Supplementary to The Echoes Report Magazine

Winter 1996 $1

Tina Modotti: Photographs

Tina Modotti once said of her work: “I consider myself a photographer, nothing more.” Yet she was, perhaps, one of the most fascinating and complex women of her time. Her photographic career evolved with her political activism as she developed a modernist vision and adapted it in unique ways to capture the struggles of the working class in Mexico, Germany, the Soviet Union, Italy, and Spain. Her images, however, reveal the beauty in ordinary objects and flowers as well as the harsh realities of the proletarian experience.

As an artist, Modotti received limited recognition for her aesthetic contributions to the field of photography, in part because of the focus on her unconventional lifestyle, her legendary beauty, and her personal liaisons with well-known artists and revolutionaries, but also because most of her work was produced outside of European and North American artistic centers. Now, during the centennial of her birth, a major retrospective focuses exclusively on Tina Modotti.


About The Echoes Report Magazine

The Echoes Report Magazine is a glossy quarterly publication focused on Mid-20th century style & design. Specific emphasis is placed on the 1920s, '30s, '40s, '50s and '60s eras, including Art Deco, Streamline Modern, Biomorphic '50s, and Abstract '60s. The Supplemental is published between magazine issues to keep our readers abreast of the changes and events in the marketplace. The Supplemental also provides a venue for shop owners, dealers and individuals to present a photograph of the current inventory they have for sale. This combination of pictures and descriptions provides readers with a first-hand look at what's for sale within the Modern Market!

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Tina Modotti
(continued from cover) Tina Modotti: Photographs features 116 prints, nearly half of which have never been on view nor reproduced, including exquisite still lifes, images of Mexican workers and peasants, portraits of fellow artists, and photographs of folk art and indigenous architecture. In addition, nine case objects show examples of the work Modotti contributed to leftist political journals, as well as photographs of Mexican artist Diego Rivera's murals. Organized by the Alfred Stieglitz Center of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, this retrospective showcases images drawn from 52 public and private collections in the United States, Mexico, Canada, England, the Netherlands, and Australia.

"Tina Modotti was one of the most important contemporary photographers of our time," said Peter C. Marzio, director of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. "Her poignant photographs of post-revolutionary Mexico represent the synthesis of her personal and artistic expression. We are pleased to share her pioneering vision with the people of Houston."

Anne Tucker, Gus and Lyndall Wortham Curator of Photography, said, "As a photographer, Tina Modotti drew upon the richness and diversity of her surroundings to produce visually compelling and intellectually stimulating works of art. The public will see that the melding of her political and artistic pursuits allowed Modotti to leave an important legacy."

Modotti’s Background
Tina Modotti was born Assunta Adelaide Luigia Modotti on August 17, 1896, to a modest family in northern Italy. After emigrating to the United States in 1913, Modotti became an actress in the San Francisco Italian theater. Four years later she
married Roubaix de l’Abrie Richey (Robo), an aspiring painter and poet. The couple moved to Los Angeles, where Modotti worked as a silent film actress in Hollywood’s burgeoning movie industry. She moved within a circle of bohemian artists and writers, including her future mentor and lover, renowned American photographer Edward Weston. Modotti’s world view and ideologies were shaped through these friendships as she discussed issues of psychology, socialism, religion, and art. Following the sudden death of her husband, Modotti and Edward Weston moved in 1923 to Mexico and opened a photographic studio. They made a professional agreement that Weston would teach her photography, taking her on as a studio assistant, while she, speaking fluent Spanish, would run the household and the business.

As Weston’s pupil, Modotti adopted the “straight” aesthetic of his studied formalism and later evolved to incorporate more narrative themes. For Modotti, photography became a vehicle for expressing her emerging social conscience and political activism. Although sometimes criticized as propaganda, Modotti’s staged images symbolized the union of art, labor, and struggle. Likewise, her beautiful portraits of the women of the Tehuanepan gracefully depicted their dignity and the elegant designs of their traditional dress. These photographs appeared internationally, in art journals and in left-wing periodicals such as El Machete (Mexico), New Masses (US), and Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung (Germany).

