**Salons and Coteries**

Originating in the eighteenth century as part of the bourgeois public sphere, salons were institutions of modern culture, led by the figure of the salonière, as Emily Bilsky and Emily Braun have argued in *Jewish Women and their Salons: The Power of Conversation*. Whereas traditional salons emanated from *Tischgesellschaften* (table societies) and were linked to inclusiveness and reason (Habermas 34-35), the modernist salons cultivated play with ludic and erotic identities, ‘disrupt[ing] the public sphere’s ideal of transparency’ (Dean 245). Modernist salons also became vehicles for ‘advancing and disseminating new art movements’ (Bilski and Braun 84). Besides the legendary salons of Gertrude Stein and Nathalie Barney in Paris, or Bloomsbury in London, salons that were critical in the dissemination of Modernism were held by, briefly: Felicie and Carl Bernstein in Berlin, championing Impressionism; Berta Zuckerkandl in Vienna, hailing the Succession (Bilski and Braun 85); and Florine Stettheimer in New York cultivating Duchampian gender play. Equally important in fuelling avant-garde movements are coteries, or communities with select memberships, such as the Stefan George *Kreis*, a tightly knit anti-establishment group hailing a revolution in gender, sexuality and poetics in early twentieth century Berlin and Munich; or the Arensberg circle in New York, championing Dada in the collaborative publishing of the avant-garde magazine *The Blind Man* (http://bit.ly/M5rdtQ). Paying tribute to the communal structures of art production, a well known modernist magazine in Britain is ostensibly titled *Coterie: A Quarterly: Art, Prose, and Poetry* (1919-21; http://bit.ly/KN9iLD).

*Irene Gammel, Ryerson University*

**References and further reading**

Bilski, E. D. and Braun, E. (2005) *The Power of Conversation: Jewish Women and Their Salons*, New Haven: Yale University Press.

Dean, J. (2001) ‘Cybersalons and Civil Society: Rethinking the Public Sphere in Transnational Technoculture.’ *Public Culture* 13 (2): 243-65. http://bit.ly/MiDblg

Habermas, J. (1989) *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. T. Burger, Cambridge: MIT Press.