced from the fall of 1912 through 1916.

The Museum of Modern Art’s collection includes nine maquettes, four sculptural figures, and forty-one sketches relating to the ballet. The maquettes and sculptures are the most “finished” works, and in most cases derive from earlier sketches. Several sketches have been removed from the book and matted by the museum, for the purposes of exhibition display.47 In instances where the museum suggests names of depicted characters, the nominations prove unreliable and often do not corroborate with the

47 Several items were shown in 2014 at the Lenbachhaus exhibition of the artist’s work in Munich (see Florine Stettheimer, Mühling et al., eds.). An exhibition organized by the Jewish Museum, New York in 2017 also prominently features the works (see Stephen Brown with Georgiana Uhlyarik, Florine Stettheimer: Painting Poetry, (New York, Toronto, New Haven: Yale University Press, in association with the Jewish Museum and Art Gallery of Ontario, 2017, published in conjunction with the exhibition of the same name, shown at the Jewish Museum and the Art Gallery of Ontario)).
libretti. The works are retitled for the purposes of this thesis to better reflect the identities of the characters, and in concordance with the scenario.

2. The Artist’s Libretti

The narrative structure remains essentially unchanged in the three handwritten libretto manuscripts, although important differences persist. The earliest draft, in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University, includes dialogue for the characters and incorporates a chorus in the classical Greek tradition. A second draft, also maintained at Beinecke, features slightly revised character names and omits speaking roles. The contents of this manuscript are closely mirrored in what is considered the third and most conclusive version, at the Museum of Modern Art. A consideration of the contents of the manuscripts allows for the elucidation of the ballet’s materials, with the setting of the historical Parisian Bal des Quat’z-Arts revealed as essential to an interpretation of the project.

Stettheimer’s ballet takes place late one evening in modern Paris. The first scene occurs in a quiet restaurant on the Champs Elysées. The last guests linger over their drinks, but soon depart; the street is nearly deserted, save straggling pedestrians and two young apaches (Parisian vagabonds). A broadly executed sketch reveals the artist’s conception for the stage design at this early juncture in the performance (fig. 29). The sketch shows an empty street, with tree blossoms marked by red and blue wisps. The restaurant is situated at the upper right of the stage, recessed far into the background.

48 For the discrepancies occurring between the author’s proposed titles and the Museum of Modern Art’s suggestions, consult the List of Illustrations in the present study; in addition, a complete catalogue of the works with revised titling appears here as an Appendix.
49 Irene Gammel and Suzanne Zelazo describe the libretti contents in *Crystal Flowers: Poems and a Libretto* (Toronto: BookThug, 2010), 163.
Stettheimer outlines a bench in pencil at the lower left of the picture, ostensibly the same location where the apache couple sits in the earliest Yale manuscript.

The silence of the night is suddenly interrupted by a procession of elaborately costumed figures. Led by Orpheus, they dance and carouse as part of the Bal des Quat’z-Arts, an annual parade of École des Beaux-Arts students. Gods and goddesses are drawn by worshippers on wheeled floats that resemble exotic and often imaginary animals. They proceed across the stage in individual presentations, incorporating dance.\(^{50}\) The fantastic figures of Eurydice, Leda, St. Francis of Assisi, Andromache, and Diana are among the participants. In the earliest version of the libretto, Orpheus initiates a call-and-response dialogue with the Chorus, where the figure’s status as the forebear of artists and poets is established.\(^{51}\)

Amidst the carousing, the characters Georgette and her father, M. Dupetit, pass by in a carriage. The fiacre pauses and Georgette is helped to the street by Orpheus. Enchanted, Georgette is whisked into the procession; her father also joins the festivities. Georgette dances in an increasingly uninhibited fashion, though the specific details of the dance are not elaborated. In the course of her wild performance, the character removes her fashionable dress and is bedecked with flowers by the revelers, completing the transformation from wealthy socialite to liberated artiste. The loose narrative descends into a disordered bacchanalia; the carousing ends only when Mars enters the fray, beckoning the rising sun. The revelers disperse, and Georgette and her father mount their

\(^{50}\) Stettheimer clarifies her intentions: “This part is a procession arranged in organic groups, each one of which enters by itself to make a complete picture, before the succeeding one comes on. Most of these groups do dances.” See MoMA 3.

\(^{51}\) Yale 1.
carriage to return home. In the light of dawn the street is cleared once again, as the artists return the avenue to the quotidian social order.

The action takes place amidst the Bal de Quat’z-Arts, a parade initiated in 1892 that was notorious for its raucous antics. Each year, participants donned provocative costumes and reveled in the streets of Paris until early morning, in what amounted to a light-hearted but rowdy procession. One contemporary account describes the riotous behavior in detail:

It was ten o’clock before all the students had arrived. Then we formed in procession, and yelled and danced past all the cafes on the Boul’ Mich to the Luxembourg-Palace and the Theatre de l’Odeon, to take the ‘buses of the Montmartre line. These we quickly seized and overloaded in violation of the law, and then, dashing down the quiet streets of the Rive Gauche, headed for Montmartre, making a noise to rouse the dead. As we neared the Place Blanche we found the little streets merging from different quarters crowded with people in costume, some walking and others crowding almost innumerable vehicles, and the balconies and portes-cochères packed with spectators. The Place Blanche fronts the Moulin Rouge, and it was crowded and brilliantly lighted. The facade of the Moulin Rouge was a blaze of electric lights and colored lanterns, and the revolving wings of the mill flamed across the sky. It was a perfect night.52

The Bal’s notoriety was bolstered by its 1893 iteration, which permitted women to participate in the festivities for the first time (the inaugural Bal of 1892 was exclusively male). The parade was reserved for students of the École; since women were not admitted to the Academy until 1897, many of the female participants of 1893 were employed as artists’ models.53 On that occasion, the well-known model Sarah Brown and three others were responsible for attracting the attention of the authorities with a public display of nudity. A description of Brown’s scant costume is included in an article from a contemporary edition of the Sun newspaper, based in New York:

First and foremost was Mlle. Royer, nicknamed Sarah Brown, the celebrated model of Rochgrosse in his fall of Babylon, a girl of dazzling beauty, representing Cleopatra. Reclining in a luxurious attitude, her throat encircled by pearls, her body partly covered

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by a large-meshed network of velvet, she was borne aloft on a palanquin by an escort of student Africans, while two of their number attended her with gorgeous Egyptian fans.\footnote{“Paris Raged in Riot. The Whirl of Student Fun That Ended in Terror,” \textit{Sun}, New York, July 24, 1893.}

The models’ scandalous garb (or lack thereof) resulted in a trial brought forth by the government, where they were charged with public indecency. The case was ruled in favor of the prosecution, and the accused parties were forced to pay a fine of one hundred francs each as reparations to the state. Students staged a march in protest, which escalated into week-long riots provoked by physical altercations between the protestors and the police. At least one student was killed in the melee, further escalating the fracas. As the scholar Lela Felter-Kerley observes, “What had started out as a relatively peaceful student protest had grown into the revolt of an uncontrollable mob.”\footnote{Felter-Kerley, “Art of Posing Nude,” 93.}

It is unclear when Stettheimer learned of the events of the 1893 Bal, though it is pertinent to note that in the same year the artist was engaged with her own studies at the Art Students League in New York – an institution where the enrollment of women was accepted, in contrast to the French Academy. The cultural significance of the events in Paris could not have been lost on Stettheimer. In Felter-Kerley’s words, the scandal “played an important role in redefining modern-day norms of male and female sexual behavior” in the context of the arts in Europe. The episode served to problematize the regressive moral standards of the Third Republic, which tended to stigmatize the participation of women in the fine arts.\footnote{Ibid. 94.} The controversies associated with the Bal seem to have directly inspired the scenario for Stettheimer’s ballet – a fact that endeared Bolm to the project. As Stettheimer notes, “I told Bolm that my ballet was based on the incident...
that happened in Paris. He gleefully told me he was one of the revellers [sic] – and he took a plunge into the basin at the Place de la Concorde.”

3. Dramatis Personae

Stettheimer drew from myth and religious lore as well as contemporaneous sources for the formation of the ballet’s ensemble cast of characters. For each persona, the artist created corresponding works that serve to outline the aesthetic course of the production. The employment of androgynous figuration and a flattened perspective is ubiquitous; Stettheimer also frequently paints skin tones in arbitrary colors, and incorporates unorthodox materials such as beads, fabric, and hair. These formal characteristics are considered in light of the content they inspire. An analysis of the works in context reveals the dominant theme of liberation – erotic, societal, and decisively artistic – that is ultimately pinned to the philosophical matrix of Bergsonism.

Sexual fluidity and eroticism are key thematic constituents of the Orphée, typically manifest in androgynous characterizations. The definitive demonstration of gender ambiguity occurs in Stettheimer’s depictions of Orpheus and Georgette. The narrative process of Georgette’s transformation is accentuated visually by her costume change. The character is introduced into the action as a proper Parisian woman of the upper classes, and her fashionable attire is reflective of her status. *Georgette in Gown* shows the character in a richly decorated gown, created with the use of cloth, fur and yarn (fig. 30). The figure appears guarded, coyly clutching a bouquet of flowers close to her chest. Georgette’s participation in the bacchanal dance necessitates the removal of her evening dress. Stettheimer produced designs of the character’s second costume, with

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57 Florine Stettheimer to her sisters and mother, October 5th, 1916. FESP Series I, Box 5, Folder 88. Though Adolph Bolm (1884 – 1851) was too young to have attended the 1893 Bal, its audacious nature persisted in subsequent iterations.
Georgette clad in transparent black lace, sporting a wreath of flowers in her hair and tossing garlands with her hands (figs. 31 and 32). The patterned fabric is reminiscent of lingerie, and her red heels, bare outstretched arms, and “bacchanalian” pose indicate her participation in the liberating spectacle of dance, led by the mythical poet Orpheus.

