Visitors of the Émile Bernard retrospective in the Paris Orangerie in the fall of 2014, were welcomed by a large pastel at the entrance of the exhibition: *L’heure de la viande* from the year 1885/1886 (ill. p. 56).

The setting is Paris, Montmartre, an infamous and dimly lit turn-of-the-century establishment, a pimp and a prostitute facing each other ready to fight, clenched fists sunk deeply into their pockets. What they are negotiating here, is too obvious. The scene shows no romantic allusions and it is devoid of any eroticism; the viewer feels the existential seriousness of the situation, and the exaggeration almost makes it comical. It is the first major composition of the artist who had just turned seventeen. “Through Anquetin and Lautrec I came to discover the immoral Paris,” Bernard later commented on the period of the late nineteenth century and industrialization, when the big city and its entertainment venues, cafés, vaudeville theaters, cabarets, and even brothels received growing attention from painters such as Edgar Degas and Toulouse-Lautrec. The fact that the modern artist chose a prostitute and her pimp as a motif for his first major composition underlines the importance of brothel scenes for young painters, who often depicted them in a more voyeuristic fashion. This thematic preference is not accidental: The prostitute was seen by artists in the mirror of their own exclusion.

For Jeanne Mammen, who enrolled at the Paris Académie Julian in 1907, these painted studies of modern life were part of the formative experiences of her artistic education. Therefore, it is hardly surprising that later on in Berlin, in the twenties and thirties, she also chose scenes and images of public and semi-public life as the center of her art, especially women. The prostitute in particular continued to fascinate Jeanne Mammen; an example is the watercolor that is listed in the catalogue raisonné under the title *Dirne auf grüner Couch* (harlot on green couch; ill. p. 57).

Partly raised, as if she were about to get up, the scantily dressed young woman leans against a red pillow on the green couch, in a lascivious pose. She appears to be listless and the rims of her eyes are markedly black. Tired and bored and clad in silk stockings, she puts her one leg on the floor, while the other is stretched out and still resting on the sofa. Against the backdrop of threadbare walls, smoke is rising from the burning cigarette in her right hand, and from her flaccid left hand a newspaper that she might just have finished reading, is gliding to the floor. Her aloof and at the same time taxing gaze is directed towards the left of the viewer. Her unwilling attention does not seem to be directed at us, but at a third person. A mere detail, the suspenders thrown over the back-rest of the chair, enables us to understand the scene, which has a theatrical component. A lamp with tulip shaped lamp shades, which is held by a dark-skinned nude female figure, the unfolded fan, and other knickknacks
on the walls, as well as the sparse furnishings of the room, do not convey any of the dusty plush atmosphere of a bordello, but seem to indicate that the scene occurs in the home of the young woman.

The watercolor was published in Magnus Hirschfeld’s *Sittengeschichte der Nachkriegszeit* in 1931, titled *Die Garçonne* (the garçonne). It represents a type of woman whose retro understanding of fashion was already out-
dated at the beginning of the thirties, but who had conquered the masses after the end of World War I. The caption refers to the protagonist of the novel with the same title, *La garçonnière* by Victor Margueritte (ill. p. 59). This novel was published in postwar Paris, in 1922, by Flammarion, and it ensured that the modern, self-confident, and especially sexually emancipated young woman, the "type of masculinized woman", the "bobby", as Kurt Tucholsky put it, entered literature. In this sense Jeanne Mammen's watercolor was included among her society scenes and portrait studies of the twenties. After World War I, the garçonne was interpreted as an icon of the "new woman". The connection of "garçonnière" and "harlot", as alternative titles of the watercolor, could suggest a sociocritical perspective interpreting the theatrical composition as the failure of the young woman who wanted to be acknowledged as a "garçonne", but ended up being a prostitute.  

But can the complex character of the garçonne be equated as easily with that of the prostitute as the conjunction of the two titles leads us to believe? This (at first glance) seems to be a foregone conclusion, when one considers the context of the publication of the novel and its perception.

The watercolor will therefore be reexamined, and new aspects will be looked at, which might cast some more light on the phenomenon of the garçonne in Berlin during the Weimar Republic, keeping in mind the question of the literary portrait as well as the interpretation of a failed life design. The double titling seems to reflect the complexities involved, when the success of the novel unfolded in France and also reached society in Berlin during the twenties. This watercolor not only exemplifies the reception of the garçonne in Germany, it also unites traditions of visual art, which are rooted equally in Germany and in France, and thus bear witness to the biography of the artist.