While in Mexico, Modotti became more interested and involved in politics. Her friendships with vanguard Mexican muralists
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1950s:
- Aristocraft high back platform rocker (M367D), pr. of Lamp tables with drawers (M793G), 54" cocktail table with drawer (M1686G). Sculptura double dresser with mirror, Kohinoor dresser with deck top.

1960s:
- Encore bedroom sets, Kneehole & student desks. Crown glass china on buffet (M1547 on M1543).

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12 New England Antique & Collectible Toy Show in Methuen, MA (800) 759-SHOW
14-19 Brimfield Antique Show in Brimfield, MA (413) 283-6149
17 Skinner’s Art Glass & Lamps, Arts & Crafts, Art Deco & Modern Auction in Boston, MA (617) 350-5400
18-19 20th Century Ltd. Show in Oak Park, IL (708) 879-5603

ONGOING
Through March 24 “A Slice of Schiaparelli: Surrealism in Fashion” at the Brooklyn Museum in NY (718) 638-5000
Through March 31 “Friedrich Adler: From Art Nouveau to Art Deco” at the Spertus Institute of Jewish Studies in Chicago, IL (312) 322-1747
March 31 - July 14 “Hot Cars, High Fashion, Cool Stuff: Designs of the 20th Century” at the Dallas Museum of Art in Dallas, TX (214) 922-1200
IN THE NEXT ISSUE

ECHOES

MAGAZINE

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Paul Frankl, Skyscraper Cabinet, attribution

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Announcements
• Deco Echoes Publications has mutually agreed with Vanderhagen Interiors of Laguna Beach, California - formerly the West Coast representatives for Deco Echoes - to terminate their relationship.
• The new advertising rate card for 1996 is available from Deco Echoes Publications, and will be in effect for the March 1996 issue. Call (508) 428-2324 to request one today.
• The Echoes Report magazine is completing negotiations to establish an office in the UK which will report on the Modern scene overseas. The March 1996 issue will mark the premier of this overseas addition to our publication, featuring a 4-page review of auction results, show dates, a feature article, and overseas advertisers. This will provide our readers with a more complete view of the activities of the 1930s-1960s market throughout the world.

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The journalist Modotti was under surveillance by the Mexican government. The harassment increased after she was charged and later acquitted of murdering her lover, exiled Cuban journalist Julio Antonio Mella, in 1929. The following year Modotti organized a one-woman exhibition of her work which was billed as “the first revolutionary photographic exhibition in Mexico.” A few months later, she was deported from Mexico as a suspected coconspirator in the plot to assassinate the Mexican president Pascual Ortiz Rubio. She lived briefly in Germany, the Soviet Union, and Italy, and eventually gave up photography in order to work for the party full time. In 1939, Modotti was finally able to return to Mexico and clear her name before her death in 1942.

TOUR SCHEDULE
Following its presentation at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, the exhibition will travel to the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art where it will run from March 28 - June 2, 1996.

EXHIBITION CATALOG

DECO ECHOES ON THE WORLD WIDE WEB

http://www.deco-echoes.com

There’s a tremendous new addition to the Mid-20th Century marketplace - the Deco Echoes Web site on the internet! Having established The Echoes Report magazine as the premier source for news, information and resources regarding the growing Modern movement, Deco Echoes is committed to establishing an equal resource on the Internet, creating the definitive Web site for Mid-20th Century Style & Design. The Deco Echoes Web site is state-of-the-art, and includes a Vintage Shops section where Mid-20th Century enterprises can promote their businesses online, a Calendar of shows and events, a Bookstore, Art Deco Society information, Issue Archives, a Sample of our current issue including a feature story, Catalog shopping, Links to other related sites, and much more! With our targeted distribution, vast network of contacts, and registration with all the major search engines and directories within the Web, Deco Echoes will constantly and actively promote the address of our site and those businesses which advertise within it, therefore increasing within the Echoes Report’s segment to advertising in The Best of all, creating a Web within The Echoes and inexpensive (as need to own a computer per copy of your page proof, and you can receive mail, fax or telex-page for your business a photograph of your you wish to sell, along with the rest. Your page can be as simple or as complex as you like - we will work with you to make the Web page you have in mind a reality!

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