

12:00 – 13:00

Welcome from Conference Organizers

Megan Bosence, Bärbel Harju, Amelie Starke

Opening Keynote: “Whose Feminism?” by Angelique Szymanek (New York)

Joy Poe’s Rape Performance (1979) was a vital contribution to the rise of feminist art addressing sexual violence in the U.S. throughout the 1970s. The marginalization of the performance and Poe from art historical narratives, however, foregrounds the limits of what was, and what remains, image-able when it comes to sexual violence. This talk seeks to expand the limited discourse on this divisive work through a contextualizing of its conditions of visibility or, as is the case, invisibility as they were being articulated through the concurrent debates regarding representations of the female body in art and pornography. In so doing, the talk raises still urgent questions about the ethics of making and viewing images of violence as well as the inherent violence of naming—in this case [naming art] ‘feminist.’

Angelique Szymanek is Assistant Professor in the Department of Art and Architecture, Hobart & William Smith Colleges in Geneva, New York. Her research on feminist art and histories of sexual violence has been published in *Signs: A Journal of Feminist Scholarship*, *Women’s Art Journal*, and *The Journal of Feminist Scholarship*. She has twice been named a National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institute Scholar (2016 & 2017) and was a Helena Rubenstein fellow at the Whitney Museum for American Art Independent Study Program (2012-2013). She has recently been awarded a Fulbright U.S. Scholar Award (2019-2020) to conduct research on feminist art production in Scotland.

13:00 – 14:30

Panel I

Chair: Giorgia Tommasi (Munich)

From Reagan to Trump: Suppressing Feminine Power—Why We Need to Revisit Judy Chicago’s “The Dinner Party” Once Again

Magdalena Natalia Zalewski (Munich)

In 1979 American feminist artist and writer Judy Chicago presented a mixed media art installation named “The Dinner Party” for the very first time. With the intention to create a 3D feast to teach women about *their* history from antiquity to the Women’s Revolution, Chicago worked alongside a female collective of volunteers. What was meant as a genuine expression of feminine creativity, wisdom and creation, unprecedented in size and magnitude, became popular and was well received by the general public during the 1980s, but certain art critics felt the artist’s work lacked depth and more so, that the *dinner party* was just “vaginas on plates.” More so, conservatives deemed it obscene and vulgar, as it was a time in which the 2nd wave of feminism was experiencing major setback under Ronald Reagan’s government. Nevertheless, Chicago’s *dinner party* is now regarded as the first epic feminist artwork, functioning as a symbolichistory of women in civilization, now on permanent display at the Brooklyn Museum. Today, I want to revisit this mixed media installation as a defining symbol in feminist art and advertisement for the feminist movement. Looking at its socio-political importance that could once again re-gain momentum almost four decades later. By comparing the anti-feminist climate of the Reagan era (1981-1989)—the historical point in which “The Dinner Party” was originally set—to the Gender Backlash experienced ever since Donald Trump entered the Oval Office in 2017. Furthermore, I will be also looking upon Judy Chicago’s most famous work through the lens of Audre Lorde by seeing it as a powerful example of the “Use of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power.”

Magdalena Natalia Zalewski is a PhD candidate at the LMU Munich, and currently working on her dissertation “Representations of Meat Consumption in Contemporary Anglophone Fiction”. The literary scholar obtained her Master’s degree in American Studies and Sociology in Munich, in 2013— her Master’s Thesis dealt with “Cannibalism in Contemporary (American) Fiction,” in which she interpreted the primitive as a metaphor for a civilized Western society. Her main interest remains in contemporary North American literature with a focus on dystopian fiction and postmodernism. Incorporating interdisciplinary studies, gender studies, ecocriticism, food studies, and art history in her work, she is trying to further push the boundaries between the Self and the Other, to make the unfamiliar and unpleasant visible, following the principles of deconstruction.