Let us start with a brief summary of Victor Margueritte's meanwhile forgotten novel *La garçonnière*. Structured like a "Bildungsroman", a "roman à thèse", it tells the story of the young Monique Lerbier during the immediate postwar period in three parts. Part one: The daughter of an industrialist family, whose considerable fortune has suffered greatly because of World War I, is to be married to Julien Vigneron, one of her father's business partners. For the young woman, who forfeits her virginity for the young man before the wedding, a world collapses, when she accidentally learns of his amorous double life during a theater visit. Against the opposition of her parents, she dissolves the engagement and gives herself to the first available stranger in an anonymous hotel room.

Left to her own devices, we see her at the beginning of the second part in Paris, where, thanks to a small inheritance at the right moment, she can open a trade for interior decoration in the then already well-established and expensive gallery mile, rue La Boetie. She throws herself into a series of erotic adventures with men and women, which Margueritte describes in detail with almost voyeuristic delight. Her sophisticated acquaintances soon ensure her a wealthy clientele and total economic and social independence, which she flaunts by wearing a bob haircut. When she gets tired of her short-lived love affairs, she fervently wants to have a child. The question of who is to be the father, is of no importance to her. After some time, however, she realizes that she cannot have children, and she deadens her grief with opium.
The third part of the novel presents the solution to the conflict: Through successive liaisons with two men, gradually everything takes a turn for the better. The first man can indeed free her from her self-destructive despair, however, contrary to his ostentatious progressiveness, he is unable to overcome his traditional bourgeois standards and principles, and he cannot cope with Monique’s licentious sexual past. Redemption is eventually brought about by Georges Blanchet, a tolerant academic who has just completed his philosophical habilitation thesis on modern marriage. They get married, and to please him she even lets her hair grow again. Margueritte de-

scribes the return of the heroine to the bourgeois world as a morally correct decision, “In the face of true love, the proud garçonne who had formerly rebelled against the hypocrisy and brutality of men, softened up and became a woman again.”

In his novel, Margueritte expressly refers to the ideas Léon Blum had developed in 1907, in his essay Du mariage, as well as to other contemporary contributions to the debate concerning an appropriate form of marriage; such texts were included in the novel as subtexts.

The book was received enthusiastically in France, where a million copies were sold by 1929. Shortly after
its release, it was translated into more than a dozen languages, including English, Spanish, and Italian, but also into Czech, Hungarian, and even into Arabic and Japanese. The first two German translations (undated) were probably published in 1923.

In the French press, the publication of the novel triggered a flood of reviews that were written almost exclusively by famous contemporary intellectuals in journalism and politics. For the magazine *Europe*, the critic Paul Colin wrote that *La garçonne* was "an event, even the literary event of the postwar period."13 *La garçonne* was one of the largest successes in scandalous literature of the twenties.

What turned the novel into a unique bestseller? The most widespread point of criticism was that it could encourage young women to mimic the behavior of its heroine. This criticism was based on the fear that *La garçonne* would, similar to a new Werther, drive thousands of young women into debauchery and an immoral life.14 One must keep in mind that *La garçonne* did not take place in the outsider milieu of the Bohème or the socially disadvantaged. On the contrary, Margueritte sets his story in the world of the upscale bourgeoisie and thus aims his criticism at the heart of the French bourgeoisie. The literary magazine *Les Débats* criticized, "Nothing more insulting than this has ever been read in a book. [...] An encyclopedia and, at the same time, an instruction manual. But the most peculiar thing is that all this detailed and carefully annotated pornography claims to enforce morale and despise immorality."15

The bourgeois and the feminist press alike distanced themselves from the novel and condemned the sexually dissolute and immoral lifestyle of the garçonne.16 Concern was sparked mainly because of the fear that the goals of the feminist movement could be equated with the content of the novel, because the author Victor Margueritte considered himself a feminist writer.17

