

WILEY BLACKWELL COMPANIONS TO ART HISTORY



# A Companion to Feminist Art

Edited by Hilary Robinson and Maria Elena Buszek



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## **A Companion to Feminist Art**

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# **A Companion to Feminist Art**

*Edited by*

*Hilary Robinson and Maria Elena Buszek*

**WILEY** Blackwell

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*For our companionista Alanna Lockward (1961–2019)*





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## Series Editor Preface

*Blackwell Companions to Art History* is a series of edited collections designed to cover the discipline of art history in all its complexities. Each volume is edited by specialists who lead a team of essayists, representing the best of leading scholarship, in mapping the state of research within the sub-field under review, as well as pointing toward future trends in research.

This *Companion to Feminist Art* focuses on the recent history of and current discussions within feminist art history, theory and practice. The wide-ranging chapters include contributions that address questions such as configurations of feminism and gender in post-Cold War Europe, to more focused conversations with women artists on Afropean decoloniality.

This volume is divided into five sections that signal the variety of voices that articulate feminist thought and art. Together the sections and essays challenge and expand our understanding of feminist art beyond the canonical definitions that are rooted in the 1960s. Through the chapters we encounter feminist art as dynamic and fluid, sitting at the intersection between culture, politics and practice.

As series editor, I was delighted to receive the proposal for this volume, which was both timely and thought provoking. As the editors note, the book's evolution over a number of years has in part been a product of the differences of thought and experience of the editorial team. The volume has benefitted from this creative friction as the thematic sections and the essays they contain recognise and celebrate the diversity of feminist thinkers and practitioners. This collection of essays will be essential reading for students, researchers and teachers working on the histories, theories and practices of feminism and art, and in related fields. I have no doubt that *A Companion to Feminist Art* will make a very welcome addition to the series.

*Dana Arnold, 2019*



## About the Editors

**Hilary Robinson** is Professor of Feminism, Art, and Theory at Loughborough University. Her publications include *Visibly Female: Women and Art Today* (1987), *Reading Art, Reading Irigaray: The Politics of Art by Women* (2006), *Feminism–Art–Theory 1968–2014* (2015). Initially she trained as a painter, at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne; she also has an MA in Cultural History from the Royal College of Art, London and a PhD in Art Theory from the University of Leeds. Hilary’s academic career has been in Belfast, Northern Ireland, Pittsburgh, PA, USA, and London, England. At the University of Ulster (1992–2005) she taught the history and theory of contemporary art to studio Fine and Applied Art students, at BA, MFA, and PhD levels. In 2005, she was appointed Dean of the College of Fine Arts at Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, PA, USA. While in Pittsburgh her board memberships included The Andy Warhol Museum; Silver Eye Centre for Photography and The Mattress Factory Museum. She headed the Creative Entrepreneurs project, to retain artists in post-industrial Pittsburgh. She moved back to the UK in 2012 to take up the position of Professor and Dean of the School of Art and Design at Middlesex University for a four-year term before taking up her present research professorship. Her current book project is *ReSisters: Art, Activism and Feminist Resistance*.

**Maria Elena Buszek** is Associate Professor of Art History at the University of Colorado Denver. Her publications include the books *Pin-Up Grrrls: Feminism, Sexuality, Popular Culture* (2006) and *Extra/Ordinary: Craft and Contemporary Art* (2011). She has also contributed writing to numerous, international exhibition catalogues: most recently, essays in *Dorothy Iannone: Censorship and the Irrepressible Drive Toward Divinity* (2014), *Andrea Bowers* (2014), *Mark Mothersbaugh: Myopia* (2014), and *In Wonderland: The Surrealist Adventures of Women Artists in Mexico and the United States* (2012). Her scholarship and art criticism have appeared in such publications as *Art Journal*, *TDR: The Journal of Performance Studies*, and *Art in America*, and (with Kirsty Robertson) she edited a special issue of *Utopian Studies* on the subject of “craftivism.” Dr. Buszek is also a prolific independent curator, whose most recent exhibitions include the 2016 exhibition *Danger Came Smiling: Feminist Art and Popular Music* and the traveling exhibition *Raised in Craftivity*. Before coming to CU-Denver, she was Assistant Professor of Art History at the Kansas City Art Institute and served as a curatorial assistant at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the Museum of Modern Art in New York City. Her current book project, *Art of Noise*, explores the ties between contemporary activist art and popular music.





## Notes on Contributors

**Felicity Allen** is an artist, writer, and educator. Her career's work is a model of The Disoeuvre, the neologism she coined to describe the contingent and adaptable practices that she has developed (like many other artists), in contrast to a conventional 'oeuvre'. In the last decade she has made five series of Dialogic Portraits projects, producing paintings, films, and artists books (included in Tate's and Getty's artists' books collections). She has written numerous articles on gallery education, published poetry, and sustained a long-term project with a Syrian artist based in Damascus.

**Tanya Augsborg** is a humanities-trained, interdisciplinary feminist performance scholar, critic, and curator who can be occasionally persuaded to perform. She teaches at San Francisco State University, where she is Professor of Humanities. Her current projects include completing a book-length manuscript on the interdisciplinary arts and a book-length manuscript on what she is calling "feminist *ars erotica*."