Stettheimer’s depictions of Orpheus incorporate a floating green cape, as well as the presence of his lyre, wreaths and garlands of flowers (fig. 33). The latter accoutrements are notably present in renderings of Georgette, following her wardrobe change. A close examination finds further instances of blurred distinctions between the characters: in a sketch of Orpheus leading the procession, the character’s flailing arms and hairstyle recall those in *Georgette Dancing* (fig. 34). Confounding the perception of Orpheus’ gender, his costume in *Sketch of Orpheus* is overtly feminized; he wears a skirt decorated in bright floral motifs and is daintily positioned in a balletic pose (fig. 35). The artist achieves the Georgette-Orpheus amalgamation in a carefully staged maquette: Orpheus is shown with lengthier hair and feminine facial features, wearing red heels and possessing a figure whose exaggerated sinuosity and delicate positioning support an androgynous reading (fig. 36). Orpheus’ head, tilted to the left, finds its source in the *Sketch of Georgette Dancing*. The cradling of the lyre in his left arm is construed as a transposition of Georgette’s stance in *Georgette with Gown*: the curled right arm of the female character is found fully extended in the depiction of Orpheus. Where Georgette holds a bouquet with the left hand, Orpheus instead grasps the lyre – his personal symbol of artistry. The comparison serves as a visual exemplification of Georgette’s transformation from socially-restrained woman to artist, liberated from the mores that define contemporary life – including those associated with gender and sexuality.
Stettheimer foreshadows the gender fluidity in the earliest libretto manuscript, when Georgette is introduced to Orpheus:

Orpheus – (handing Georgette out of her fiacre) “Bon soir Mademoiselle, you come late, oh, so late! – Alas the centuries wasted, when you were not here – all those centuries! I with my lyre have wandered through the ages in search of you! – And what do those who love you call you?”
Georgette – (graciously) “Georgette – and you, how are you called?”
Orpheus – “Orphée – Georgette.”
Chorus – “Orphée Georgette, Georgette Orphée.”

Orpheus’ introduction is qualified with the addition of “Georgette” to his namesake; the names are subsequently repeated and interchanged by the Chorus. The nominal convergence, in combination with visual correlations presented in the costume designs, presents the Georgette-Orpheus amalgamation as a metaphorical statement of the characters’ erotic union. Georgette is charmed by the musician’s prowess; the enchantment culminates in an experience of total sexual liberation, indicative of Stettheimer’s own erotic sublimation vis-à-vis her surrogate, Georgette. The unwed artist, in her early forties at the time she conceived of the Orphée, channels sexual impulse into artistic creation – the spontaneous “dance” of Georgette Dupetit.

Stettheimer’s references to eroticism persist in other designs. The most elaborate maquette produced by the artist, Procession of Zizim of Persia, Agnes of Bourganeuf, and Pierre d’Aubusson, is based on a legend centered around the theme of unrequited love (fig. 37). The tale details the exploits of the historical figures Pierre d’Aubusson and the Ottoman Prince Jem (“Zizim”). Stettheimer’s inclusion of the fictitious Agnes of Bourganeuf indicates the artist’s familiarity with an account published contemporaneously, in Elizabeth Williams Champney’s Romance of the French

58 Yale 1.
The legend relates to a series of sixteenth century tapestries that depict a scenario including the maiden and unicorn (fig. 38). Housed at the Musée national du Moyen Âge (formerly the Musée de Cluny) in Paris, Stettheimer likely studied the works firsthand and was drawn to their exquisite ornamentation, mythical subject, and oriental aesthetic.

Following the death of the Ottoman sultan Mehemmed II, his sons Jem and Bayezid vied for the vacant throne. Bayezid ultimately became king, and Jem, fearing for his life, withdrew to Rhodes under the care of Pierre d’Aubusson. As Grand Master of the Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem, d’Aubusson considered the rogue prince a potentially worthy political ally in his endeavor to spread the influence of Christianity; in turn, he brought Jem to France, where he was safeguarded from the attempts of Ottoman assassins. Here legend diverges from truth: in the historical account, Jem was ultimately turned over to the Pope, who sought “so valuable a political weapon as the Sultan’s brother.” In the fictional story, however, d’Aubusson and Jem strive for the love of a magnificent young woman, Agnes of Bourganeouf. D’Aubusson’s vow of celibacy prevents him from consummating his devotion. Instead of pursuing his love, he commissions six tapestries as wedding gifts for the maiden’s ill-fated marriage to Jem.

Stettheimer treats the subject with subtle detail. The Prince’s costume is delicately rendered with black, brown, and tan fabrics. He is adorned with jewelry, reflecting his wealth: long earrings, rings, and bracelets are described by the artist’s use of a variety of beads. His lighthearted demeanor is enforced by a tilted head, closed eyes, and wry smile;

59 Or, at least, a similar version of the story.
the carefree posture is contrasted with Agnes of Bourganeuf’s elegance. The maiden’s
demure chastity is articulated by a slightly upturned head, delicately outstretched hands
which hold a garland of flowers, and extremely slender figure. Her skin is stark white, a
symbol of virginal purity. Her elaborate hair is fashioned into a thin conical shape,
extending far above her head and crossing with the unicorn’s horn.

Agnes trains behind her a mythical unicorn, whose horn echoes the lady’s
coiffure. The animal is feminized with red lips and a highly-stylized eye, pronounced by
daubs of red, green, and blue paint, as well as a black bead set for its pupil. The unicorn’s
fantastic origins seem bolstered by an ethereal white trail that emits from the tip of
Agnes’ hair, extending toward the right of the composition, where it is grasped by Pierre
d’Aubusson. The earlier Sketch of Zizim of Persia and Agnes of Bourganeuf shows
Agnes’ headdress trailed by a long white train, flecked with brown paint (fig. 39). Indeed,
the artist also affixed a fabric train to the maquette upon its creation, documented by an
installation photograph in the archives of the Museum of Modern Art (fig. 40). The fabric
is now lost, and what appears to be a wispy trail of smoke in the maquette’s present
condition is revealed to be traces of residue left from glue.

D’Aubusson holds Agnes’ train close to his face; eyes closed, he seems to inhale
the very essence of the maiden through an article of clothing. Here Stettheimer drew from
the final moments of the Faune ballet production, wherein Nijinsky embraces the
clothing of a nymph.62 For the devout Knight, this innocuous gesture represents the only
possibility for erotic engagement. Like d’Aubusson, Nijinsky’s faun is denied the object
of his affection (in the latter’s case, a wild nymph). The subject is treated again in Sketch

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Research: The Journal of the Society for Dance Research, 27, no. 1 (Summer 2009), 35.
of a *Goddess with Reveler and Faun*, which shows a faun holding a goddess’s scarf up to its face, overcome with ecstasy at contact with a possession of the deity (fig. 41).

Following her work on the ballet, Stettheimer’s figures became marked by a slender and androgynous shape. Both male and female forms were rendered in this manner, and oftentimes the artist would ascribe distinctly feminine traits to male sitters. In *Music*, for example, the red-clad dancer is shown with wide hips, wearing lipstick (fig. 42). Portrayed in a decidedly feminine manner, the dancer is none other than Nijinsky, shown performing a signature pose from the ballet *Le Spectre de la Rose*. A less overt feminizing occurs in *Picnic at Bedford Hills*, which characteristically shows the Stettheimer sisters in the midst of leisure – in this instance, a picnic (fig. 43). The figures are thin and sinuous, though the depiction of artist Elie Nadelman particularly exhibits the distinctive androgynous body type of Stettheimer’s mature works. Nadelman appears to the right of the composition, clothed in a yellow jumpsuit. He leans with one elbow on the ground and appears to be flirting with Ettie.\(^63\) The figure’s shape is marked by a thin waist giving way to a widened posterior. His legs are crossed nimbly at the calf, similar to the depictions of Ettie and Florine (who sits on the far left of the canvas, looking downward). Such characteristics show Stettheimer continuously toying with dalliance, erotic fantasy, and gender ambiguity.

The presentation of androgynous figures is consistent in the ballet materials. In *Ariadne and Dionysus*, Stettheimer shows the mythical couple in somewhat reversed gender roles: Dionysus appears in feminine garb, wearing a skirt wreathed in flowers and a violet wrap (fig. 44).\(^64\) He draws Ariadne forward, who is seated on a panther (a

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\(^63\) Suggested in Bloemink, *Life and Art*, 92.

\(^64\) In MoMA 3, Stettheimer refers to the sixth figure grouping as “Ariadna on Panther and Dionysus.”
reference to Johann Heinrich von Dannecker’s sculpture of the same subject; fig. 45). Her elbows point toward her body in a restrained position, contrasting with Dionysus’ flailing arms and wild pose. The black panther, whose limbs and tail are rendered in relief with putty, is positioned with its body to the ground. It appears tame, tail pointed downward, deferential and subservient to the immortal Ariadne. The wine-colored fabric that Stettheimer employs for Dionysus’s wrap acts as a reference to the god’s association with the grape. His uninhibited posture and long, unkempt hair support his kinship with the natural world – where the restraints of society carry no importance.

Androcles and the Lion offers further evidence of the artist thwarting normative gender roles, as she depicts the classical Greek folk hero as female with flowing long hair, covered chest, and skirt (fig. 46). The distinctive, empty eyes of both Androcles and the lion are similarly shaped ellipses, while the yarn used for the lion’s mane and the figure’s hair is of the same color. Using these shared characteristics, the artist considers the parallel natures of human and beast. The animalistic tendencies of humankind are further referenced in the bacchanalia of the dancers. Stettheimer depicts a primitivism tempered with compassion in her reference to the Androcles legend: the tale finds Androcles befriending a wild lion by removing a thorn from its paw, forming a lasting bond between the two. By presenting formal commonalities – hair and eyes – Stettheimer underlines the joint interests and symbiotic relationship of Androcles to the lion, and by extrapolation, of humankind to nature.

The deference to the natural world exhibited in the representations of both Dionysus and Androcles is understood as a critique of rationalism, consistent with the

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65 Androcles is not mentioned in any of the libretti, however a paper listing “Androckles” and his association with the lion is found in FESP Series III, Box 8, Folder 142.
66 It is possible that beads, employed as pupils, have since been lost.
philosophical ideas of Bergson. A return to nature, where intuition precedes intellect, is manifest in the *Orphée* as the flouting of social norms and championing of the pure creative processes associated with artistry. These thematic aspects are evinced in both the formal elements of the ballet materials, which emphasize two-dimensionality, as well as in Stettheimer’s idealized representation of bohemianism.

To speak first of formal concerns, the designs frequently feature characters rendered in profile. Such illustrations are exemplary of the flattened aesthetic espoused by the Ballets Russes production of Nijinsky’s *Faune*. Nijinsky’s choreography resembled a bas-relief carving, where dancers performed almost entirely in profile. The ballet was meticulously notated using Nijinsky’s personal system, with no room for interpretive flourishes on the part of the dancers. Absolute creative control ensured that the performers would not lapse into traditional balletic cliché; as the scholar Katie R. Horowitz describes, Nijinsky rather preferred to create “a thoroughly novel mode of bodily display.” The performance made use of frequent pauses at arbitrary moments in its loosely-defined narrative. These attributes, in addition to the flattened perspective articulated in the scenography of Léon Bakst, created an effect of the performance as a two-dimensional tableau.

