

J. Freitas

From Subjection to Survival

The Artistry of American Women Writers

From Subjection to Survival is a work of feminist scholarship that works at the intersection of literature and art history, the written and the visual. By examining six important and diverse multiethnic American women writers of the twentieth century (Kate Chopin, Anzia Yeziarska, Edith Wharton, Zitkala-Ša, Nella Larsen, and Helena María Viramontes), From Subjection to Survival establishes a genealogy of how women writers claim the power and possibility of visual art to make sense of their experiences. These writers write about women and feature female protagonists who engage with art as painters, writers, muses, or icons in the texts themselves. The texts are written visually to expose the fundamental substantiation of gender in art and the unavoidable aestheticization of women in daily life. As every text in this book makes clear, women can claim substantial power through art. Yet, aestheticization is not always positive. As a consequence of such negative possibilities, the artistic self-referentiality of all of the texts in From Subjection to Survival exposes a negotiated course between subjectivity and objectness which women experience when engaging with art. From Subjection to Survival studies this negotiated course to lay bare the difficult path of women's artistic and aesthetic experience, but ultimately to claim the power and the possibility of the visual arts for women.

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