**Jill Bennett** is an Australian Research Council Laureate Fellow and Professor of Experimental Arts at the University of New South Wales. She leads a transdisciplinary research team investigating the experience of ageing and neurological/mental health, and producing 3D immersive visualization of subjective experience. She is Founding Director of The Big Anxiety: Festival of Arts+ Science+ People. Her books include *Empathic Vision: Affect, Trauma and Contemporary Art* and *Practical Aesthetics*, as well as monographs on media arts and curating.

**Susan Best** is Professor of Art History and Theory and Deputy Director (research and postgraduate) at Queensland College of Art, Griffith University. She is the author of *Visualizing Feeling: Affect and the Feminine Avant-Garde* (2011) and *Reparative Aesthetics: Witnessing in Contemporary Art Photography* (2016).

**Lucy Day** is a lecturer, writer, and Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts. Alongside her 30-year curating career, Day has supported artists and arts organizers through mentoring, workshops, and organizational change. For over 10 years as part of the independent curatorial partnership Day + Gluckman, she has collaborated with a variety of organizations, and in 2015 founded A Woman's Place Project CIC, which takes equality as its starting point, exploring it creatively through contemporary-art exhibitions, projects, and events.

**Angela Dimitrakaki** is Senior Lecturer in Contemporary Art History and Theory, University of Edinburgh. She has co-edited *Economy: Art, Production and the Subject in the 21st Century* (2015, with Kirsten Lloyd) and *Politics in a Glass Case: Feminism, Exhibition Cultures, and Curatorial Transgressions* (2013, with Lara Perry), and special issues on social reproduction for the journals *Historical Materialism* (2016) and *Third Text* (2017), and on antifascist art theory for *Third Text* (2019). She has authored *Gender, ArtWork and the Global Imperative* (2013), and *Art and Globalisation: From the Postmodern Sign to the Biopolitical Arena* (2013, in Greek). Her forthcoming book is *Feminism, Art, Capitalism*. She has received an Academy of Athens award for fiction writing (2017).

**Julie Ewington** is a writer and curator based in Sydney, Australia. Between 2001 and 2014 she was Head of Australian Art at Queensland Art Gallery|Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane. She has written numerous catalogue essays and reviews for journals, including *The Monthly*, *Art Monthly Australasia*, and *Artforum*. Major publications include monographs on Fiona Hall (2005) and Del Kathryn Barton (2014). In 2016 Ewington curated *The Sculpture of Bronwyn Oliver* for TarraWarra Museum of Art, and in 2017 was a curatorium member for *Unfinished Business: Perspectives on Art and Feminism*, at ACCA, Melbourne.

**Maria Fernandez** teaches at Cornell University. She works on the history and theory of digital art, postcolonial and gender studies, Latin American art and architecture, and the intersections of these fields. She is the author of *Cosmopolitanism in Mexican Visual Culture* (2014) for which she was awarded the Arvey Prize by the Association for Latin American Art in 2015. She edited *Latin American Modernisms and Technology* (2018) and with Faith Wilding and Michelle Wright coedited *Domain Errors: Cyberfeminist Practices* (2002).

**Eliza Gluckman** was Curator of the *New Hall Art Collection*, Murray Edwards College, University of Cambridge, the largest collection of works by women in Europe, from 2015 to 2018, and is currently Senior Curator and Deputy Director of the Government Art Collection (UK). For over 10 years as part of the independent curatorial partnership Day+Gluckman, she has collaborated with a variety of organizations, and in 2015 founded A Woman's Place Project CIC, which takes equality as its starting point, exploring it creatively through contemporary-art exhibitions, projects, and events.

**Lubaina Himid** is an artist, curator, and Professor of Contemporary Art at the University of Central Lancaster. She was awarded the Turner Prize (2017), and an MBE for services to Black women's art (2010). Recent exhibitions include *Invisible Strategies, Modern Art Oxford, 2017*, and *Navigation Charts, Spike Island, 2017*. Other exhibitions include the Studio Museum, New York, 1997, Tate Britain, 2011, and the Badischer Kunstverein, 2017. She represented Britain at the Gwangju Biennial, 2014 and the Berlin Biennial, 2018. She curated *Five Black Women*, Africa Centre, London 1983, *The Thin Black Line*, ICA London, 1985, and *Thin Black Line(s)*, Tate Britain 2011.

**Amelia Jones** is Robert A. Day Professor, Roski School of Art & Design, USC, and is a curator and scholar of contemporary art, performance, and feminist/sexuality studies.

Recent publications include *Seeing Differently: A History and Theory of Identification and the Visual Arts* (2012), co-edited with Erin Silver, *Otherwise: Imagining Queer Feminist Art Histories* (2016), and the edited special issue “On Trans/Performance” of *Performance Research* (2016). Jones is currently working on a retrospective of the work of Ron Athey and a book tentatively entitled *In Between Subjects: A Critical Genealogy of Queer Performance*.

**Alexandra Kokoli** is Senior Lecturer in Visual Culture, Middlesex University, London, and Research Associate at VIAD, University of Johannesburg. A writer and curator, she has published widely on feminism, art, and visual culture in journals including *Art Journal*, *Women and Performance*, *n.paradoxa*, *Performance Research*, *Oxford Art Journal*, and *Hypatia*. Her books include *The Feminist Uncanny in Theory and Art Practice* (2016, paperback 2017), and (as editor) *Feminism Reframed: Reflections on Art and Difference* (2008), and *The Provisional Texture of Reality: Selected Talks and Texts by Susan Hiller, 1977–2007* (2008).