Nijinsky’s inspirational sources were archaic Greek and Assyrian artworks (fig. 47). Similarly, Stettheimer’s visit to the Archeological Museum of Florence in June 1913 provoked the artist to espouse an admiration for archaic Greek art. In her diary she

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notes: “I didn’t like the Idolino – looks mean small [sic] – but there were fascinatingly graceful little bronzes among the archaic and later things in the vases.”

Stettheimer’s appreciation of the Ballets Russes was supported by her own interest in archaic artwork; like Nijinsky, she revealed this appreciation in both the aesthetic style and choice of subject for her own ballet production. The work *Aphrodite and Wave*, which features the Greek goddess of love seated on a fantastical pink sea lion/dolphin hybrid, serves as one illustration of the influence (fig. 48). The maquette’s composition closely resembles an earlier sketch (fig. 49). In both examples, Aphrodite’s head is rendered in perfect profile, while her body is turned towards the viewer. The two-dimensional orientation of the figure is reminiscent of Egyptian reliefs, as is Aphrodite’s conical, elevated hair, which resembles the headdress of Nefertiti found in Berlin (figs. 50 and 51). The pencil sketch *Profile Studies* finds Stettheimer experimenting with a similar pose (fig. 52).

Stettheimer’s fascination with archaic art, as well as with the vanguard performance of Nijinsky, inspired the essential flatness of the ballet’s designs. A turn toward archaism is symbolic of the artist’s break from academic training, and an embrace of “primitive” art inspired by creative intuition rather than academism. Additionally, Stettheimer’s arbitrary application of color, apparent throughout the ballet designs, coincides strongly with the dictum of Matisse: “The chief function of colour should be to serve expression as well as possible.”

Exemplifying Stettheimer’s expressive liberties with color is *Sketch of Female Model*, which shows the character’s skin covered

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71 Diary entry dated June 13th, 1913. FESP Series II, Box 6, Folder 113.
72 The list of persons appearing in the ballet preceding Yale 1 refers to the animal accompanying Aphrodite as “Dolphin – sea lion”. Another paper located in the same folder reiterates this distinction. Yale 2 and MoMA 3 cite the goddess as accompanied by a dolphin; however, Stettheimer’s sketch and maquette both reveal a creature that resembles a hybrid of the two animals, with the head and flippers of a sea lion and the tail of a dolphin. Yale 1, Yale 2, and loose papers found in FESP Series III, Box 8, Folder 142.
completely in a deep blue (fig. 53). A lighter shade of blue is used to cover the surface of
the figure in *Sketch of Male Model*, who straddles a spotted and striped giraffe (fig. 54).

The utilization of unorthodox materials in the detailed treatment of the *Orphée*’s
costumes serves as a formal indicator of the emphasis on unbridled artistic creation. In
her own time, the artist was described by the critic Paul Rosenfeld as “having a highly
refined decorative sense combined with a certain predilection for the ornamental.”74 The
influence stems in part from Stettheimer’s interest in the Jugendstil aesthetic, and the
Austrian symbolist Gustav Klimt. Works such as *The Kiss* find Klimt incorporating non-
traditional materials (i.e. gold leaf) to great decorative effect (fig. 55). The ornamental
patterns of the figures’ dress are contrasted with a solid background. Stettheimer’s
maquettes, with their solid blue backgrounds and employment of unorthodox materials,
denote a similar approach. Additionally, Klimt’s flattened figures offer another source for
the ballet’s two-dimensional emphasis.

Stettheimer’s denunciation of social habits manifests in the casting of two apaches
in the ballet (only one is afforded a dedicated treatment by the artist; fig. 56). The term
“apache” refers to a culture of vagabond Parisian gangs that proliferated in the first
decade of the twentieth century. Comprised of adolescents, these bands were notorious
for committing street crimes, but also for their propensity for carousal, excess, and
provocative dance. W. Scott Haine links the rise of the apache to the decline of the
traditional apprenticeship system that came with the onset of industrialization. The
stratified, formal environments of industrialized workshops discouraged playful and
irresponsible behavior, prompting some disenfranchised proletarians to turn to a carefree

74 Paul Rosenfeld, “The World of Florine Stettheimer,” *Nation*, May 4, 1932, 522. The consulted copy is
located in FSP Box 4, Folder 15.
life on the streets. In the mainstream press, apaches were associated with sexual promiscuity, violence, and a disregard for the rule of law; yet Haine concludes, “The apaches probably provoked more fascination than fear among the middle class.”\textsuperscript{75} The romanticizing of the apache lifestyle is evident in Stettheimer’s depictions, where the characters are associated with artistic freedom and libertinism. Cast as harmless bohemians, the apaches are among the first characters introduced in the libretti.

Stettheimer’s captivation with the apaches points to an upper-class fascination with societal dissidents, who, according to scholar Susan Buck-Morss, “fascinate us the more their poverty, intoxication, dirt and idleness seem to come from defiance rather than helplessness.”\textsuperscript{76} Stettheimer undoubtedly felt an attraction to the bohemian lifestyle. As a female artist who exhibited selectively and chose not to introduce her works to the market, she possessed a rebellious streak, often expressed in her writings by a contempt for social convention. Although Stettheimer’s familial wealth afforded her a peripatetic lifestyle, it came with its own responsibilities and restrictions. The artist was a fastidious woman of means; she often wrote in her diaries of inadequate hotel accommodations, and occasionally employed a mocking tone when critiquing the work of other artists. Yet Stettheimer also frankly expressed her dissatisfaction with upper-class pageantry and social mores. In one entry, she describes her frustration regarding an obligation to dine with her family: “Meals are ridiculous institutions - we are such slaves to them. We were not hungry and 20 minutes more on the Appian way would have given us enjoyment but


we had to go to dinner.”77 Her poetry provides further evidence of Stettheimer’s evaluations of social engagements:

Paris – living in the Latin Quarter
And flâneing in the Bois
Going to staid dinner parties
In Callot gowns chez moi
Bored by my painting master
Rather charmed by a blond Vicomte
Approving of French tools
Also of French art
Thrilled by the Russian Ballet
And cakes made by Rebattet
Liking Marquis chocolate
And petits pois à la française78

The verse exemplifies Stettheimer’s personal experience of Paris with a particular emphasis on sensory pleasure. The artist equates her experience with the solitary life of the flâneur, the wandering observer of the modern city. Charles Baudelaire’s description of the flâneurs’ program – “to see the world, to be at the centre of the world, and yet to remain hidden from the world” – is appropriately applied to Stettheimer in her self-identification with the archetype.79 Stettheimer’s poem serves to distinguish the artist from the activities surrounding her. The involvement of her immediate family, who unfailingly accompanied her in her travels, goes unmentioned; dinner parties are disregarded off-handedly as “staid;” even her art instructor “bored” her. In contrast, the bohemian classes were emblematic of the social liberation that Stettheimer sought: as Buck-Morss deduces, “It is their spitting in the eye of bourgeois decorum and their total disregard for its success values to which we, observing from the safe side, feel drawn.”80

At the root of Stettheimer’s appeals to social, artistic, and sexual liberation lies

77 Florine Stettheimer, quoted in Bloemink, Life and Art, 30.
78 Florine Stettheimer, Crystal Flowers, Gammel and Zelazo, eds., 128 – 129.
80 Buck-Morss, “The Flaneur, the Sandwichman and the Whore,” 114.
the Bergsonian critique of rationalism. The following chapter offers a consideration of these traits in light of Bergson’s philosophy, which emphasizes intuition and subjective experience in the pursuit of metaphysical transcendence.
Chapter II - Philosophy

1. Orphic Symbolism

The historian Modris Eksteins observes that the early twentieth century artistic trend toward irrationalism was linked to “the rapidly advancing scientific demolition of the Newtonian universe,” a conversation to which Bergson contributed in his writings. Subsequently, the philosopher became well-known in chic circles both in Paris and abroad, demonstrating the popular appeal of his texts and lectures. Bergson’s fame was enforced by the prevailing artistic and philosophical ideas of the era; his was not the only voice to privilege creativity and intuition in opposition to a materialist worldview. In the arena of the arts, one signifier of the prevailing cultural climate was the initiation of Orphic cubism, a movement with its origins in France.

In 1912, the French artist Robert Delaunay published “On the Construction of Reality in Pure Painting,” a treatise calling for the undiluted “expression of human nature” through the medium of paint. Delaunay was the progenitor of Orphic cubism, an abstract style that sought to mimic the beauty of nature in purely creative, colorful forms. Its name, coined by the poet Guillaume Apollinaire, appropriately references the legendary forebear of art, taking up the same mythical subject that preoccupied the symbolists. Delaunay’s emphasis on “exclusively plastic” forms manifested in abstract compositions, which differed from the representational approach of Moreau and artists of the symbolist generation. Yet the themes informing both movements were similar, as each was marked by a fixation on the expressive potentials of art. Stettheimer’s work on

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83 Ibid.
the *Orphée* possesses a similar emphasis on creative expression and a privileging of the Orphic mythos.

The tragic Greek myth of Orpheus and Eurydice stands at the heart of the artist’s ballet. As the legend goes, Orpheus is grief-stricken when his beloved Eurydice dies from a snakebite. The mythic hero resolves to travel to Hades, to return Eurydice to the world of the living. He charms the denizens of the underworld with the mournful beauty of his song. The Roman poet Vergil describes the spectacle:

> Yet, moved by his song, the insubstantial shades and the ghosts of those deprived of light came from the deepest region of Erebus, like many thousands of birds taking cover in the woods when evening or the winter rains drive them down from the mountains: mothers and girls, men in the prime of their lives placed on pyres before their parents’ eyes – those whom the black mire and murky reeds of Cocytus and the hateful marsh with its sluggish waters hem in and the nine winding circles of the Styx confine.\(^84\)

This description underscores art’s unique appeal to a fundamental human sympathy, where even the lost souls of the underworld might be persuaded by the sheer power and beauty of the artistic spectacle. As Orpheus employs song to gain entrance to the afterlife, the myth also casts art as a vehicle for transcendental experience, whereby the esoteric knowledge of death is revealed to the living. Yet the latter point is tempered by the myth’s denouement: as Orpheus escorts his beloved back to Earth, he cannot help but cast a forbidden look at her, nullifying his agreement with Hades and sending Eurydice back to the realm of the dead.