Louis Aragon was the first to emphasize the fact that, what was really significant about *La garçonne*, was not the novel itself, but its term-coining potential and the acceptance of the "catchword" by the society of the twenties: "A word or a formula, these are the real achievements of the spirit. In the same context it is necessary to see the extraordinary importance of a linguistic innovation by Victor Margueritte. I mean the word garçonne. We do not want to waste our time with narrow-mindedness, but realize that this word has contributed more to the emancipation of young girls than the lawmaker Naquet to that of married women."18 As a modern "myth" in the sense of Roland Barthes, the term garçonne undergoes a formulaic shift from "meaning to form" in the course of its historical development,19 which is accompanied by a transformation of text into visual manifestation and, broadly speaking, can indeed be applied to two different types of women.20 On the one hand, in the society of the twenties, the garçonne as a social type represents the previously mentioned modern, emancipated, and confident young woman with an androgynous appearance, as embodied in the fashion of the time. On the other hand, the neologism garçonne soon finds its way into the vocabulary of the twenties as a synonym for lesbian women and is considered a more positive designation than other familiar and clearly negative connotations, such as "anandryne, fricatrice, tribade, gouine, gousse, gougnotte, uranienne, gomorrhienne."21 The two meanings, however, cannot always be clearly separated in their visual presentation, as we shall see.
This process, which started immediately after the publication of the novel, is exemplified by illustrations created by the Dutch painter Kees van Dongen in 1925, for a lavish edition of *La garçonne* with twenty-eight lithographs, published by Flammarion.22

On the book cover, the artist already pins the garçonne down to the stylized, aesthetic image of femininity, which is venerated particularly in contemporary fashion illustrations and in the women’s press: the modern, fashionably dressed young woman with short hair and a straight silhouetted who is active in her leisure time, enjoys activities with her friends, and is no longer confined by scheduled tea and reception times in the closed salons of the *Belle Époque* (ill. pp. 61, 62). The modern woman drives a car, goes to the theater and to cafés, and she is always confident and self-assured. These situations can frequently be found in the commercial art of the twenties, in women’s and fashion magazines, as contemporary examples of such juxtapositions prove. The theme can also be found repeatedly in Jeanne Mammen’s artwork, such as *Bei Kranzler* (at Kranzler’s), a watercolor that is also reproduced in Hirschfeld’s *Sittengeschichte der Nachkriegszeit* under the title *Nachkriegsfrauen* (postwar women23; ill. p. 64). In the Paris of the twenties, van Dongen acquired a reputation as the painter of the fashionable world. His women are as radiant as those in advertisements, neither do they have dark circles under their eyes nor are they plagued by financial worries; they are dressed perfectly, their appearance is made up skillfully, they do not experience setbacks. Van Dongen’s women belong to the upper class, and he tries to capture their dependance on fashion as well as their craving for admiration in countless portraits. It is his style to exaggerate. He is even said to have boasted, that, to delight the ladies he portrayed, he only had to apply more make-up to their faces and adorn them with more jewelry than they actually owned.24 Despite his sometimes very colorful and theatrically exaggerated portraits, he was one of the most sought after portraitists of his time.

Jeanne Mammen, by contrast, was a quiet observer of contemporary scenes, and with her drawing pencil she was at home in all social milieus. She was not only interested in the upper class of the Kurfürstendamm area, but she also focused on workers, white collar workers and
The artist observed the typical characteristics of urban society with a critical eye and rendered her portraits in a "new objective", provocative, exaggerated and at times satirical style. We might use Curt Moreck's comparison in "Wir zeigen Ihnen Berlin" (we show you Berlin), the introduction to his Führer durch das "laster-hafte" Berlin (guide through "immoral" Berlin): While van Dongen draws attention to the superficial sides of the fashionable society of his time, Mammen seeks to portray people and their underlying feelings. This is illustrated clearly in watercolors such as Langeweile (boredom) or Berliner Straßenszene (Berlin street scene; ill. p. 79) where metropolis phenomena such as fatigue and drunkenness, hectic big city bustle and loneliness dominate the atmosphere of the image.

Only in a few illustrations, van Dongen refers to concrete situations described in the novel, and when he does, his interest, which is always directed towards sensations, is primarily focused on scenes with an overload of drama and excitement, as the crucial confrontation and the breach between father and daughter in the first part, or the scene of the theater evening when the deeply shocked Monique discovers her fiancé with his mistress.