**Tirza Latimer** earned her PhD in Art History at Stanford University. Professor in Visual Studies at California College of the Arts, Oakland/San Francisco, her teaching, publications, and curatorial projects reflect on visual culture and visual politics from queer feminist perspectives. Her latest book, *Eccentric Modernisms: Making Differences in the History of American Art*, was released by University of California Press in 2016.

**Alanna Lockward** was a Dominican-German writer, journalist, filmmaker and founding director of Art Labour Archives. Lockward conceptualized and curated the groundbreaking transdisciplinary meeting BE.BOP. BLACK EUROPE BODY POLITICS (2012–2018). She was the author of several books, including *Apremio: apuntes sobre el pensamiento y la creación contemporánea desde el Caribe* (2006) and *Un Haití Dominicano: Tatuajes fantasmas y narrativas bilaterales* (2014), and editor of *BE.BOP 2012–2014. El cuerpo en el continente de la conciencia Negra* (2016). She was research professor at the Center of Caribbean Studies, Pontificia Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra. Dr Lockward passed away in January 2019.

**Natalie Loveless** is an associate professor in the Department of Art and Design (History of Art, Design, and Visual Culture) at the University of Alberta, Canada, where she also directs the Research-Creation and Social Justice CoLABoratory. Recent projects include *New Maternalisms* and *Immune Nations*. Current work includes a forthcoming book, *Art at the End of the World: A Manifesto for Research-Creation*, and a collaborative project on art and ecology called *Speculative Energy Futures*.

**Jaleh Mansoor** is Associate Professor of Art History at the University of British Columbia. She coedited the anthology *Communities of Sense: Rethinking Aesthetics and Politics* (2010), and her monograph *Marshall Plan Modernism: Italian Postwar Abstraction and the Beginnings of Autonomia* was published in September 2016. She has contributed to *October*, *Texte Zur Kunst*, and *Artforum*. Mansoor’s current project traces the historical and structural entwinement of aesthetic and real (or concrete) abstraction, the latter understood as the extraction of surplus labor valorized on and by the market.

**Michelle Meagher** is Associate Professor of Women's and Gender Studies at the University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada, where she teaches courses in the area of popular culture, feminist body studies, and art and activism. Her current research project, titled *Art, Feminism, and the Periodical Press*, considers the ways that feminist art was produced, defined, and circulated by periodical communities of the late 1970s and through the 1980s in the US context.

**Marsha Meskimmon** is Professor of Art History and Theory at Loughborough University (UK). Her publications include: *The Art of Reflection: Women Artists' Self-Portraiture in the Twentieth Century* (1996), *Women Making Art: History, Subjectivity, Aesthetics* (2003), *Contemporary Art and the Cosmopolitan Imagination* (2010), *Women, the Arts and Globalization: Eccentric Experience* (coedited, Dorothy Rowe, 2013), *Drawing Difference: Connections between Gender and Drawing* (coauthored, Phil Sawdon, 2016), and *Home/Land: Women, Citizenship, Photographies* (coedited, Marion Arnold, 2016). She is currently writing a trilogy, *Transnational Feminism and the Arts* for Routledge.

**Richard Meyer** is Robert and Ruth Halperin Professor of Art History at Stanford University, where he teaches courses on twentieth-century American art, censorship, feminism, and queer studies. He is the author of *What Was Contemporary Art?* (2013) and, with Catherine Lord, *Art and Queer Culture* (2013). A new edition of Meyer's first book, *Outlaw Representation: Censorship and Homosexuality in Twentieth-Century American Art*, has just been published with a preface by the author that considers the book's relevance to the cultural and political landscape of Trump's America.

**Martina Pachmanová** is an Associate Professor at the Department of Theory and History of Art at the Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design in Prague. As a researcher, writer, and curator she specializes in gender, sexual politics, and feminism in modern, post-war and contemporary art and visual culture. She is an author, editor, and coeditor of numerous books and exhibition catalogues, including monographs of forgotten Czech female modernists related to their retrospective exhibitions.

**Griselda Pollock** is Professor of Social and Critical Histories of Art and Director, Centre for Cultural Analysis, Theory and History (CentreCATH) at the University of Leeds, UK. Committed to an international, postcolonial, queer feminist analysis of the visual arts, visual culture, and cultural theory, one major publication is *Charlotte Salomon in the Theatre of Memory* (2018). Forthcoming publications included *Is Feminism a Bad Memory?* (2019) and *Monroe's Mov(i)es: Class, Gender and Nation in the Work, Image-Making and Agency of "Marilyn Monroe"* (2020).

**Harriet Riches** is an art historian whose current research focuses on issues of gender and the language of femininity in the historiography of photography. She has published widely on this subject in journals such as *Oxford Art Journal*, and writes regularly on contemporary photography for several international magazines including *Afterimage: Journal of Media Arts & Cultural Criticism* and *Source Photographic Review*. She is currently Director of post-graduate programs at Cambridge School of Visual & Performing Arts.

**María Laura Rosa** is a researcher at CONICET (Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas, Argentina) and the Interdisciplinary Institute for Gender Studies at the University of Buenos Aires, Professor of Aesthetics, Department of Arts, Philosophy and Literature Faculty University of Buenos Aires, and Lecturer of Latin-American Arts at ESEADE University, Buenos Aires. Dr. Rosa is the editor (with Soledad Novoa Donoso) of *Share the World: The Experience of Women and Art* (2017) and the author of *Legacies of Freedom: Feminist Art in Democratic Effervescence* (2014).