Orpheus appears in the context of the ballet as a figure worthy of worship. His participation emblematizes Stettheimer’s partiality to the creative arts. As Orpheus enters

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the stage, he proclaims himself the progenitor of the arts in a call-and-response scenario with the Chorus:

Orpheus – “I am Orpheus”  
Chorus – “We are Orpheus”  
Orpheus – “The first songster”  
Chorus – “The first songster”  
Orpheus – “The first poet”  
Chorus – “The first poet”  
Orpheus – “The first artist”  
Chorus – “Hail the artist”

The Chorus’ reverence for Orpheus establishes the status of artist as master. The revelers’ identification with the mythic hero (“We are Orpheus”) indicates not only veneration for the forebear of art, but for all artists – and in turn, for themselves. Shortly thereafter, the Chorus reiterates this notion: “He is an artist we are artists/ let us lead a joyous life.”

The honorable status of artist, which uniquely allows for the rejection of material concerns, is associated with joy. The revelers’ self-inclusion in the paean to artistry illustrates the importance of subjective experience in Stettheimer’s conception.

The significance of the myth for Stettheimer as well as other fin de siècle artists further describes the cultural milieu in which Bergson rose to prominence. Its theme promotes art as salvation, a conceit enforced by the journey of Orpheus’ dismembered head to Lesbos (discussed in the previous chapter). The prevailing conceit of the myth, which notes both art’s transcendental potential (allowing Orpheus to visit the underworld) and its limits (its failure to overcome literal mortality), is amended by Stettheimer: the focus of the ballet is on the transformative potential of intuitive art rather than the limited redemptive possibilities associated with material practice.

85 Yale 1.  
86 Ibid.  
87 For more on the soteriological roots of the Orphic myth, see Vishwa Adluri and Joydeep Bagchee, “From Poetic Immortality to Salvation: Ruru and Orpheus in Indic and Greek Myth,” History of Religions 51, no. 3 (Feb. 2012), 239 - 261.
The relationship between art and metaphysics was explored by Stettheimer’s contemporaries; frequently, as in the case of Delaunay, the resulting works were abstract. According to Hilton Kramer, non-representational art “represented for its pioneer creators a solution to a spiritual crisis,” one with its origins in rapid industrialization and an increasingly scientific, empirical, and material world.88 Wassily Kandinsky, the Russian-born progenitor of abstract art, was one such practitioner who wrote against the “nightmare of materialism, which has turned the life of the universe into an evil, useless game.”89 His work was strongly influenced by the teachings of Theosophy, a spiritual movement originating in the late nineteenth century that combined aspects of Eastern and Western religions with classical philosophy. Although Stettheimer rejected abstraction, the expressive nature of the ballet, its influences, and its championing of creativity all correlate with the interest of modernist abstract painters. Kandinsky also favored an intuitive process of creation, especially in the compositions he called “improvisations;” these he described as “spontaneous expressions of incidents of an inner character, or impressions of the ‘inner nature’” (fig. 57).90

The intuitional and expressive paintings of Kandinsky embody the artist’s interest in the occult, an area of study in which the secular Stettheimer is not likely to have engaged. Yet the observation remains relevant for its significance in demonstrating the popularity of metaphysical and occult ideas in the arts among Stettheimer’s contemporaries. The popular influence of the occult transpires for Stettheimer in the creation of a set of fortune telling cards, similar to tarot decks, dating to her student days

90 Ibid. 98.
While Stettheimer’s example functions as the lighthearted rendering of a young student, beliefs in supernatural phenomena such as divination and telepathy were seriously considered in contemporary philosophy. In turn, such convictions find a proponent in Bergson, whose systematic approach led him to conclude in the viability of telepathy:

I am led to believe in telepathy, just as I believe in the defeat of the Invincible Armada. My belief has not the mathematical certainty which the demonstration of Pythagoras’s theorem gives me, it has not the physical certainty which the verification of Galileo’s law brings me, but it has at least all the certainty which we can obtain in historical or judicial matters.91

While it would be amiss to project Bergson’s belief in telepathy on Stettheimer, it is important to note that the cultural environment in which the artist engaged was suffused with such philosophical ideas. The point helps to position Stettheimer’s undertaking of the Orphée as not merely an escapist romp, but rather a meditation on metaphysical concerns.

Another early endeavor on the part of the artist was the execution of watercolor sketches of a Roman Catholic mass, which serve to illustrate the pageantry of the service and the devotion of its participants (fig. 59). Stettheimer’s attraction to religious themes persists in the Orphée, particularly in the casting of St. Francis. Sketch of St. Francis of Assisi features a character clad in the ragged clothing of the poor, in this case a simple violet tunic (fig. 60). The garb indicates the saint’s oath of poverty. St. Francis’ ascetic devotion is further intimated in Sketch of Eurydice, the Apaches, and St. Francis of Assisi, where the character appears reluctant to succumb to the apache girl’s goads to join the revelry (fig. 61). In addition to the inclusion of St. Francis, the choice of Orpheus as subject presents a possible indicator of Stettheimer’s interest in religion. As well as his

91 Bergson, Mind-Energy, 81.
classical association with the arts, Orpheus inspired a cultic following in ancient times, and according to Kiki Karoglou, “was credited with the introduction of the mysteries into the Greek world.”\footnote{Kiki Karoglou, “Mystery Cults in the Greek and Roman World,” in \textit{Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History} (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, October 2013, accessed February 20, 2017, http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/myst/hd_myst.htm).} The persistence of religious themes suggests that, while Stettheimer might not have possessed a markedly spiritual predilection, the ballet’s presentation of artistic liberation appears as an affirmative rejoinder to Moreau’s conviction, “painting is the language of God.”\footnote{Gustave Moreau, \textit{Ecrits sur l’Art}, quoted in and translated by Joëlle Joffe, “Women, the Symbolist Movement, and Psychoanalysis,” in \textit{Symbolism, Its Origins and Its Consequences}, Rosina Neginsky ed. (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), 255.} At the least, Stettheimer’s engagement with the subject of religion indicates an interest in the central philosophical questions of eternal consequence, as described by Bergson: “Whence do we come? What are we doing here? Whither are we bound?”\footnote{Bergson, \textit{Mind-Energy}, 71 - 72.} The artist’s personal method of philosophical inquiry manifests in her work; in the \textit{Orphée}, Stettheimer proposes intuitive artistic expression as the solution to the human condition.

2. Bergsonism

The world as described in the \textit{Orphée} eschews rationality in favor of subjective experience and ambiguous details, functioning as a critique of rationalism and socially-accepted norms. Bergson’s philosophy recognizes the limits of analytic intelligence; it offers a secular and scientifically-oriented rebuttal to an intellectualized, rationalist worldview. Despite his evaluation of rationalism, Bergson was, in his own way, an empiricist: he did not reject Darwinian evolution outright, but as Elena Fell describes, he
“rejected the notion that scientific mechanism accounted for the uniqueness of life.”

The philosopher’s methodical approach was undoubtedly part of his appeal for Stettheimer, who, in the words of her first biographer, Parker Tyler, “caviled at mystical verbiage that was beside the point of painting.” As a secular and progressive artist, Stettheimer found a suitable proponent for the embrace of intuitive creativity in Bergson. The philosopher identified the problems associated with mechanism; his evaluation of artistic creation and aesthetic awareness reveal his belief that art supports intuitional understanding. This section considers Bergson a source of inspiration and support for the artist’s emphasis on creativity and self-referentiality, themes that prevail in the *Orphée* and her subsequent oeuvre. Furthermore, it offers a new reading of the artist’s approach that emphasizes an intuitional and subjective strain.

Central to Bergson’s philosophy is the concept of the élan vital. It is from this impulsion that life springs, allowing for different species to creatively adapt through unique evolutionary avenues and promoting the propagation of diverse life. The concept is espoused in conjunction with the process of duration, the phenomenon by which reality unfolds. “Duration” refers to an endless process wherein all aspects of existence are intrinsically bound to each other, in opposition to a mechanistic and rationalist approach which conceives of events as separate and static entities. In *Creative Evolution*, Bergson postulates two distinct characteristics – intellect and instinct – as competing evolutionary components, each occurring in durational process and springing from the seat of the élan vital. Instinct, related to intuition, is an innate trait that proceeds “organically” and “is

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molded on the very form of life.”97 Intellect, conversely, proceeds “mechanically” and “is characterized by a natural inability to comprehend life.”98 Our inability to grasp the true nature of reality – one of durational process, with its origin in the vital impulse – is precluded by the essentially pragmatic orientation of human intelligence.

Bergson contrasts human beings, fundamentally intellectual creatures, with insects, who operate almost exclusively via instinct. Human intelligence evolved as a practical response to the environment, which would have prohibited life without the development of tools. Insects, in contrast, possess a high degree of instinctual awareness, enabling them to proliferate without the need for advanced intelligence or tool-making. Bergson’s example of bees building a hive, “forming a system so strictly organized that no individual can live apart from the others beyond a certain time,” exhibits a high degree of instinct.99 Lacking the survivalist necessity of a heightened instinctual awareness, human evolution shunned intuitive means in favor of a rationalist approach to the world. Such an approach works well to ensure survival, but it fails to account for an inherently biased conception of reality. Bergson’s critique suggests that rationality inhibits one’s ability to reflect on the nature of existence, as it proceeds exclusively based on analytic observation. The argument is spurred by the limits of a mechanistic worldview, which sees events as fundamentally separate and teleologically bound. On the subject, the philosopher rhetorically ponders: “Created by life, in definite circumstances, to act on definite things, how can [rational thought] embrace life, of which it is only an emanation or an aspect?”100

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97 Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, 165.
98 Ibid. Bergson’s emphasis.
99 Ibid. 166.
100 Ibid. X.
Our intellectual prowess, steeped as it is in the material universe, inhibits the understanding of the essential nature of reality, the élan vital. Bergson’s solution is surmised by Leonard Lawlor and Valentine Moulard Leonard, who write: “in order that human intelligence may attain true knowledge of the essence of the vital impulse, it will have to proceed by means of a mode of knowing that lies at the opposite end of intelligence, namely, instinct.”

Instinctual awareness manifests as intuition in the human experience, existing at the far-flung fringes of the intellect. One proposed method to tap into latent human intuition is to create and perceive art.

Bergson writes of human beings’ ability to broach intuition as proven by the existence of an “aesthetic faculty.” He argues:

Our eye perceives the features of the living being, merely as assembled, not as mutually organized. The intention of life, the simple movement that runs through the lines, that binds them together and gives them significance, escapes it. This intention is just what the artist tries to regain, in placing himself back within the object by a kind of sympathy, in breaking down, by an effort of intuition, the barrier that space puts up between him and his model.

