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## VISUAL ART

See Art, Visual, Photography.

## VIVIEN, RENÉE (1877–1909)

Anglo-French poet and novelist.

Born in London of an English father and an American mother as Pauline Mary Tarn, Vivien was taken to Paris when she was one year old. There she mainly educated herself by reading French books. Her first love was a neighbor, Violet Silleto, whom she was later to recall in her writings. After her mother removed her again to London, Vivien finally achieved her independence, which was cushioned by a substantial inheritance.

In 1899 she met Natalie Clifford Barney in Paris and began a relationship that is chronicled in *Un femme m'apparat* (1904). Although both women had achieved success in their writings in the French language, Barney recognized that Vivien had a real vocation, while her own works were more adjuncts to her opulent life and public persona. It is a mark of Vivien's seriousness that in the last ten years of her life she wrote nine volumes of poetry, two novels, and two books of short stories. Her first poems were published under the name of R. Vivien, and critics who had hailed the "young man's" passionate poetry to women were dismayed when Vivien went public with her real identity as a woman. In fact her work became increasingly gynocentric, addressing women as a group apart from men.

The relationship with Barney was a stormy one. Both women had affairs with others, Vivien with the colorful Baroness Hélène de Zuylen de Nyevelt, who also wrote novels. Vivien and Barney visited the island of Lesbos together; the impressions gained here in Vivien's company were probably responsible for Barney's founding of her Academy of Women many

years later. Vivien's work was always concerned with death and in her last years she gradually starved herself to death, a victim of anorexia, which was not recognized as a disease at the time. In the 1970s her work was revived by both French- and English-speaking feminists and lesbians, and today it forms part of what appears almost as a golden age of lesbian creativity in Paris in the early decades of the twentieth century.

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## VOGEL, BRUNO (1895–1987)

German writer. The details of Bruno Vogel's biography are obscure; the little that is known comes mainly from an autobiographical sketch by the author himself and conversations that he had with Wolfgang U. Schutte and Manfred Herzer and others in the last years of his life. Vogel belongs to the comparatively few authors, at least in the German-speaking world, whose treatment of homosexuality is not only explicit and overt, but also clearly positive. Moreover, in Vogel this stance melds with his socialist-anarchist politics. After his first volume of stories, *Es lebe der Krieg!* (1924), antimilitarist and gay themes ran to some extent parallel in *Ein Gulasch* (1928). Vogel gained a reputation with his short novel *Alf*, first published in 1929 and reprinted in 1977 in its third edition, in which a critique of the horrors of war combines with a critique of a society that will not grant young men the appropriate form of friendship, tenderness, and sexuality: Alf becomes a victim of the war, because as a victim of incomprehension and of his own confusion in regard to the impossibility of his feelings he has sought out the war as a volunteer.

In *Alf*, Vogel makes one of the protagonists, Alf's young friend Felix,

express an almost uncritically positive judgment on psychoanalysis, which is celebrated as "something enormous and grand" because it unmasks the sexual morality propagated by state and church.

In the interwar period Vogel was close to the **Scientific-Humanitarian Committee** (he was briefly an officer) and a member of Hirschfeld's Institute for Sexual Science. He left Germany in 1931, and via Switzerland, Paris, and Norway he reached South Africa in 1937. There he did exactly what Felix praised his deceased friend for having done at the end of the novel: he fought against "baseness and stupidity," this time against apartheid. So in the early 1950s it was time to turn his back on South Africa. He settled in London, where—not even noticed by the Exile-PEN club residing there—he led a hand-to-mouth existence. In 1987 his work *Ein junger Rebell—Erzählungen und Skizzen aus der Weimarer Republik* was published in East Germany.

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### VOLTAIRE, FRANÇOIS-MARIE AROUET, KNOWN AS (1694–1778)

French philosopher, dramatist, essayist, and critic.

*Life.* Born in Paris as the son of a well-to-do notary, Voltaire, as he came to be known from the very beginning of the French Enlightenment, was educated by the Jesuits of the Collège de Clermont, then became a member of the libertine society of the Temple and devoted himself to the study of jurisprudence. Some disrespectful verses directed at the Regent, Philippe d'Orléans, and a quarrel with the

Chevalier de Rohan-Chabot led to his imprisonment (1716–18, 1726), followed by exile in England. In a country whose language and literature were still little known on the continent, Voltaire was influenced by the empiricism of Locke, Newtonian physics, and English deism, which had virtually replaced Christianity among the educated classes. Upon his return to France in 1729, Voltaire criticized the literature of the day in *Le Temple du goût* (1732), polemicized against the notion of divine goodness (*Épître à Uranie*), and without authorization published the *Lettres philosophiques* (1734), to which he added the *Remarques sur les "Pensées" de Pascal*. This criticism of the regime in France led to criminal proceedings which he escaped by taking refuge on the estate of the Marquise du Châtelet in Lorraine (1734–49). Here he composed most of the fifty comedies and tragedies that founded his literary reputation, and in 1746 he was named historiographer of the king and a member of the French Academy.

On the death of Madame du Châtelet, Voltaire accepted the invitation of Frederick II of Prussia, with whom he had corresponded since 1736, to reside at the court of Potsdam. Here he pursued his literary, historical, and philosophical work, but quarrels with Maupertuis, president of the Berlin Academy, and with Frederick himself made him seek refuge in Geneva, where he began his collaboration on the *Encyclopédie* of Diderot and d'Alembert (1755). But his writings scandalized the Calvinist theologians of Geneva as much as they had the Catholics. In 1759, while writing the novel *Candide*, directed in part against the optimism of Leibnitz and Pope, Voltaire found his definitive retreat at Ferney (1760–78). During this period, the intellectual and political elites of European society maintained close relations with Voltaire, whose influence grew steadily thanks to his many writings, for which—because of the risks which their challenge to the established order entailed—he employed 160 different pseudo-