**Mira Schor** is a New York-based painter and writer. Schor has been the recipient of awards in painting from the Guggenheim, Rockefeller, and Pollock-Krasner Foundations, as well as the College Art Association's Frank Jewett Mather Award for Art Criticism, a Creative Capital/Warhol Foundation Arts Writers Grant and an AICA-USA award for her blog *A Year of Positive Thinking*. She is the author of two books of collected essays, *Wet: On Painting, Feminism, and Art Culture* and *A Decade of Negative Thinking: Essays on Art, Politics, and Daily Life* and coeditor of *M/E/A/N/I/N/G: An Anthology of Artists' Writings, Theory, and Criticism* and *M/E/A/N/I/N/G Online*.

**Gayatri Sinha** is an art critic and curator whose primary areas of interest are gender and iconography, media, economics, and social history. She has curated and lectured extensively in India, Europe, and the United States. Sinha is the founder and director of Critical Collective, an initiative to build knowledge in the visual arts in India. Sinha's publications include *Voices of Change: 20 Indian Artists* (2010), *Art and Visual Culture in India 1857–2007* (2009), and *Indian Art: An Overview* (2003), among others. She was the recipient of the Tate Asia Research fellowship in 2017.

**Eliza Steinbock** is Assistant Professor of Film and Literary Studies at Leiden University Centre for the Arts in Society, and former "Veni" Talent Scheme postdoctoral researcher awarded for "Vital Art: Transgender Portraiture as Visual Activism" (NWO 2014–2018). In addition to coediting four special journal issues, their articles have been published in the *Photography and Culture*, *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly*, *Spectator*, *Feminist Media Studies*, and in over fifteen edited volumes. Their forthcoming first book, *Shimmering Images: Trans Cinema, Embodiment and the Aesthetics of Change*, is with Duke University Press (Spring 2019).

**Amy Tobin** is a lecturer in the History of Art Department at the University of Cambridge and Curator of Events, Exhibitions and Research at Kettle's Yard, Cambridge. She completed her PhD at the University of York in 2017 with a thesis on feminism, art, and collaboration in the 1970s. Her research on art, film, and feminism has been published in the journals *Tate Papers* and *MIRAJ*, as well as in Sue Clayton and Laura Mulvey's edited collection *Other Cinemas: Politics, Culture and Experimental Film in the 1970s* (2017). She is also coeditor of *London Art Worlds: Mobile, Contingent and Ephemeral Networks 1960–1980* (2018) with Jo Applin and Catherine Spencer, and the author of *14 Radnor Terrace: A Woman's Place* (2017).

**Karen von Veh** is Associate Professor of Art History and Head of Department in the Visual Arts Department at the University of Johannesburg, South Africa. Her research interests include contemporary South African Art, the transgressive use of Christian

iconography, postcolonial studies, and gender studies. She has written several articles in academic journals and chapters in books on these subjects, as well as two monographs on South African artist Diane Victor. Karen is a past president and long-term membership secretary of the South African Visual Arts Historians Association, has served on the board of directors of Arts Council of the African Studies Association, and currently serves on the international board of AICA (International Association of Art Critics).

**Siona Wilson** is Associate Professor of Art History at the College of Staten Island and the Graduate Center, the City University of New York. She is the author of *Art Labor, Sex Politics: Feminist Effects in 1970s British Art and Performance* (2015) and has published on topics including feminist politics of war imaging, documentary photography and film and video art, and the gendering of sound. She is currently working on a book addressing episodes in the history of documentary from the 1930s to the present and the figure of the female insurgent.

**Ebru Yetişkin** is an independent curator and media theorist. She works on the interaction of science, technology, politics, and art. She works as a full-time researcher at Istanbul Technical University. She has curated media art related exhibitions entitled *Cacophony* (2013), *Code Unknown* (2014), *Waves* (2015), *Contagious Bodies* (2015), *X-CHANGE* (2015), *Illusionoscope* (2016), and *Interfaces* (2017). In 2016, she edited a book of poetry, *Like The Others* written by a robot named Deniz Yılmaz, and curated an autograph session at the Istanbul Art and Book Fair.

## Introduction

The term “feminist art” has been misused as often as not. Understood as a codification within the academic discipline of art history and within the related curatorial and archival categories of museological practices, it has frequently come to represent a classification: feminist art. Used as such, the classification implies consideration under definitions familiar in other art historical and museological classifications, definitions of geography, chronology, style, materials, and influence (fifteenth-century Florentine, Golden Age Dutch, Pre-Raphaelite, and so forth). It therefore restricts consideration of feminist art to a particular overt content, style, use of materials, or chronological geographical influence since “women’s liberation” or the “second wave” of the feminist movement emerged in full force in the West in the late 1960s.