Guerrilla Girls Activism: The Mixed Blessing of “MASK-ularity” and the Death of the Artist

Sophia Hoerl (Munich)

They wear gorilla masks and give a second coming to deceased female artists and what they stand for, using names like Frida Kahlo or Käthe Kollwitz as pseudonyms in their feminist activist collective named *Guerrilla Girls*. Frustrated with ingrained inequalities concerning gender, race, and class in the art world, they tackle these problematic issues with the weapon of anonymity, their trademark “Mask-ularity”, to subvert the concept of white-male authorship. To this day, anonymity has been the driving force of the group since its founding in 1985 in the wake of second-wave feminism and in times of art censorship debates. Yet, the *Guerrilla Girls*’ unified alternative identity has proven to be both a blessing and a curse in their fight against the underrepresentation of female artists and artists of color in a male-dominated art world.

This paper will critically assess the activist group’s subversion of white-male authorship that has long shaped the understanding of art in relation gender, and scrutinize the so-called “death of the artist”. One of the core questions will be if anonymity and feminist activism ultimately go together at all, as the collective’s “Mask-ularity” also glosses over its members’ individual identities and diversity. Both the struggle within the group and the ambivalent reception the *Guerrilla Girls*, who have clearly left their mark on the (inter)national art scene and have become a staple in contemporary feminist art, will be discussed, and the success because of and despite their anonymity will be evaluated.

Sophia Hörl received her B.A. in North American Studies at LMU Munich in 2018. In her B.A. thesis, she explored the phenomenon of “racial passing” in American literature, which also relates to the notion of masking one’s true identity. Sophia is currently enrolled in the Environmental Studies Certificate Program of the Rachel Carson Center and in the Master’s Program “American History, Society and Culture” at LMU, where she particularly focuses on art censorship during the U.S. Culture War of the 1980s, the history of protest art and activism in the visual arts, and Modernist photography, architecture, and literature.

Gendering the Truth Claim: The Feminist Productions of the Early Newsreel Collective

Sophie Holzberger (Berlin)

Given that the film industry has a long history of unequal distribution of labor and discriminatory work conditions, it is no coincidence that the #metoo hashtag went viral in Hollywood (Martin 2017). But there have always been attempts to structure filmmaking differently. In the emerging New Left in North America one of the most famous initiatives that sprung from this desire for a collaborative filmmaking was the Newsreel collective. My presentation is going to focus on a distinct moment in the group when women in different branches of the collective started pursuing their own projects. What can be learned from these feminist collective histories and how did they shape and prefigure contemporary conflicts and perspectives of feminist art and activism? Beginning with the 1968 *Newsreel #4 Jeannette Rankin Brigade* and with the 1970 *The Woman’s Film*, female filmmakers not only challenged the universal truth claim of left documentary cinema, they also laid the foundation for the organizational structures of Third World Newsreel until today (Rabinowitz 2002). By focusing on *Up Against the Wall Miss America*, a short film about the demonstration against the Miss America Pageant 1968 in Atlantic City made in collaboration with the influential feminist collective New York Radical Women, I will critically examine the feminism that produced and was produced by these early films. The film shows the radical politics of the women’s liberation movement as it testifies to its problematic relationship with the anti-racist struggle. My presentation argues that the way in which the film was produced as well as the presence of African American activists is paradoxically a symptom of the lack of intersectional solidarity and an anticipation of the shift towards “Third World” politics at Newsreel and in the American Left at that time (Young 2006).

Sophie Holzberger studied Comparative Literature and Art History at University of Munich (LMU) and King’s College London and is currently enrolled in her Masters in Film Studies at Freie Universität Berlin. She is a visiting student at NYU’s Department of German for the academic year 2019/2020. She has worked at film festivals, in film production and is a film critic as well as an editorial assistant for the magazine nachdemfilm.de. In June 2019, she co-organized the “Kino-Kon”, a student-led conference on feminist approaches to the cinematic apparatus.

14:30 – 15:00

B R E A K

Panel II

Chair: Sakina Gröppmaier (Munich)

Art as an Affective Intervention Against Sexual Violence and Femicides

Sarah Held (Vienna)