Rather than mechanistically reducing perceived materials to their basic atomic constituents, the eye sees reality wholly, “as assembled.” It is only through the influence of the intellect that the world is reorganized. Bergson casts the artist as uniquely equipped to utilize intuition to reflect an expression of reality, one uninhibited by rationalist organizing principles. Art becomes a communicative form unencumbered by the analytic predisposition. As a purely creative act it resembles the vital impulse, with its origin in subjective experience; as Fell notes, “The work of art is then a materialised manifestation, an embodiment of the artist’s volition and a prolongation of his or her

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102 Fell, “Bergson’s Aesthetics.”
103 Bergson, Creative Evolution, 177.
duration, with all of his or her experiences, memories, emotions and beliefs playing their part in the artistic creation.”

The Orphic myth presents itself as a perfect Bergsonian subject, illustrating as it does the necessity of instinctual awareness in the pursuit of metaphysical knowledge. The sympathy elicited by the song of Orpheus is linked to the vestiges of intuition that humans are wont to experience. Bergson minces no words in his description of sympathy’s rank in the necessary turn towards instinct: “Instinct is sympathy. If this sympathy could extend its object and also reflect upon itself, it would give us the key to vital operations – just as intelligence, developed and disciplined, guides us into matter.” Art – referenced by Bergson’s “aesthetic faculty” – is what allows for the possibility of self-reflective awareness. Orpheus’ song is conjured from the pain of subjective experience; it stirs sympathy, an intuitive feeling, even in the shades of Hades; and ultimately, it results in the passage of the primordial artist from the world of the material to the realm of the eternal. In Stettheimer’s rendition, the creative arts act as liberator, and artistic engagement offers an opportunity for meditation on philosophical concerns. In the Orphée, artistic liberation is promoted through Stettheimer’s employment of ambiguous traits that serve to challenge the rationalist-empiricist societal structure.

Stettheimer’s emphasis on expressive artistic tendencies is apparent in a diary entry from October 1916. Following her presentation of the ballet materials to Bolm, Stettheimer asked her lawyer for his opinion on the dancer’s reception. “Mr. T”

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104 Fell, “Bergson’s Aesthetics.”
105 Bergson, Creative Evolution, 176.
(Benjamin Tuska) remarked that Bolm seemed genuinely interested in the production, but also suggested amending the narrative to incorporate the Great War:

Mr. T. suggests working the war into the ballet. I see his point – it would probably popularize it and positively make it inartistic. My composing the ballet was a means of getting away from the war – like the way the Greeks invented their gay mythology to make life possible for their melancholy dispositions according to Nietzsche.  

The passage highlights two important points regarding Stettheimer’s conception of the *Orphée*: one, that the ballet served as a form of escape for the artist from the trying political circumstances of the time (i.e. material reality); and two, that the introduction of the Great War into its narrative would render the work “inartistic” in Stettheimer’s estimation.

It is appropriate to consider Stettheimer’s intentional avoidance of the war as an indication of her desire to create a wholly expressive work, with its basis in personal intuition (as opposed to an “inartistic” work, which the artist openly rejects). The contemporary art that Stettheimer most admired (particularly the Ballets Russes) was characterized by a preference for ambiguity, rather than the tendency for rote representation as expressed in classical art forms. Nijinsky’s *Faune* broke the rules of traditional narrative in its loose and anticlimactic design, which lacked a clear resolution; Stettheimer’s ballet proceeds similarly. Conceptually, the artist expresses an allegiance to the prevailing modernist conception of art as a purely creative end. In conceiving the libretto, Stettheimer operates in the tradition of modernist poetry, a form that “propounds no moral, nor a popular message” according to the historian Norman Cantor.  

Stettheimer rejects the turmoil wrought by the Great War in favor of pure creative expression, consistent with the contemporary modernist vanguard.

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106 Diary entry dated October 5, 1916. FESP Series II, Box 6, Folder 114.
Dance reveals itself as a fundamentally intuitive art form in the ballet. The work serves to construe dance as a boundless and expressive art which requires no intellectualization. The disparate cast of revelers are inspired by Orpheus; following his lead, they “take up the dance” and allow the procession to descend into “a wild bacchanalia.” Works such as Sketch of Orpheus Leading the Procession with Eurydice exhibit the contorted poses and reckless abandon of the scene. The characters are stirred by emotion and zeal as they disregard convention; personal intuition is the supreme artistic muse. Though the ballet was never produced, one imagines that its results would have been readily distinguishable from classical ballets of the past. Bolm interpreted the designs and scenario as innately unorthodox, and “did some grotesque dancing in illustration” of his ideas for the Orphée. Particularly evident in Stettheimer’s clearest inspirational source, Nijinsky’s Faune, unconventional performance was common to Ballets Russes productions. In her own refutation of academic ballet, Stettheimer offers wild dance as a model for artistic expression.

In terms of its aesthetic orientation, the Orphée represents a rupture from the prescribed academic art practices to which Stettheimer was exposed as a student. The break from academic training is emblematized formally in the ballet’s designs, where the artist adopts a faux-naif style marked by a flattening of the picture plane and arbitrary coloration. Stettheimer’s utilization of androgynous figuration, articulated throughout the ballet’s designs, fosters the conceit of ambiguity. The artist’s preference for sexual ambiguity is most evidently established in the androgynous Georgette-Orpheus union, though Stettheimer’s work presents ambiguity in other ways.

108 MoMA 3.
109 Florine Stettheimer to her sisters and mother, October 4, 1916. FESP Series I, Box 5, Folder 88.
Stettheimer’s penchant for expressing temporal ambiguity is made manifest in her mature works via the application of “multiplication virtuelle.” The artist tends to repeat figures several times in a composition, foregoing linear narrative and casting disparate events as simultaneously occurring. Exemplary of this tendency is *Henry McBride, Art Critic*, wherein the sitter appears numerously, engaged in unique activities (fig. 62). Bloemink identifies the various poses of McBride as alternately, “sportsman, farmer, defender of nineteenth-century American art, and admirer of new tendencies in modern art.”\(^\text{110}\) The portrait implements Stettheimer’s artistic conception of reality as a durational process; the whole of the sitter’s life is measured in order to form a complete picture of his personality. The technique finds corroboration in Bergson’s philosophy: “Our personality, which is being built up each instant with its accumulated experience, changes without ceasing… Each of its moments is something new added to what was before… Doubtless, my present state is explained by what was in me and by what was acting on me a moment ago.”\(^\text{111}\)

Stettheimer’s temporal inquiries extend beyond portraiture to many of her mature works. In *Lake Placid*, the artist depicts her sisters Carrie and Ettie each in distinct scenes: Ettie, identified by a red cap, is shown both swimming and sitting on a raft. Carrie, whose cap and swimsuit are black, is similarly rendered in a seated pose as well as actively engaged in the water (fig. 63). The lake itself seems to undulate, in flux with the passage of time; at the rear of the composition, the water swoons upward to the top of the canvas, yet it remains calm enough in the foreground to accommodate a rowboat.

\(^\text{110}\) Bloemink, *Life and Art*, 126.
\(^\text{111}\) Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, 5 - 6.
These details allow for a single painting to describe events occurring over an extended period, rather than at a single moment.

Stettheimer also establishes temporal ambiguity in the ballet’s libretti. Although situated in modern Paris, most characters are drawn from mythological and religious traditions that span the ages. A linear conception of time is eschewed entirely, as Stettheimer complicates the very mythos of the characters. Orpheus’ description of Eurydice’s fate illustrates this notion: “Look at Euridice, see how the snake bites her – and she dies and she goes to the underworld, and the Apaches will console her. The snake woman!”\textsuperscript{112} Here Orpheus relates the details of Eurydice’s death in the present tense. The venomous snakebite, her subsequent demise, and her journey to the underworld appear to occur simultaneously. Orpheus also speaks of the future, as he suggests that the apache characters will figure into the myth to console his lover. The description endorses a durational rather than strictly linear conception of reality, where past, present, and future are integrated into an impression.

The ambiguous narrative structure of the \textit{Orphée} is essentially irrational, a trait that the artist utilizes to differentiate the “artistic” from the “popular.” The revelers themselves are ostensibly cast as contemporary artists and students dressed in costume. However, a vaguer reading presents itself: it could be that the models are transformed by the donning of costume, or that the revelers are the literal representations of mythological figures. Stettheimer does not clearly notate how the viewer should perceive the characters in this regard. This loosely-defined and dreamlike scenario resembles modernist literature of the same era. The modernist novelists preferred intimations of events in opposition to

\textsuperscript{112} Yale 1.
the Victorian authors, whose works were often exhaustively descriptive. The contemporary form, according to Cantor, “communicates not a programmed narrative but the confusion, hesitancies, and partial perception of fragmented individual experience.”

A fundamental tenet of modernism is its propensity for self-reference. In the visual arts, the trait is often discussed with reference to the Greenbergian formulation, which accounts for “the use of the characteristic methods of a discipline to criticize the discipline itself.” Certainly Stettheimer’s eschewal of classical pictorial representation vis-à-vis the use of a flattened picture plane, as well as the arbitrary coloration and unorthodox employment of materials, pronounces the importance of form in the conception of the ballet. In later works such as *Heat*, the artist continues to confound traditional notions of perspective (fig. 64). The composition is separated into three graduated areas, each arbitrarily defined by its own color. Toward the bottom of the painting, in an area painted red, a birthday cake dedicated to “Mother” reveals the work’s setting. The perspective is titled so that the top of the cake is readily visible; one observes this section as though from above, even as the matriarch Rosetta is rendered head-on and frontally-oriented in the middle ground. The green-painted background in the uppermost area further distorts the space of the work, with the inclusion of trees and a circular white globe. Ostensibly representing the full moon languishing in the night, this section complicates the perspectival emphasis further, as the viewer experiences the sky in the same pictorial space as the frontal figure. Far from photo-realistic, the mashed

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113 Cantor, *Twentieth-Century Culture*, 43 - 44.
114 Ibid. 36.
perspective is one that becomes possible only in the medium of paint, a formal reference to the medium itself.

In addition to formal traits, the modernist tendency to self-refer is revealed in other ways—notably, by the inclusion of autobiographical detail. The author Marcel Proust’s defining work, *Swann’s Way*, is a sprawling autobiographical novel that incorporates the writer’s personal experiences and impressions. Though considerably less ambitious in scope, Carl Van Vechten and Ettie Stettheimer both published novels that traced diverse aspects of personal experience. The form of the autobiographical novel allows for an expressive artistic outlet that retains something of the subjective perception of reality. In turn, writers are afforded a certain distance from their subject, as the works are ultimately construed as fictive. Stettheimer adopts a similar approach in the paintings of her mature oeuvre; unconcerned with realistic depiction, the artist freely renders her experiences without any regard for accuracy. In the case of Proust, whose work Stettheimer greatly admired, the conflation of real and embellished detail couples with an expansive conception of time to convey the impressions, ideas, and emotions that accompany lived experience. Returning to *Lake Placid*, David Tatham notes that Stettheimer combined the events of “several days into one,” as the piece is based on the artist’s vacation to the Upstate New York destination. The temporal liberties taken by Stettheimer reflect not only an appreciation of Bergsonian duration, but also an emphasis on creative rendering as opposed to reportage.