This book, however, comes to the term “feminist art” from a different direction. As editors, we have approached “art” as a dynamic set of material and theoretical practices in the realm of culture, and “feminism” as an equally dynamic set of activist and theoretical practices in the realm of politics. Given that culture and politics constantly intersect and work upon each other, “feminist art” for us is the space and place – the site – where feminist politics and the domain of art-making intersect. Not surprisingly, it is also the place where both feminist politics and art-making sometimes diverge and divide, in order to reconnect with greater strength resulting from this kind of critique and debate. It is not always a comfortable, safe, or secure place for those who work at that intersection: the art world in the twenty-first century retains a hierarchy of thinking and of practice that is still overwhelmingly dominated by masculinist, Euro/USA-centric values. (A quick look at the 100 most expensive modern and contemporary artworks sold at auction can verify the value assigned to non-male, non-Euro/USA artists.) To us, and to a determined, angry, joyous, powerfully creative, and increasing number of artists, critics, scholars, and curators, working at this intersection is an urgent activity.

The structure of the book is grounded in this approach to feminist art. Not a history, rather it is intended to give an overview of what is happening at the time of its writing, why, and how; and in different locations, ways of making, and ways of thinking. We have invited the writers to respond to the brief in the way that suits them best, rather than asking all to give an overview of the subjects in which they are specialists: sometimes the sharp focus can illuminate the tacit questions and challenges of a large sector of artists; sometimes an overview has been a more appropriate way to introduce or provoke further, focused questions for the reader. Either way, we hope that readers will, along with us, be cognizant that what is here is an indicator of how much more there is

out there to discover. There is a recognition that we have tried to build into the structure of the book this diversity of feminist thinkers and practitioners. Indeed, the choice to coedit this volume emerged from a desire to include at the editorial level differences of thought and experience, and a challenge to each editor's own, distinct ways of thinking and working. And, concomitantly, we'd like to recognize our editorial frustration at the inevitably partial nature of any such undertaking within the covers of one book and the reach of one language: for various reasons, we were not able to secure all the writers we wished for, or therefore all the voices and topics we wanted to share.

In many ways, this book is both a complement and a contrast to the archival anthologies compiled by one of us, Hilary Robinson's *Feminism–Art–Theory 1968–2000* and *Feminism–Art–Theory 1968–2014*. It is a contrast in that here you will find newly commissioned essays that focus upon the now and upon recent history, while the other anthologies are of pre-existing texts, charting discussions and developments historically. It is a complement in starting from such values and pursuing such diversity, in its approach to feminist art and to feminist thinkers and practitioners, and in the words of these thinkers and practitioners themselves.

## Geographies

In her 1984 book *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*, the African-American feminist scholar bell hooks influentially, and inclusively, defines feminism as “a movement to end sexist oppression.” And yet, she reminds us, feminism also “directs our attention to systems of domination and the interrelatedness of sex, race, and class oppression.”<sup>1</sup> This definition has guided our work as feminist-art scholars, and also our choices as editors of this anthology – beginning with the knowledge that, while the limitations of an English-language publication prevented us from working with and translating the work of as many feminists as we'd have liked, this anthology needed to incorporate as many voices from around the globe as possible. We often spoke of the need for “on-the-ground” perspectives on global feminisms, and all the contributors to our “geographies” of feminist art live and work in the regions about which they write.

We have not pursued an “area studies” approach to this section; rather, we have compiled it from the belief that feminist politics and practices rest upon local conditions, and interact with local histories, and cultural and political practices. Nor did we address the section by thinking we needed a “compare and contrast” approach, which may have led to false competitions about which feminism was more urgent or more effective, or to a sense that differing locations were in themselves objects of study. Instead, we invited writers to identify the current issues for and of feminist art in their locations, along with the most appropriate way of exploring them.

In the opening chapter, Julie Ewington presents us with a survey of the Australian feminist movement in art, starting by situating it in a moment of historical reflexivity, internationalism, and a 2015 artwork by Kelly Doley and Diana Smith (working as the collective Sunday School), titled *The Lucy R. Lippard Lecture*. This piece itself reflected upon the visit to Australia 40 years earlier by American critic Lucy Lippard. Ewington goes on to trace the engagement of Australian feminist artists not only with the US but with current European (‘continental’) philosophy, and of course the UK (where Germaine Greer and a number of other Australians, later to become prominent in the arts and



media, had emigrated in the 1960s). Against this backdrop, Ewington demonstrates the struggle of Australian feminists to produce methods and practices appropriate to their own condition, including that of the differing realities of Indigenous Australian lives and white post-coloniality. She concludes with an examination of recent curatorial and art practices, including major exhibitions and the debates they embodied and provoked.

A different approach is taken by María Laura Rosa. Her chapter covers four countries – Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, and Peru – but she maintains a focus on particular types of practice: feminist collectives and their art activism. A strong theme through this chapter is that of access to public space, and how to make effective aesthetic interventions in it. Charting projects by four groups – *Mujeres Públicas*, *Mujeres Creando*, *Malignas Influencias*, and *Laperrera* – Rosa opens up the tactical thinking of these groups to reach the audiences that they wish to, in order to build solidarity and further action.

In contrast to the occupation of public space in Latin America, Gayatri Sinha's essay traces the creation of subject space of women artists and feminism in India. Woven against a background of subaltern studies, Indian Marxism, class, and caste, she demonstrates how these artists realized their subjectivities and their publics in movements "compelled by the politics of a region of fraught cartographies." Influences of goddesses and the lived politics affecting individual women are shown to effect both the growth and nature of feminism in India from the 1970s onwards, but are also necessary to understanding the work of the artists she discusses, such as Arpita Singh, Sheba Chhachhi, Nalini Malani, and a newer generation such as Sheela Gowda, Anita Dube, and Navjot Altaf. In all this work the artists question the "divine feminine, or the motherland." Opening with "an initiative so silent that it was virtually unspoken," Sinha argues that these artists have moved towards representing diverse subjectivities through re-representing the gendered and "unquiet processes of nationhood."