According to the Greek myth Philomela was raped by her brother Tereus and he cut off her tongue afterwards. Philomela found a way to tell her story through textile craft by weaving his crime into garments for her sister Prokne, who rescued her. There is a line linking Philomela's textile outcry with craft based activism against sexualized and gender based violence. Critical crafting projects like The Monument Quilt or Desconocida Unknown Ukjent materialize issues of (sexualized) violence in fabrics. They can be read as a modern version of Philomela's mythology. Since the beginning of the 21st century, a new wave of art/craft activists is reclaiming urban spaces with various political fiber works. The Monument Quilt is made of thousands of quilted stories of rape survivors. Desconocida Unknown Ukjent (by the textile artist Lise Bjørne Linnert) is a critical crafting project that centers Femicides at the US-Mexican border. Both are adequate examples to show how material culture deals with issues of sexual violence and Femicides in the borderland between Mexico and the USA. The activist project The Monument Quilt is trying to intervene in how society treats survivors of sexual violence and rape. True to the motto „every tool is a weapon if you know how to use it“ the Quilt's inventors (Force: Upsetting Rape Culture-Campaign) conquer the urban space and try to bring rape culture into the main-stream dialogue. Desconocida Unknown Ukjent is a handcrafted artwork that collects nametags of murdered and missing women from Ciudad Juárez, MX and displays them in art exhibitions around the world. Following Butler's "Notes towards a Performative Theory of Assembly", these art shows are textile demonstrations against Femicides. It is a metaphor for raising voices against Femicides. My paper reveals how empowerment and support can be materialized in fabrics and tries to answer: How are gender and queer based activisms performed at the US-Mexican-border? How can critical crafting campaigns create agency for survivors of sexualized violence and abuse? Which tools are they using for aiming their goals? Affect studies (e.g. Ann Cvetkovich's "Depression a Public Feeling") and Gloria Anzaldúa's concept of Border Thinking are building the theoretical background of my paper. I will present my field research of Desconocida Unknown Ukjent, the analysis of the double border display of the The Monument Quilt in El Paso and Cd. Juárez in 2017 and also results of my Dissertation on these topics.

Sarah Held lives in Vienna and works as senior scientist at the Academy of Fine Arts and teaches fashion theory at the University of Arts and Design in Linz. At the Academy of Fine Arts and the University of Frankfurt/Main, she did her PhD on textile art as an intervention to visualize sexual violence on women*. Her dissertation examines the tension between feminist activism and feminist-affective art practices that are located at the intersection between material and visual culture. Therefore, she did research stays in Australia, Chile, Mexico, and the USA. Her Ph.D. also deals with art/craft interventions against *Femicides* in the borderland between El Paso and Ciudad Juárez.

Spaces of Power: The Video "Borderhole" by Amber Bemak and Nadia Granados as a Queer-feminist Critique of the U.S.-Mexico Border, Gendered Violence, and the Media

Tonia Andresen (Hamburg)

Starting from a fictional border space between the USA and Colombia, *Borderhole* (Video, 14 min., 2017) deals with the political and social levels of meaning of borders, above all with institutionalized violence and its relation to the medial perception of female-presenting and colonized bodies. *Borderhole* links media images, such as a meeting between U.S. President George W. Bush and Álvaro Uribe, Colombian President, or an audio recording by Judge Jeanine Pirro, shortly after 9/11, in which she recalls the friend-enemy-distinction that had not only been normalized since Trump. These images are interrupted by self-portraits of the two artists, reminiscent of YouTube clips. Questions of gender, the female body and its historical connection to territory are themes that are elaborated. Granados and Bemak incorporate aesthetics of the media, emphasizing its role in creating knowledge, while simultaneously subverting its meanings, making visible the power structures that work within those spaces. The border appears as a space in which power structures and relations are highly condensed leading to an actual analysis of the effects of neoliberal globalization and its production of inequalities and hierarchies among the categories gender, race, class and sexual orientation. Especially the appearance of the two bodies of the artists – the *white* female body and the Indigenous female body – lead to a broaching of their different social positions that are further reinforced by the border space.

Another layer is added through the implication of a romantic relationship between the artists. We see them kissing or caressing each other in various scenes. Their queerness is linked to violence, while in scenes in which the bodies are presented in front of a webcam – a role assigned to them in the logic of patriarchal structures – they do not have to fear for their safety. The border space as a symbol for the existence of state power and the to be defended and

protected nation, materializes itself not only in economic and political processes but also in the production of specific subject constitutions. Heterosexuality becomes a decisive factor for obtaining citizenship.

For my presentation I'd like to stress these aspects and link them to the aesthetic language used by the artists. How does the video represent the production of female and queer subjectivities in relation to the border? Which role assert Granados and Bemak to the media in (re)producing stereotypes and power relations? And what activist, feminist strategies can derive from the engagement with the video?