Stettheimer’s casting of Georgette is positioned as an artistic endeavor analogous

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116 Bloemink cites Proust as Stettheimer’s “favorite author” in *Life and Art*, 135.
to the modernist penchant for autobiographical fiction. The character’s sexually-charged dancing and implied erotic rendezvous with Orpheus operate as vehicles of vicarious experience for the unwed and middle-aged artist, who possessed a devotion to the arts. It is noted by Judith Pratt that Stettheimer conceived of the ballet’s narrative as representative of her personal “passage…from the constraints of traditional influences to her independence as a modern artist.”¹¹⁸ The artist’s propensity to include her visage, literally or symbolically, in her mature works, supports the notion that the character of Georgette stands as surrogate for Stettheimer.¹¹⁹ As Bloemink notes, Georgette “moves with ease between the disparate worlds of society and bohemia” in a manner that the artist likely wishes for herself.¹²⁰

The importance of self-inclusion for Stettheimer supports the view that the artist’s practice was oriented towards a personal philosophical journey. Bergsonian ideas in the conception of the Orphée manifest in the proposition of unbridled creative expression and a presentation of time as durational process. The employment of ambiguities suggests the artist’s preference for “artistic” and irrational tropes versus overtly representative, moralistically motivated, and “popularized” social commentary. Stettheimer links art with the tendency toward irrationalism that prevailed in the cultural climate of her day, rather than an intellectualized and mechanistic rendering of current events. The possibility arises that the artist relished the ambiguous details of her ballet and mature oeuvre as means of dismantling the empiricism of the material world. In this regard,

¹¹⁸ Pratt, “A Personal Passage,” 8.
¹¹⁹ This idea was first presented by Bloemink in Life and Art, 46, and is accepted as a precondition in Pratt’s analysis.
¹²⁰ Ibid.
Stettheimer’s work is a celebration of intuitive creative expression, a reflection of the fundamental aspect of Bergson’s vital impulse.
Conclusion

The *Orphée* ballet enabled Stettheimer to develop a personal artistic style. It finds the artist subsuming a wide range of influences in the creation of an encompassing modernist work. Already in her early forties by the time she conceived the project, Stettheimer had accumulated decades of international travel experience; an exposure to a host of European art, literature, and philosophy presented a plethora of inspirational sources from which to draw. The ballet marked Stettheimer’s most ambitious project at the time of its initiation, as indicated by the large quantity of designs created in association with the production. It is evident that the artist took the ballet seriously – and yet, the *Orphée* was never produced onstage.

The failure to produce the work could not be attributed to a lack of connections on the part of the artist. Stettheimer’s presentation to Adolph Bolm, and his enthusiastic support for the project, suggests that the realization of the ballet seemed imminent at one time. It has been proposed that Bolm rescinded his offer to produce the *Orphée* in 1916, and that the relationship between the dancer and Stettheimer was tarnished as a result.

Stettheimer’s diaries and correspondences provide evidence to the contrary: Bolm remained a part of the artist’s circle after the ballet’s abandonment, and a close relationship was maintained between the Stettheimer and Bolm families until the dancer’s death in 1951.

Bolm’s enthusiasm for the ballet is supported by the historical record as well. The dancer promised to seek out an appropriate composer to score the production, and he kept

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121 Pratt, “A Personal Passage,” 46.
122 The dancer is referenced in diary entries post-dating the ballet’s desertion, including March 6, 1918. FESP Series II, Box 6, Folder 118. A touching letter from Bolm’s wife Beatrice to Ettie regarding the dancer’s passing is dated June 6, 1951. FESP Series I, Box 1, Folder 14. The dancer’s likeness also appears in Stettheimer’s painting *Music*, dated c. 1920.
his word: on July 4, 1917 (the last extant mention of the ballet in the diaries), Stettheimer writes of her attendance at a performance of Johan Svendsen’s *Carnival in Paris*:

> Ettie and I came to town called here by Bolm having Svendsen’s Carnival a Paris played for me to hear – he thinks my ballet might be fitted into it – have heard it now and I don’t – I never did think it would – I want a composer all to myself and tell him what to do…I tried to have some kind of special feeling about it – Ettie seemed to think it would be thrilling. We took Duchamp with us.\(^{123}\)

The passage highlights what lies at the root of the ballet’s abandonment: Stettheimer’s adamancy regarding the contents of the score. The search for a composer was hampered by the artist’s insistence on total creative control. Stettheimer’s words imply that she did not favor Svendsen’s work, even before hearing it (“I never did think it would…”), as she opposed the notion of utilizing an existing piece of music. The artist instead preferred a new composition from a living composer (Svendsen died in 1911), one that perfectly matched her vision.\(^{124}\) Her unwillingness to compromise on the score was likely a major detriment in securing an eager composer, particularly given the artist’s relative obscurity at the time. Her solo exhibition at the Knoedler Gallery in 1916 garnered a lukewarm response from the local press, and resulted in no sales; the artist simply did not possess the clout to secure a private composer at that early stage in her career.\(^{125}\)

Stettheimer’s general unwillingness to compromise also manifested in her sole realized stage collaboration, the opera *Four Saints in Three Acts*, with a libretto by

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\(^{123}\) Diary entry dated July 4, 1917. FESP Series II, Box 7, Folder 126.

\(^{124}\) There is some dispute, due to the illegibility of the artist’s handwriting, regarding the name of the composer whose work Stettheimer heard that evening in July, 1917. Parker Tyler suggests that it was “Swendow” (*A Life in Art*, 117); Bloemink believes it was “Swendam” (*Life and Art*, 75). The author proposes that it reads “Svendsen.” The notion is supported by the existence of the Norwegian composer’s piece entitled *Carnival in Paris, Op.9*, created in the years 1871-72. It is a brief work of approximately twelve minutes, similar in length to Debussy’s score for Nijinsky’s *Faune*, already shown to be the basis of inspiration for Stettheimer’s ballet. The score for Svendsen is in the digital collection of the Petrucci Music Library, and may be accessed online at http://imslp.org/wiki/Carnival_in_Paris,_Op.9_(Svendsen,_Johan). The library also maintains a digital recording of the work.

\(^{125}\) Stettheimer’s diary from 1916 features an account of the Knoedler exhibition spanning several entries. FESP Series II, Box 6, Folder 114.
Gertrude Stein and score by Virgil Thomson. First showing at the Wadsworth Atheneum in 1934 and thereafter traveling to Broadway for an extensive run of performances, *Four Saints* marks the artist’s most successful venture in terms of contemporary popular recognition. Of Stettheimer’s role as costume and set designer, David Harris writes: “As an artist of means, and a newcomer to the world of the stage, Stettheimer was unaccustomed to the ordinary compromises of the theatre. As such, her fastidious attention to detail was a source both of endless anxiety to her collaborators and of the stylistic unity of the opera as it appeared on stage.”\(^{126}\) The artist insisted on producing the stage designs to exacting specifications, incorporating cellophane, beads, and lace in her models. The use of such materials illustrates Stettheimer’s belief that “painting alone was insufficient for theatrical design, an idea leading to her obstinate insistence that nothing in the setting be merely painted.”\(^{127}\) The final sets, which made little use of painting, reflected this principle (fig. 65). A similar conviction was present in her earlier ballet project, where each maquette incorporated unorthodox materials in addition to paint. The *Orphée* appears a trial run for the artist’s future work, and represents the development of her conception for theatrical productions.

The success of *Four Saints* provoked Thomson to engage in a second collaboration with Stettheimer. The composer suggested that they work together on a ballet concerning the subject of Native American princess Pocahontas. Stettheimer again approached the production in the methodical and rigorous manner that typified her work on the *Orphée*. She researched the historical account of Pocahontas in earnest, and Bloemink suggests that Stettheimer spent “hours at the Museum of Natural History


\(^{127}\) Ibid. 107.
making watercolor sketches of Native American tools, carved totems, rattles, feathered headdresses, and clothing.” From 1934 until her death ten years later, Stettheimer worked on designs for the new ballet. She incorporated the use of mixed materials, such as foil and cellophane, in the creation of her models; yet again, the ballet was not performed. In this instance, however, it is reasonable to conclude that the work might have seen production had the artist lived: she already possessed a composer, with whom Stettheimer had developed an amicable rapport in a previous project; by this time she had established a name for herself, with the success of *Four Saints*; and she had a willing choreographer in Frederick Ashton, who Thomson tapped for the role at the time of the project’s conception. All that she lacked, unfortunately, was time.

Florine Stettheimer passed away following a battle with cancer in 1944. More than seven decades later, her artistic legacy remains largely unaccounted for in terms of its breadth and scope. Typically understood in terms of a feminine aesthetic orientation, this thesis complicates the traditional understanding of Stettheimer’s oeuvre, proposing the ideas of the philosopher Henri Bergson as an appropriate lens through which to examine her first ballet. The onset of the Great War provoked the artist to turn away from the trials of the world in a search for the fundamentally “artistic.” She found her voice in pure, unadulterated, and subjective creative expression, inspired in large part by the Ballets Russes. Philosophical affirmation for her embrace of creativity was found in the ideas of Bergson, whose promotion of intuitional awareness presented itself as a fitting counterpoint to the all-too-real horrors of mechanized warfare.