Karen von Veh's chapter also focuses on the unquiet processes of nationhood, in this instance, in the formation of post-apartheid South Africa, and in particular on how sexualities and sexual identities intersect with constructions of national identity and analysis of how contemporary South Africa is formed through its sexual politics. The work of two women, one black and one white, is brought to the fore. Zanele Muholi's activist practices of photography focus on representations of queer black identities, particularly in her portraits of black lesbian women and trans men. Diane Victor's mixed media works explore men's violence against women in the new South Africa, across all communities. Both women, therefore, are exposing that which has been hidden in silence, and attempt instead to give visibility and voice. Muholi gives dignity, respect and self-realization to communities that have been abused, denied, and subjected to crimes of "cure" by rape. They are portraits of those who have endured, survived, and who have found security in their individual subjecthoods and collective communities. Victor exposes (often shockingly and painfully) the crimes to which those communities, and other women, have been subjected. Not all the victims of corrective rape survived; elsewhere in black communities and in all sections of the white community, the levels of rape and woman-murder are horrendous, bringing the female homicide rate to six times the average. Victor's work focusses on particular crimes, bringing them out of the realm of anonymous statistics to present their narratives in a visceral manner. Von Veh completes her essay by outlining how both artists avoid the designation "feminist," and how the term has a complex and problematic history in its rise in white communities before the end of apartheid.

The art world in one city, Istanbul, is the context for Ebru Yetişkin's chapter, "Moving Towards Paratactical Curating." She describes the algorithmic control exercised by state and corporations as producing systemic and functional stupidity, and analyses how this has been at work in Turkey and more specifically in the art world of Istanbul, and how feminist critiques through curatorial practices have attempted to develop effective techniques. Given some background in the political and economic programs of the Turkish state, including in the arts, she then moves to the development of curatorial practices, and thence to feminist practices of curation, particularly of new media art. In the increasingly autocratic and repressive state that is Turkey, paratactics are needed.

Maria Pachmanová addresses the region she calls in her title "post-Wall Europe." Through the essay, her terminology shifts as appropriate – "former Eastern bloc" (political); "eastern Europe" (geographical); the "former East" (chronological); even "ex-East" which could remind us of the ex-parrot in *Monty Python* – one description in a long list of ways to say the bird was dead. The resonance is not drawn flippantly: how to describe the complexity of this part of the world, not post-colonialist but post-communist though not all post-Soviet, overwhelmingly white but subject to racial and ethnic abuse in the rest of Europe, and where wars between their newly formed states have been fought often on ethnic and sectarian grounds, and internal minorities including the Roma bear the collective brunt of such thinking. Pachmanová explores the status of "feminism" as a political concept in this environment, and the difficulty and significance of attention to the politics of gender and race in the art world here.

While the "former East" is and has been clearly problematized as a concept on many fronts, its counterpart, the "former West" is not often treated in a similar fashion. Its values are taken as having triumphed (if only because it has outlasted the Communist regimes of the former Eastern bloc), even while they have shifted. Further, its identity crises are happening internally within pre-existing states, who are attempting to re-define themselves in distinction from each other or, more frequently, in distinction from people who have arrived from elsewhere and who are seen as a threat to that identity. In these new narratives of Western identity, old narratives are brushed off and re-drafted, as if national identity were static. Alexandra Kokoli addresses these crises in "Crossing Borders and Other Dividers in Western Europe and the British Isles." Her focus first is on transhistorical feminism; then on the shifting uses of "gender" as a category; and finally on transnationalism, exile, and diaspora, emphasizing how national identity is always contingent, even in times of retrenchment, and how feminist politics and art is constantly in negotiation with these changes.

To end this section, we move to the other end of the scale: one event in New York. Mira Schor's "Wheels and Waves in the USA" starts with the concept of amnesiac returns – apparent successes leading to forgetfulness and the return of the need for and actuality of feminist acts which have, however, also forgotten their history. Schor's account of the event, in turns acerbic and funny, pulls together her tweets from the event, her notes written at the time, her later reflections upon being there, and her political analysis. It spins off into reflections upon her own feminist history: throughout, the jamming together of the personal and the political across a generational gulf is to the fore. What is the reader to draw (for example) from her quotes of the speaker's wish to escape from capitalism, and her observations of the financial realities of the event? Or the veteran and much-respected feminist who hands over her speaking time to a white male? At the end, as a Jewish woman, she recounts the story of the Jews being

made to wander in the desert until a generation has died and a new way of thinking can emerge: a story about the necessity of forgetting and the imperative of remembering. It is left to resonate with what we have read before, and with feminist politics in the USA.

## Being

Feminist politics frequently spring from the experience of inhabiting a body that is acculturated in particular ways (trained to designated behaviors, appearances, and activities; assumed to be adept at certain functions; and understood as deviant or disruptive if it transgresses these sanctions). So, too, feminist art often grapples with the representation of these bodily acculturations, and the relationship between them and “femininity.” In this section, contributors confront some of the myriad, even contradictory, ways in which the experience of living in and perceiving aged, raced, and gendered bodies relates to feminist politics in the art world. Perhaps unsurprisingly, considering their growing visibility and impact upon feminist politics in the past decade, trans\* persons, art, and theory emerge frequently in this section’s writing on representing contemporary feminist embodiment.