An above average number of illustrations of La garçonne are dedicated to the love between women. We can see Monique and her partner Niquette in a music hall or dancing in tight embrace. Here, as well as in "Women in the Jazz Bar", the close relationship between commercial art and artistic illustration is evident. Whereas Margueritte designs the garçonne's lesbian episode in the novel as a temporary, excessive, and negatively judged life experience, van Dongen in his illustrations portrays it as a model equal to heterosexual relationships. The artist chooses the same
notational conventions for heterosexual and homosexual scenes that are charged with both harmony and eroticism. In addition, the two lesbian lovers are depicted in eroticized nakedness during, shortly before or after lovemaking. This invites a comparison with the representation of love between women in the work of Jeanne Mammen. With her illustrations for Les Chansons de Bilitis (the songs of Bilitis; 1930/1932), she created a rich repertoire of emotional states in the relationship between women, cf. Reinhardt, this book, pp. 80–99. In the work of van Dongen viewers will not find emotional states such as distance or genuine closeness as depicted in Eifersucht (jealousy; ill. p. 86) or in the intimate togetherness of Siesta (ill. p. 87). On the contrary, in his artwork women in men’s clothing demonstrate the real threat they signal to the bourgeois society with its patriarchal structure. The masculine garçonnette was also seen in a film by Armand Du Plessy, which premiered in Paris in 1923; the film is not preserved, only a few surviving photographs document this event. The masculine garçonnette was also very much present in interwar Paris as documented on historical photographs such as in Brassai’s photograph taken in the garçonnette bar “Au Monocle” (ill. p. 65).

Did Jeanne Mammen read Victor Margueritte’s novel? In her partly preserved library there is no trace of the novel, at the same time it is hard to imagine that she in particular would not have known this popular book – especially since she had an affinity for French literature, which she followed closely.

While the successful novel was sharply criticized in France, because it might encourage young women to lead immoral lives, French authorities feared that its international translations would stain the image of the French woman, in particular in the hostile German-French atmosphere, during the postwar period. The French Embassy in Berlin therefore accused Germany of intentionally abetting public defamation of the image of French mores by using this book as propaganda.

Beyond such politically motivated instrumentalization, it is interesting to note that during the course of cultural transfer from the French art metropolis to the capital of the Weimar Republic, the original cultural meanings of the garçonnette, specifically as a traditional popular feminine myth, did not essentially change: Berlin of the Weimar Republic, perceived the garçonnette as both a symbol of the modern young woman, now from a “new objective” angle, as demonstrated in Mammen’s watercolor, and – as in France – as a synonym for the lesbian woman: Susanne Wanowski, a friend of the excessive and scandalous nude dancer Anita Berber, ran a women’s bar named “La Garçonnette” in 11 Kalckreuthstraße in the district of Schöneberg.

One of the first lesbian women’s magazines of the Republic, which was published from 1930 to 1932, was also titled Garçonnette – Junggesellin.

We know that the love between women, their meeting places, their nightlife, and their rituals were also a subject in Jeanne Mammen’s artwork. As in postwar Paris, lesbianism was not permitted officially in Berlin, but was tolerated in certain places, and, as Curt Moreck informs in his Führer durch das “lasterhafte” Berlin, it was becoming a trend. In his book fourteen works by Jeanne Mammen are published along with those by George Grosz, Paul Kamm, Christian Schad, and Heinrich Zille.

In Paris and in Berlin the garçonnette was thus perceived as an icon of the new woman, who stood for the change of mores and of society and at last for love among women.
From the Paris Bourgeoisie to the Berlin Erotic Entertainment Business
But how is she perceived as a prostitute? This brings us back to Jeanne Mammen’s *Dirne auf grüner Couch*.

In the following some thoughts will be presented regarding the possible connection of these three aspects, which were discussed: the “bob”, the lesbian woman, and the prostitute. When contemplating Jeanne Mammen’s lithograph *Die Wahl* (the choice) from her *Bilitis* suite the first impression suggests a complex situation: Two scantily clad and tantalizingly coy young women offer themselves to a staid, aged, and pudgy couple; she, an elderly lady sitting in an armchair, he, standing behind her, upright, with narrowed eyes, as if he cannot get enough of what is presented to him. They are a madam and a suitor. *Die Wahl* (ill. p. 91) therefore seems to be a more liberal, more provocative version of Émile Bernard’s previously mentioned *L’heure de la viande* (the hour of the flesh), although both works basically share the same theme.