Tonia Andresen studied art history, education and gender at the University of Hamburg. Her research focuses on contemporary artistic practices that address gender, work, migration, activist strategies and global inequalities. Recently she finished her M.A. thesis with the title "Globalization and gender: Border spaces between Mexico and the U. S. in the videos *Borderhole* by Amber Bemak and Nadia Granados and *Cosmic Generator* by Mika Rottenberg". Since 2016 she has been organizing community art projects, among others with the collective ARTERias Urbanas in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia, where she co-founded the project '//El Contenedor', a mobile urban gallery. She was also the main organizer of the event series 'Inter_Sections: Mapping queer-feminist art practices' at Gallery Genscher, Hamburg (2018) which has been published as a book (2019, Marta Press). She is currently working as a research assistant in the international research group 'SVAC – sexual violence in armed conflict' at the Hamburg Institute of Social Research.

#ApsáalookeFeminist: Space and Representation in the Art of Wendy Red Star

Melissa Schlecht (Stuttgart)

In 2019, the Minneapolis Institute of Art presented the first major thematic exhibition of female Indigenous artists in the United States, Hearts of Our People. This landmark show explored the significant role of Native women artists who have long been misrepresented in Eurocentric, patriarchal art history and criticism. While Native male artworks were often valorized as sacred and highly individualistic, women's art was referred to as a quotidian craft (Berlo and Philipps, 33). This paper aims to discuss the question of space and representation in the work of Wendy Red Star, a Crow artist who challenges art history's predominantly white, male gaze in her photography – a genre which, historically, contributed to the degradation and trivialization of the Indigenous woman as a fetishized object. By using the medium of photography as a counter- hegemonic practice, Red Star thematizes the misrepresentation of Native Americans in the stereotypical imagery of the western world. This paper examines Red Star's oeuvre from her early art pieces to her recent work *Apsáalooke Feminist*, in which she confronts the recipients with their own gaze, and comments on the construction of native spaces in the art historical tradition. The artist's use of social media will also be discussed, especially the creation of the hashtag #ApsáalookeFeminist to raise awareness for female Crow-artists in digital spaces – and to emphasize the presence of Indigenous women artists as feminist voices in the modern world.

Melissa Schlecht studied Art History, Literary Studies and Literary and Cultural Theory at the Universities of Stuttgart and Tübingen. After receiving her M.A. she worked as a research associate at a museum for Outsider Art. She joined the Department of American Literature and Culture at the University of Stuttgart in 2017. In her own teaching and research, her interests lie in visual cultures, intermediality and multi-ethnic literatures. Her PHD- project investigates the role of social and cultural mobility in U.S.- American artist narratives.

16:30 – 17:00

B R E A K

17:00 – 17:30

Sophia Süßmilch: Art Performance // Artist Talk

Moderator: Amelie Starke (Munich)

Sophia Süßmilch was born a German citizen in the last millennium and will die in this one. She studied sculpture at the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich with Stephan Huber, as well as contextual painting with Ashley Hans Scheirl at the Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna. Süßmilch works in several media; she paints in oil as a means of calming herself and enjoys being nude in her photography and her video works. Her artworks generally oscillate between ironic distance and aggressive proximity, which matches with her personality. Sophia Süßmilch was awarded the Bavarian sponzorship prize in 2018. Süßmilch lives in Munich and Vienna. She hates both cities.

15:00 – 15:30

Tamar Beruchashvili: Art Performance // Artist Talk

Moderator: Amelie Starke (Munich)

The boundaries between the disciplines are disappearing, and the boundaries between digital and analog embodiments are no longer recognizable. We see our analogue world - urban space no longer, we see it as a transit and lose the details that make up our empathy. This empathy and the search for "invisible" move me. I observe and examine my social worlds and myself deeply. This creative game takes place on Instagram, because we all see each other through the stabilizing character of the Panopticon? Could I "destroy" the "norms" made by my "questioning"? To make them visible? So I use my own body as a material and explore its limits in creative games. The superimposed human and animal meat (rhizomes) should not be "beautiful" and "filtered", but as naked as it would be without "doing". What do common unconditional love, doing gender and doing care have in common? Could I ask this question again visually through my work through my performances, but never answer it. My conceptual works are by no means the answers and recipes to social questions, but they are questions to the questions. These iterative re questions are intended to confuse and upset observing people. I do not give any interpretation in advance, I only open up space for observing people, everyone should interpret my works based on their own experience. In conclusion, the academic artistic practices that are currently taking place want to deal with our social challenges through visual practices. I do it the other way round! I want to get the visual practices out of myself and my social environment through our social challenges.