Amelia Jones opens this group of essays with a nuanced history and critique of “essentialism” in feminist art and theory (an issue raised by Schor at the end of the last section), and how queer and trans\* bodies are productively problematizing the notion in the twenty-first century. On the one hand, Jones recognizes the ways in which the “felt and visible” category of “woman” is necessary to recognize when confronting the fact of sexist oppression in heteronormative patriarchy. On the other, this categorization of “woman” as the opposite of a gender binary with “man” – as readily assumed in social-constructionist feminist theory as essentialist – tends to limit the very freedoms and variety of gendered identities that feminism embraces. Analyzing the representations of gender in emergent trans\* cultures as they have evolved out of queer theory, Jones proposes that the simultaneously social and individual, and always relational definitions of gender in the work of trans\* artists like Vaginal Davis, Zachary Drucker, and Rhys Ernst offer feminism tantalizingly open, new ways of battling sexism without reverting to the binaries sexism upholds.

In the subsequent chapter, Michelle Meagher also applies the potential of “trans-,” but in the context of feminist ageing. Utilizing Helene Moglen’s concept of “transageing” to disrupt narratives of age as linear and deteriorating, Meagher asks her readers to rather reconsider ageing as accumulation – of experience, knowledge, work, and self-awareness. Conjuring tropes of ageing womanhood from the ancient crone to the contemporary cougar in the work of feminist artists from Louise Bourgeois to Cindy Sherman, Meagher compellingly argues for “the capacity for a feminist aesthetics of ageing” in both a women’s movement and an art world historically centered around the image and concerns of youth.

Artist Lubaina Himid’s chapter takes the form of letters to artist and collaborator Susan Walsh, in which Himid’s responses to a series of (here unseen) queries from her correspondent unfold into a narrative about the nitty-gritty of everyday battles of Black women artists in the United Kingdom. The chapter ostensibly begins with Himid looking back at her experiences in organizing three groundbreaking exhibitions in London galleries: *5 Black Women* (1983), *Black Woman Time Now* (1983/4), and *The Thin Black*

*Line* (1985). Today, these are enshrined in art history for the spotlight they shone on the work of contemporary women artists of color in the UK. However, as the fine-grain detail of Himid's recollections grow with each subsequent letter, the reader becomes aware of the participants' struggles to launch not just these shows but their very careers as artists, curators, critics, and scholars. Himid's "Letters to Susan" attempts to demystify the opaque systems by which artists are educated, discovered, organized, and funded – to which too many women artists and artists of color are denied access. She also lauds the often unglamorous or seemingly trivial contributions to marginalized artists' work that results in real, if frustratingly incremental, progress toward their visibility.

Richard Meyer similarly addresses the power of exhibitions to reveal hidden histories and fault lines in feminist ways of being; in this case the "blockbuster" traveling exhibition *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution* (2007–2009). Here, Meyer focuses his attention on the exhibition catalog's cover, whose use of a Martha Rosler collage comprising vintage pin-ups reignited decades-old debates around the blurry line between feminist expressions of sexuality and desire and cultural representations that often objectify and demean women. Meyer both contextualizes Rosler's work in the "erotic ambivalence" of the second wave feminist era from which it came, and argues that the more recent debates over its meanings – in the art press, between artists in the exhibition, and even on the Internet and social media – demonstrate the sophistication and ongoing relevance of these expressions in feminist art today.

In Eliza Steinbock's chapter, she too returns to the resilience of second wave feminist thought, as well as returning this section full circle to the potential of transfeminism by rephrasing Linda Nochlin's famous 1971 question about women artists: "Why are there no great trans\* artists?" While Steinbock is eager to trace the history of "trancestors" in art, like Nochlin she is more interested in critiquing the conservative traditions by which art-historical "greatness" is determined, represented here by portraiture. Steinbock sees in the importance of self-portraiture among trans-identified artists a concerted effort toward the documenting and humanizing of radical new subjectivities that simultaneously reference and extend feminist theories and practices of embodiment in art.

## Doing

Too often, "feminism" is approached as a "methodology" of art-making and scholarship, rather than as an activist practice. Needless to say, as art historians dedicated to both practicing and writing about feminism as activism – in the streets as on the page – we sought out contributors who would articulate a range of practices in the realm of "doing feminism" in different realms: activism, use of language, and practices of education, as well as in different ways of making art. To crib from Eliza Gluckman's contribution (with her curating partner Lucy Day) in this section, throughout this book, we hope "to remind people as they are learning about feminist art [...] that it comes from this – a place where there is a fight to be had."

Hilary Robinson begins this section with a crucial, tragic moment from the fight for women's suffrage in Great Britain: the death of Emily Wilding Davison during an action at the Epsom Derby in 1913, when she stepped onto the track with a suffrage banner

and collided with the racehorse Anmer, owned by King George V. Her death would rally support for women's enfranchisement, largely due to the spectacular, performative nature of her martyrdom, captured by the relatively new phenomenon of the moving-picture camera that allowed unprecedented numbers to witness her feminist protest via Pathé newsreel. Applying the writings Hannah Arendt, Chantal Mouffe, and Lucy Lippard on the nature and power of political art, Robinson addresses contemporary feminist work over which Davison's ghost fairly hovers: work that not just performatively but also publicly intervenes in the very spaces, systems, and communities where women's subjugation occurs, requiring viewers to "bear witness" to these artists' (literal) acts of resistance.

