Ageeth Sluis. *Deco Body, Deco City: Female Spectacle & Modernity in Mexico City, 1900–1939*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2016. Pp. 396. Paper $35.00.

The connection between gender roles and architecture gives an interesting twist to Mexican women and modernity in *Deco Body, Deco City*. Ageeth Sluis, Associate Professor of History at Butler University, tells the story of how women transformed upon migrating to Mexico City, fleeing the violence brought on by the revolution. Poor female migrants entangled themselves in the informal economy of street vending, domestic service, and prostitution in order to get by. Consequently, these women, also referred to as *mujeres callejeras* (street women), became "spectacles of poverty" to middle and upper-class women. Yet, the revolution brought opportunities for new social arenas where women could exercise agency as they took on unconventional roles. These changing gender roles influenced the reshaping of Mexico City in the 1930s through intersections of urban reform, public works projects, and new gender norms. Referencing architecture, sculptures, and magazines, the study links social, gender, theater, and architectural history to illustrate how changing gender standards produced a new urban identity.

According to Sluis, recent studies reveal that, although post-revolutionary leaders aimed to reform Mexico City through its urban development, the revolutionary "cultural project" hindered the feminist cause. Though there were changing ideas of femininity, and despite cross-class alliances, organization, and activism, women were unsuccessful in challenging the patriarchal social order. The monograph first offers an overview of the role that theater played in changing gender norms and urban life. Female theater performance influenced both men's and women's changing perceptions of femininity and masculinity. Sluis recognizes the essential role of visual arts in fostering an exoticism that juxtaposed urban identities with rural ones. Another key discussion is the exploration of the ways in which nudity and the visibility of female sexuality served as indicators of modernity, and how the female body influenced the reshaping of the city through architecture.

Sluis is at her best when she explains the influence of Art Deco and how it became a gender and beauty aesthetic for women, not just architecture in the capital city. She offers great analysis of the role of theaters, and how divas adopted and embraced behaviors that society once considered too bold for women to embody. The author provides ample number of images to help the reader grasp her examinations of the "Deco Body," a new female archetype that transcended traditional gender roles. Though Sluis attempts to weigh her study evenly over the diverse issues of gendered bodies, architecture, urban space, and fashion and theater, the scope feels too broad for one book. This ambitious study, however, offers opportunities for further research. Although Sluis argues that changing gender roles was itself revolutionary, previous scholarship has suggested that despite mobilization, women did not achieve gender equality (13). One could argue that women remained visual subjects cast under a spotlight for the male gaze. Though popular early twentieth century magazines, such as *Vea,* offered images of the "bold, sexually open" woman, they still continued to hold women as the constant subject of male scrutiny. Nonetheless, audiences interested in art history, urban planning, and women's studies will appreciate her book. *Deco Body, Deco City* is an excellent cultural history that weaves together subjects of gender, theater and architecture.

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