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129 Ibid.
Stettheimer’s *Orphée* can be considered within the terms of Bergson’s élan vital; the perception of the “vital impulse” as an intensive creative effusion deeply influenced her subsequent works in orientation and aesthetic. Her eschewal of linear narrative in the ballet manifests in later compositions, as figures are repeated on the same canvas in the midst of disparate activities. As she abandoned academic tropes in favor of subjectively-rendered, two-dimensionally-oriented compositions, Stettheimer embodied the Bergsonian ideal of forsaking the intellectual in favor of the intuitive. The artist’s adaptation of ambiguous details – relating to gender, time, and space – indicate Stettheimer’s embrace of subjective experience in lieu of an empirically-bound worldview. The confluence of these artistic traits suggests the gravitation toward the Bergsonian ideal in a refutation of rationalism. Stettheimer’s interests in philosophy, symbolism, modernist performance, and a wide array of art resulted in the creation of a richly-designed ballet, the study of which reveals the artistic profundity and philosophic acuity of this seminal American modernist.
Figure 1  Florine Stettheimer. *Nude Study, Standing with Hands Clasped*, May, 1895. Oil on canvas mounted on board.
Figure 2  Marsden Hartley. *Painting, Number 5*, 1914-15. Oil on linen.
Figure 3    Arthur Dove. *Plant Forms*, c. 1912. Pastel on canvas.
Figure 4  Grant Wood. *American Gothic*, 1930. Oil on beaver board.
Figure 5  Charles Demuth. *I Saw the Figure 5 in Gold*, 1928. Oil, graphite, ink, and gold leaf on paperboard (Upson board).
Figure 6  Edward Hopper. *Railroad Sunset*, 1929. Oil on canvas.
Figure 7  Florine Stettheimer. *Head of Medusa (Head of Ettie Stettheimer as Medusa)*, 1908. Oil on canvas.
Figure 8  
Figure 9  Florine Stettheimer. *Portrait of Myself*, 1923. Oil on canvas mounted on composition board.
Figure 10  Florine Stettheimer. *Self-Portrait with Palette (Painter and Faun)*, n.d. Oil on canvas.
Figure 11  Florine Stettheimer. *Portrait of Carl Van Vechten*, 1922. Oil on canvas.
Figure 12  Henri Matisse. *The Red Studio*, Fall 1911. Oil on canvas.
Figure 13  Henri Matisse. *Red Room: Harmony in Red*, 1908. Oil on canvas.
Figure 14  Florine Stettheimer. *Portrait of My Aunt, Caroline Walter Neustadter*, 1928. Oil on canvas.
Figure 15  Florine Stettheimer. *New York/Liberty*, 1918. Oil on canvas.
Figure 16 Florine Stettheimer. *The Cathedrals of Art*, 1942. Oil on canvas.
Figure 17  Masaccio. *Payment of the Tribute Money*, 1426-27. Fresco.
Figure 18  
Figure 20 Florine Stettheimer. *Sketchbook for Orphée of the Quat-z-arts*, Fall 1912-1916. Sketchbook containing designs.
Figure 21  Florine Stettheimer. Detail showing Munchen sticker (inside cover), Sketchbook for Orphée of the Quat-z-arts, Fall 1912-1916. Sketchbook containing designs.
Figure 22  Florine Stettheimer. Detail showing Munchen sticker (inside cover),

*Florine Stettheimer’s Diary*, 1913. Diary.
Figure 23  Florine Stettheimer. *Studies of Classical Figures*, c. 1914. Pencil on paper.
Figure 24  Florine Stettheimer. *Sketch of Mars with Beast*, Fall 1912-1916. Gouache, watercolor, metallic paint, and pencil on paper.
Figure 25  Florine Stettheimer. *Sketch of Mars Brandishing Sword*, Fall 1912-1916. Watercolor, metallic paint, and pencil on paper.
Figure 26       Florine Stettheimer. *Sketch of Bolm as Mars on Horse*, 1916. Gouache and pencil on paper.
Figure 27  Florine Stettheimer. *Sketch of Bolm as Mars*, c. 1916. Gouache and pencil on paper.
Figure 28 Florine Stettheimer. *Mars on Horse*, c. 1916. Modeling putty and pigmented shellac-based paint on wire armature with brass sheet and wood.
Figure 29  Florine Stettheimer. *Sketch of Avenue des Champs-Élysées*, Fall 1912-1916. Gouache, watercolor, and pencil on paper.
Figure 30  Florine Stettheimer. *Georgette in Gown*, 1914-1916. Oil, cloth, fur, yarn, and hair on canvas. 83.1947.8
Figure 31  Florine Stettheimer. *Georgette Dancing*, 1914-1916. Gouache and lace on paper on wood.
Figure 32  Florine Stettheimer. *Sketch of Georgette Dancing*, Fall 1912-1916. Pencil, watercolor, and metallic paint on paper.
Figure 33  Florine Stettheimer. *Sketch of Nijinsky as Orpheus*, Fall 1912-1916.

Gouache and metallic paint on paper.
Figure 34  *Sketch of Orpheus Leading the Procession with Eurydice*, Fall 1912-1916. Gouache, metallic paint, watercolor, and pencil on paper.
Figure 35  Florine Stettheimer. *Sketch of Orpheus*, Fall 1912-1916. Gouache and pencil on paper.
Figure 36  *Orpheus*, 1914-1916. Oil, cloth, and gold braid on canvas.
Figure 37  Florine Stettheier. *Procession of Zizim of Persia, Agnes of Bourganeuf, and Pierre d’Aubusson*, 1914-1916. Oil, fabric, and beads on canvas.
Figure 38  *The Lady and the Unicorn*, late 15th-early 16th century. Woven tapestry.
Figure 39  Florine Stettheimer. *Sketch of Zizim of Persia and Agnes of Bourganeuf*, Fall 1912-1916. Gouache, watercolor, and pencil on paper.
Figure 40    Photograph of *Orphée of the Quat-z-arts*, installation view for *Florine Stettheimer*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1946.
Figure 41  Florine Stettheimer. *Sketch of a Goddess with Reveler and Faun*, Fall 1912-1916. Gouache and pencil on paper.
Figure 42  Florine Stettheimer. *Music*, c. 1920. Oil on canvas.
Figure 43  Florine Stettheimer. *Picnic at Bedford Hills*, 1918. Oil on canvas.
Figure 44  Florine Stettheimer. *Ariadne and Dionysus*, 1914-1916. Oil, putty, fabric, and beads on canvas.
Figure 45  Johann Heinrich von Dannecker. *Ariadne on the Panther*, 1803-1814. Marble.
Figure 46  Florine Stettheimer. *Androcles and the Lion*, 1914-1916. Oil, yarn, fabric, and lace on wood.
Figure 47  *Relief Panel*, Neo-Assyrian, c. 883-859 BC.
Figure 48   Florine Stettheimer. *Aphrodite and Wave*, 1914-1916. Oil, lace, beads, and silver foil sewed and pinned to canvas.
Figure 49    Florine Stettheimer. *Sketch of Aphrodite and Wave*, Fall 1912-1916.

Gouache and pencil on paper.
Figure 50  Relief from the temple of Hatshepsut showing Egyptian soldiers, Dynasty 18, Egypt, 1479-1458 BC. Limestone.
Figure 51  *Bust of Queen Nefertiti*, New Kingdom, Dynasty 18, Egypt, ca. 1340 BC.

Limestone, gypsum, crystal and wax.
Figure 52  Florine Stettheimer. *Profile Studies*, Fall 1912-1916. Pencil on paper.
Figure 53  Florine Stettheimer. *Sketch of Female Model*, Fall 1912-1916. Gouache, metallic paint, and pencil on paper.
Figure 54  *Sketch of Male Model*, Fall 1912-1916. Gouache, watercolor, and pencil on paper.
Figure 55  
Figure 56  Florine Stettheimer. Sketch of Female Apache, Fall 1912-1916.  
Watercolor and pencil on paper.
Figure 57  Wassily Kandinsky. *Improvisation 28 (Second Version)*, 1912. Oil on canvas.
Figure 58  Florine Stettheimer. *Fortune Telling Cards*, n.d. Pencil and watercolor.
Figure 59   Florine Stettheimer. *San Paolo fuori le Mura*, January 25, 1900. Pencil, watercolor and pastel.
Figure 60  Florine Stettheimer. *Sketch of St. Francis of Assisi*, Fall 1912-1916.

Gouache, watercolor, and pencil on paper.
Figure 61  Florine Stettheimer. *Sketch of Eurydice, the Apaches, and St. Francis of Assisi*, Fall 1912-1916. Gouache, watercolor, metallic paint, and pencil on paper.
Figure 62  Florine Stettheimer. *Henry McBride, Art Critic*, 1922. Oil on canvas.
Figure 63  Florine Stettheimer. *Lake Placid*, 1919. Oil on canvas.
Figure 64   Florine Stettheimer. *Heat*, 1919. Oil on canvas.
Figure 65 Photograph of stage set for *Four Saints in Three Acts*, March 10, 1934. Sets and costumes designed by Florine Stettheimer. Black and white photographic print.
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Yale University, New Haven, Conn.
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   Library [FESP]
Stettheimer: Selected Exhibitions


*Florine Stettheimer*. Edited by Matthias Mühling, Karin Althaus, and Susanne Böller. Munich: Lenbachhaus, in association with Hirmer, 2014. Published in conjunction with the exhibition of the same name, shown at Lenbachhaus und Kunstbau.


Sussman, Elisabeth. *Florine Stettheimer: Still Lifes, Portraits and Pageants 1910 - 1942*. Boston, San Antonio, and Poughkeepsie: The Institute of Contemporary Art, Marion Koogler McNay Art Institute, and Vassar College Art Gallery, 1980. Published in conjunction with the exhibition of the same name, shown at The Institute of Contemporary Art, Marion Koogler McNay Art Institute, and Vassar College Art Gallery.


Bergson: Writings and Studies


Appendix

The following illustrations document Florine Stettheimer’s *Orphée of the Quat-z-arts* designs. They are listed according to the Museum of Modern Art’s inventory numbers. The museum dates all the designs c. 1912. Revised titles and dates below are based on the present research.

All works are in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art, New York, Gift of Miss Ettie Stettheimer.
83.1947.1-54  Sketchbook for Orphée of the Quat-z-arts, Fall 1912-1916.

Sketchbook containing designs. [Designs for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"].
83.1947.1  *Aphrodite and Wave*, 1914-1916. Oil, lace, beads, and silver foil sewed and pinned to canvas. 17 x 24 7/8” (43.2 x 63.2 cm). [Costume design (Aphrodite on a Dolphin...) for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"].
17 1/8 x 25" (43.5 x 63.5 cm). [Costume design (Ariadne on Panther...) for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"].
11 7/8 x 17 7/8" (30.2 x 45.4 cm). [Costume design (Woman on Lion) for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"].
83.1947.4  *Diana and Night*, 1914-1916. Oil, putty, cloth, and cellophane on wood. 16 7/8 x 25" (42.9 x 63.5 cm). [Costume design (two figures and four-legged animal) for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"].
83.1947.5  *Orpheus*, 1914-1916. Oil, cloth, and gold braid on canvas.