It is clear that Jeanne Mammen selects a well known motif from French pictorial tradition in the late nineteenth century, but she adds one aspect, which also particularly intrigued Toulouse-Lautrec in his *Elles* portfolio; in Mammen’s lithograph *Die Wahl* the two young prostitutes are lesbian. Lesbianism and prostitution are thus put into context with each other in one image and one subject matter, as various examples in French art also demonstrate. In *Elles*, Toulouse-Lautrec’s series of ten lithographs from 1896, prostitutes are shown in different situations and settings of everyday life, “in the dining room, the parlor, in front of the dressing table or playing cards, during a visit to the doctor’s office or a lesbian rendezvous.”[31] The first image of the series shows the entertainer Cha-U-Kao at the Moulin Rouge; it is known that she never made a secret of her homosexuality. In his series the painter Toulouse-Lautrec is said to have portrayed the everyday life of these women in a nonjudgemental manner.

Enhanced by the aspect of portraying a prostitute who sells herself to men, but in reality loves women, *Dirne auf grüner Couch* follows a traditional French motif, and the artist uses this, now depicting her in the style of “new objectivity” as a “Garçonne auf grüner Couch”. In Germany during the Great Depression at the beginning of the thirties, she no longer serves the purpose of rehabilitating social outcasts but points to the harsh and brutal reality of the struggle for survival. Jeanne Mammen’s
garçonne does not belong to the upper class, as described by Margueritte or depicted by van Dongen. She is part of the milieu portrayed by Toulouse-Lautrec.

Iconographically, *Dirne auf grüner Couch* invokes an even more famous French pictorial tradition: In 1865 a female nude that had been created two years earlier, elicited an unprecedented scandal in the salons, when Édouard Manet presented the painting of a life-sized, partly reclined woman to the public, illustrating quite clearly to everyone, by the simple detail of a black neck ribbon, that she was not a transfigured Venus, but a prostitute. The black servant of the cocotte is handing her the bouquet of an admirer, the black cat at the right edge of the painting is commonly interpreted as an erotic reference to an absent lover. It would certainly be somewhat speculative to see a direct reference to Manet’s *Olympia* (ill. p. 67) in Mammen’s harlot. Nonetheless, she does take up the iconography of the partly reclined woman and transposes it into a composition of a modern image of the woman and the prostitute of her time. In her watercolor, the lamp with tulip shaped shades, held by a dark-skinned nude female figure, takes the place of the black servant, the suspenders evoke a man’s presence in the room, albeit less encrypted and with its symbols downright rough and raw.

In Mammen’s *Dirne auf grüner Couch* cultural transfer, artistic appropriation, and transformation are combined in a very specific way. This demonstrates the artist’s ability to cross boundaries between the iconographic tradition at the turn of the century and the scenes she observed in the city of Berlin during the Weimar Republic, and how these impressions inspired her to create new images in her artwork.

lications of the women's rights activist Ellen Key *Love and Marriage* (1911) and of the physician and psychiatrist Édouard Toulouse *La question sexuelle et la femme* (1918) can be found on the desk of the historian Vignabos. All three publications criticize the conventions of bourgeois marriage. In his book, Blum advocates the same pre-marital sexual freedom for women that are conceded to men.

12 The number is quoted from Anne-Marie Sohn, "La garçonne face à l'opinion publique: type littéraire ou type social des années 20?", in: *Le mouvement social*, no. 80, July–September 1972, p. 8.


14 Cf. Julia Drost 2003 (as in n. 9), pp. 112–116; this is particularly evident in the statement by the radical feminist Renée Papaud and was shared by other critics as well: "La suggestion du livre est un fait. Que de 'Werther' Goethe a-t-il produit, que de 'garçonne' naîtront où sont nées du livre de Margueritte." Renée Papaud, "Le Féminisme à travers le roman", in: *Bulletin des groupes féministes de l'enseignement loïque*, vol. 23, February 1924.


16 Julia Drost 2003 (as in n. 9), p. 113.

17 Ibid., pp. 36 f; together...
Jeanne Mammen, untitled [Aschinger(at Aschinger's)], n. d. [ca. 1926], watercolor and pencil, 44.3 x 32.6 cm (cat. rais. A 204), private owner