Tamar Beruchashvili was born in Tbilisi (Georgia) in 1985. Her childhood was very much influenced by post-Soviet events (political and economic). She studied Oriental Studies in Georgia. She has been living in Munich since 2008 and studied Management of Social Innovations (Munich University of Applied Sciences, Bachelor), Design Thinking (SCE, additional studies), Sociology and Gender Studies (LMU, Master of Arts). Tamar worked as a research assistant in a sub-project of ForGenderCare, which turned her theoretical perspective on gender studies very much into practice. She is currently trying to gain a foothold in the art scene in Germany and Georgia (mentor Gia Edzgeradze, Kunstakademie Düsseldorf) and works as an innovation manager at TUM and at Caritasverband.

15:30 – 17:00

Panel III

Chair: Nicolle Herzog (Tours)

"I Got Good Hair, I Got African in My Family"—The Black Female Experience of 'Going Natural' in Nakeya Brown's Photography

Joyce Osagie (Munich)

At this year's Oscars, "Hair Love" won an Oscar for the Best Animated Short Film, expressing the message: "embrace and love your natural hair". Looking at Black Feminism and the Natural Hair Movement I raise the questions: How does natural hair shape the black female experience? What place does (natural) hair hold in Black womanhood? Analyzing works from Nakeya Brown's photography series *The Refutation of "Good" Hair and Hair Stories Untold*, I will argue that the concept of 'Going Natural' is an essential everyday practice of contemporary Black Feminism. This paper will examine the depiction of Black women's power and agency as well as the idea of a rather newly defined notion of Black beauty in the works of Nakeya Brown. Here, the preconceived notions of 'good' and 'bad' hair will be challenged to illustrate the increasing identification of African American women with their natural curly and kinky hair. In so doing, I will demonstrate how Nakeya Brown challenges the stereotypical representation of Black women in the U.S and highlight how young Black women are taking the social signs and symbols of natural hair to reinvent their shared experience of femininity.

Joyce Osagie received her BA in American Studies from the University of Munich in 2018. During her studies, Joyce has been focusing on African American Studies, in particular on the Black experience of racism, police brutality, and activism. Her BA thesis explored the similarities and differences of the Black Panthers and the Black Lives Matter Movement. Currently, she is enrolled in the American Studies Master program at the LMU. Further, Joyce is planning on writing her Masters' thesis at Wayne State University in Detroit, where she hopes to investigate issues of the criminal justice system in the discourse of race as well as the issues of black and white multiracial identities.

Appropriation and Subversion: Black Humor in the Photo-Text Artworks of Carrie Mae Weems and Lorna Simpson

Xinrui Jiang (Munich)

The absurdity of slavery, Jim Crow, and other forms of injustice against African Americans gives the term black humor a specifically racial context in the US. For African Americans, black humor has long become a tradition to confront the absurdity in their lives. Yet, the humor of black women, especially black female visual artists, has been largely ignored due to their doubly marginalized racial and gender identity. By focusing on the image-text artworks of two significant contemporary black female artists – Carrie Mae Weems' *Ain't Jokin'* (1987-1988) and Lorna Simpson's *Twenty Questions (A Sampler, 1986)*, the paper explores their strategic use of black humor to convey black feminist ideas in their artworks. How does humor function in the selected photo-text works of Weems and Simpson? What does the humor in those artworks serve? What are similarities and differences in their works? Through the analysis of the aesthetics and politics of black humor in their works from the perspective of intersectionality, the paper argues that the two artists employ black humor to appropriate racial stereotypes of black women. By telling the jokes themselves they subvert the stereotypes and redirect the hostility.

