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Faith Binckes Annotation

In this engaging and highly readable volume, Faith Binckes takes the two little magazines *Rhythm* (Summer 1911–March 1913) and the *Blue Review* (May–July 1913), and examines their content, editorial positions and contributors, to arrive at a new reading of the very earliest years of modernism in Europe. The main protagonists in this re-evaluation are John Middleton Murry, who set up *Rhythm* with assistance from Michael Sadleir, and Katherine Mansfield, who was one of the earliest contributors and who soon became Murry's partner, both in an editorial sense and in his private life. The book's six chapters cover the topics of finances and publishers, the avant-garde, questions of tradition, France and the Fantaisistes, the careers of Mansfield and Murry during this period, the graphic content of *Rhythm*, with a final chapter discussing the *Blue Review* and a brief concluding overview of another short lived little magazine, the *Signature* (October–November 1915), co-edited by Murry and D. H. Lawrence, assisted by Mansfield.

The prodigious research for this volume reveals some fascinating facts about this early period of innovative journal production. Binckes notes that *Rhythm* was “the first British publication to reproduce a Picasso” (p.56), in its opening number of Summer 1911. By September 1912, it could post a truly international readership “with outlets in Paris, New York, Munich, Berlin, Helsinki, Warsaw and Krakow” (p. 80). Previously unpublished letters and documents reveal the machinations involved in nurturing potential benefactors to provide much needed financial assistance for the publications, though in all three cases, a precarious financial state was the main cause of their demise, alongside insufficient regular subscribers. Nevertheless, their importance should not be underestimated; Binckes sets out in her discourse on these little magazines “to redress an imbalance, and to reclaim an under-acknowledged participant in the dialogues through which modernism was first shaped and disseminated in Britain” (p. 199).