earlier, in such projects as Michiel Brinkman's Justus van Effenblok development, Rotterdam (1919–22), illustrated here with a photograph showing poor tenants congregating on a not particularly wide access gallery. In slum housing, children and mothers spent as much of their lives as they could outside in streets and alleys because their dwellings were cramped and ill-serviced. The notion that the old sociability could be revived by widening access galleries was largely a patronising illusion; once people acquire better dwellings, they spend more of their lives indoors.

As far as the illuminating internal plans in the *Atlas* are concerned, a great fertility of plan-forms for flats, maisonettes (here called duplexes) and patio houses is spread before the reader. The plans are lightly labelled, which is as well, given the scale, although the direction in which doors open is always represented. Eating spaces, indicated by tables and chairs, usually form part of a living room, since most of the projects are for low-income tenants. The plans of later projects betray the growth of mechanical services. One retrograde aspect of this is the advent of the mechanically ventilated lavatory, without natural light and too often noisy and smelly. It is not commented on here, but it is a feature that architects should resist.

Finally, the distribution of projects is generally wide and fair. Some of the Spanish projects are especially stimulating. They include Francisco Javier Sáenz de Oiza's Torres Blancas, Madrid (1961–68), which betrays the influence of Bertrand Goldberg's Marina City, Chicago, and, judging from the single modern photo in the book, now looks drab; some clever temporary housing at Hortaleza (1963); a wild agglomeration of towers by Ricardo Bofill's firm outside Barcelona called Walden-7 (1970–75), of which mercifully only a fragment was built; and Giancarlo de Carlo's low-rise Villaggio Matteotti, Terni (Fig.7), where residents participated in the design. The Dutch, always enterprising at housing, are well represented. So is Britain. Why the Barbican, hardly a low-cost housing development, is included remains unclear. It is misleadingly classified as 'public' (p.209), perhaps because the City of London Corporation promoted it. And three projects from within the London Borough of Camden are surely too many, given the wealth of wider possibilities in Britain. These are quibbles. It is a pleasure to forget the social shortcomings and leaf through this absorbing compendium of architectural ideas about the most crucial of all modern dwelling-types.

Tamara de Lempicka

Edited by Gioia Mori and Furio Rinaldi with Alison de Lima Greene and Laura L. Camerlengo. 256 pp. incl. 200 col. + b. & w. ills. (Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco and Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2025), £50. ISBN 978-0-300-27850-7.

by **NINA FOLKERSMA**

The richly illustrated catalogue of the recent Tamara de Lempicka (1894–1980) retrospective, held at the De Young Museum, San Francisco (closed 9th February), and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (closed 6th July), is a bold and timely celebration of an artist who, although iconic in the popular imagination, has long been in need of rigorous art-historical reassessment. While the exhibition – the first major retrospective of De Lempicka's work in the United States – constituted a long-overdue institutional recognition of the artist's contribution to twentieth-century Modernism, the publication, edited by the curators, Furio Rinaldi and the late Gioia Mori, stands independently as a major scholarly resource. With detailed essays, catalogue entries and high-quality reproductions, the volume offers a comprehensive study of the artist, illuminating both the development of her distinctive style and the shifting narratives of her identity.

De Lempicka's biography is one of continual transformation. She was born on 28th June 1894 in either Warsaw, Moscow or Saint Petersburg, according to her own varying accounts. Similarly, her recently confirmed birthdate contradicts a lifelong habit of subtracting years, and her official birth name, Tamara Rosa Hurwitz, is also a recent discovery. De Lempicka actively shaped her public image, and her career is marked by a deliberate and – at times necessary – embrace of multiple personae. As a Polish-Russian émigré of Jewish descent navigating the complexities of the inter-war period, her adoption of a Christian identity was not only strategic but also a means of survival. This transformation is reflected in the Christian iconography and motifs that appear throughout her work – depictions of Madonnas, saints and nuns, as well as a portrait of her daughter, Kizette, in a white Communion dress (1928; La Piscine – Musée d'art et d'industrie André Diligent, Roubaix; cat. no.24) – all subtly reinforcing the identity Lempicka crafted in response to both social pressures and personal imperatives.

Like the exhibition, the catalogue section is divided into four biographical chapters, each corresponding to one of the artist's adopted identities: Tamara Rosa Hurwitz; Monsieur Lempitzky, a gender-bending pseudonym reflecting her playful and strategic navigation of gender roles during her early years in Paris; the now-canonical Tamara de Lempicka, derived from the surname of her first husband, Tadeusz Lempicki; and Baroness Kuffner, which she adopted after her second marriage to Baron Kuffner in 1934. This framework allows for a nuanced reading of the artist's evolving self-representation, particularly as it intersected with her public visibility and market reception. Yet the catalogue is careful to avoid a reductive psychobiographical approach, instead positioning these identities as lenses through which to examine shifts in patronage, subjects and thematic preoccupations.

