



**Sky Blue Press**

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## **BEFORE *HENRY & JUNE*, THERE WAS HANS & JOHANNA** **Anaïs Nin's Banned Book Resurfaces After Nearly 70 Years**

**Troy, MI, Oct 1, 2007.** In the wild days of prewar Paris, art, love, and literature flowed freely, breaking rules and shocking audiences who were not prepared for the explosive expressions of the bohemian, the avant-garde, the revolutionary. One of the cutting-edge writers of the time, Anaïs Nin, produced a collection of novellas entitled *The Winter of Artifice*, arguably one of the very first sexually explicit writings by a female author.

Along with Henry Miller (*Tropic of Cancer*) and Lawrence Durrell (*The Black Book*), Nin was one of the "Villa Seurat" writers, named after the street where Miller lived in the late thirties. Both Miller and Durrell had their previously banned works published in the USA shortly after the landmark trial which obliterated the obscenity laws in 1961. However, the original Obelisk Press version of *The Winter of Artifice* was heavily edited and purged of its risqué passages in the early forties and republished as such, leaving the original edition unavailable and unread.

Nin cut out the most explicit story, "Djuna," which was her first rendering of the love triangle between herself, Henry Miller, and his wife June, the basis for the movie "**Henry and June**," the first film in history to receive the NC-17 rating. The other two stories in *The Winter of Artifice*, "Lilith," Nin's treatment of her incestuous relationship with her father, and "The Voice," which represents Nin's sexual experiences with her therapists, were also severely censored.

For many years, Benjamin Franklin V, the preeminent Nin scholar, saw the lack of the original edition of *The Winter of Artifice* as a huge gap in Nin bibliography. A few years ago, he approached Paul Herron, Editor of Sky Blue Press, with the idea of bringing the book out in facsimile from a rare surviving copy, one of which he had in his collection. Herron was only too happy to accept the challenge, since he is heavily involved with Anaïs Nin studies in his annual, *A Café in Space: The Anaïs Nin Literary Journal*. Little did he know it would take more than two years to achieve the goal. "We had to scan each page and digitally remove the scars of time," Herron says. "Sometimes it got down to going letter by letter. We didn't want an old-looking book—we were after what rolled off the press in 1939. It took a long time, but the results speak for themselves." Herron appears to be right. The Deco-inspired cover is in a vibrant blue, and the text is crisp and dark. Most importantly, the book is once again available, sixty-eight years after the fact.

So, on October 1, 2007, the last of the banned Villa Seurat books is in print in America. Anaïs Nin can now take her place next to her fellow "musketees," as they were known, Henry Miller and Lawrence Durrell. Franklin says, "The republication of *The Winter of Artifice* satisfies the greatest need relating to Nin's fiction."

**Author:** Anaïs Nin • **Title:** *The Winter of Artifice: a facsimile of the original 1939 Paris edition* • **Publisher:** Sky Blue Press, Troy, MI 48083. Ph. 248-619-9918 • **Date of publication:** October 2007 • **# pages:** 322 • **ISBN:** 0-9774851-1-0 • **LCCN:** 2007024450 • **Website:** [www.skybluepress.com](http://www.skybluepress.com)

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If you would like more information about this book or to schedule an interview with Paul Herron, please call: **(248) 619-9918** or email: [skybluepress@skybluepress.com](mailto:skybluepress@skybluepress.com)

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