18 1/2 x 15 3/8" (47 x 39.1 cm). [Figure. Costume design for the artist's ballet *Orphée* of the Quat-z-arts].
83.1947.6  *Procession of Zizim of Persia, Agnes of Bourganeuf, and Pierre
17 1/8 x 35 1/8" (43.5 x 89.2 cm). [Costume design (Procession:
Orpheus...) for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"].
83.1947.7    *Georgette Dancing*, 1914-1916. Gouache and lace on paper on wood
18 x 12 7/8" (45.7 x 32.7 cm). [Costume design (Figure of a woman) for
artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"].
83.1947.8  *Georgette in Gown*, 1914-1916. Oil, cloth, fur, yarn, and hair on canvas 17 1/4 x 15 1/8" (43.8 x 38.4 cm). [Costume design (Figure of a woman) for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"].
83.1947.9  *Eurydice and the Snake*, 1914-1916. Oil, beads, and metal lace on canvas. 18 5/8 x 15 1/8" (47.3 x 38.4 cm). [Euridice and her Snake. Costume design for the artist's ballet Orphée of the Quat'z Arts].
83.1947.10  *Sketch of Nijinsky as Orpheus*, Fall 1912-1916. Gouache and metallic paint on paper. 15 1/8 x 9 1/8" (38.4 x 23.2 cm). [Costume design (Nijinsky) for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"].
83.1947.11  *Sketch of Slave*, Fall 1912-1916. Watercolor and pencil on paper.

15 1/8 x 9 1/8" (38.4 x 23.2 cm). [Costume design (First-Rush, Esclave) for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"].
83.1947.12  *Sketch of St. Francis of Assisi*, Fall 1912-1916. Gouache, watercolor, and pencil on paper. 15 1/8 x 9 3/8" (38.4 x 23.8 cm). [Costume design (St. Francis of Assisi) for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"].
83.1947.13  *Sketch of Reveler*, Fall 1912-1916. Gouache, watercolor, and pencil on paper. 15 1/8 x 9 1/8" (38.4 x 23.2 cm). [Costume design (First-Rush without Panther) for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"].
83.1947.14  *Sketch of Female Model*, Fall 1912-1916. Gouache, metallic paint, and pencil on paper. 15 1/8 x 9 1/8" (38.4 x 23.2 cm). [Costume design (First Rush) for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"].
83.1947.15  *Sketch of Female Model*, Fall 1912-1916. Gouache, watercolor, metallic paint, and pencil on paper. 15 1/8 x 9 1/8" (38.4 x 23.2 cm). [Costume design (Modele femme) for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"].
83.1947.16  *Sketch of Male Model*, Fall 1912-1916. Gouache, watercolor, and pencil on paper. 15 1/8 x 9 1/8" (38.4 x 23.2 cm). [Costume design (Modele homme) for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"].
83.1947.17 Sketch of Revelers in the First Rush, Fall 1912-1916. Gouache, watercolor, and pencil on paper. 15 1/8 x 9 1/8" (38.4 x 23.2 cm).

[Costume design (First Rush) for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"].
83.1947.18  *Sketch of Mars Brandishing Sword*, Fall 1912-1916. Watercolor, metallic paint, and pencil on paper. 15 1/8 x 9 1/8" (38.4 x 23.2 cm). [Costume design (Mars Brandishing Sword) for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"].
83.1947.19a-b  Sketch of Androcles and the Lion and Study of Mars and Beast, Fall 1912-1916.  .a: Pencil and watercolor on paper

.b: Watercolor, metallic paint and pencil on paper

15 1/8 x 9 1/8" (38.4 x 23.2 cm) (each). [Costume designs for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"].
83.1947.20  *Sketch of Eurydice and the Snake*, Fall 1912-1916. Gouache, metallic paint, and pencil on paper. 15 1/8 x 9 1/8" (38.4 x 23.2 cm). [Costume design (Euridice) for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"].

15 1/8 x 9 1/8" (38.4 x 23.2 cm). [Georgette Dupetit. Costume design for the artist's ballet Orphée of the Quat'z Arts].
Sketch of Georgette with Gown, Fall 1912-1916. Gouache, watercolor, and pencil on paper. 15 1/8 x 9 1/8" (38.4 x 23.2 cm). [Costume design (Georgette) for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"].
Sketch of Mars with Beast, Fall 1912-1916. Gouache, watercolor, metallic paint, and pencil on paper. 15 1/8 x 9 1/8" (38.4 x 23.2 cm). [Costume design (Mars) for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"].
83.1947.24  *Sketch of Georgette Dancing*, Fall 1912-1916. Pencil, watercolor, and metallic paint on paper. 15 1/8 x 9 1/8" (38.4 x 23.2 cm). [Costume design (Georgette) for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"].
83.1947.25  *Sketch of Leda on the Swan*, Fall 1912-1916. Gouache, watercolor, metallic paint, and pencil on paper. 9 1/8 x 15 1/8" (23.2 x 38.4 cm).

[Costume design (Leda) for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"].
83.1947.26  Sketch of the Procession with Orpheus and Georgette, Fall 1912-1916.

Gouache, watercolor, metallic paint, and pencil on paper.

9 1/8 x 15 1/8" (23.2 x 38.4 cm). [Costume design (Orpheus and Georgette) for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"].
83.1947.27 Sketch of a Goddess with Reveler and Faun, Fall 1912-1916. Gouache and pencil on paper. 9 1/8 x 15 1/8" (23.2 x 38.4 cm). [Costume design for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"].
83.1947.28  *Sketch of Avenue des Champs-Élysées*, Fall 1912-1916. Gouache, watercolor, and pencil on paper. 9 1/8 x 15 1/8" (23.2 x 38.4 cm).

[Scenery design for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"].
83.1947.29  *Sketch of Female Apache*, Fall 1912-1916. Watercolor and pencil on paper. 15 1/8 x 9 1/8" (38.4 x 23.2 cm). [Costume design (Apache girl) for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"].

15 1/8 x 9 1/8" (38.4 x 23.2 cm). [Costume design for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"].

15 1/8 x 9 1/8" (38.4 x 23.2 cm). [Costume design for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"].
83.1947.32  *Sketch of Eurydice, the Apaches, and St. Francis of Assisi*, Fall 1912-1916. Gouache, watercolor, metallic paint, and pencil on paper.

9 1/8 x 15 1/8" (23.2 x 38.4 cm). [Euridice and her Snake, Two Tango Dancers and St. Francis. Costume design for the artist's ballet Orphée of the Quat'z Arts].
83.1947.33 Study of Male Figure, Fall 1912-1916. Pencil on paper. 15 1/8 x 9 1/8" (38.4 x 23.2 cm). [Costume design for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"].
Sketch of Adonis on Boar, Fall 1912-1916. Gouache, watercolor, and pencil on paper. 9 1/8 x 15 1/8" (23.2 x 38.4 cm). [Costume design (Adonis and Boar) for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"].
83.1947.35  *Sketch of Aphrodite and Wave*, Fall 1912-1916. Gouache and pencil on paper. 9 1/8 x 15 1/8" (23.2 x 38.4 cm). [Costume Design (Wave and Aphrodite) for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"].
83.1947.36  *Study of Figure on Float*, Fall 1912-1916. Pencil on paper.

9 1/8 x 15 1/8" (23.2 x 38.4 cm). [Costume design for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"]]
83.1947.37  *Sketch of Zizim of Persia and Agnes of Bourganeuf*, Fall 1912-1916.

Gouache, watercolor, and pencil on paper. 9 1/8 x 15 1/8" (23.2 x 38.4 cm). [Costume design (Agnes de Bourganeuf, Pierre d'Aubusson and Zizim of Persia) for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"].
83.1947.38  *Study of Figure Feeding Animal*, Fall 1912-1916. Pencil on paper.

9 1/8 x 15 1/8" (23.2 x 38.4 cm). [Costume design for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"]: 
83.1947.39  Sketch of Europa on Bull, Fall 1912-1916. Gouache, watercolor, metallic paint, and pencil on paper. 9 1/8 x 15 1/8" (23.2 x 38.4 cm). [Costume design (Europa) for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"].
83.1947.40  Sketch of Perseus, Dragon, and Andromache, Fall 1912-1916. Gouache, watercolor, metallic paint, and pencil on paper. 9 1/8 x 15 1/8" (23.2 x 38.4 cm). [Costume design (Perseus, Dragon and Andromache) for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"].
83.1947.41  *Sketch of Diana and Night*, Fall 1912-1916. Gouache, metallic paint, and pencil on paper. 9 1/8 x 15 1/8" (23.2 x 38.4 cm). [Costume design (Night-Cloud and Diana) for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"].

9 1/8 x 15 1/8" (23.2 x 38.4 cm). [Costume design for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"].
83.1947.43  *Sketch of Ariadne on the Panther*, Fall 1912-1916. Gouache, watercolor, and pencil on paper. 9 1/8 x 15 1/8" (23.2 x 38.4 cm). [Costume design (Ariadne) for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"].
Sketch of Eurydice in a Snake Dress, Fall 1912-1916. Gouache, metallic paint, and pencil on paper. 15 1/8 x 9 1/8" (38.4 x 23.2 cm). [Costume design for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"].
83.1947.45 Sketch of Orpheus, Fall 1912-1916. Gouache and pencil on paper. 15 1/8 x 9 1/8" (38.4 x 23.2 cm). [Costume design for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"].

15 1/8 x 9 1/8" (38.4 x 23.2 cm). [Costume design for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"].

15 1/8 x 9 1/8" (38.4 x 23.2 cm). [Costume design for artist's ballet
"Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"].
83.1947.48a  *Study of Dionysus*, Fall 1912-1916. Pencil on paper, 15 1/8 x 9 1/8" (38.4 x 23.2 cm), [Costume design for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"].

15 1/8 x 9 1/8" (38.4 x 23.2 cm). [Costume design for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"].
83.1947.49a-b Sketch of Bolm as Mars, c. 1916. Gouache and pencil on paper.

15 1/8 x 9 1/8" (38.4 x 23.2 cm). [.a: Costume design (Bolm); .b: Costume design; for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"].
83.1947. 50  *Sketch of Bolm as Mars on Horse*, c. 1916. Gouache and pencil on paper.

15 1/8 x 9 1/8" (38.4 x 23.2 cm). [Costume design (Bolm) for artist's ballet "Orphée of the Quat-z-arts"].
83.1947.51  *Mars on Horse*, c. 1916. Modeling putty and pigmented shellac-based paint on wire armature with brass sheet and wood. sculpture: 12" (30.5 cm); base: 7 1/2 x 4 14 x 1/2". [51: Mars. Maquette for the artist's ballet Orphée of the Quat'z Arts; 52: Horse. Maquette for the artist's ballet Orphée of the Quat'z Arts].

(height of figure): 12" (30.5 cm) [Yellow Male Figure. Maquette for the artist's ballet *Orphée* of the Quat'z Arts].

(Height of figure): 10 1/2" (26.7 cm) [Blue Male Figure. Maquette for the artist's ballet Orphée of the Quat'z Arts].