De Lempicka's most celebrated period remains the 1920s, which she spent in Paris, where her cool, angular portraits and stylised sensuous nudes established her as a leading figure of the Art Deco movement. Her iconic self-portrait in a green Bugatti (1929; private collection; ex-catalogue), a powerful representation of the modern, independent woman, encapsulated the essence of the Roaring Twenties and the burgeoning spirit of modernity. Her immaculate style, however, also attracted scepticism from bohemian and avant-garde circles, who dismissed her work as too polished, too fashionable and too perfect. After settling in the United States in 1939 and obtaining citizenship in 1945, De Lempicka became a prominent figure in Hollywood's glamorous social scene, mingling with celebrities, socialites and wealthy collectors. By the 1960s, as artistic trends shifted towards Abstract Expressionism and Conceptual art, her representational style fell out of favour, leading her to gradually retreat from active participation in the art world. By the time of her death in 1980, De Lempicka was nearly forgotten by mainstream institutions.

The catalogue brings together an extraordinary selection of De Lempicka's iconic portraits and nudes, alongside lesser-known works and early still lifes. The inclusion of nearly forty drawings, many of which are reproduced and contextualised here for the first time, significantly enhances our understanding of the artist's technique and meticulous planning. A major strength of the publication lies in its elevation of De Lempicka's draughtsmanship, an aspect of

8. Study for *Young girl drawing*, by Tamara de Lempicka. 1937. Graphite on paper, 32.5 by 23.2 cm. (Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco).

her practice largely overlooked in earlier studies. Rinaldi's essay is particularly valuable in this regard, as it highlights the enduring legacy of her training with André Lhote (1885–1962). The post-Cubist French painter instilled in her the centrality of drawing as both a technical discipline and a mode of intellectual engagement with the past. His influence is visible in the sculptural solidity of De Lempicka's figures, with their smooth, porcelain-like surfaces and abstract linearity: a synthesis of Renaissance and Baroque sensibilities and the sleek geometries of Cubism. This approach is exemplified in a study for *Young girl drawing* (no.93; Fig.8), a recent acquisition by the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco and the first De Lempicka work to enter an American museum collection. The graphite drawing, a portrait of Kizette as a teenager, reveals a delicacy and precision that belie the assertive glamour of her better-known oil portraits. It offers rare insight into her working methods – particularly her ability to balance compositional control with psychological intimacy.

Alongside the essays by Rinaldi and Mori, a leading authority on De Lempicka, is a contribution by Alison de Lima Greene, curator at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and a reprint of Françoise Gilot's obituary for the French edition of *Vogue*, as well as a biographical timeline and several detailed entries that enrich the scholarly apparatus. In a gesture as curious as it is telling, Barbra Streisand, an early collector of De Lempicka's work, has written the preface, recounting not only her appreciation for the artist but also the windfalls from reselling her works – a detail that feels as glamorous (and unapologetically American) as De Lempicka herself.

The publication excels in articulating the complexity of De Lempicka's status as a pioneering woman artist. Her self-fashioned independence, her commanding representations of modern women and her commitment to supporting women in art resonate powerfully today. This emancipating force extends beyond her portraits of women, which are characterised by an unprecedented confidence and assertive coolness. The male subjects in her work are likewise imbued with a sexual charge and femininity rarely seen in the genre. Their languid attitudes and overly elegant, affected poses echo visual conventions traditionally reserved for female portraiture, thereby subverting expectations of gender representation. De Lempicka never concealed the extent to which the interchangeability of her signatures corresponded to her fluid sexual identity. Openly bisexual, she frequented Montmartre's lesbian nightclubs and maintained a lifelong relationship with the poet Ira Perrot – her neighbour, lover and the subject of numerous paintings. Over the course of twenty years, Lempicka created a number of works – '*visions amoureuses*' (p.82) – dedicated to Perrot and other female lovers, including Suzy Solidor and Rafaëla. As the curators rightly assert, De Lempicka – by being transgressive, provocative and fiercely independent – embodies the very symbol of an open-ended modernity, the influence of which spans from the Art Deco period to the present day.

This catalogue is more than a tribute; it is a reappraisal. With outstanding reproductions and insightful essays, it restores De Lempicka to her rightful place in twentieth-century art history – not just as an icon of Art Deco, but as a master of her craft, a strategic image-maker and a woman who wielded glamour as both subject and weapon.