Xinrui Jiang received a B.A. in English from Zhengzhou University and an M.A. in English Language and Literature from Wuhan University in China. She volunteered as a Chinese teacher at a middle school in Jakarta, Indonesia, for two years. Currently, she is enrolled in the master's program "American History, Culture and Society" at LMU Munich. Her major research interests are African American literature and culture, gender studies, and transnational migration literature. In her current master's thesis, she explores the identity issues in the new African Diasporic literature based on Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* and NoViolet Bulawayo *We Need New Names*.

Sugar Baby – The Racialization, Spectacularization, and Mammification of the Big Black Body

Melina Haberl (Munich)

Besides obliterating the myths steeped in weight stigma, Grammy-winning artist Lizzo represents the antithesis to the "Mammy" stereotype that is often cast on African American women. In this paper I will explore how the Big Black Body is used to invalidate race, class, and gender prejudices. I argue that the ideal of thinness is not only American, but, at its very core, racialized and racist. Fatphobia, then, is inextricably linked to anti-blackness. Analyzing Kara Walker's installation at the Domino Sugar Factory in Williamsburg, New York, *A Sublety, The Marvelous Sugar Baby, an Homage to the unpaid and overworked Artisans who have refined our Sweet tastes from the cane fields to the Kitchens of the New World on the Occasion of the demolition of the Domino Sugar Refining Plant* (2014), this paper shows how studies of feminism and racism are intertwined. In response to the U.S. Senate approval of a monument honoring the faithful slave mammies of the South in 1923, Kara Walker created a sugar-coated sphinx that is a hybrid of two distinct stereotypes of the Black female. The sculpture has the head of a kerchief-wearing Black woman, referencing the mammy stereotype, but her body is a caricature of the hyper-sexualized Black woman with prominent breasts, enormous buttocks and a protruding vulva. The display also exhibits fifteen smaller sculptures reminiscent of blackamoors. Walker's work demonstrates how whiteness is produced at the expense and marginalization of blackness under the consideration of the history of sugar production. In doing so, the Black body and Black art in general are substantially spectacularized. Not surprisingly, Walker's work has been met with controversy by feminists and the #blacklivesmatter movement who criticized the sphinx for exclusively attracting a white audience and the recreation of the same racism it claims to critique. This paper demonstrates how Kara Walker's representation of the mammy stereotype negotiates and navigates issues of the complex racialization of the female Big Black Body.

Melina Haberl received her B.A. in North American Studies from the University of Munich in 2019 and is currently enrolled in the Master's Program *American History, Culture and Society* at LMU Munich. During her studies, Melina has focused on African American Studies, in particular on racial relations in the United States, police brutality, and racial injustice as well as its representation on TV. She is a visiting student at Wayne State University in Detroit for the academic year 2021 where she will be exploring issues linked to mass incarceration and the U.S. criminal justice system in its war on drugs.

17:00 – 17:15

B R E A K

Closing Lecture by Rebecca Wanzo (St. Louis, MO):

“Redrawing the Canon: My Favorite Thing is Monsters and Queering Western Art Traditions”

Moderator: Rupali Naik (Exeter) and Laura Purdy (Leeds)

This presentation explores how Emil Ferris’s still uncompleted opus, *My Favorite Thing is Monsters*, builds on a tradition of feminist comics and queer life narratives in recognizing that heteronormative representations still leave a space for feminist and queer attachments. Through reproductions of canonical works but with a difference, Ferris positions western art within popular art traditions and, like Berger and others who follow him, recognizes the logics of consumption that travel between high and “low” art traditions. But rather than reject “the gaze” she treats art objects as spaces of equal opportunity aesthetic access.

Rebecca Wanzo is professor and chair of Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at Washington University in St. Louis. She is the author of the books *The Suffering Will Not Be Televised: African American Women and Sentimental Political Storytelling* (SUNY Press, 2009), and *The Content of Our Caricature: African American Comic Art and Political Belonging* (NYU Press, 2020). Her research interests include African American literature and culture, critical race theory, feminist theory, the history of popular fiction in the United States, cultural studies, theories of affect, and graphic storytelling. In addition to her numerous publications in scholarly journal articles, art exhibition catalogs, and edited collections, Rebecca has also written for *CNN*, the *LA Review of Books*, *Huffington Post*, *The Conversation*, and *Bitch Planet*.

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