In her rich survey of the subject, Griselda Pollock takes up language as a significant form of "doing" feminism. Words, she reminds us, are "potent ways in which dominant social and political systems sustain their hegemony," and in this chapter Pollock analyzes how Western languages have established and reinforce hierarchies of gender, class, and race. However, Pollock also documents the myriad ways in which feminist artists and scholars have revealed and interrupted, and continue to interrogate and transform these hierarchies in ways that transcend the limits of existing representation – allowing us to not just imagine and articulate but also create and live new realities as gendered subjects.

The act of art-making is the focus of Harriet Riches' chapter on photographic processes, handcraft, and their implications in feminist art. Riches is interested in women's presence in photo history from its very origins, beginning with Elizabeth Fulhame's experiments with "fabric photographs" in the eighteenth century, as well as the consistency with which these women's contributions have been minimized by criticism that downgrades the alleged "feminization" of their work. As such, Riches turns to the work of contemporary photographers such as Julie Cockburn, Inge Jacobsen, and Sabrina Gschwandtner, which uses needlework to pierce and embellish found photography as a feminist reclamation of the "soft processes" of photo history that are often dismissed as nostalgic or folksy at a moment when digital photography is coded as masculine and, predictably, dominant in the discourse as a result.

New-media scholar Maria Fernandez's contribution to this section asserts the relevance of posthuman and new materialist philosophy to ways of "doing" feminist art. She builds on influential thought by scholars such as Katherine Hayles and Rosa Braidotti, which necessarily addresses the limits of classical humanism in the digital age, and analyzes the work of artists from Lynn Hershman-Leeson to Gaetano Adi as exemplary of "ways in which the processes of matter contribute to support, consolidate, or disrupt power relations." Fernandez stresses that, despite the seemingly dystopian cast of the term "posthuman," that the crisis it suggests is, in fact, an opportunity to recognize and create new subjectivities that integrate cutting-edge knowledge from the sciences, and even historical innovations of marginalized peoples into appropriately complex, nuanced notions of what feminist agency might look like in the twenty-first century.

Lucy Day and Eliza Gluckman contribute a chapter that is part conversation, part curatorial statement, which simultaneously explains and reflects their embrace of "curation as a *collective act*, working alongside its co-conspirator curation as an activist proposition." While each woman has her own, individual curatorial practice, the pair additionally work together organizing feminist exhibitions and events as Day + Gluckman, the genesis of which they articulate here in a warm, informal interview with one another.

They subsequently, and more formally, follow this with a statement of their goals for Day + Gluckman as a model of feminist curatorial activism in not just the subjects of their exhibitions but also how they seek to consider and empathize with the personal, work/life realities of artists, arts professionals, and audiences in their practice.

In the subsequent essay, Felicity Allen expands on Day + Gluckman's insistence on the feminist collaboration inherent to, but often overlooked by, contemporary curatorial practices with a look at gallery educators and the myriad communities they engage with. Noting that, for decades, the role of women in art institutions was limited to that of "teacher," Allen tracks ways in which the activism of (often working-class) feminists and people of color quietly entered, then arguably came to define, practices in gallery education in the 1970s to the present day. And yet, even as concepts of relational aesthetics have allegedly grown more common and popular in contemporary art and its exhibition, Allen argues that the labor of educators and staff in these "relations" have gone unrecognized – indeed, is generally obscured – by the institutions they serve. Historicizing and celebrating the feminist history of gallery education, Allen's essay reveals how the field has built our understanding of and demand for art spaces' connection to their communities.

## Thinking

After "Being" (feminism addressing the sexual politics of ontology and embodiedness) and "Doing" (where we asked writers to reflect upon different ways in which feminism is enacted in the art world and how its processes have developed), we wanted to address the intersection between feminist thinking and major theories that have influenced art theory. Aesthetics, Marxism, queer theory, psychoanalytic theory, and decolonialism have all been hugely beneficial and enriching to feminism in the art world – but equally have benefitted from feminist input and critique. Again, we invited writers to use their knowledge and expertise to determine how to address the topics and the currency of feminist thinking in these fields, and again diverse approaches to the challenge and to writing essays have emerged.

Marsha Meskimmon takes this as her starting point in her move towards identifying her focus. Her aim is to discuss the possibilities for creating and understanding aesthetic practices through understanding the ways in which corporeal feminisms are entangled with new materialisms. Such a feminist corporeal-materialist aesthetics will demonstrate that art matters, and therefore is "asking us to think, make and write otherwise." Developing layers of thinking through the essay, drawing upon work by such as Judith Butler, Karen Barad, and Rosi Braidotti, Meskimmon constantly returns us to the practices of artists, producing increased legibility and resonance for their work. Works by Joanna Frueh and Frances Murray, Phil Sayers working with Esther Sayers and with Monica Grohmann, and Elizabeth King are analyzed for their processes of making and as objects that have people that interact with them. Meskimmon traces how processes of intra-action and mutual productions of evolving identities are formed in and through these works, together confirming that "art *matters*, and *matters differently*."

The dependency of feminism upon Marx's *Capital* is asserted in the opening sentence of Jaleh Mansoor's chapter. In one passage Marx evokes the "hidden abode" of capitalism – the private office spaces in the factory, bourgeois spaces that if examined